THE CITY OF
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CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Safety Forces Testing

2017 FIRE LIEUTENANT AND FIRE CAPTAIN

STUDY GUIDE

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

A. OVERVIEW

This Study Guide is designed to assist candidates in their preparation for the Fire Lieutenant and Fire Captain examinations. The examinations consist of three phases:

Phase I	Closed-book Multiple-Choice Examination
Phase II	Tactical Exercise
Phase III	Oral Board Examination

The examinations are designed on the basis of information obtained from an extensive job analysis of the Columbus Fire Lieutenant and Captain classifications. The job analysis provides a description of the duties of lieutenants and captains and identifies the knowledge and tasks required to perform effectively in these jobs.

Following the administration of phase I of the promotional process a "cut-off" score will be established for lieutenant and captain candidates. Only those candidates whose score is above the cut-off will be invited to participate in phase II. Following the administration of phase II another "cut-off" score will be established for the lieutenant exam. Only those lieutenant candidates whose score is above this cut-off will be invited to participate in phase III. All captain candidates whose score is above the cut-off for phase I will be invited to participate in both phases II and III.

All candidates who participate in phases I, II, and III will be placed on the eligible list according their final score, which is based on the scores from all three phases and the addition of seniority points. These final scores will determine the ranks on the eligible lists.

This study guide contains information on study skills and test-taking strategies that may help you improve your score. Several different study techniques are discussed so that you may try different methods and find one that works for you. Also contained in this booklet is information about all phases of the exam. Areas covered include test formats, test-taking strategies, and grading methods specific to each phase of the exam.

The Civil Service Commission website at www.csc.columbus.gov contains information relevant to the exams such as exam reading lists and important test-related dates.

B. INFORMATION SESSIONS AND WEBSITE

You were invited to attend information sessions which were designed to help you prepare for the test. The sessions included additional information on all test phases. The Civil Service Commission website at https://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/Uniformed-Fire-Series/ includes links to information presented during these information sessions. The website also includes a listing of the questions asked during the information sessions and CSC's official response to the questions. It is to your advantage to review the information available on the Commission's website so that you have a clear understanding of what to expect during each phase of the test.

SECTION II: STUDY SKILLS

The following section describes study techniques that may be useful in preparing for the examination. You may use your own method of studying or use one or a combination of the methods presented here. To find a more effective method, you may try the alternatives discussed below to determine a method that works best for you.

A. CONCENTRATION TECHNIQUES

You must comprehend the material if you expect to remember it during the examination. There are several things that you can do that will help you comprehend the material.

1. **Make the material more interesting or meaningful**. One way to do that is to apply it to yourself by relating it to your own personal experiences. For example, when studying, try to relate the concepts to something you have done or something you have seen someone else do.

2. **Eliminate distractions from your environment**. These distractions compete for your attention, interfere with your concentration, and "turn off" your memory of the material. It is difficult for people to pay attention to several things at the same time. Instead, they usually switch back and forth, paying attention first to one thing and then to another. Any material that did not receive attention will not be remembered. This means that listening to the radio while you are studying or studying in a noisy area may leave gaps in your memory of the material you are trying to learn.

3. **Eliminate internal distractions**. Avoid trying to learn or memorize material when you are tired or hungry. Fatigue reduces the amount of material that you can remember. Both fatigue and hunger make concentration difficult. One way to avoid internal distractions is to schedule study times and to set realistic goals.

4. **Use the check-mark technique**. This technique involves keeping a separate sheet of paper beside you and marking a check on it each time your mind wanders. This makes you aware of how often you are not concentrating and forces you to keep focused. Too many checks might indicate that a different study time could allow you to concentrate better and use your time more effectively.

B. READING COMPREHENSION TECHNIQUES

1. **Page-at-a-Time Method**
   This method involves stopping at the bottom of each page and summarizing the content in a few sentences. Ask yourself, "What did the author say on this page?" The page-at-a-time method makes you concentrate by forcing your mind to focus on the material while it is still fresh.

2. **Organizational Pattern Method**
   This method involves determining how the author is presenting the material. Once you have identified an author's organizational pattern, you are able to better organize both your note taking and your thinking. There are several types of organizational patterns:

a. Process Pattern—in this pattern, steps are presented in sequence. A fire suppression procedure, for example, would be described step by step.
b. Increasing Importance Pattern—this pattern presents information from the least important to most important.
c. Decreasing Importance Pattern—using this pattern, the author organizes information from most important to least important.
d. Cause and Effect Pattern—with this pattern, when you identify a cause or a problem, you are prompted to look for the effect or the solution.
e. Compare or Contrast Pattern—this pattern involves presenting similarities or differences among theories, ideas, procedures, etc.

