



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Jevon Snyder, Fire
Captain (PM2340C), Ocean City

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

CSC Docket No. 2023-2424

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: August 14, 2024 (ABR)

Jevon Snyder appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Captain (PM2340C), Ocean City. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a score of 83.360 and ranks 11th on the subject eligible list.

This two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. Candidates were required to pass the written portion of the examination, and then were ranked on their performance on both portions of the examination. The test was worth 80 percent of the final score and seniority was worth the remaining 20 percent. Of the test weights, 35.90% of the score was the written multiple-choice portion, 22.04% was the technical score for the evolving exercise, 7.45% was the supervision score for the evolving exercise, 5.71% was the oral communication score for the evolving exercise, 23.20% was the technical score for the arriving exercise, 5.71% was the oral communication score for the arriving exercise.

The oral portion of the Fire Captain examination consisted of two scenarios: a fire scene simulation with questions designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of fire fighters and the ability to assess fire conditions and hazards in an evolving incident on the fireground (Evolving Scenario); and a fire scene simulation designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of firefighters and the ability to plan strategies and tactics based upon a building's

structure and condition (Arriving Scenario). Knowledge of supervision was measured by a question in the Evolving Scenario, and was scored for that scenario. For the Evolving Scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the Arriving Scenario, a five-minute preparation period was given, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

The candidates' responses were scored on technical knowledge and oral communication ability. Prior to the administration of the exam, a panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) determined the scoring criteria, using generally approved fire command practices, firefighting practices, and reference materials. Scoring decisions were based on SME-approved possible courses of action (PCAs) including those actions that must be taken to resolve the situation as presented. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process. It is noted that candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: "In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score."

Candidates were rated on a five-point scale, with 5 as the optimal response, 4 as a more than acceptable passing response, 3 as a minimally acceptable passing response, 2 as a less than acceptable response, and 1 as a much less than acceptable response. For each of the scenes, and for oral communication, the requirements for each score were defined.

On the Evolving Scenario, the appellant scored a 2 on the technical component, a 3 on the supervision component, and a 3 on the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 3 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component.

On appeal, the appellant challenges his technical and supervision component scores on the Evolving Scenario, as well as his technical component score on the Arriving Scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The Evolving Scenario involves the response to a fire at a single-story ranch house. Battalion 1 is the incident commander and the candidate is the first-level supervisor of the first arriving ladder company, Ladder 7. Upon arrival, the incident commander reports there is smoke coming from Side A and orders the candidate's crew to conduct a primary search, as he cannot get confirmation if the owners are home or not.

The SME found that the appellant failed to identify multiple mandatory responses, including ensuring the removal of any found victims and evacuating the crew. In addition, the SME indicated that the appellant missed a number of

additional opportunities. Based upon the foregoing, the SME awarded the appellant a technical component score of 2. On appeal, the appellant argues that his statements regarding performing primary and secondary searches at three specified points during his presentation were sufficient to cover the PCA regarding the removal of victims. As to the evacuation of the crew, the appellant avers that he covered this response by noting the urgent message and advising crews of the issues of the partial collapse at a specific time in his presentation.

In reply, it is noted that ordering a primary search of the house and giving an urgent message to the incident commander were PCAs for which the appellant received credit. As noted above, candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: “In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score.” The statements cited by the appellant were too general to award him credit for the separate and distinct PCAs at issue. Further, a review of the appellant’s Evolving Scenario presentation recording fails to demonstrate that he otherwise covered these PCAs. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof regarding the Evolving Scenario and his technical component score of 2 is sustained.

The supervision component of the Evolving Scenario provides that that while concluding the incident, the candidate notices a personal accountability tag (PAT) is missing from their company. Firefighter Smith informs the candidate that he has misplaced his PAT. It then asks the candidate how they will handle this situation upon return to the fire station.

The assessor awarded the appellant a supervision component score of 2, based upon a finding that the appellant missed a number of PCAs in response to the supervision component prompt, including opportunities to inform the chief that he spoke with Firefighter Smith and to document all findings and actions taken. On appeal, the appellant presents that he stated he would contact administration and noted that he would indicate in Firefighter Smith’s file that he was given a verbal warning and review whether there were any similar incidents in his record.

In reply, the appellant’s statements were sufficient to cover other PCAs for which he received credit, including reviewing Firefighter Smith’s file and issuing a reprimand. However, these statements were too general to award him credit for the distinct PCAs at issue in this scenario. Again, as noted above, candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: “In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score.” Here, the appellant’s statement about “contact[ing] the . . . admin side [about] how they would want to pursue” was too vague to award him credit for the specific action of informing his supervisor/chief that he spoke with Firefighter Smith. Further, the appellant’s statement about recording

the verbal warning in Firefighter Smith's file was insufficient to cover the PCA of documenting all findings/actions, as noting the disciplinary action in Firefighter Smith's file would be just one part of the documentation and reporting that would need to occur after an incident like the one involved in the subject scenario. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof with respect to the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario and his score of 3 is affirmed.

The Arriving Scenario involves a fire at a two-story, single family, wood-framed residential property where the candidate will be the highest-ranking officer at the scene. Upon arrival, the candidate sees fire and smoke coming from a second floor window and the attic above it on Side A. There are no cars parked in the driveway upon arrival and nobody is outside of the home. A single police officer is running around the house in an effort to make entry into the residence. The prompt then asks what the candidate's main concerns are when conducting their size-up of this incident for their initial report, and what specific actions they will take to fully address this incident.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 3 on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario, based upon a finding that the candidate missed a number of opportunities, including conducting a personnel accountability review (PAR), and evacuating and protecting exposures on Sides B and D. On appeal, the appellant argues that he covered the PCAs at issue by calling for a PAR and placing a third line in service to protect exposures.

In reply, although the appellant was advised that he failed to "evacuate & protect exposures on Side 'B' and Side 'D,'" it is noted that a review of the Arriving Scenario scoring sheet from the Division of Test, Development, Analytics and Administration indicates that the PCA related to those exposures was to "[e]vacuate Side B and D exposures." As such, the appellant's statement about placing a third hoseline to protect exposures on Sides B and D was insufficient to establish that he would evacuate those exposures, as required. However, regarding the PCA of conducting a PAR, upon review of the appellant's appeal and his presentation, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) has determined that the appellant should have been awarded credit. TDAA advises that based upon this change, the appellant's score should be raised from 3 to 4. The Commission agrees with TDAA's assessment regarding this Arriving Scenario PCA.

CONCLUSION

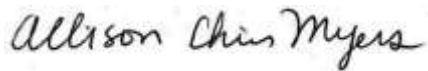
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record and, except as noted above, the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted in part and that the appellant's technical component score for the Arriving Scenario be raised from 3 to 4 with retroactive effect.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 14TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2024



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