

# COMMISSION COMMENTS

Volume 10, Issue 4

Fourth Quarter, 2012

## Selective Measures

*How our tests are designed to find the best candidate*

A common misconception about the Civil Service Commission is that we have one test a candidate must pass to earn consideration for all city jobs. The truth is that we create our own exams in-house, tailored to the specific competitive jobs that exist in our workforce, so we actually have around 265 different tests.

The test development process starts with a Job Analysis. The first part of the Job Analysis is usually a job observation, which involves following incumbents around for a period of time, participating in work, and/or discussing job duties with employees. The analyst may also discuss the job with supervisors, read the previous Job Analysis, and/or read other professional materials about the job. Using the job class specification and information gathered during observations, the analyst develops a Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) and distributes copies to the incumbents. The JAQ asks the incumbents to provide ratings on the importance of



job duties and how frequently they are performed, the importance of various abilities to the job, and the importance of job knowledge areas and whether or not specific job knowledge is needed day one on the job.

When the JAQs are returned, the analyst examines the results statistically and determines which aspects of the job are the most vital, which abilities are needed to perform the job, and which knowledge areas are needed the first day on the job. The analyst meets with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), which may include incumbents, supervisors, and/or managers, to verify that the results are accurate and representative of the job class.

The analyst then figures out the best way to test the most important job knowledges and abilities. For many classifications, a written or multiple-choice test is sufficient. Other exams may include an oral board segment, where candidates must present or  
*(continued on page 2)*

### Inside this issue:

Types of City Jobs	2
Fire Promotional Tactical Exams	3
Testing Clinic	3
Meet the Staff	4
Ask Eyestein	4
Police Testing Update	4

**“The difference between try and triumph is a little umph.”**

*-Author Unknown*

## Selective Measures (continued from page 1)

respond to a scenario for a panel of raters. Some exams may require candidates to write a report or respond in writing to a job related scenario. For others, candidates may actually perform a portion of the job, such as reading blueprints, climbing a utility pole, or driving a truck through an obstacle course. Ultimately, each exam is specifically designed to assess the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities that a candidate needs the first day on the job.

Since jobs can change over time, a Job Analysis is conducted every five years for each tested non-uniformed job. The exam is then reviewed and revised accordingly based on the results of the Job Analysis. At the time of review, the analyst also has access to data from the last time the test was administered. This information allows the analyst to look at a test, question by question, and decide if it is still relevant. The analyst can also confer with the department to determine if they are happy with the quality of candidates hired from the eligible list, and based on the feedback provided, tweak the test as needed.

