

# San Diego Fire-Rescue Orientation Manual



## Captain Promotional Examination Process



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# Orientation Manual Overview

*This chapter briefly explains the manual so that you can easily find the information that will be most helpful to you.*

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## Introduction

The goal of this manual is to introduce you to the promotional process that will be used for the positions in your Department. Exposure to this material will give you, the candidate, an idea of what to expect and how to prepare for the promotional process. This manual will assist you in preparing for the written examination and, depending on how well you score, your advancement to the assessment center.

Each of the sections in the manual is briefly described below.

### Written Test

This section of the orientation manual contains information to answer the following questions commonly asked about written examinations.

- What general steps should I take to prepare for the test?
- How should I review the reading material?
- How can I control test anxiety?
- What strategies should I use when actually taking the test?
- What is the test development process?
- What kinds of questions will be on the test?

### Assessment Center

In this chapter, you will find answers to the following questions:

- What is an assessment center?
- Why are assessment centers used?
- How are assessment center exercises developed?
- What are the typical assessment center exercises?
- How is the assessment center process conducted?
- How should I prepare for an assessment center?
- How will the assessment center be scored?
- What feedback will I receive on my performance?
- How will I be evaluated during the assessment center?

### Appendices

In the appendices, you will find examples of typical written test items and assessment center exercises. These example items and exercises will give you an idea of what to expect in this promotional process.



# Written Test

*This section of the manual will provide suggestions for general test preparation, a discussion on test anxiety, different strategies to consider during test taking, and an overview of the types of multiple-choice questions that may be on the written test.*

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## General Steps in Preparing for the Test

Start your preparation for the test early. Finding time to study while working full-time will be difficult, so you need to get organized. Preparing a calendar, finding a good study environment, forming a study group, reading the text material, and taking care of yourself are all important considerations when preparing for the written exam.

### ***Additional Study Materials***

- **The Library.** The library has books that cover topics such as:
  - Reading and note-taking
  - Passing exams
  - Time management
  - Stress and relaxation
- **The Internet.** Many websites include information on preparing and studying for an exam and tips on taking the exam. You can also search for books and training materials related to taking tests.

### ***Prepare a Calendar***

Break down the number of pages on the reading list into specific pages or chapters you plan to study each week. In this way, the amount of reading will not seem so enormous, giving you a small goal each week to accomplish. ***Be sure to include time to review and outline the chapters.***

### ***Study Environment***

It is crucial to study in a room in your home or the library where you will not be interrupted or distracted by other people. By isolating yourself, you will not be distracted by the phone or household chores. It is incredible how important cleaning the basement or mowing the lawn can become when your alternative is studying!

### ***Form a Study Group***

Form a study group that meets once a week to:

- Compare outlines.
- Answer review questions.
- Quiz one another.
- Clarify difficult areas.
- Discuss the important issues in the chapters that were assigned for the week.



When you know that other people are relying on your input in the group, you will be less likely to skip or procrastinate your own study sessions, and you will make sure you are prepared when the group meets. Each person in the group should contribute information and ideas equally. Meeting with other people who are going through the same process will help lend some support and motivate you to study.

### ***Develop Excellent Reading Skills***

One of the important test preparations you can do is to assess and improve your reading skills. If you are not accustomed to reading, you will be at a disadvantage when you have to read for 2 –3 hours at one time during the test. In addition, effective reading skills are a requirement for studying the reading sources. Get into a habit of reading for at least 30 minutes every day. You can read newspapers, magazines, books, or any material that interests you.

### ***Practice Taking Tests***

Taking a test is a skill. Some studies have found that many people do not perform well on tests because the test-taking experience is unnatural, unfamiliar, or intimidating. You should practice taking tests under “test-like” conditions. You can use the items in a study guide or that you and your peers have developed. The test can be taken in any environment that has library-type qualities.

### ***Take Care of Yourself***

Allow yourself to have some fun. Do not study in all your spare time. When you give yourself a break, you will be much fresher when you try studying again. Give yourself at least one day off before the examination to avoid being exhausted or stressed on the exam day. Most importantly, get a good night’s sleep the night before the exam, and arrive early so you are not feeling rushed and anxious before the exam begins.

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## **How to Review the Reading Material**

Because several reading sources have been assigned to the reading list, it would be unlikely that you will have the opportunity to read the material more than once. Although you should be familiar with the material on the reading list from your studies and use of this material, a few helpful hints will help you study the material more effectively for the examination.

### ***Obtain an Overview of the Material***

- 1) Look at each reading source to see how it is organized into sections and how many pages of reading are required for each manual. Be sure to note on the reading lists if some sources have chapters or sections excluded from the reading requirements.
- 2) Before you begin reading, skim the chapter or section for objectives, headings, subheadings, and review questions to get an idea of the chapter’s content.



## ***Taking Notes from a Reading Source***

First, read the entire chapter or section, then go back and take notes. Decide what the main and sub-ideas of the section are and then paraphrase the ideas and important points. Putting the general information into your own words will help you process and remember it better than copying it directly from the textbook. However, some technical information needs to be very precise. You may want to create tables or charts for definitions, exact procedures, or formulas that require you to remember specific information.

## ***Hints for studying the material***

- 1) Note any diagrams, tables, or graphs in the chapter. If information is in the reading source more than once, it will likely be an important topic.
- 2) Note words that are in bold type, italics, or have definitions associated with them. The authors and editors of the reading source highlighted these words because they thought they were important.
- 3) Write an outline for each reading source to organize the important ideas. Instead of completely re-reading the material, you can use the outlines to review the important points of each reading source before the test.
- 4) Do not re-read all of the material a second time before the test. It is a waste of time if you create high-quality summaries or outlines of each chapter. Concentrate only on your outline and the headings, subheadings, important words, definitions, and summaries in each reading source. Do not get overwhelmed by the amount of material you need to read. Take one section at a time.

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## **How to Control Test Anxiety**

Most people are naturally anxious to some degree about taking a test. A moderate amount of anxiety can enhance your test performance by enhancing your alertness. Too much anxiety can disturb your concentration and can be detrimental to your performance. The stress that results from anxiety over a situation occurs in three levels of increasing severity.

The first level of anxiety is a cognitive or thinking reaction to stress. Your thoughts or uneasiness about an event can result in sleepless nights, negative thoughts about performance, difficulty concentrating, and the expectation of failure.

The second level of anxiety is a behavioral reaction to stress, which is most frequently associated with the “fight or flight” response, in which the person is torn between choosing to stay and fight harder (i.e., studying harder for the test) or running away from the problem (i.e., avoid studying or working harder).