3. **Paragraph Method**
This method involves stopping at the end of each paragraph and summarizing it into one sentence. Simply ask yourself, "What was this paragraph meant to convey?" This helps to ensure that you understand what you are reading. It will also be helpful to identify the types of sentences and paragraphs you are reading. This approach allows you to identify where the important information is in the material.

a. Identify types of sentences by function.
   - Topic sentences are controlling ideas
   - Supporting sentences explain and prove the main idea
   - Concluding sentences sum up the discussion
b. Identify types of paragraphs.
   - Introductory paragraphs give the main idea
   - Expository paragraphs present new information
   - Transitional paragraphs tie information together
   - Summarizing paragraphs restate main ideas and draw conclusions

4. **SQ3R: A Method for Studying**
The symbols SQ3R stand for SURVEY, QUESTION, READ, RECITE, and REVIEW. These five elements make up a set of study habits that have proven successful for many test-takers.

a. SURVEY: To survey is to find the limits or borders of an area. Surveying the material to be studied is the first step in the SQ3R method. This step allows you to distinguish between important information and trivial detail.

   The most obvious way to survey a body of information is to scan it from start to finish. By skimming over the pages, you will get an idea of what is to come and how long it will take to cover the material. This will help you to break the assignment down into reasonable time blocks. In most textbooks, this type of survey is made much easier through chapter summaries. Chapter summaries can give a quick overview of the important parts or pieces of the chapter. If you look at the chapter itself, you will see that it is usually broken down into smaller parts or pieces through the use of headings. Bold headings introduce big or important elements; smaller headings introduce sub areas of these important elements. These headings can provide an important road map through the chapter.

b. QUESTION: Most people need a reason to do things. The same is true for

studying or reading a textbook. Try to formulate questions about the text you are about to read. Finding the answers to these questions will give the material that you are reading more meaning.

There are several ways to develop these questions. One way is to begin with the list of headings from the chapter outline. Write a question for each major and minor heading.

c. READ: For most people, reading means the same thing as studying. Reading is important, but it will be done more effectively when the survey and question steps have been completed.

Material should be read in small "chunks" that you identified in the survey stage. One section might be all of the material under a major heading. If several pages are included under a major heading, divide it up into smaller sections separated by minor headings. Try to determine how many sections will be read in a given study session. Once you are able to answer the questions you developed in the previous step, you can move on to the next section. Be sure you understand the material in the section you are reading before you move on to the next section. A good time to take breaks is between these sections, not in the middle of them.

It is important that you understand the material you are reading. One way to do this is to keep a list of all unfamiliar terms and their meanings. The quicker you get to know the meaning of all the terms, the more effective your study practices will be. You might want to keep a notebook of these terms as well as all-important terms. You will find that this notebook of terms will be a big help in preparing for the closed book examination.

To become a more active participant in the studying process, you might also want to mark or underline the text while you are reading. This will also help you to focus on the major ideas and keep you from getting bogged down with details. Reviewing the material will be easier since you have already given yourself some hints and associations that will aid in later recall.

Highlight or underline key words and concepts and make notes to yourself in the margins. If you choose to use the underlining and marking method, here are a few guidelines:

i) Read the whole section before doing any underlining or marking.
ii) Don't mark or underline too much; the value of the technique lies in highlighting only the most important material.
iii) Use ink if possible so that the underlining and notes do not disappear or become unclear in the course of studying.
iv) Use symbols as much as possible. For example, use "?" as a symbol for questions you have; use "*" to stand for a particularly important idea.

The act of identifying and choosing the most important material to be highlighted will make recalling this information in the chapter easier at a later point in time.

d. RECITE: An important step in this method is the recite step. Recitation will help you to remember the information that you just read.

Recitation does not have to be out loud, but it should be formal. Don't just look over the information and say to yourself, "Now I know it." The point is that you should recite the information that you are trying to learn. This can be done in several ways. One popular method is to close the book and try to repeat what you have just read. Then check to see if you were correct. A second way is to answer questions about the material you have just read.

Reciting material with the assistance of another individual is also helpful. You can ask each other questions about portions of the material, which will make you recite the material in a very formal way. Choosing someone who is familiar with the material is not necessary. The person only has to be able to recognize that what you have said is what is written in the book or in your notes.

In order to be most effective, recitation should take place quite soon after you've first learned or read the material. This is important because the greatest amount of information is lost or forgotten right after it is first learned.

Don't try to recite too much information at once. Depending on the number of pages covered, this might be all of the information in one major heading or even one subheading. A whole chapter is certainly too large a unit for recitation purposes.

e. REVIEW: The last step of the SQ3R method is review. When you have finished studying a block of material such as a chapter, you should review what you have learned. This can be done through reciting or through answering specific questions. The point is that you should go back over the material once you think it has been learned.

The second form of review is done just before you begin a new study session. In this form of review, you are actually preparing yourself for new learning by strengthening learning. This helps to ensure that any old learning that is needed as a basis for new learning is correct and available.

The final form of review is done before a test and is most effective in a group with other test takers. This cuts down on some of the drudgery of pre-test studying and can increase the meaning of the information. It is sometimes easier to remember the information if you think back to who said what and how the review conversation went.

