



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Armando Roman,
Jr., Fire Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey
City

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-2324

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: July 24, 2024 (ABR)

Armando Roman, Jr. 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 85.550 and ranks 66th 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 5 for the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component and a 5 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 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 a number of additional opportunities, including instructing the crew to stay low as they advanced and removing the pressure reducing valve, if present. On appeal, the appellant argues that a pressure-reducing valve (PRV) cannot be removed, only adjusted, while a pressure-reducing device (PRD), which is an accessory that is not

an integral part of the system, can be removed without damaging the entire system. He avers that if a PRV were removed, it could disrupt the entire system's pressure regulation and could damage the system, disrupt downstream pressure and damage sensitive equipment. Additionally, the appellant contends that a malfunctioning PRV is unlikely to be the sole reason for a loss of hoseline pressure and that other issues, like hoseline issues, pump issues, water supply issues, or human error are more likely to be the source of the problem. The appellant states that he mentioned several of these in his answer. Further, the appellant presents that because the total height of the building in the scenario is unclear, it couldn't be determined whether a pressure-reducing valve would have made a significant difference in the overall pressure reduction if there were any installed. Moreover, the appellant proffers several colleagues told him that their scores for the scenario were not lowered, even though they never mentioned anything about PRVs and it was never mentioned in their review packages.

CONCLUSION

In the instant matter, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof. The appellant provides no source to support his claim that PRVs cannot be removed but PRDs are removable. However, it is noted that John Norman, *Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics* 146 (5th ed. 2019) indicates that PRDs "are combination outlet control and *pressure-reducing valves*" (emphasis added). Even assuming, *arguendo*, that the appellant is correct about the distinction between PRVs and PRDs, the appellant does not contend that he stated that he would remove a PRD as part of his response and a review of the appellant's presentation does not indicate that he detailed such an action. Finally, the appellant's unsupported claims about the scoring of the examinations of unnamed candidates he spoke with are insufficient to sustain his burden of proof in this matter. However, the Civil Service Commission observes that the subject PCA was an additional response, meaning that even if a candidate failed to identify the subject PCA, they could achieve the maximum score of 5 if they identified all mandatory responses and a sufficient number of other additional responses. Moreover, the appellant's claim that total building height in the scenario is unclear is without merit, as the prompt clearly stated the building dimensions, including the number of stories. Accordingly, the appellant's arguments fail to demonstrate that his score of 3 on the technical component of the evolving scenario should be changed.

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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