The third and most severe level of anxiety is a physiological reaction to stress. This level of test anxiety involves physiological changes such as increased heartbeat, excess perspiration, clammy palms, and high tension.

These thoughts, behaviors, and physiological changes resulting from high levels of test anxiety can hurt test preparation and performance. If you are a person who becomes paralyzed at the thought of taking a test, you will need to take a few steps to get your anxiety under control.

- **First, think positive.** Research has shown that positive thoughts and beliefs can have a positive effect. Even if it does not help your performance, it cannot hurt, and you will feel better.





- **Second, start controlling your physical nervousness by learning to relax.** If you feel nervous, sit back comfortably in your chair, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Imagine yourself doing well on the exam. Remember, a few minutes spent relaxing so that you can answer the questions intelligently is not a waste of time. This is especially true when you recognize that spending 30 minutes aimlessly reading and guessing the answers to questions could be a disaster.
- **Third, avoid talking to other people who are anxious before the exam begins.** It is easy to allow yourself to become “worked up” on your own. You will likely become anxious if the people you talk to are. You do not need help from anyone else!
- **Fourth, do not be hard on yourself.** If you think it will be a difficult exam, you are probably not alone in that thought. You are not expected to know the answer to every question on the test. Everyone makes mistakes, so think positive and try to do your best.

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## Strategies for Taking the Test

The type of written test you will be taking is multiple-choice. The multiple-choice form of test items consists of the item stem (an introductory question or incomplete statement) and several alternative responses. The responses are suggested answers to the questions or completions of a statement.

On this type of test, you will be asked to identify a single answer from several alternatives. There will be 100 multiple-choice questions on the test. The steps you should follow to do well on this type of test are as follows:

### General Strategy

- **Arrive on time and ready to begin the exam.**
- **Do not hesitate to ask the administrator if you are unsure of what to do.**
- **Look the test over before responding to any items** to familiarize yourself with the entire test. Note how many pages there are on the test. If you accidentally skip an entire page of items, your chances of promotion will be significantly reduced.
- **The time limits for this test are very liberal.** Keep track of the time and remember to allow some time at the end to go back and check your answers and ensure you have answered all the questions. Use all of your time. You will not get extra credit for leaving early; you may remember something when you relax after you think you have finished the exam.
- **Skip the difficult items and return to them after you have answered all others.** When you skip an item, skip to the corresponding number on the answer sheet. It is very easy to get off by one, so check yourself often.
- **For items you cannot answer immediately, read each option carefully.** Use a strategy such as the process of elimination.
- **If you do not know the answer to the item, make your best guess.** You will not be penalized for guessing, so answering every item is in your best interest.



### Multiple Choice Items

- **Read the stem of the item all the way through.** Then, read all the alternatives on the item, even if you think one of the first options is correct. You may remember reading one of the answer options in the reading source. However, that does not make the first option correct.
- **If you are uncertain of the correct answer,** cross out the options you know are wrong and choose from those options left.
- **Watch out for all negative words.** Circle words such as “not,” “false,” or “except” within the item stem and the options. A negative word can easily trip you up because your answer will be completely different to an item phrased in the positive than to the same item in the negative.
- **Circle 100 percent words** such as “never,” “no,” “none,” “best,” “worst,” “first,” “always,” “all,” and “every.” Some items may appear to have more than one correct answer. However, there is one best option.
- **There are no trick items.** If an item appears confusing, re-read it to ensure you understand what the item is asking.

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## Exam Development Process

IOS begins the test development process by meeting with incumbents in the current position. After the test items are written, multiple SMEs will review them to ensure that they are job-relevant, not impossibly difficult, and required for effective performance on the job. Based on the SME’s suggestions, items that are not job-relevant, too difficult, or confusing will be removed or replaced with new items.

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## The Test

The test consists of 100 multiple-choice items. Multiple-choice items consist of a stem and answer options. All test items will be drawn from the reading sources in the Official Reading List. There is only one correct answer for each of the items.

### **The types of items on the test may include items that:**

- Ask you to recall regulations, procedures, or technical information from Departmental policies or directives and information presented in other outside reading sources.
- Test your ability to apply the concepts presented in the reading materials. For example, you may be given a situation and asked how to handle it.
- Ask for definitions of concepts or information you need to know on the job.
- Some items may appear to have more than one correct answer. However, there is one best option. If you believe that there is more than one right answer, choose the option that you believe is the most correct.



**The stem can be of two types:**

- Background information followed by a direct question. One of the options will answer the question.
- Fill in the blanks. A partial statement with one or more missing words. One of the options will complete the statement.

**The items:**

- Some items will ask you for procedures or technical information related to the position.
- Some items will test your ability to apply the concepts you have learned.
- Other items will ask you for definitions of concepts or information you need to know on the job.



# The Assessment Center Process

*This section of the manual will provide you with an opportunity to learn how to do your very best in the assessment center exercises. You will learn how an assessment center promotional process is typically run and what the results are for both a candidate and the Department. You will also learn how to prepare for the assessment center exercises. Examples of exercises will be provided in another section of this manual to prepare you for what to expect.*

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## What is an Assessment Center?

An assessment center is an integrated system of simulations designed to elicit behavior similar to that required for success in a target job. It is a series of activities similar to those performed in a given job. Each activity mirrors a different aspect of the job. Performance in these activities is observed by assessors trained to be fair and objective. The panel of objective assessors will be selected based on their expertise and knowledge regarding the target job. The assessors will observe you perform in a series of exercises in order to evaluate several job performance dimensions deemed important to performing successfully on the job. Assessors compare candidates' performance to predetermined performance guidelines to ascertain who will perform effectively in the job.

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## Why Use an Assessment Center?

It is always difficult to measure human behavior. Any type of testing process is imperfect. However, Assessment Centers are known to be a valid predictor of success on the job, and the results are reliable. Your evaluation will not be based on how you look or who you know. It will be based on what you know and what you can do.

For practical reasons, your Department cannot promote everyone who is eligible for promotion and then see how they perform before making a final selection. The next best approach is to give you a chance to try activities that closely resemble the target job. In this way, an Assessment Center Process is like a try-out for a sports team. For example, a basketball coach who wants the best performers has potential players try out for the team. He does not assume that all tall individuals will make good players. The coach is trying to predict performance under actual game conditions by seeing how people do in a try-out situation. Similarly, the Department is predicting future job performance by seeing how well you perform in a situation that closely parallels activities on the job. These activities are called simulations or exercises and are the major ingredients of the Assessment Center Process. It is a real opportunity to demonstrate your abilities.

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## How are the Exercises Developed?