C. NOTE-TAKING SYSTEMS

1. **Cornell Note-Taking System**
   This system involves drawing lines to leave margins of a couple of inches on the left and bottom part of the paper. The left margin is used for cue words or questions and the bottom is used to summarize. The note taking process for this method is as follows:

   a. Record
   b. Question
   c. Recite
   d. Reflect
   e. Review
   f. Summarize

2. **Questions-in-the-Margin System for Reading Textbooks**
   a. Survey the entire chapter.
   b. Return to first paragraph and read to determine "what is important?"
   c. Write a brief question about the key points in the margin.
   d. Underline or highlight key words, phrases, or sentences which answer your questions.

D. MEMORY TECHNIQUES

1. Distributive vs. Massed Practice

   Distributive practice involves studying for 50 minutes with a 10 minute break each hour. This method reduces fatigue and boredom. Also, motivation is stronger in short blocks of time.

   Massed practice is a method also called cramming. This method is generally useful for creative processes, for example, when writing a paper.

2. Recitation and repetition are important in transferring information from short-term memory to long-term memory. More material is retained when a greater proportion of study time is spent reciting.

3. Creating associations can be useful, as you will store new information next to related information in your memory.

E. VISUALIZATION

The left brain is used for reading, note taking and memorizing, while the right brain is used for looking at graphs, shapes, forms and for visualizing and focusing on the whole. By visualizing while studying, you use both hemispheres of the brain and strengthen the ability to recall information at a later time.

A concept map or word diagram can help you to visualize material. This is an outline in a flow chart format that shows key points and how they are related. It can be used to reinforce important facts, clarify difficult passages, organize and pull together ideas, and can be used as a review.

SECTION III: PHASE I—MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAMINATION

A. TEST FORMAT

The first part of the fire lieutenant and captain promotional exams is a closed-book examination. This part of the exam is set in a multiple-choice format designed to test "active memory." A test of "active memory" covers material you need to know or should know without the luxury of checking reference materials. Therefore, you will not be permitted to use your source materials during this portion of the examination.

Candidates' scores will be based on the number of correct responses. Answers will be recorded on a computer answer sheet that will be scanned. Only responses on the computer scan sheet will be scored.

B. MARKING THE ANSWER SHEET

All of the questions on the closed-book portion of the examination are multiple-choice. You are to mark your answers (A, B, C, etc.) on the separate computer answer sheet that you will be given during the examination. The answer sheet will be scored by machine so it is important that you follow marking instructions carefully.

When you use the answer sheet during the examination, follow these instructions:

1. Make good dark marks that completely fill in the blank.
2. Completely erase any changed answers.
3. Make one, and only one, mark for each question.
4. Frequently check that the question number in the test booklet corresponds with the number of the space you are marking on the answer sheet.
5. Use a pencil with number 2 lead to mark your answers. Pencils will be provided during the examination. Do not use ballpoint or felt-tip pens.
6. Follow the test monitor's instructions carefully for marking your Identification Number on the answer sheet. This is extremely important because this is the only source used for identification.
7. Although you are encouraged to mark in the test booklet, your score will be based only on the answers recorded on the computer answer sheet.

C. TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

Here is a list of test-taking strategies you should remember:

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Know how to mark the separate answer sheet correctly.
3. Know how much time you have to complete the examination.

4. Read each question carefully. Try to answer the question before you look at the answers provided. If you know the answer, compare your answer to the available choices and pick the closest alternative.

5. Find clue words. Words such as all, none, never, and every, harden the meaning of the sentence by indicating that there are no exceptions. As a rule, alternatives with these words have a lesser chance of being correct. Words such as some, sometimes, may, generally, and possibly, soften the meaning of a statement and leave more room for an alternative to be correct. (A word of caution: The test item writers know these rules too!)

6. Often, first instincts are correct, so if you are unsure of an answer, you may want to go with the first answer that comes to mind.

7. Answer the easy questions first and then go back to the harder ones so that you do not spend too much time on any one item. If you skip an item, be sure to also "skip" the item on the answer sheet.

8. If you don't know what the answer is to a question before looking at the alternatives, first eliminate those choices that are clearly wrong. This makes the chance of picking the correct answer easier. After eliminating the obviously wrong answers, pick the best alternative from those that are left.

9. Be careful not to be misled by alternatives that are only partially true.

10. When reading test questions, you may mark in the test booklet. Here are some suggestions:

    a. Use slash marks (/) to break up sentences into smaller segments. This will make you attentive to each piece of information.
    b. Circle key words that tell what the sentence is all about. This will help you get a "handle" on the sentence and will make it easier if you have to hunt for an answer later.
    c. Underline words that harden or soften the meaning.
    d. Put marks next to each alternative (e.g., "g" = "clearly a good answer," "x" = "clearly a bad answer"). When rereading the question or answers, these notations will save time.

11. There is no penalty for incorrect answers on this examination, so even if you must guess, answer every question.

12. If you have time, go back and look at every question and answer. Make any changes that are necessary, but keep #6 in mind--first instincts are often correct.

13. Remember, test monitors are there to assist all candidates with procedures and to help them perform to the best of their ability. However, they cannot provide answers that will give clues to the correct response. If you have any questions, ask for assistance before the examination begins or whenever a question arises.