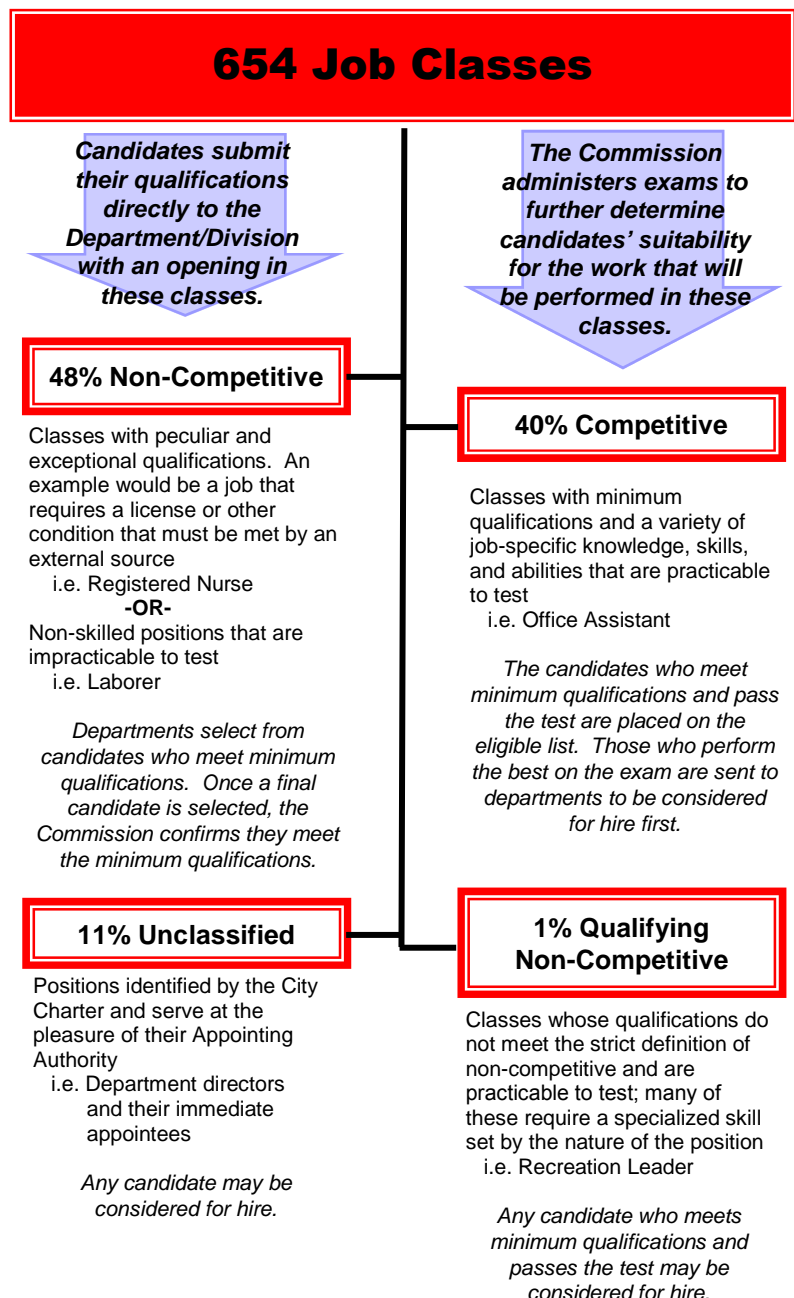
## Types of City Jobs

Civil Service is responsible for managing the Classification Plan—the list of City job classes and how departments may use them. The class plan also provides a structural framework for all personnel actions and the basis for an equitable compensation plan.

In order to ensure that specific positions under each of the job classes in the class plan can be filled in a timely fashion with qualified employees, the City’s Charter has designated four classification types: non-competitive, competitive, qualifying non-competitive, and unclassified.

The chart to the right illustrates how the existing 654 job classes are proportionally distributed between these classification types. To find out which type a specific job falls under:

- go to our website at [www.csc.columbus.gov](http://www.csc.columbus.gov)
- select *Job Class Info*
- find the job class
- click *Job Class Details*,
- scroll down to the *Other Information* section



## Fire Promotional Tactical Exams

An important part of a fire officer's job is being in command of emergency crews and emergency scenes. The promotional testing process for Fire Lieutenant, Captain, Battalion Chief, and Deputy Chief includes a tactical exam phase which tests for the knowledge, skills and abilities related to this important job function. The tactical exams are video based and developed by Commission staff and Columbus Division of Fire personnel. The idea to develop these video-based tactical exams came about when a member of the Commission staff attended an out-of-state conference for applied personnel assessment professionals. Soon after, the Commission implemented tactical exams with the use of contracted videographers. Soon thereafter, newer technology made it possible for

Commission staff to fully develop the exams in-house. In 2004, Commission employees won the Innovations in Assessment award presented by the International Personnel Management Association Assessment Council (IPMAAC), which at the time was a leading organization of applied personnel assessment professionals.



Several software programs are used in the construction of the tactical exams, such as Photoshop, Moviemaker, and Fire Studio. The key program is Fire Studio. By using Fire Studio, smoke, fire, and even victims can be added to any digital photograph. The program allows for many options to customize the smoke and fire for each photograph. The size, speed, color, density, and direction of each piece of smoke and fire can be adjusted to ensure that the final product is as realistic as possible. Once a photo has been customized, the resulting still images, or video clips, can be transferred into Windows Movie Maker. Once in Movie Maker, audio narration and text can be added, as necessary, to create the final exam product.