The job analysis was reviewed to determine what knowledge, skills, and abilities a candidate must possess to perform successfully in the position. Job analysis is a process of critically examining job components in order to provide a functional description of a job. Federal regulations and other guidelines mandate the use of a job analysis to determine the "job relatedness" of each element in the selection system.



The results of the type of job analysis employed for this position is a list of knowledge and skills that are related to job success or lack of job success. These skills and knowledge are determined by surveying direct supervisors of the target jobs or incumbents who are permanent in the position. Since it would be virtually impossible to test each knowledge and skill individually, similar knowledge and skills are grouped into categories called performance dimensions.

Different exercises may focus on different dimensions, and one dimension may be tested in more than one exercise. The decisions as to which dimensions to include and their relative importance directly result from the information gained from the job analysis and discussions with Subject Matter Experts within the Department.

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## **How to Prepare for the Assessment Center Process**

### ***Self Assessment***

Have you made a list of your strengths and weaknesses? Do you know what your biggest challenges will be in the job? This is about being honest about your readiness for the job (not just the test.) A sample self-assessment is included in the appendix of this manual.

### ***Plan & Prioritize***

Many of the most successful candidates began preparing weeks, months, and even a year or more before the assessment center. Whatever time you have to prepare, plan it out and ensure that you practice for every type of exercise.

### ***Practice***

Practice performing the exercises that will be included in the assessment center. The more you practice, the better you become. Do it with a group or by yourself. Give each other constructive feedback or ask for help from a mentor. Record yourself and observe your presentation skills.

### ***Prepare Mentally and Stay Positive!***

You are not just preparing for a test – your practice and preparation will help you be a better job performer in your current position – and in the new position after you are promoted. In the worst-case scenario, if you are not promoted in this process, you will be better prepared for your current and future career.

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## **How to Practice for an Assessment Center**

### ***Understand the Needs of the Organization***

Use that information wherever and whenever you can. In developing the assessment center exercises, we integrate the needs and concerns of the organization into the exercises. Candidates who are aware of them can generally address them better and demonstrate their abilities in these areas.

### ***Think about the roles and responsibilities - Put yourself in the position***

Pretend that you already received the promotion. Every day, think about how you would handle the various situations that come up if it was your job to handle them. Be a leader, even if you don't have the official rank. Don't just practice for the test – practice for the job.



## Anticipate

Write scenarios and practice with them. You can practice every kind of scenario which might be integrated into the exercises. Example exercises are included in the appendix of this manual for you to review.

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## What Performance Dimensions are Assessed?

*Each exercise in the assessment center process is designed to assess some combination of the following performance dimensions:*

| <b>Dimension Label</b>            | <b>Dimension Definition</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Administrative Management</b>  | Identifying, arranging, and organizing necessary resources (e.g., material, personnel, and financial) to accomplish objectives and tasks in an effective and efficient manner. Planning, directing, and controlling projects and programs to achieve set objectives. Managing one's time to accomplish items of highest priority while leaving sufficient time to address other less critical items.  |
| <b>Community Relations</b>        | Identifying the needs, concerns, and risks of communities and their members. Making strategic, concerted efforts to deliver services and share information that addresses those needs, concerns, and risks. Understanding the way the organization needs to be presented to the community at large and making necessary efforts to work with the public while protecting the integrity of the organization. Demonstrating cultural sensitivity for various demographic and societal groups. |
| <b>Critical Thinking</b>          | Using careful analysis and evaluation to recognize when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. The ability to identify a solution or corrective action and use available information and resources to solve problems. Identifying several courses of action, the benefits and consequences of such courses of action, and making decisions using all available information.   |
| <b>Incident Operations</b>        | Establishing the incident objectives and goals for emergency incidents. Using the appropriate resources, strategies, skills, and procedures to achieve tactical goals at emergency incidents. Applying acquired knowledge of organizational guidelines, standards, and procedures. Maintaining accountability, crew integrity, and responsibility over personnel and the incident. Ensuring responder safety throughout the incident.   |
| <b>Interpersonal Skills</b>       | Interacting with others in a pleasant and comfortable manner to build trust and rapport. Working with individuals to identify problems, identify solutions, and negotiate mutually acceptable outcomes. Working with opposing sides to make good faith efforts to pursue solutions and honor agreements. Effectively working with others to accomplish mutual goals. The ability to rely on others to assist with a task, working interdependently to accomplish the goal.                  |
| <b>Leadership</b>                 | Inspiring, guiding, and improving the performance of groups of employees by identifying a common goal or vision, encouraging employees to expand their skill set, and maintaining a positive and productive work environment. Serving as a role model for others.   |
| <b>Management and Supervision</b> | Day-to-day monitoring of personnel to ensure the effective completion of assigned tasks and position-specific responsibilities including the oversight and improvement of employees to achieve the highest level of employee performance.   |
| <b>Oral Communication</b>         | Communicating orally to convey information effectively. Ability to speak in a clear, concise, understandable, and appropriate manner. Ability to deliver a message in such a way that others clearly understand the meaning of an intended message. Using language and non-verbals effectively to engage a group and clearly communicate a message in a formal or semi-formal presentation setting.   |
| <b>Written Communication</b>      | Communicating in writing to convey information effectively and accurately. Using written language (word choice, punctuation, grammar, and syntax) to communicate clear thoughts.  |



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## Overview of Typical Assessment Center Exercises

*The purpose of this section is to introduce the types of exercises that are typically involved in an Assessment Center process. Please note that each type of exercise has been presented, but typically, an Assessment Center is comprised of 3 to 4 of these exercises. Specific information on how to prepare for each type of exercise is presented later in the Orientation Manual.*

### ***In-Basket / Daily Activities***

This exercise is common for many management ranks. It provides useful insights into a candidate's management abilities and job knowledge. This exercise will contain various items and situations that could occur during a typical shift or are made known to you during a shift. The items may be memos, e-mails, voice mail, phone calls, radio communications, in-person conversations, or events out in the field. Your task is to handle and respond to these items or situations effectively. During the preparation time, you will read all the items, and then decide how to prioritize and respond to them. You will then present your results and decisions to a panel of assessors to discuss your prioritizing strategy and your rationales for the actions that you would take.

### ***Static Emergency Command Scenario***

This exercise requires you to present your incident command skills. You will be allowed to review preliminary information about an emergency scenario, much as you would receive en route to an emergency scene. Once in the assessment room, you will view a visual aid, which shows you the scene upon arrival, and you will be asked questions about how you would manage the incident. As a rule, it is your responsibility to size up the situation, command the incident, and manage your staff. You may or may not be required to transfer command.