E. ERROR ANALYSIS

Each one of us has weak areas in our test-taking behavior. There are several possible reasons for choosing an incorrect response. Once you've identified those potential problems, they can be avoided. The following are six possible reasons for incorrectly answering a question along with possible methods of avoiding those errors.

1. **You have accidentally marked the wrong space on the answer sheet.**

   Since there are a limited number of questions on the exam, careless errors such as these are costly. Check each answer choice on the answer sheet to ensure you are marking the answer you have chosen. As an additional check, after you complete the exam, go back over every question and make sure the answers match. This will be easier if, you circle the selected alternative in the test booklet, as you go through the test.

2. **You have misread a question or answer by overlooking a key word or phrase.**

   The solution to this problem is UNDERLINING. Underlining makes those key words and phrases stand out when choosing an answer. Once you have underlined the key words and phrases, check the details of the possible answers with the details you underlined, one by one. If every detail doesn't match, consider that answer suspect and try another. Always keep in mind you're looking for the best possible answer.

3. **You do not know the meaning of one or more key terms.**

   This could be a problem in PREPARATION and/or VOCABULARY. In the outside textbooks, underline key terms and make sure you know what they mean as part of your study process. If an unfamiliar term is a technical term, it most likely will be defined in the books. If an unfamiliar term is not a technical term, go to a dictionary and look it up. It is a good idea to build your own glossary of terms and their meanings.

   When taking the exam, if you have difficulty with a term, reread the sentence to determine its overall meaning without worrying about the meaning of a particular word. Try to understand the general message of the sentence or paragraph. The meaning of the unfamiliar word should become clearer once you understand the general context within which it has been placed.

4. **You may have been unable to distinguish the important and unimportant parts of a question because it was complicated or difficult to understand.**

   First of all, these are the questions you probably should skip until the end of the test. These are also the questions on which you can use the slash mark technique discussed earlier.

   This technique is called divide and conquer. Use slash marks to break up the material into small segments, and then concentrate on one segment at a time. When you do go back to these difficult questions, first read the possible answers before reading the question. This tells you what to concentrate on while reading the

question. Read for the general meaning and do not get bogged down by individual words or phrases you do not understand.

5. **You may miss a question because you are simply unaccustomed to comparing combinations of information.**

   This is a problem of re-arranging information in the correct way so that it makes sense. Circle critical pieces of information and then compare the information with the possible answers point by point. Also, concentrate on eliminating the wrong answers first.

6. **You may have selected an answer that "looked good."**

   There are a number of factors that can cause you to fall for incorrect answers that look good:

   a. An incorrect answer may contain an exact phrase from the question.
   b. An incorrect answer may contain a phrase or sentence that is used out of context. For example, an idea which is expressed but then rejected may be presented as an idea that was supported in the question.
   c. An incorrect answer may overstate what the question has stated. For example, if the correct response based upon the source says, "Some firefighters...," the incorrect answer may say, "All firefighters..."

   Listed below are some specific strategies for avoiding the tendency to fall for incorrect answers that look good:

   a. Have an answer in mind before you look over the alternatives. This will make you less susceptible to choosing an answer that looks good.
   b. Do not forget to use the method of marking each alternative to indicate what you think about it (e.g., bad, good, or possible) before choosing one.
   c. Stick strictly to the facts or rules of a question and don't fall for answers that stretch or exaggerate the facts or rules described in the test question itself. This is the time to watch out for words that harden or soften a phrase such as only, never, always, whenever, all, etc.

B. APPEAL PROCEDURES

Candidates will be permitted to mark their answers in their test booklets during the test for later use during the appeal period. These markings are solely for the candidate's own use. The official computer answer sheets are the **ONLY** documents that will be used to determine the candidates' raw scores.

No appeals will be accepted at the test site on the test date. However, candidates will be permitted to submit appeals on phase I during a three-day period following the test administration. Candidates will be provided with the answer keys and their own test booklets. Candidates must bring their own source material to reference for appeals, and are strictly prohibited from writing in those source materials or from removing any test materials (original, machine-copied, or hand-copied notes) from the appeal site. The uses of cell phones and other communication devices are prohibited in the appeal room. Only exam candidates and CSC staff are permitted and are permitted in the appeal room.

Basis of Appeals: Candidates must indicate the basis on which the appeal is being filed. Appeals which are ambiguous, do not refer to one of the four reasons listed below, or are unsubstantiated, may be summarily dismissed. For each appeal submitted, the candidate must clearly indicate the reason the appeal is being filed and explain their rationale. An item may be appealed for one of the following reasons **ONLY**:

1. No correct alternative: The appellant must specify the reason the keyed alternative is incorrect.

2. Multiple equally correct alternatives: The appellant must demonstrate that an unkeyed alternative is at least as proper as the keyed alternative.

3. Item content is not contained in a source on the reading list: The appellant must demonstrate that the item was based solely on reference material not included on the reading list.

4. Item is incorrectly keyed: The appellant must demonstrate that the keyed alternative is incorrect **AND** a different alternative is correct.

