



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Ernest Lunetta,  
Battalion Fire Chief (PM3388C),  
Newark

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-1918

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED: March 20, 2024 (ABR)**

Ernest Lunetta appeals his score on the promotional examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM3388C), Newark. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 81.910 and ranks 21<sup>st</sup> on the eligible list.

The subject promotional examination was held on May 23, 2022, and 39 candidates passed. This two-part examination consisted of an integrated system of simulations designed to generate behavior similar to that required for success on the job. The first part consisted of multiple-choice items that measured specific work components identified and weighted by the job analysis. The second part consisted of three oral scenarios: Supervision, Administration and Incident Command. The examination was based on a comprehensive job analysis conducted by the Civil Service Commission (Commission), which identified the critical areas of the job. The weighting of the test components was derived from the job analysis data. 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."

Each candidate in a given jurisdiction was scored by a team of three different Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who were trained in current technical scoring procedures. Each of these SMEs were current or retired fire officers who held the title of Battalion Fire Chief (or Fire Officer 2) or higher. Candidates were also assessed by three Commission employees trained in oral communication assessment. As part of

the scoring process, an SME observed and noted the responses of a candidate relative to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that each exercise was designed to measure. An assessor also noted any weaknesses that detracted from the candidate's overall oral communication ability. Each assessor then rated the candidate's performance according to the rating standards and assigned the candidate a technical or oral communication score on that exercise.

In order to preserve the relative weighting of each of the components of the examination, the ratings for each portion were adjusted by a well-recognized statistical process known as "standardization." Under this process, the ratings are standardized by converting the raw scores to z-scores, an expression of the deviation of the score from the mean score of the group in relation to the standard deviation of scores for the group. Each portion of the examination had a relative weight in its relation to the whole examination. Thus, the z-score for the multiple-choice portion was multiplied by a test weight of 36.53%, the oral technical scores were multiplied by a test weight of 53.91% and the oral communication scores were multiplied by a test weight of 9.56%. The weighted z-scores were summed and this became the overall final test score. This was weighted and added to the weighted seniority score. The result was standardized, then normalized, and rounded up to the third decimal place to arrive at a final average.

On the Supervision scenario, the appellant scored a 5 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component. On the Administration scenario, the appellant scored a 3 on the technical component and a 5 on the oral communication component. Finally, on the Incident Command scenario, the appellant scored a 3 on the technical component and a 5 on the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Incident Command scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material and a listing of possible courses of action (PCAs) for the scenarios were reviewed.

The Incident Command scenario involves a response to a fire at a local auto parts store and auto repair shop. Question 1 asks what specific actions the candidate would take upon arriving at the scene. The prompt for Question 2 indicates that while crews are involved in extinguishment operations, an explosion occurs on Side C, emergency radio traffic is transmitted by a fire fighter and structural damage is now visible on Side C. Question 2 asks what specific actions the candidate should now take based upon this new information.

On the technical component of the Incident Command scenario, the assessor awarded the appellant a score of 3, based, in part, upon his failure to perform the mandatory response of conducting a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) in

response to Question 2 and his failure to identify a number of additional PCAs, including the opportunity to monitor the air.

On appeal, the appellant argues that he stated that he would perform a PAR at a specified point during his presentation.

### CONCLUSION

In the instant matter, a review of the appellant's presentation demonstrates that he stated during his response to Question 1 that he would "conduct a PAR for accountability." However, the PCA at issue was a mandatory response to the explosion noted in Question 2 and the appellant's statement during his response to Question 1 was insufficient to demonstrate that he would conduct a PAR in response to the explosion in Question 2. Therefore, he was properly denied credit for the subject mandatory response.

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 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 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: Ernest Lunetta  
Division of Administrative and Employee Services  
Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration  
Records Center