### ***Dynamic Emergency Command Scenario***

This exercise requires you to present your incident command skills. You will be allowed to review preliminary information about an emergency scenario, much as you would receive en route to an emergency scene. Once in the assessment room, you will view a computer-generated simulation of a working fire or other emergency incident. You will communicate verbally with the responding units as if you are actually the Incident Commander on the scene, and the units will respond back to you. The simulation will change based on the actions you do or do not take.

### ***Oral Presentation***

In this exercise, candidates are asked to prepare and present an Oral Presentation to the assessors. Like all assessment center exercises, the topic is adjusted to the targeted rank. For example, an Oral Presentation for a candidate who would be expected to conduct training might include the presentation of an actual class. Various Oral Presentation topics and formats may be used. Some additional examples include presenting facts before a legal board of inquiry, followed by questioning from an aggressive defense attorney, making a prepared statement at a press conference, presenting a budget request, speaking at a community meeting, conducting a meeting with your subordinates, etc.



### **Role-Play**

The Role-Play exercise allows the assessors to evaluate candidates in realistic interactions with one or more individuals who will be playing the role of someone who might interact with the target position. The situation for the Role-Play might be related to any aspect of the job for the rank.

### **Structured Interview**

During this exercise, you will be asked to respond to several questions. The topics of the questions may cover a wide range of knowledge. For instance, one question may ask you to describe your background and how it has prepared you for the position. Another question might ask how you would react in a difficult situation. You may or may not be given the questions to review before the actual interview.

### **Written Exercise**

The Written Exercise may be on any relevant topic for the rank in your Department. Candidates are asked to write or edit a paper, memo, or other correspondence on a related topic. You can write on important topics in your Department and have others evaluate it for both writing ability and content. The writing for this exercise will typically utilize a computer or laptop.

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## **Preparing for Specific Assessment Center Exercises**

### **In-Basket**

- Your strategy for this exercise should be to make sure that you go through all of the items in the In-Basket before deciding how to handle them. Remember that some important items may be included later in the list of items.
- While going through the items, consider the following factors:
  - Priority or importance. An example might be to place the items into three categories corresponding to high, medium, and low priorities.
  - Speed of response. You should discuss which items should be handled immediately, those which will require more information or thought, and those which should not be handled by you at all.
  - Interrelationships. Some items in an In-Basket will stand alone. Others, however, are related in some way to other items in the In-Basket. In such cases, you will want to discuss how the items relate to one another.
- You should make notes of the rationale for your decisions! You will have the opportunity to explain to the evaluators why you prioritized the way you did and why you chose the actions you took. Therefore, you will want to jot down the reasons for your decisions so that you can refer to your notes throughout your presentation.
- Everyone has a different style of prioritizing and managing the items. The assessors will be trained to understand that different styles of handling the items should be expected. What is most important is to explain why you chose a particular action or priority over another.





- You should take a “big picture” approach to handling the items. For instance, you may notice a larger common thread running through several of the items, such as suggested training needs or a need to address employee morale.
- Be certain that you think through the causes and effects of your decisions and actions. For example, the items in the In-Basket may force you to decide upon a reassignment of an individual. Reassignments, of course, tend to disrupt an organization and impact morale and productivity. You might inform the assessors that you would anticipate such consequences and prepare yourself and the Department accordingly.
- There is a tendency among many assessment center participants, especially those who have never been through one, to defer decisions because they do not have enough information. There may be some situations where a definitive decision cannot be made due to insufficient information. However, we recommend you consider the situation and determine what could happen. You should present “if/then” situations to the assessors. In other words, “if such and such were the case, I would...” “However, if such and such happened, then I would...” The assessors will look for you to think through each situation rather than defer situations.
- State your assumptions. Remember that the assessors are not mind readers. If you make an assumption that affects how you handle certain items in your In-Basket, be certain to tell the assessors what those assumptions are.

## **Role Play**

- Expect anything! In your interactions with the role players, you may discover information that requires you to adjust or adapt your approach to the situation.
- You should interact with the role players and handle the issues involved in the Role Play based on the roles and responsibilities of the position.
- Make sure to explain why you approached the interactions in the Role Play the way that you did. If explaining your approach to the characters in the Role Play scenario would be appropriate, then do so. You will often also be given the opportunity to explain your approach and decisions during a question-and-answer section after your interactions with the role players. Be prepared to discuss issues such as the potential consequences of your actions.

## **Emergency Command Scenario**

- This assessment center exercise will test your knowledge and skills in a variety of areas, including technical job knowledge, tactical skills, and effectiveness under stress.
- One of the most common mistakes candidates make is not using their time wisely. Time can go by very quickly in a fast-paced Emergency Command Scenario Exercise. Pace yourself and slow down enough that you can present your ideas in a clear, precise, and understandable manner.
- To prepare, you might consider some emergency scenarios that have occurred in your Department in the past. Think through the steps and strategies that were effective and those that were not.
- Know your Department policies and procedures. When they are relevant and appropriate, mention them in your presentation to the assessors. The assessors are trained to look for your knowledge and application of policies and procedures.



- Review the information for each scenario provided to you in the preparation room. Review any pertinent details such as time of day, weather conditions, and scenario location. Consider the impact this information will have on your strategy for handling the emergency.

## **Oral Presentation**

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Make a mental checklist of the key issues facing your Department today. Knowing your Department's current events and issues will allow you to make a thorough, relevant presentation consistent with Department goals, challenges, and initiatives.
- Consider the types of presentations individuals in the target position might be expected to make. This could include presentations to members of the public, the media, subordinates, or supervisors.
- Find a willing family member or friend who will listen to you speak and give you feedback. This is a great way to practice speaking and often is a good way to find out what you do well and what you need to improve. You should also consider recording yourself and watching the recording. You will learn a great deal from watching your own performance.
- Several good books and other resources are available to enhance your presentation skills. Go to your local library or bookstore to find one of these books and brush up on your presentation skills!

## **Structured Interview**

- You may be asked about anything relevant to the position during this exercise. The questions' topics will be important to your Department and the position you are applying for.
- You will likely be asked to talk about yourself during this exercise. You will often have the opportunity to explain why you are an excellent candidate for the position.
  - Take some time to sit down and think about your education, work experience, extracurricular activities, special projects, etc., and how they have helped you prepare for the position.
  - Be specific. Avoid speaking in generalizations. For example, do not say, "I am a good supervisor," unless you are prepared to back it up.
- Questions are often situational questions that ask you what you would do in a particular situation.
- To prepare, think of issues that are important to your Department. Also, think of the various job responsibilities. Think of situations that would address those issues. Decide how you would act in those situations.
- You may or may not be given the questions prior to meeting with the assessors.
- Think about if/then scenarios. Consider how the Department is affected by the issue. Consider how your actions in the situation would affect the Department, the public, your co-workers, and anyone else. In other words, move away from your own personal stake in the issue and look at the big picture.



