



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Matthew Faden, Fire
Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey City

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-2475

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: July 24, 2024 (ABR)

Matthew Faden appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey City. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 84.910 and is tied as the 75th ranked candidate on the 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 Officer 1 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.

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 3 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component and a 4 for the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component 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 provides that the candidate is the First Level Fire Supervisor of the first responding engine company dispatched to a report of a fire in a 12th floor apartment in a 27-story apartment building. Question 1 asks the candidate to describe, in detail, what orders they will give their crew to complete their orders from the Incident Command. Question 2 asks the candidate to describe the possible causes of a significant drop in water pressure and what actions they and their crew should take in order to solve the problem with regard to each possible cause.

On the technical component of the Evolving Scenario, the SME awarded the appellant a score of 3 based upon findings that the appellant failed to identify the mandatory response of establishing a water supply from the standpipe on the 11th floor and missed a number of additional opportunities, including the opportunity to instruct the crew to stay low as they advance. On appeal, the appellant argues that

he addressed the mandatory response of establishing a water supply from the standpipe on the 11th floor by stating at specified points that he would take the elevator with his crew to two floors below the reported location of the fire, discussing how he would ensure adequate water pressure before entering the apartment and addressing the subsequent loss of water pressure. Additionally, the appellant contends that it was unnecessary for him to have his crew get low because there were no reports of the fire exiting the apartment, the fire was contained because of the building construction type and doors of the apartment were closed. He proffers that if he had entered the apartment with no heat or fire initially and the fire was in a back room, he would not have to get low, and would advance the line to the fire and the heat will dictate all of this once in the apartment.

CONCLUSION

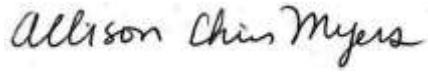
In the instant matter, a review of the appellant's Evolving Scenario presentation demonstrates that the appellant was properly denied credit for the mandatory response at issue. The appellant stated, in relevant part, "I'll report to the 10th floor, 2 floors below the fire. I would get off with my members, walk the two floors in Stairwell A. Hook up the standpipe in Stairwell A. I will then open the door from stairwell A into the main hallway . . ." In other words, he indicated that he would establish a water supply from the standpipe on the fire floor (12th floor), rather than one floor below (11th floor). The other actions described by the appellant correspond to other distinct PCAs, for which the appellant received appropriate credit and cannot be said to cover the mandatory response at issue. As to the appellant's arguments regarding the PCA of telling his crew to keep low, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) observes that one of the diagrams in the test booklet showed that smoke exited the apartment and drifted into the hallway. TDAA advises that smoke is the primary reason that firefighters are advised to stay low, as the toxic and ignitable chemicals rise and visibility will be better lower to the ground. Since Ladder 1 would be conducting a primary search, candidates would want their crews searching off of the hoseline and looking for victims. Further, TDAA notes that one of the diagrams in the test booklet establishes that the fire was in close proximity to the apartment entrance, not the back room claimed by the candidate. The Civil Service Commission agrees with TDAA's rationale and finds the appellant's arguments regarding the PCA of telling the crew to keep low are without merit. Accordingly, a thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and 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 24TH DAY OF JULY, 2024



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