Resolution of Appeals: Each appeal submitted will be reviewed by subject matter experts (captain and above). In the event an appeal for one of the reasons outlined in 1-3 is granted, the item will be deleted. If an appeal is granted on the basis that the alternative was incorrectly keyed (4), the key will be corrected. ***The decisions of these appeals are final.***

SECTION IV: PHASE II—TACTICAL EXERCISE

A. TEST FORMAT

1. Lieutenant Tactical

The tactical exercise for the lieutenant exam will assess the candidates' knowledge of emergency response as a company officer. This exercise will consist of a series of image-based emergency scene simulations. The candidates will respond to the scenarios in a written multiple-choice/forced choice format. This tactical exercise is designed to assess "active memory" job knowledge and the ability to apply the knowledge within the context of emergency situations. A test of "active memory" covers material that is typically memorized and utilized without reference to written materials during the course of performing the job. For this reason, this phase of the examination will be "closed-book" with respect to all sources.

There will be ten to fifteen video scenarios. Each scenario will show a video of an emergency scene with possibly multiple views. You will be given two sheets of scratch paper to take notes. While the video is initially playing, you are encouraged to take notes on the scratch paper because the images will only be shown once during the scenario. You will then be asked to respond to questions displayed on the video screen by marking a scan enabled answer sheet. Your test booklet will contain questions only. The alternatives to the questions will only be displayed on

the video screen for a limited period of time. The alternatives will not be in your test booklet. The video may instruct you to choose the best answer, choose all that apply, or choose up to a certain number of responses. There could be one to nine questions per scenario, with two to twelve alternatives per question.

You should become familiar with the preferred response to various types of emergency situations. Consider, review, and discuss typical emergency runs that are taken by various fire companies led by company officers and determine appropriate responses to each situation. You should also prepare for this phase of the exam by studying SOPs and other reading list sources related to proper emergency response procedures.

2. Captain Tactical

The tactical exercise for the captain exam will assess the candidates' knowledge and ability related to emergency response as a company officer. This tactical exercise is designed to assess "active memory" job knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge within the context of emergency situations. A test of "active memory" covers material that is typically memorized and utilized without reference to written materials during the course of performing the job. For this reason, this phase of the examination will be "closed-book" with respect to all sources

The captain tactical exercise will consist of a series of audio-visual emergency scene simulations. Up to ten test candidates at a time will individually enter one of ten test rooms. You will respond to the scenarios verbally, and your recorded audio responses will be scored at a later date. On test day, you will be provided with information about the constructed simulations. This information may include number of personnel assigned to each ladder, engine etc. and will include test specific instructions. You will be situated in front of a video monitor or laptop. CSC test monitors will start video cameras, with lenses shut or turned away from the candidate. The recorded test will begin and the test monitor will exit the room. One camera will face you, with the lens open, to serve as monitor for the examination. This camera will allow CSC staff to review the activity of the candidates while in the room to confirm that inappropriate actions, such as referring to prohibited notes, did not occur. You will view and listen to a video with emergency scene prompts and will be instructed by the video when you should respond. The video will pause for a designated time, but may continue to show the various views to the scene already provided. The video will automatically continue to the next prompt. This will repeat until the exam is complete. Depending upon the prompt, response time will range from approximately one to five minutes for your verbal response. The full duration of the test is anticipated to be approximately one hour. Candidates and the Division of Fire SMEs who take the test, will be sequestered without access to communication devices. This will ensure that no candidates are able to access test information prior to the exam administration.

You should become familiar with the preferred response to various types of emergency situations. Consider, review, and discuss typical emergency runs that are taken by various fire companies led by company officers and determine appropriate responses to each situation. You should also prepare for this phase of the exam by studying SOPs and other reading list sources related to proper emergency response procedures.

B. KEY DEVELOPMENT

1. Lieutenant Tactical Key

The key for the tactical exercise and the video scenarios will be developed with the help of outside SMEs. These SMEs will be fire professionals at the rank being tested or higher and from jurisdictions outside the state of Ohio. The tactical exercises will then be pilot-tested by another group of outside SMEs who will then review the draft key and make recommendations for appropriate modifications. The key will include keyed responses with varying assigned weights and will include some incorrect answers with negative values.

2. Captain Tactical Key

The key for the captain tactical exercise will be a check-off type key and will also include a command demeanor section with a rating on a 0-2 scale for each observed behavior related to command demeanor. The keys will be developed with input from outside SMEs. These SMEs will be fire professionals at the rank being tested or higher and from jurisdictions outside the state of Ohio. In addition, it is planned to have several CFD captains take the tactical exam at the same time as the candidates. These CFD captains will not see the key, but their responses will be considered when finalizing the key.

C. APPEALS

1. Lieutenant Tactical Appeals

After the tactical exercise is administered, you will be permitted to review the initial key and appeal specific keyed responses to have them rekeyed or deleted. The appeal process for the tactical exercise will be very similar in nature to the multiple-choice exam appeal process. The appeal process may result in changes to the final key including items being deleted from the exam. Appeals of multiple-choice items will be accepted with the following rationales: No correct alternative, additional, equally correct alternatives, the item is incorrectly keyed. Those appeals will then be reviewed by a group of internal SMEs who will be tasked with recommendations for finalizing the keys.

