



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Curtis Yarbrough,  
Fire Lieutenant (PM2375C), New  
Brunswick

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-2591

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED:** November 27, 2024 (ABR)

Curtis Yarbrough appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM2375C), New Brunswick. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a score of 83.380 and ranks ninth 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 Lieutenant 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 4 on the supervision component, and a 5 on the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 5 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical and supervision components of the Evolving Scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenario were reviewed.

The Evolving Scenario involves a fire reported on the second floor of a college dormitory where the candidate is the First-Level Fire Supervisor of the first arriving engine company, Engine 4. The prompt indicates that Battalion 4 and Ladder 2 are responding with the candidate while Engine 5 is seven minutes out. Additionally, it states that the fire was first reported 10 minutes earlier and that the sprinklers are functioning. Further, a resident director approaches the incident commander and states that two students on the second floor are unaccounted for. The candidate's engine company is ordered to establish a primary water supply and attack the fire while Ladder 2 will conduct a primary search and Engine 5 will be responsible for a secondary water supply. Question 1 then asks the candidate what orders they will give their crew to complete their orders from the incident commander. The prompt

for Question 2 states that as the company officer, the candidate and their crew are approaching the seat of the fire, they come across two students in the hallway who are unresponsive. It further indicates that Ladder 2 is by the elevator on the second floor. It then asks the candidate to describe the specific actions they and their crew should now take.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 2 on the technical component of the Evolving Scenario based upon a finding that the appellant failed to identify the mandatory response of ordering searching for victims off the line and missed a number of additional opportunities. On appeal, the appellant maintains that he addressed the PCA at issue by indicating during his presentation that his company located victims and that they would use a thermal imaging camera (TIC) to search the room.

In reply, the use of a TIC was a distinct action for which the appellant did receive credit. In order to receive credit for the mandatory response of conducting a primary search off the hoseline, the appellant needed to specifically indicate that he was giving such an order during the portion of his presentation covering Question 1. The appellant's statement related to finding two victims were insufficient because it was not an explicit order to conduct a search off the line and did not come until the appellant was giving his response to Question 2. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof and his Evolving Scenario technical component score of 2 is affirmed.

The supervision component of the Evolving Scenario states that upon arrival, the candidate discovers that their supply hose was improperly packed after a prior incident earlier that shift, causing a delay in current operations. It then asks what actions the candidate should take now and back at the firehouse.

On the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario, the assessor awarded the appellant a score of 4, based upon a finding that the candidate missed several PCAs, including the opportunity to inspect the rest of the hoses. On appeal, the appellant maintains that he indicated during his presentation that he would pull all of the hoselines off of the bed of the truck and high rise pack and go over it with the firefighters.

In reply, the appellant's statement covered the PCA of ordering the firefighter to remedy the situation/find a solution. However, it fell short of specifically indicating that he would inspect the hoselines and, 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." Accordingly, the appellant was properly denied credit for the PCA at issue and his score of 4 for the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario is affirmed.

## CONCLUSION

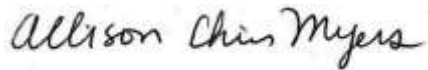
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and that the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

## ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

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 27<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2024



---

Allison Chris Myers  
Chairperson  
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries  
and  
Correspondence

Nicholas F. Angiulo  
Director  
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs  
Civil Service Commission  
Written Record Appeals Unit  
P.O. Box 312  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Curtis Yarbrough  
Division of Administrative and Employee Services  
Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration  
Records Center