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Fire Battalion Chief Examination

Fire Deputy Chief Examination

Phase I – Written Work Sample

Examination Dimensions

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION – (Clearly define the problem.) Identifies and understands critical issues presented in a written format; Clearly expresses ideas in writing; Uses proper grammatical form; Communicates effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience; Presents in written form complex ideas in a clear, concise, logical manner; Uses appropriate vocabulary, structure, grammar and syntax for a number of different materials.

INFORMATION GATHERING – (Measure the problem.) Seeks out and identifies all of the appropriate sources of information; Identifies key stakeholders in order to facilitate the generation of appropriate actions; Seeks out information on the positions and concerns of other stakeholders in the decisions to be made; Identifies problems and possible causes of problems; Identifies legal and/or regulatory issues that are affected; Identifies issues and arguments that affect particular courses of action; Identifies budgetary and resources limitations/implications.

INFORMATION ANALYSIS – (Analyze the problem.) Analyzes information and risks for various courses of action; Reviews and weighs information relative to a topic; Identifies and calculates the relative costs versus benefits for different courses of actions; Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions; Demonstrates the importance of various competing goals; Generates and/or evaluates alternative strategies and/or courses of action that reflect the information gathered.

DECISION MAKING – (Improve the problem.) Makes conclusions on course of action to improve the problem; Generates and/or recognizes imaginative solutions and innovations in work-related situations; Makes decisions based on the logical assessment and weighing of evidence; Takes action that may involve an appropriate risk in order to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage; Uses information in timely manner; Develops and implements alternative courses of action; Establishes an action plan and how to implement the plan; Renders judgments, takes action, and commits oneself.

FOLLOW-UP – (Control the Problem.) Evaluates the established criteria for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of programs, plans or policies; Establishes a plan to monitor the program results for the purpose of improvement and makes adjustments as necessary; Monitors how future conditions relate to current situation for the purpose of improvement and long-term success of program.

SAMPLE

Phase II Battalion Chief/Deputy Chief Tactical Exercise Sample Instructions to Candidates

Please Note:

* This is a sample of the Fire Tactical Exercise Instructions to Candidates. The actual examination instructions may vary.

The tactical exercises are designed to assess your ability to act as an incident commander at the rank of battalion chief within the incident management system. The tactical exercises will simulate an emergency scene in a realistic manner, within the constraints of the testing environment. The exercises are interactive so that raters can observe and assess your abilities related to emergency scene management.

Candidates will individually “run through” two tactical exercises each. For each exercise, you will be escorted into the testing room and introduced to the two tactical experts. You will be placed at a workspace facing a television or computer monitor with the two tactical experts and several video cameras nearby. Typically, each exercise begins with a brief orientation period during which you will hear and see information regarding the scenario on the computer monitor. You will then be instructed to begin the exercise. Your responses during the exercise will be recorded and later scored by a panel of assessors. Remember to speak clearly when responding.

You are expected to assume the role of a battalion chief for the City of Columbus. You are to assume that each respective company dispatched to the scene is staffed one and three. Due to testing constraints, the overall time from the beginning of the incident to the incident resolution will generally be accelerated. In the initial stages of the emergency incident, time will transpire at a rate close to reality. As the incident progresses, however, time will accelerate. As a general rule-of-thumb, you can expect that what typically happens in 30 minutes on a real emergency scene will happen in approximately 10 minutes in the tactical exercises.

In your role as a battalion chief you will be brought into the scenario in one of two ways—you may be dispatched to the scene, or you may arrive at the scene without a formal dispatch. You will hear the FAO dispatch companies to the scene, and will receive notification of their arrival at the scene. As each dispatch fully arrives on the scene, you will be provided with a “Run Card” that lists the companies included in that dispatch. **Once the “Run Card” is in your possession, you may assume that the listed companies are on the scene and awaiting your commands. You may make notes on these lists as you see fit. Additionally, blank paper will be provided for your use.** Other additional materials relevant to each respective scenario may be provided as well. Note, the run cards and any other supplemental materials are provided only for your personal use during the exam. Only your oral responses will be graded.