## Written Exercise

- Simply pick a topic, give yourself a time limit to write on it, and have a colleague critique it.
- Outline your paper. Most people are not good enough at writing to create an outline in their heads. We encourage you to write a broad outline to structure your paper. On the other hand, do not be so detailed with your outline that you run out of time to write your actual exercise. Recognize that the assessors will be assessing your finished product.
- Stick to the topic at hand. Do not ramble! Review your work. Use some of your exercise time to review and edit your written response.
- Consider your audience. A formal report to your Chief differs from a disgruntled citizen's letter. Consider to whom you are writing and the appropriate language and tone to take with that individual.
- In terms of preparing for the subject of the Written Exercise, be prepared to discuss the current issues within the Department.

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## Scoring

In the assessment center process, each candidate is evaluated on a variety of job performance dimensions utilizing 100-point, behaviorally-anchored rating scales. For a complete list of the performance dimensions, refer to the list above. The ratings are statistically combined to produce a combined total score across exercises and scores reflecting your performance in each exercise. The combined total scores determine how well you scored on the Assessment Center. The results are then utilized for selection according to the policy set forth by the rules of the Department.

For each exercise, the assessors' scores are averaged to obtain your exercise score. Then, the total exercise scores are combined to obtain your assessment center score.

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## Conducting the Assessment Center Process

The sample schedule shown below will give you some idea of what a typical schedule would be like for the process. When you arrive, you will receive your individual schedule. All the candidates will have the same amount of time for preparation and presentation. You should be prepared to be on-site for as long as 5 hours.

You may bring water and snacks. You may not have digital or electronic equipment (other than a traditional wristwatch, stopwatch, or digital timer), including phones and smartwatches. You may not bring any job-related material.



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## Sample Schedule

Your schedule will show when you should prepare for the exercises and when you will present each exercise. Each exercise has strict time limits. For each exercise, wait outside the room until a proctor or assessor calls you into the room.

The time allotted for preparation and each exercise in your process may vary from those shown on this example schedule.

|                                   |                 |   |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>REPORT TIME</b>                | <b>7:00 AM</b>  |   |                 |
| <b>GENERAL PREPARATION</b>        | <b>7:10 AM</b>  | - | <b>8:10 AM</b>  |
| <b>EMERGENCY COMMAND</b>          | <b>8:15 AM</b>  | - | <b>8:35 AM</b>  |
| <b>10 Minute Preparation Time</b> | <b>8:40 AM</b>  | - | <b>8:50 AM</b>  |
| <b>SUPERVISORY ASSESSMENT</b>     | <b>8:55 AM</b>  | - | <b>9:15 AM</b>  |
| <b>10 Minute Preparation Time</b> | <b>9:20 AM</b>  | - | <b>9:30 AM</b>  |
| <b>STRUCTURED INTERVIEW</b>       | <b>9:35 AM</b>  | - | <b>9:55 AM</b>  |
| <b>10 Minute Preparation Time</b> | <b>10:00 AM</b> | - | <b>10:10 AM</b> |
| <b>WRITTEN EXERCISE</b>           | <b>10:15 AM</b> | - | <b>11:00 AM</b> |

Get a good night's rest the day before the assessment center process. It is also very important to not let poor performance on one exercise destroy your overall performance. Each exercise is unique, and your overall performance will reflect your combined performance in all exercises.

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## Succeeding in the Assessment Center

### ***Follow all Instructions***

Everything in this orientation manual is to help you prepare. However, we cannot tell you exactly what your exercises will look like. You must read carefully and follow all the instructions at the assessment center.

### ***State your Assumptions***

On almost every exercise, the candidate will have to make certain assumptions. It is best to inform the assessors of such assumptions.

### ***When Possible, Take an Overall or "Big Picture" View of the Situation***

Look for themes or critical issues in the exercises. Do not forget to discuss documentation, notifications, and follow-up actions.



### ***Present the Breadth of Your Knowledge and Appropriate Details***

Let the assessors know the scope of what you know about a topic, then go into detail as time allows. Present as many details as necessary to fully explain the reasons for your actions and decisions. However, do not present everything you know about one topic and run out of time to explain other topics.

### ***Pay Close Attention to Time Limits***

You are responsible for managing your own time during the exercises. A digital watch with a stopwatch feature works well for this. Any watch will work (although you will not be allowed to use a “smart phone” or “smart watch”) as long as you understand when the exercise will finish. Then, periodically check to see how much time you have left. You can speed up or slow down depending on the time left.

### ***Materials and Supplies***

You are not allowed to bring any written materials or documents with you to the assessment center. All preparation will be done in the preparation room. We will provide paper, pens, and all other needed materials. You may take your preparation materials from the preparation room to the exercise room. After each exercise, you will leave all notes and exercise materials with the assessors. You may not remove any materials or documents from the assessment center premises.



# APPENDIX A:

# Sample Assessment Center Exercises

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## Example In-Basket Exercise

For this exercise, imagine that you are a **Captain** with your Department. You were recently promoted and assigned to **Station 31** (about two weeks ago), which is a double company station with a ladder truck and engine. You are the **Company Officer** on Truck 31.

The items and situations that accompany these instructions occur during this shift or are made known to you during this shift. The items may be memos, email, voice mails, phone calls, radio communications, emergency situations, in-person conversations, etc. Your task is to effectively handle and respond to these items or situations. **You must be specific in stating what actions you will take, when you will take these actions, and what results you anticipate.**

You may use any of the materials located in the exercise preparation room to document what actions you will take on each of the items in the exercise, and in what order you will address the items. If an action requires that you write a memo, draft a letter, complete a form, make a phone call, or make any other similar response, describe what you would put in that response. The assessors will **not** read your notes; however, you will need good notes in order to make a thorough presentation.

The following is provided for your assistance with the exercise:

- Today's duty roster.
- A blank calendar that you may use if you want.
- Items A – D are the individual memos, emails, calls, messages, and other situations to which you must respond.

**NOTE: ONLY A FEW MEMOS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE EXERCISE. A TYPICAL IN-BASKET EXERCISE WOULD HAVE APPROXIMATELY 7-15 ITEMS.**

Each item has a letter and short name in the upper right hand corner. **WRITE THE LETTER AND SHORT NAME** of each item in your notes, so that you can refer to it when discussing your actions. When you discuss each item, **REFER TO IT BY LETTER AND SHORT NAME** only – this will save you time. Do not tell the assessors what is in each item. The assessors will know the contents and topics very well, and they will refer to each item **BY LETTER**.

