



International
Association
of Fire Chiefs



National
Fire Protection
Association

Fire Officer

Principles and Practice
THIRD EDITION



Chapter 2 Preparing for Promotion (Fire Officer I)

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Discuss the origin of civil service promotional examinations.
- Discuss promotional processes that can be used by fire departments.
- Describe how a promotional examination is prepared.

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Identify the elements of a promotional examination.
- Identify the components of an assessment center.
- List techniques for studying for a promotional examination.

Introduction

- The civil service promotional examination process is used by most fire departments.
 - Variations exist in testing procedures and promotional practices.

The Origin of Promotional Examinations

- Before the Civil War, the patronage or spoils system was used.
- The Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act brought about promotional examinations.
 - The spoils system was replaced by merit selection and promotion.

Sizing Up Promotion Opportunities

- Opportunities have decreased, due to the recent recession.
- Many fire fighters now work years beyond their retirement date.



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Sizing Up Promotion Opportunities

- The eligibility list lasts 2 to 6 years.
 - Rank ordered: Highest-scoring candidate is ranked number 1, second highest-scoring candidate is number 2, etc.
 - Banded: Candidates are placed into groups (“highly qualified,” “qualified,” “not qualified.”)

Postexamination Promotional Considerations

- Promotions meet department and community needs.
 - Candidates must be medically qualified and free of active formal discipline.



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When Fire Officers Are Voted In

- American fire service started with neighbor helping neighbor.
- Today, some states do not require training for volunteer fire officers.
 - Completing a training program will benefit the newly elected officer, which will assist the department in serving its community.

Preparing a Promotional Examination

- Combined effort between fire department and municipality's human resources section.
 - If developed within the agency, a committee establishes the exam content.



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Charting the Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- The KSAs required for a position are defined by two documents:
 - Job description
 - Class specification worksheet

Charting the Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

CLASS TITLE: Fire Lieutenant

CLASS CODE:		
DEPARTMENT:		
Fire Services	ACCOUNTABLE TO:	FLSA STATUS:
	Fire Captain	Non-exempt
CLASS SUMMARY:		
Incumbents are responsible for shift supervision of County firefighters. Duties include: supervising and evaluating staff; overseeing responses to reports of fires; supervising rescue operations; preparing work schedules; writing reports of firefighting and rescue activities; training personnel; coordinating equipment and facility maintenance; presenting fire prevention programs; and, representing the department at special events.		
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:		
The Fire Lieutenant is the second level in a five level firefighter series. The Fire Lieutenant is distinguished from the Firefighter/Apparatus Operator in that it has shift supervisory responsibilities. The Fire Lieutenant is distinguished from the Fire Captain which has full supervisory authority.		

DUTY NO.	TYPICAL CLASS ESSENTIAL DUTIES: (These duties are a representative sample; position assignments may vary.)	FRE-QUENCY
1.	Supervises two or more full-time staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff are trained; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.	Daily 25%
2.	Oversees response to reports of fires which includes: preparing pre-incident surveys; securing the scene; extinguishing the fire; salvaging structures and their contents; and providing emergency medical services to injured parties.	Daily 15%
3.	Supervises rescue operations by overseeing extrication activities and providing emergency medical services to injured parties.	Daily 15%
4.	Prepares daily and weekly work schedules for firefighters.	Daily 10%
5.	Prepares written reports of fire and rescue activities.	Daily 10%
6.	Provides training to shift personnel and students at the County fire academy on firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical topics.	Daily 10%
7.	Coordinates firefighter maintenance of vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, and facilities.	Daily 5%
8.	Presents fire prevention and education programs to businesses, schools, and community groups.	Weekly 5%
9.	Represents the department at special events including parades and open houses.	Occasion-ally 5%
10.	Performs other duties of a similar nature or level.	As Required
11.	Performs work during emergency/disaster situations.	As Required