You are to begin your response when instructed to do so. You will orally respond to the scenario just as you would on the fireground. Your actions should be consistent with the standard operating procedures of the Columbus Division of Fire and sound, professional, fire service tactics. The purpose of the tactical experts is to provide you with information and responses based upon your questions, requests and commands. The tactical experts are assuming the roles of the FAO and the various other companies and/or personnel on the scene.

Examples:

SAMPLE

- You may direct a company to search and rescue. As you direct activities, the tactical experts may provide you with information regarding the status of that activity.
- You may ask for status reports from the tactical experts. Based upon the information provided by the tactical experts, you may need to question “others” at the scene or direct other activities at the scene—both of which you may do through the tactical experts.
- You may “radio the dispatcher.” You may request additional resources or you may ask for the status of specific companies dispatched to your location but which have not arrived. The tactical experts will provide feedback regarding your requests.

IMPORTANT:

Do not respond by describing what you “would do” if you were in the situation; rather, respond as if you were actually there. It is also important for testing purposes, when functional responsibilities are delegated you must identify the specific activities of each respective functional area. For example, if you choose to staff an Operations function, a ventilation group, or assign a geographic division, you still must identify during the test the specific goals, objectives, and actions that each functional fireground assignment would engage in to receive the most credit for accomplishment of those objectives. Remember to speak clearly for the video recorder.

You will not actually see changes occur to the scene based upon your actions. Information may be given to you orally, such as the fire being extinguished or escalating, but will not be displayed on the screen. You will need to rely on the information provided to you verbally by the tactical experts. Certain information may be automatically provided to you, or you may specifically request the information from the tactical experts.

You will be allowed approximately 10 minutes for each scenario, starting from the time you are instructed to begin. You will be given a verbal notification when you reach the midpoint of your exercise and when you have two minutes remaining. If you finish before the time limit expires, let the monitor know you have completed the exercise. The monitor may instruct you to wait to ensure all scenario events have taken place before escorting you out of the room. After the first exercise, you will be permitted a short break. You will then be escorted into the second tactical exercise boardroom.

Each exercise will start the same for all candidates. However, because candidates may direct different activities and/or ask different questions, different information may be provided to candidates. The scoring keys have been developed such that differences in style will be permitted without loss of points. Actions taken that address the relevant problems inherent in the scenarios should result in awarding of points regardless of the approach, however, points will not be awarded for a failure to recognize and appropriately address the relevant problems.

Effort will be made not to award points for trivial concerns. You may fail to earn points if you detail contradictory information or give directions that do not directly relate to the scenario presented.

The assessors are fire personnel in the rank being tested for or above from outside the state of Ohio. They will rate you based upon a previously developed check-off list type answer key. The tactical experts will also be fire experts from outside the state. The tactical experts will provide feedback as the candidate responds to the scenario. The monitor will be a Civil Service analyst who will ensure the testing process proceeds as planned. The monitor may also provide information that may be necessary to the scenario. The exercise will be video recorded to allow assessors to view your responses.

Phase III

ORAL BOARD DIMENSIONS

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Organizes thoughts and expresses them in a clear and logical manner, quickly comprehends another's meaning, uses appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar, and appropriate non-verbal communication (gestures, etc.)

SUPERVISION & INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Displays an appropriate interpersonal style in guiding others toward task accomplishment by establishing and maintaining cooperative and constructive working relationships with others, by considering the feelings and needs of others, and by providing counseling advice when necessary

PROBLEM SOLVING

The ability to arrive at sound decisions through the process of problem identification, alternative solution development, and the analysis of the implications associated with the problem and the potential solutions

TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The ability to understand, apply, and implement relevant technical and professional information