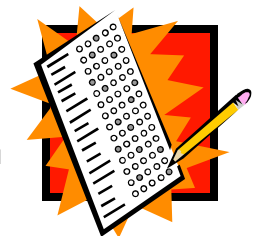
Fire lieutenant and captain candidates respond to the exam in a written format. For the exam, the test takers are seated in a room together and view between six and nine scenarios. After each scenario, test takers respond in writing to questions regarding the scenario. Response times for each scenario normally vary from three to eight minutes depending on the complexity of the scenario. For the Fire Battalion Chief and Deputy Chief exams, each test taker has an individual test. Test takers watch an emergency scene develop, and then respond verbally as if they were actually at the scene and in command of the emergency. As the scenario progresses, live verbal

feedback is provided to the test takers. Individual exams are video recorded and graded at a later time. For the Battalion Chief and Deputy Chief exams, there are normally two scenarios for each exam and the response time is normally 12-15 minutes per scenario.

These video based tactical exams provide a realistic, job related testing experience within the constraints of the testing environment. The Commission staff believes that these tests help to ensure that our leaders in emergency services will be capable and ready to lead during any natural or manmade emergency that occurs in or around the City of Columbus.

## Testing Clinic

The Civil Service Commission administered the first ever Testing Clinic on October 20, 2012, at the Jerry Hammond Center. Fifty-five participants received help and feedback on their on-line profiles, learned about the job analysis process, and took a sample examination. They left with a better understanding of our most common subtests, learned how a test is developed, and (hopefully) reduced their level of test anxiety. Another Testing Clinic is planned for 2013. If you are interested in attending and would like to be notified when it is scheduled, sign up through the job interest tab on our website.



**Main Office and Test Center**

50 West Gay Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-9038  
614-645-8300  
CivilService@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-8379/8334

**Piedmont Test Center**

750 Piedmont Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266  
614-645-0800  
PoliceFireTesting@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-0866

[www.csc.columbus.gov](http://www.csc.columbus.gov)

*Commission Comments brought to you courtesy of:*

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor  
Grady L. Pettigrew, Jr., President  
Delena Edwards, Member  
Jeffrey D. Porter, Member  
C. Amy DeLong, Executive Director

*Articles and information contributed by:*

Brenda Sobieck, Editor  
Cat Emhuff, Assistant Editor  
Deb Frame  
Sheri Goodwin  
Kristi Hagans  
Laura Hausman



## Meet Commission Employee Carol Lagemann

Originally from Tennessee, Carol Lagemann still has a bit of southern flavor in her personality. She loves living in Columbus because she finds it is as friendly and welcoming as the south, with day-to-day pleasant hellos and courtesy from strangers.

As a Personnel Analyst II, Carol works in the Classification Unit of the Commission, primarily focusing on classification revisions, job audits, and compliance reviews. She sends out questionnaires and visits city employees to learn about positions & classifications and to gather real-time information about the City's Class Plan. She also gathers information by conducting job observations, reviewing the organization of our class plan, researching other jurisdictions, and reviewing other professional resources. She finds it to be a nice balance of human contact and desk work.

Her favorite part of her job is learning from our employees how a city the size of Columbus operates through its different positions and classifications. Each classification review provides more insight into the type of jobs that our city needs to function. "Learning the parts that make up the whole and becoming familiar with the work that our city employees do is the best part of my job," she says.

Carol holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Miami of Ohio, as well as a master's degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology from the University of Connecticut. At home, Carol and her husband lead an active family life – they have two little boys under the age of three. She can put a mean spiral on a football and looks forward to throwing with her boys. Carol loves taking walks with her family & dog and sampling the incredible restaurants Columbus has to offer.

Carol still travels on a regular basis to visit family, so her southern accent is revived at least a couple times a year. If you "might could" want to "holler at her" she's "liable" to greet you with a "Hi there" and a friendly smile.

### Police Officer Testing Update

The first three phases of the Entry-Level Police Officer examination are complete.

Grading is currently in progress.

Results letters are expected to be sent out mid-December.

Candidates who pass all three phases will be invited back in mid-January to take phase four, the physical test.

### ??? Ask Eyestein ???



**Dear Eyestein:**

**I brought an application to your "Applications Counter," and they told me I took it to the wrong place. What's that about?**

**Signed, Where DO I Take It?**

Dear Where:

You brought an application for a non-competitive position to the Commission. These jobs do not have a civil service test, so applications go directly to the Department that has the vacancy. The hiring departments are responsible for reviewing the applications for non-tested positions. If you apply through our website, your online application will be sent to the hiring department. Be sure to read the job announcement if you decide to fill out a paper application so you can submit your application to the correct location.