Internal Division of Fire SMEs will review the appeals. Due to allegations that candidates did or could communicate with appeals-review SMEs using some clandestine system of stray marks or extraneous statements (e.g. Thank you, Have a good day, etc.), language is being added to the appeals form indicating that the Commission may summarily dismiss appeals forms containing stray marks or statements irrelevant to the appeal at hand. Appeals will be organized by test question and SMEs will provide independent judgments as to the merit of each appealed test question. A consensus of the SMEs will generally be required to modify the key or delete an item; however, the Commission reserves the right to make the final determination. The requirement for a consensus is new for this test administration. The prohibition of extraneous statements or marks does not prevent candidates from trying to verbally persuade SMEs to rule in their favor. As such the requirement for a consensus of three SMEs to delete or re-key a question will further reduce the likelihood of inappropriate influence some candidates may attempt over SMEs. The Commission will only deviate from the SMEs' consensus

recommendation when there is compelling evidence or clear justification. Any changes to the key as a result of the appeals will change the key for all candidates. Candidates will not be provided with their own test booklets for purposes of appeals.

2. **Captain Tactical Appeals**
   Appeals will not be accepted for the tactical phase of the captain's exam.
   *Pending the results of the arbitration.

D. SCORING PROCEDURE

1. **Lieutenant Scoring Procedure**
   Once the key has been finalized, the tactical exercise component will be scored using the Commission's scanning software application. The weighted key and negative point values will be assigned within the program. The candidate answer sheets will be scanned and read into the software program. The software compiles the data and results for analysis and reporting.

2. **Captain Scoring Procedure**
   The Fire Captain tactical exercise will be a check-off type key with a judgmental portion related to command demeanor. Operationally, there will be three assessors per candidate per scenario. Using the check-off list, each assessor initially independently indicates whether a candidate has met a keyed response by providing a check mark in the space allotted on the key for each keyed response. For the command demeanor section, each assessor provides a rating on a 0-2 scale for each observed behavior related to command demeanor. Once the independent scoring of the candidate has been completed, the panel will go through the check-off portion of the key line-by-line to indicate whether the candidate's response meets the keyed response. In cases where two of the three assessors deem the candidate meets the keyed response, the candidate receives credit. In cases where only one of the three assessors indicates the candidate meets a keyed response, the monitor will replay the audio for the entire panel, to locate and determine if that specific candidate's response in fact merits credit for the given keyed response. With respect to the command demeanor section, the judgmental scores of the assessors are averaged by behavior to obtain an average for each command demeanor behavioral component.

E. CLERICAL REVIEW

1. **Lieutenant Clerical Review**
   For the lieutenant exam only, there will be a clerical review. During this clerical review you will have the opportunity to compare the final revised scoring key with your answer sheet to ensure you were given proper credit. Any errors that are identified with the scoring of your answer sheet will be corrected.

2. **Captain Clerical Review**
   Clerical review petitions will not be accepted for the captain tactical exam.

SECTION V: PHASE III—ORAL BOARD EXAMINATIONS

A. TEST FORMAT

The last part of the promotional examination is the oral board examination. Candidates will submit preferences for morning or afternoon time blocks at the Phase II test. Oral board times will then be scheduled taking candidate preferences into consideration as much as possible. Candidates will be notified of their scheduled date and time.

During the oral boards, you will be given two problem situations for which you must develop solutions and present these solutions to two oral boards. You will be given 60 minutes to prepare your responses to the scenarios. You may make notes or outlines during this time. You will then typically have 8-10 minutes to present the solutions to the board and answer questions from board members. You will see a different board for each problem.

The oral board scenarios may be of a number of different types. For example, one type of scenario might require the candidate to have a one-on-one discussion with a subordinate experiencing some difficulties. These difficulties might relate to performance, discipline, or personal problems. Candidates should be aware that this type of exercise may be an interactive role-play involving the candidate and someone playing the role of the individual involved in the situation described.

Another type of scenario might require the candidate to address a group consisting of three subordinates. (The roles of this three-member group would be played by the panel of role-players.) The candidate may be asked to discuss a critique of an emergency run with the group or to cover some other issue that is relevant to the position being tested. The role-players will make comments and ask questions during the oral exercise. Likewise, the candidate may ask questions of the group members. For this second type of oral exercise, the role-players will all be seated facing the candidate as they play the roles of the subordinates. The candidate will sit when addressing the group.

Another type of problem might require the candidate to address a group of civilians on topics such as fire prevention or fire safety. Again, the roles of the civilians would be played by assessors and/or role-players, and there would be interaction between the candidate and the role-players.

Finally, one of the exercises might be a structured interview where the raters will have a predetermined set of questions to ask and the candidate will be expected to respond to these questions. This type of exercise will <u>not</u> be a role-play. The candidate will be expected to explain how they would handle a situation or answer questions rather than play a role.

