



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of James Johnson, Fire
Lieutenant (PM2374C), Mount
Laurel

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

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2023-2343

ISSUED: July 3, 2024 (ABR)

James Johnson appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM2389C), Mount Laurel. It is noted that the appellant failed the subject examination.

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.

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.

For the Evolving Scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component, a 3 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. For the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 1 for the technical component and a 4 for the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Arriving Scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The Arriving Scenario involves the response to a fire at a building on a farm which has steel truss construction with corrugated steel walls and a roof with steel I-beams. The building houses farm equipment, bales of hay and straw, diesel fuel, solvents, oils, and lubricants. Question 1 directs candidates to perform their initial reports to the camera as they would upon arrival at this incident. Question 2 asks, after the candidate's initial report, what specific actions they should take to fully address the incident. The SME indicted that the appellant missed a number of opportunities, including, in part, establishing a water supply, ordering an attack line of 2.5 inches or greater, and requesting hazmat. On appeal, the appellant asserts that he covered these actions at specified points.

CONCLUSION

In the instant matter, upon review of the appellant's appeal, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) has determined that the appellant should have been credited with several mandatory and additional responses in addressing Question 2, including establishing a water supply, ordering an attack line of 2.5 inches or greater, requesting hazmat and requesting a utility company. Based upon the foregoing, TDAA submits that the appellant's score should be raised from 1 to 2. TDAA further advises that even with this scoring change, the appellant would still fail the examination. The Commission agrees with TDAA's findings.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the appellant's score of 1 on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario be raised to 2 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 3RD DAY OF JULY, 2024

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