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

CLASS TITLE: Fire Lieutenant

POSITION SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES MIGHT INCLUDE:
• Does not apply.
Knowledge (position requirements at entry): Knowledge of: • General principles of fire science; • Emergency management techniques; • Basic principles of rescue; • Hazardous materials management techniques; • Emergency medical practices; • Departmental policies and practices; • Local and state fire ordinances.
Skills (position requirements at entry): Skill in: • Performing fire suppression and rescue operations; • Driving a vehicle; • Preparing and making presentations; • Preparing written incident reports; • Using a computer and related software applications; • Supervising and evaluating employees; • Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.
Training and Experience (positions in this class typically require): High School Diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and five years of related firefighting experience, including two years of progressively responsible supervisory experience; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above; Associate's Degree in Fire Science preferred.
Licensing/Certification Requirements (positions in this class typically require): • Class B Driver's License; • Firefighter II Certification; • Must be able to obtain EMT and Fire Instructor Level II certifications within one year and Level I Fire Inspector and ERT Certifications within two years.
Physical Requirements/Working Conditions: Positions in this class typically require: climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching, standing, walking, pushing, pulling, lifting, lincering, grasping, feeling, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motions. Heavy Work: Exerting up to 100 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 50 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 20 pounds of forces constantly to move objects. Incumbents may be subjected to moving mechanical parts, electrical currents, vibrations, fumes, odors, dusts, gases, poor ventilation, chemicals, oils, extreme temperatures, inadequate lighting, work space restrictions, intense noises, and travel.
NOTE: The above job description is intended to represent only the key areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the business needs of the department.
Classification History: Draft prepared by Fox Lawson and Associates LLC (CC). Date: 10/99

Multiple-Choice Written Examination

- An answer is either right or wrong.
- Exam covers facts that can be found within reading list materials.
 - Supervising fire officer exam usually includes many technical questions.
 - Managing fire officer exam usually includes more management and administration questions.

Multiple-Choice Written Examination

- Options for constructing exam:
 - Local exam committee develops test.
 - Private company develops generic test.
 - Hired consultant writes a specific exam.
- The committee developing the exam determines how many questions are needed.

Multiple-Choice Written Examination

- Each question is evaluated for:
 - Validity: Knowledge is required on the job and referenced to known standards.
 - Reliability: Test consistently measures what it is intended to measure.

Assessment Centers

- Series of simulation exercises
- Example: In-basket exercise
 - Timed measurement of ability to organize, prioritize, delegate, and follow up

Assessment Centers

- Suggested method of handling in-baskets:
 - Review
 - Prioritize
 - Identify resources/ options/alternatives
 - Follow up
 - Make notifications



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Emergency Incident Simulations

- Follow one of four formats:
 1. “Data dump” question
 2. Progressing simulation
 3. Multimedia interactive simulation
 4. Realistic scenario simulation



Courtesy of Orland Fire Protection District

Interpersonal Interaction

- Tests ability to perform as supervisor
- Candidate typically deals with a role player who has a problem



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Interpersonal Interaction

- Techniques include:
 - Remain in control.
 - Give the employee a deadline.
 - Get the employee to buy into a plan.
 - Be empathetic but focused.
 - Explain consequences.
 - Finish on a positive note.

Writing or Speaking Exercise

- Candidate may deliver a short oral presentation or write a memo or report.



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Technical Skills Demonstration

- Fire officers expected to be skilled in task- and tactical-level activities.
- May also be required to demonstrate very specific technical skills.

Preparing for a Promotional Examination

- Candidate must master:
 - Content
 - Process
- Preparation requires a personal study plan.



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Building a Personal Study Journal

- A study journal can be used to:
 - Set up a personal study schedule
 - Track progress
 - Make notes

Preparing for Role Playing

- The most effective candidates are the ones who act naturally.
- Candidates might prepare by:
 - Working in a busier or larger fire station
 - Working under a widely respected officer

Summary

- Promotional examinations were a product of the Pendleton Act.
- Completion of a promotional examination creates an eligibility list.
- Each jurisdiction has its own promotional process.

Summary

- A promotional examination is usually a combined effort of the fire department and the municipality's human resources section.
- KSAs are defined through narrative job descriptions and technical class specifications.

Summary

- Components used in a promotional examination are influenced by time, expense, staff, and experience.
- Fire officer candidates may be required to deliver a short presentation or write a memo or report.

Summary

- Technical skills may be evaluated during promotional tests.
- The candidate needs to develop a personal study plan to master the content for a promotional examination.