The oral exercises may be any of the different types or a combination of the different types. The goal is to present the candidate with job-related, realistic problems that will have to be resolved orally. Instructions for each problem will specify the form in which candidates are to provide their responses. If a member (or members) of the board will play a role in the candidate's problem, the explanation of the problem will state that.

At the designated time, you will be seated in a preparation room, given the scenarios,

and provided the opportunity to prepare for the oral interviews. You will not be observed by the assessors during this preparation period. You will be permitted to use the sources listed on the open-book reading list while preparing for the oral board exercises. You will not be permitted to bring reference sources in with you when you participate in the actual oral presentations. ***Note: You are not permitted to bring any prepared notes or outlines into the preparation room. Only the sources listed on the reading list as related to Phase III are permitted in the preparation room and these sources will be provided by Civil Service.***

Only scenarios provided by Civil Service and notes prepared by the candidate during the preparation period may be carried into the oral interviews. Candidates will be permitted to use any notes during the interview that were generated during the preparation period. All such notes will be collected following each candidate's second oral presentation.

Each live oral exercise will be video-recorded and scored on a subsequent day by two panels of three raters. Therefore, once you have completed both oral board scenarios, your performance will result in twelve sets of ratings.

B. SCORING PROCEDURE

Three individuals will sit on each board and observe and evaluate candidate performance via video recordings. All raters will be uniformed fire officers of a rank equivalent to the rank being tested or above, from jurisdictions outside the State of Ohio. These individuals will receive extensive training that is tailored to the Columbus fire promotional oral board process.

You will be evaluated on four dimensions: oral communication, interpersonal relations, information analysis, and problem sensing and resolution. A description of these dimensions is provided later in this booklet. The raters will evaluate independently based upon the four oral presentation dimensions. After the independent rating, the raters may discuss the scores and are given an opportunity to adjust the scores based upon relevant points made. For each board, ratings will be averaged by dimension. Thus, a candidate receiving a perfect score would have 144 points (a maximum of 9 points per dimension, 4 dimensions, and 4 boards 9x4x4).

C. SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Problem 1:
Your first assignment as a lieutenant (or captain) is to a ladder company at an outlying station. The previous lieutenant recently retired and the ladder driver, Firefighter Locke, is close to retirement. You have observed all of the following: Your company responded to a fire at an apartment complex last day, and Locke neglected to fully lower the jacks before raising the ladder. The ladder truck began to tip as a result. It was necessary to transfer power to the jacks to fully extend them before you could get into action. Fortunately, no one was hurt but the building sustained much more fire damage as a result of the delay. You have received several complaints from the other firefighters recently about Locke; they say he is not pulling his weight. Locke does not do any house chores unless you order him to do so.

You have scheduled a meeting with Firefighter Locke. What are you going to do and say

to Locke? One of the oral board members will be identified to you as Firefighter Locke. You will role-play with Firefighter Locke.

Problem 2

You are the lieutenant in charge of an engine company. Your company responded to a fire at a two-story residence this afternoon. (Or, you are a captain in charge of a fire scene at a two-story residence.) You observed several incidents involving members of your crew. The driver, Firefighter Coldman, asked for directions while driving to the scene, the third time in a week. In addition, Firefighter Essley charged the wrong bed of 1 and 1/2 inch hose. There was considerable delay in getting a charged line into the house as a result. During overhaul, you sent Firefighter Tuddle to get a tool kit to remove a panel from the furnace. Tuddle returned with the first-aid kit.

You have scheduled a critique of the fire with Firefighters Coldman, Tuddle, and Essley to be held in your office. What are you going to do and say to them? The three oral board raters will portray Coldman, Tuddle and Essley and they will identify themselves to you. You will role-play with the three firefighters.

SECTION VI: ORAL BOARD DIMENSIONS

A. ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral communication can be defined as having two basic components:

1. The ability to make one's thoughts or ideas understood by others.

   This involves the ability to organize thoughts and express them in a clear and logical manner. Candidates who speak slowly and distinctly, enunciating clearly to the oral board members, will be able to communicate their ideas better than candidates who rush or mumble.

2. The ability to understand thoughts or ideas expressed by others.

   Oral communication also involves the ability to listen and accurately comprehend what others are saying or asking. Candidates who do not take the time to listen to what is being said or asked run the risk of misinterpreting information. As a result, candidates whose answers are not focused and rambling present themselves as being confused and unable to comprehend the information presented.

Outlining during preparation is one strategy that can help to enhance candidate's communication skills. Thoughts and ideas will generally come across more clearly if they have been organized on paper. An outline can be very useful for generating oral responses to the scenarios.

Examples of Good Performance:

- Presents an organized, detailed outline of steps taken to gain control of the situation
- Expresses ideas clearly and concisely
- Listens carefully during both the role-play and follow-up questions
- Answers questions completely and precisely

Examples of Poor Performance:

- Presents confused or unclear plan of action
- Voices ideas randomly and/or several at a time
- Fails to listen to questions asked by raters
- Responds to only portions of questions
- Contradicts self or previous statements
- Talks too long without making a point

B. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Interpersonal Relations can be defined as having two basic components:

1. The ability to work with other individuals in a cooperative and constructive manner

2. The ability to consider and respect the feelings, needs, and viewpoints of others

Interpersonal Relations involves the ability to establish and maintain cooperative and constructive working relationships with individuals and/or groups. Those candidates who are insensitive to the needs of others typically convey that insensitivity during the role-playing situations.