**Begin your presentation by briefly explaining the approach you used to prioritize the items.** In other words, you should tell the assessors why you chose to address some items before others and which items you believe are the most important or most critical to handle immediately, and which items you can delegate or handle later.



You will have up to **15 minutes** to present to the assessors. During your presentation, you will be expected to explain to the assessors:

- **How and why you prioritized the items the way you did.**
- **The specific actions you will take for each of the items.**

For the purposes of this exercise, the localities associated with the incidents are either fictional or were randomly chosen and you should **not** make any assumptions about these localities based on your actual knowledge of the stations, localities, streets, or addresses. Instead, you should only utilize the information provided in this exercise. As a result, no candidate will have any advantage or disadvantage based on his or her knowledge of any localities. However, you can and should rely on your experiences in your Department in understanding and handling the issues and concerns raised or presented in this exercise.

Be very specific and detailed when explaining what actions you will take. For example, if you decide to have a meeting with one of your employees, you should discuss what you will talk about, what you wish to accomplish, and how you will conduct that meeting.

You will have up to **15 minutes** to make your presentation to the assessors. Keep in mind you should discuss **ALL** of the items in these **15 minutes**. After your presentation, the assessors will ask you **three (3) questions**. You will have a total of **five (5) minutes** to answer these **three (3) questions**.

Remember that this exercise is specifically designed to assess your time management and prioritization skills. Some of the items on this exercise include scenarios in which you would be required to respond immediately if it were a real life situation and you would have little to no time to prepare to respond to these situations in the real world. Others may require more of your time to prepare. Thus, make sure to read the entire exercise and determine which items will require more of your preparation time. For this exercise, it is critical to manage your preparation time wisely and to not spend too much time preparing for any one item.

**NOTE: ONLY A FEW MEMOS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE EXERCISE. A COMPLETE IN-BASKET EXERCISE WOULD HAVE APPROXIMATELY 12-20 ITEMS.**



**ITEM A - BACK**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Captain Candidate  
FROM: Jones  
DATE: March 1, 20XX  
SUBJECT: Injury

I just thought you should know that on a call we had a few days ago, I think Al strained his back. He probably did not say anything because he does not want anyone to think he might be out of shape. I think it happened when he lifted the stretcher of that very large man that had the heart attack last week. He says that he is all right, but I can see that he is in a lot of pain.





**ITEM B -**

**LETTER**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Captain Candidate  
FROM: Battalion Chief Everett  
DATE: March 3, 2020  
SUBJECT: Reserve Firefighter

The Chief forwarded the attached letter to me yesterday. Bolin is on your crew. Please check into this and get back to me.

February 27, 2020

Fire Chief Lansing  
Fire Department  
2100 E. 58th Street  
Fictitious, CA 48901

Dear Chief Lansing:

I am writing to let you know that I have been having a problem working with one of your firefighters. I have been called in to work with the company at Station #1 on several occasions, and every time I show up to do my job as a reserve, I get a lot of grief from Firefighter Bolin. He is always saying that I am in the way and that I do not know what I am doing. Yesterday, he even told me to just get away from him and let him do his job.

I have trained very hard to be a reserve and I intend on joining your department someday. I do not think I deserve to be treated this way when I go out on a call. It does not look good in front of the other firefighters and the citizens are probably wondering what is going on. I would appreciate it if you would talk to Bolin, so I do not have to put up with this the next time I am called out to assist the department at an emergency scene.

Sincerely,

George Henry  
Reserve Firefighter



**ITEM C – OPS CHIEF**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: All Captains  
FROM: Chief Lansing  
DATE: March 1, 2020  
SUBJECT: "Operations Chief" position

As you know, the Department has been working with a consultant to develop a 10-year strategic plan, which is near completion. We have recently had discussions regarding the addition of an "Operations Chief" position. If this position were created, the shift commanders would report directly to this individual, instead of myself as has been done in the past. I would appreciate your thoughts on the addition of this position to the department. I would like your input by March 8 so that I can review them prior to meeting with the consultant at the end of the month.



## ITEM D - COMMENTS

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Captain Candidate  
FROM: EMS/Hazmat Coordinator  
DATE: March 1, 2020  
SUBJECT: Employee Conduct

I got a call yesterday from a supervisor at Minos Ambulance Service. He called to tell me that an ambulance had been sent out from their service to assist your company at an accident scene on two separate occasions in the last month. On both occasions, he received complaints from one of his female drivers that a Firefighter Bolin had made rude, sexist comments to her at the accident scene. He was really upset about this. I do not have to tell you how the Chief would feel about this. The Department does not tolerate this kind of behavior. Since Bolin is in your company, I want you to investigate these incidents, and report back to me as soon as possible with the results.



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## Example Emergency Command Exercise

You will be participating in an emergency scenario exercise that contains a computer-generated simulation of a live fire on a screen. For the incident, you will assume the role of a Captain. The organizational structure and resources for the exercise are the same as that of your Department.

When the exercise begins, you will be dispatched to the scene in the same manner in which units in your Department are normally dispatched. The first communication from dispatch will signify the start of the exercise. At this point, you will be en route to the scene and view several response images. While en route, you will hear radio traffic from a first due unit. As you arrive, you will see several approach images. ***The fifth (5th) image you see will signify your arrival on scene.***

**Once you arrive on scene, you must assume command.** You must **stay in command, outside of the structure, until Battalion 1 arrives.** Your participation in the incident will conclude with a transfer of command report to **Battalion 1.** You should respond to the communications given and the information shown on the screen in the same way as you would respond to a real fire.

You will be provided with a “dummy” radio without live audio throughout this exercise. You may use the radio as a prop but no actual communications will take place over the radio. To speak with an engine officer or any other unit on the scene, use the normal designation used by your Department. While it is understood that you may not actually talk with your crew on the radio while on a real incident, you may use the radio to communicate with your crew during this exercise. A short period of time will pass to simulate the response time that would occur at an actual incident. Please note that during the exercise, **time will generally pass faster than “real time”** and assignments may be carried out faster than they would if this were an actual emergency incident.

When you see the slide that says, ***“You are on scene” (the fifth image presented)***, your unit has arrived on-scene. At this point, **you must assume the role of Incident Commander and remain outside of the structure.** You will use simulated radio communications for **all** communications. Role players will act as dispatch, as well as all of the other units and personnel on the scene. It is important to realize that role players will serve as more than one unit. As such, you may notice the same voice representing multiple units. You should listen and respond to the unit, not the voice. Once your unit arrives on the scene, you will operate for up to **nine (9) minutes.** You are expected to manage the incident for this amount of time only.