Candidates should be able to talk to others in a manner that is not demeaning or arrogant, thus establishing positive relationships during the sessions. However, having good interpersonal ability does not mean being wishy-washy or indecisive. Good performance requires the demonstration of sensitivity along with the assertiveness necessary to function in the position.

Listed below are some examples of behaviors reflecting effective interpersonal relations that may be displayed in face-to-face situations such as the oral board presentation:

a. eliciting the input of others, particularly those individuals who may have trouble speaking up on their own
b. avoiding the tendency to interrupt others
c. giving others full attention when they speak by listening to and looking at them
e. complimenting or giving credit to others for good ideas or performance
f. disagreeing with others in a non-threatening manner
g. offering support and assistance to individuals experiencing problems
h. focusing on ineffective behavior when discussing performance problems rather than individual personality characteristics

Examples of Good Performance:

- Conveys empathy and respect
- Remains open and sensitive
- Asks questions and elicits information without being judgmental or condescending
- Initiates corrective action in a supportive, positive way

Examples of Poor Performance:

- Approaches others with disdain or arrogance
- Asks questions in an accusatory tone
- Adopts a condescending attitude
- Offers little or no help in resolving problem(s)
- Becomes defensive
- Initiates corrective action in a non-supportive, negative way

C. INFORMATION ANALYSIS

Information analysis can be defined as having two basic components:

1. Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information and focusing on the relevant information when resolving problems or performing tasks

2. Seeking out additional information that is needed to resolve problems or accomplish tasks

Information analysis begins with the ability to research and seek out information. It involves the ability to identify and include all relevant information in the presentation. When preparing, candidates should consider all facts relating to the problem and should be able to distinguish important from unimportant information. Candidates should present a plan of action encompassing all important information. Those candidates who include trivial information in their presentation are wasting time and indicate to the oral board that they really do not understand the important aspects of a problem.

When presenting the problem during a role-play, candidates should be specific with regard to the reasons for the solutions they offer to the problems. Candidates who consider possible causes of the problem and address solutions based on the underlying causes will convey to the oral board members a clear understanding of the problem. Candidates who listen carefully to information related by the board members during the role-play period and incorporate this information into their response will fare better than candidates who respond without actually listening to the questions.

There are two strategies that may help candidates to enhance their information analysis skills:

1. **Underlining:** Underlining the important parts of the scenario description during preparation helps to focus upon the important information.

2. **Outlining:** Outlining helps to organize available information and clarify what additional information is needed to make a sound decision.

Examples of Good Performance:

- Considers all available information
- Asks questions designed to elicit additional information
- Looks at underlying as well as surface issues
- Disregards unimportant or irrelevant factors
- Develops a logical plan of action

Examples of Poor Performance:

- Recognizes only surface issues
- Fails to consider all aspects of the situation
- Concentrates on unimportant or irrelevant details
- Develops an incomplete or illogical plan of action

D. PROBLEM SENSING & RESOLUTION

The category of problem sensing and resolution can be defined as having three basic components:

1. Evaluating situations to identify problems and issues

2. Evaluating and considering the implications of alternative solutions to problems and issues

3. Deciding on a solution to a problem or issue on the basis of the evaluation of that problem/issue

Problem sensing and resolution involves the ability to critically evaluate a situation and formulate an effective, logical solution. Candidates who are able to evaluate alternative solutions to the problem will perform better than candidates who stick to only one possible solution or outcome.

Candidates should convey to the oral board members that they are aware of the implications of both the problem and the solutions they propose. Candidates who only touch the surface of the problem and concentrate on easy solutions convey to the oral board that they do not fully comprehend the problem or the consequences of their actions.

The following guidelines may help candidates enhance their problem sensing and resolution skills:

a. Identify the key components of the issue that should be considered.
b. Generate and consider alternative courses of action or solutions. When evaluating potential solutions to problems, candidates should consider the impact of each solution on all individuals who could be affected by the solution. This would include those individuals who decide on the solution, as well as those individuals who must implement, abide by, and enforce the solution.
c. Consider the short and long-range implications of decisions that are made, since some solutions may be beneficial only for the short term, while others may be more beneficial for the long term.
d. Take steps to minimize any potentially troublesome "side-effects" of the chosen solution.

Examples of Good Performance:

- Thoroughly considers all relevant information
- Develops alternative approaches to deal with a problem
- Critically evaluates alternative solutions
- Presents logical support for decisions

Examples of Poor Performance:

- Considers only a portion of the available information
- Jumps to conclusions without supporting evidence
- Fails to consider alternatives
- Uses little or no logic to reach conclusions
- Is unable to support conclusions with facts or logic

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