During this time, you may see changes in the conditions on the screen. You should respond to those changes the same way that you would as an Incident Commander. At the end of the nine-minute period, the screen will go blank and the assessors will notify you that the fire simulation has ended.

After the fire simulation has ended, the assessors will ask you to provide a transfer-of-command report to Battalion 1. The assessors may also ask you questions about your actions. The question and answer portion could last up to **11 minutes**, but the entire time may not be used.



Please review the attached fact sheet concerning your fictional incident. You should plan your course of action, considering this information and the resources that are available to you. You may write on the materials provided and bring them with you to the exercise. You will have a **total time of up to 20 minutes for this exercise**. If you have any questions about the exercise, you should ask the assessor panel prior to the start of the scenario for clarification.

Please refer to the items below prior to entering the assessment room. If you have any questions, please ask the assessor that greets you upon entering the assessment room.

- a. *You may either sit or stand during the exercise. There will be a table that you can use as your work area.*
- b. *You will need to face the screen during the exercise in order to see the incident scene.*
- c. *There will be a radio to use as a prop. Please do not turn the radio on. Role-players acting as the units you will be communicating with are located behind the partition/curtain.*
- d. *Since you are facing the screen, please be sure and talk loud enough for the assessors and role-players to hear you.*
- e. *You may notice the same voice acting for two or more units. Please do not let this confuse you. Listen and respond to the unit, not the voice.*
- f. *The exercise will begin as soon as you hear the initial dispatch. Remember, the screen will be blank at the beginning of the exercise.*
- g. *You will be operating for up to 9 minutes. The time will start after the dispatch is complete. The transfer of command and question/answer could last up to 11 minutes.*



**Example Approach Image**



**Example on Scene Image**



## Emergency Scenario Exercise Incident Fact Sheet

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**Location:** 7200 Fire Exercise Example Road

**Date:** Thursday, September 7

**Time:** 09:00 a.m.

**Temperature:** 60° Fahrenheit

**Wind:** None

**Occupancy:** Apartment Complex

**Structure:** Three (3) story, ordinary construction

**Water Supply:** Two hydrants, one 100' east, one 250' west of structure.

### Initial Dispatch:

At approximately 09:00 a.m., Thursday September 7, Dispatch received a call from an individual who stated that he lives in the Fire Exercise Subdivision. He heard the alarm in the apartment next door and upon investigation found smoke coming from the second floor windows. He was unable to get anyone to the door. With this information, the following units were dispatched:

Engine 1 One (1) **YOU**, one (1) Engineer, and two (2) Firefighters  
Engine 2 One (1) Acting Captain, one (1) Engineer, and two (2) Firefighters  
Engine 3 One (1) Captain, one (1) Acting Engineer, and one (1) Firefighter  
Ladder 1 One (1) Acting Captain, one (1) Engineer, and one (1) Firefighter  
Rescue 2 One (1) Captain, One Engineer, and one (1) Firefighter  
Battalion 1 One (1) Battalion Chief

### Other Information:

Ladder 1 and Battalion 1 are responding from City Hall and will be delayed.



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## Example Oral Presentation

For this exercise, you are to assume the role of a Captain in the Department. When you arrived at work this morning, you were informed that your Chief has requested your presence at a meeting with several chiefs from surrounding departments. The meeting begins in 30 minutes. During this meeting, your Chief would like you to give a presentation on cooperation between departments that is no more than 15 minutes in length. In this presentation, the Chief would like you to address the following points:

- How issues regarding cooperation between departments have affected the Department
- Suggestions for improving cooperation between departments

The assessors will be acting in the roles of your Chief and other chiefs. These are the three people to whom you will be presenting. You will be the only person doing a presentation. After your presentation, the other people present may ask you questions for approximately 5 minutes.



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## Example Role Play

For this exercise, you are to assume the role of a Fire Captain. You were assigned to Station 1 nine months ago, where you supervise several firefighters. Two weeks ago, you filled out the attached performance evaluation form for Firefighter Mark Ames. Your task for this exercise is to conduct a performance evaluation interview with Firefighter Ames to discuss your evaluation of his performance.

To assist you in understanding the background of Firefighter Ames since he joined the Department, we have provided a job performance profile of this individual.

### Job performance profile for Firefighter Ames:

Firefighter Ames is a 5th year employee with the Department who has not had a performance evaluation for 2 years. For the first 3 years of his employment, Ames was an exceptional employee. He required little supervision, acquired all of his certifications, asked for extra assignments, participated in the development of public education programs, and took every opportunity to get extra training. You have observed Ames over the last nine months, and found his performance on the fireground to be superior. You have also noticed that his behavior in a training setting was deficient, and his attitude at the station requires considerable improvement. In the last year, he has sat in the back of the room during training classes, had poor test scores, and in general, shown a lack of interest. The attached performance rating report has been completed by you based on your observation of Firefighter Ames over the last nine months. You have recorded these job strengths, and/or deficiencies requiring improvement based on the job behaviors you have observed.

When you arrive at the station, Firefighter Ames will be seated in your office. You are to assume that he has read his performance evaluation form prior to the meeting, and has brought a copy of the form with him to refer to during your discussion. Note that the section on the form that is used to record specific goals or improvement programs has been left blank. During the performance evaluation interview, you are also to address this section with Firefighter Ames, by outlining the goals or improvement programs to be undertaken by him during his next evaluation period.

It is important to remember that this performance evaluation interview should be handled as if the actor was actually the firefighter involved, and you were his supervisor. You will have **15** minutes to conduct the interview. The assessors will stop you approximately **15** minutes into the Role Play, to allow **5** minutes to ask questions.





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## Example Structured Interview

During this exercise, you will be asked to answer a set of questions that assesses your knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position of **Captain**. Each question gives you an opportunity to address a subject that is important in assessing your potential as a Captain.

Once the exercise begins, you will have **20 minutes** to answer a total of **five (5) questions**. You should discuss the specific actions you will take for each situation, as well as explain your reasoning and the thought processes that influenced how you would respond to each question. If you indicate that you would talk to another person, you should discuss specifically what you would say to that person or persons. If there are relevant Department policies or procedures, you should discuss them and how they apply to the specific situation so that the assessors can evaluate your knowledge of the Department and your role as Lieutenant. The assessors can only evaluate you based on what you actually say and do, so you should also state all your assumptions and considerations about each situation.

Try to be as **specific and detailed** as possible in your responses to the questions. However, remember to budget your time appropriately. It is your responsibility to allocate your time to get through all **five (5) questions**. Failure to answer a question will result in a score of "0" for that question, which will affect your overall score. Please manage your time so that you will be able to answer all of the questions in the time allotted.

### General Instructions

- Speak in general terms! Understand that you are being evaluated by assessors outside your agency. If you use Department specific language or terms, be sure to explain what you are referring to as part of your response.
- You may prepare notes during your preparation time and use those notes during the exercise. The assessors will collect your notes after the exercise, but you will not be assessed on anything in your notes. You will only be assessed on what you actually say during your oral response.
- You may choose to take some time before beginning your response in order to re-read the question or think through your answer. However, please understand that if you take this opportunity, the time is **counted as part of your response time and will come out of your allotted time for the exercise**.

### Question:

You are a new Captain in your Department. You are speaking to a group of citizens at a community center about safety practices. During the question and answer session, an individual stands up and starts yelling at you because he has complained several times about a lack of responsiveness in your Department and has never received a response. How would you respond?

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## Example Written Exercise

For this exercise, you are being assessed primarily on your writing skills, including using proper grammar, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, and word usage. ***You will also be evaluated on your ability to express ideas clearly and logically.*** Additionally, the content of your writing needs to demonstrate your knowledge of the Department and the Captain position.

You will have **45 minutes** to complete this exercise. Within these **45 minutes**, you must also complete all editing and proofing. When you are instructed to stop by the proctor, you must stop typing immediately.

You must use the computer for this exercise. You may use any of the resources provided to assist you in completing this exercise, including the use of spell check on the computer. Please write your candidate ID on the top of any draft pages, notes, or outlines you prepare. Do **NOT** put your name on your document as you will be identified solely by your candidate ID number.

You will type your response on the computer using the template provided. You may use bullet points to format a list if desired, but the memo should be in paragraph format. Please save your document under your candidate ID number. Save your work frequently!

When your time is completed, the proctor will print four copies of your document. The proctor will ask you to verify that the printed copies are your final document by initialing each page of one of the printed copies. The assessors will only read your final document. You must turn in all materials at the end of the exercise, even if they are only notes.

The topic for your memo concerns the issues related to inter-jurisdictional cooperation. As the City expands into areas that have been previously serviced by other protection districts or departments, there are likely to be conflicts and problems arising. Additionally, the Fire Department frequently interacts with other departments and jurisdictions, often addressing difficult issues. What do you see as the greatest potential problem areas, and how do you think they could best be overcome? Your memo should note in what ways you, as a Fire Captain, might have input into these matters, as well as what ideas you have to resolve some of these problem issues.

You will have **45 minutes** to complete this exercise. Budget your time wisely. ***You will be graded for both content and writing skills.*** Your content should be well-organized, directly address the topic, and include specific examples and details. Your writing skills will be assessed on all aspects of your memo, including overall readability and logical flow, good sentence structure and word choice, spelling, grammar, and punctuation.



# APPENDIX B:

## Self-Assessment

The following questions address aspects of the performance dimensions that are used to assess assessment center candidates. How would you rate yourself on each of the following on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)?

### Organizational and Technical Skills – \_\_\_\_\_

1. If your actions were ever questioned, would you be able to reference the appropriate departmental policy and procedure to defend your actions?
2. Do you know the goals and vision of your Department?

### Management and Practical Skills – \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you ever find that things didn't turn out as you had expected and you are put in a bind because you weren't prepared?
2. When you are at an emergency scene, are you able to make quick decisions when others lives are in danger?
3. Do you think it is always appropriate to react in the same way when you are approached with a complicated situation?

### Interpersonal Skills – \_\_\_\_\_

1. If a member of the public approached you and questioned your actions, would you find yourself explaining the reason for your actions or getting defensive that an outside observer is questioning your decisions?
2. Are you as eager to help the community and provide them a service (i.e. open houses, educational training) as you are to fight fires?
3. Do you have any problems working with anyone in your Department?

### Leadership Skills – \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you were in charge and no one seemed to be paying any attention to you?
2. When you need to delegate a task, would you pass it on to someone who is very good at the task or to someone who needs to improve their skills related to the task at hand?
3. When you are caught in the middle of an argument or conflict, are you able to work with all of those involved to resolve the conflict or do you allow it to eventually work itself out?
4. When you are working with others, do you tend to go along with what they are doing or do you take more of a role in developing goals and a plan to accomplish those goals?

### Oral Communication and Presentation Skills – \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does anyone ever have to ask you if you were listening to what they were saying?
2. Do people often ask you to repeat yourself or not seem to understand what you are talking about?
3. Are you comfortable speaking in front of others (i.e. giving a presentation or conducting training)?



# APPENDIX C:

# Sample Confidentiality Agreement

You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to participating in the assessment process. Below is a sample confidentiality agreement.

## Confidentiality and Integrity

I understand that all contents of the promotional assessment process are secure and confidential. I will not discuss this assessment center with any current or former members of the fire department (including co-workers, supervisors, non-sworn members, candidates who have already participated in the process, or candidates waiting to participate), citizens of the metropolitan area (including community members, political figures, members of City or county government), agents of test preparation firms, family and/or friends, or any other person who has the potential to communicate this secure information to any other person.

The information to be held secure and confidential includes (but is not limited to) the following: 1) the types of exercises utilized; 2) the specific exercise instructions or requirements; 3) any specifics or generalities regarding your participation in the promotional process including how you handled any exercise and what was said, done, or performed by you, the assessors, or the role players. Furthermore, I will not discuss or divulge any potential criteria or information that may be helpful to others in preparing for this event.

In discussing the contents of this promotional process, I understand that I am in violation of this agreement and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the policies, rules, and regulations of the City and Department. In addition, I/O Solutions will not provide scores to the City for any candidate suspected of cheating until a full investigation is made regarding the allegation. I/O Solutions reserves the right to pursue legal action against any candidate divulging assessment center content, especially when I/O Solution's proprietary information is compromised or when intellectual property is used without the expressed written consent of I/O Solutions, Inc. I/O Solutions considers unethical actions (divulging assessment center content) as causing irreparable harm to the practice that has a great likelihood of inflicting significant fiscal damage to the firm. I pledge to keep all promotional process content confidential.

## Acknowledgment of Rules and Procedures

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the procedures outlined in the document titled "Candidate Instructions." Further, I acknowledge that I have read this assessment agreement in full and understand all rules governing the assessment center.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**End of Orientation Manual  
GOOD LUCK!!!**