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DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF EXAMINATION ORIENTATION GUIDE

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The consent decree announcements for Deputy Fire Chief have not yet been approved by the USDOJ; however, candidates who wish to begin preparing for this Deputy Fire Chief Examination may use the proposed 2005 Deputy Fire Chief Study Guide. If, in the unlikely event, changes to the guide are required by the USDOJ, these changes will be added to the website at a later date.

I. INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Department of Personnel has prepared this orientation guide to give you a general understanding of the testing process and answer some of your questions about how to prepare for the examination. For specific information regarding the current testing cycle, which includes the most recent test announcement for the Deputy Fire Chief exam, please check the Department of Personnel's ***2005 Deputy Fire Chief Current Administration Exam Orientation Guide***.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXAMINATION

A. TEST DATE

Approximately two weeks before the test date, candidates will receive a notice in the mail that shows the date, time, location and room to which they should report for their examination. Candidates are to bring the Notification Card, two forms of identification and two pencils to the Examination Center. Pens and highlighters are optional. One of the forms of identification must include a photograph. Candidates will not be permitted to bring this Orientation Guide into the Examination Center. Candidates should map out a route in advance of the examination date and plan to arrive at the Examination Center early because no one will be admitted late.

B. DESCRIPTION OF TEST FORMAT

An Assessment Center is an integrated system of exercises designed to generate behaviors similar to those required for success in a target job. These behaviors are measured in simulations that are similar to those activities performed in a given job. Each activity mirrors a different aspect of the job. Performance in these activities is observed by evaluators who are trained to be fair and objective. They compare each participant's performance to predetermined performance guidelines to determine who will perform effectively in a particular job.

The New Jersey Department of Personnel, Division of Selection Services, utilizes a number of Assessment Center features in its Fire Promotional Assessment process. This methodology is known to be a reliable and valid predictor of job success. For practical reasons, fire departments cannot promote everyone who is eligible for advancement and then see how they perform before making a final selection decision. The next best approach, however, is to give eligible candidates a chance to try activities that closely resemble the target job.

A distinct examination has been developed for the title, Deputy Fire Chief. The examination will consist of four scenario-based oral exercises. Each scenario was developed to simulate tasks and assess knowledge, skills, and abilities that incumbents or supervisors of incumbents deemed important to job performance.

C. TEST CONTENT AREAS

The scenario-based oral exercises will cover four topic areas:

1. Incident Command: Non-Fire
2. Administration
3. Supervision
4. Incident Command: Fire

Sample assessment center exercises are located at the end of this guide, so that candidates may become familiar with some of the types of materials and response formats that they will encounter. The actual assessment center materials will be different from those presented in this guide. These scenarios are merely illustrative of the kinds of scenarios that may be encountered.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE LOGISTICS

The examination will be held at a central location. Candidates are advised to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to ensure that all necessary administrative procedures can be conducted prior to the scheduled start time.

Candidates must bring the Notification Card, two forms of identification and two pencils to the Examination Center. Pens and highlighters are optional. One of the forms of identification must include a photograph. Candidates will not be permitted to bring this Orientation guide into the Examination Center. Candidates should map out a route in advance of the examination date and plan to arrive at the Examination Center early because **no one will be admitted late**.

Candidates will most likely be sequestered either before actually taking the examination or right after they have taken it. This is done to eliminate interaction between a candidate who has taken the exam with a candidate who has not.

Although the exact order of the exercises has not been finalized, it has been decided that the first and last exercises will be the two Incident Command exercises (Fire and Non-fire). Because there are two Incident Command exercises, candidates will have two periods of preparation time. Each preparation period will immediately precede the candidate's participation in each Incident Command exercise. At the beginning of the initial preparation period, candidates will be given the exam materials for the Administration and Supervision exercises. The duration of the initial preparation time will be approximately 55 minutes, the first 45 of which will be used to prepare for the Administration and Supervision exercises. To simulate the short duration of time that Deputy Chiefs have to prepare for an actual incident, candidates will not be given the test materials for the first Incident Command exercise until there are approximately 10 minutes remaining in the initial preparation period. After the initial preparation period has ended, candidates will participate in the first Incident Command exercise. Next, candidates will participate in the Administration and Supervision exercises (again, the

order of these two exercises has not yet been finalized). Finally, a second preparation period will be given to prepare for the last exercise, the second Incident Command exercise, prior to participation in the exercise. The duration of the second preparation period will be approximately 10 minutes. Candidates will not be given the exam materials for the second Incident Command exercise until the beginning of the second preparation period to simulate the short duration of time that Deputy Chiefs have to prepare for an actual incident.

Candidates will be permitted to take notes on the test materials or on paper provided during the preparation periods and may use the notes while participating in the actual exercises. Candidates should be aware, however, that any notes prepared or used during the exercises will not be considered by the assessors when making evaluations. In fact, such notes will be collected and secured following each exercise to ensure that they cannot be made available to candidates who have not yet participated in the assessment center.

Candidates will have approximately 10 minutes of response time for each exercise. Once candidates have completed all four exercises, they will be directed to the check out area to turn in all of their testing materials and will be directed to a sequestering room.

E. EXAMINATION SCORING

The scoring criteria have been determined, prior to the examination administration date, by a panel of Subject Matter Experts using generally accepted fire command, fire fighting practices and reference materials. Scoring decisions are based on Subject Matter Expert-approved courses of action that must be taken to resolve the situations that are presented. Only those oral responses that depict relevant behaviors that are observable and can be quantified will be assessed in the scoring process.

All candidates will be permitted to participate in each of the four oral exercises. The scores for each exercise will be standardized, weighted, and combined to formulate each candidate's overall examination score. Exercise weights for the overall examination score are 39.41% for the Incident Command – Fire Incident exercise, 31.00% for the Incident Command – Non-fire Incident exercise, 15.98% for the Administration exercise, and 13.61% for the Supervision exercise. All scores are standardized and only candidates with passing oral exam scores will have their overall test score weighted 70% and seniority score weighted 30% in determining the final score. Candidates will be ranked based upon this final average score. A more detailed description and explanation of the score calculation process will be given to candidates during the examination review period that follows the administration of the current exam.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Unless otherwise stated in the scenario description, the following response levels and apparatus staffing will be standard for all scenarios throughout the examination.

RESPONSE LEVELS

Initial Response:	2 Engines 1 Ladder Truck 1 Battalion Chief
2nd Alarm:	2 Additional Engines 1 Additional Ladder 1 Battalion Chief
3rd Alarm:	2 Additional Engines 1 Additional Ladder 1 Battalion Chief

APPARATUS STAFFING

Engine:	1 First or Second Level Officer, 3 Firefighters
Ladder:	1 First or Second Level Officer, 3 Firefighters
EMS (Ambulance):	2 Emergency Medical Technicians

RESOURCES

Multi-channel radio capabilities
Immediate subordinate officers are Battalion Chiefs

III. CANDIDATE PREPARATION

A. READING/ REFERENCE LIST

For specific information about the reading/reference list for the Deputy Fire Chief exam, please check the Department of Personnel's **2005 Deputy Fire Chief Current Administration Exam Orientation Guide**.

B. HELPFUL HINTS

The purpose of the assessment center is to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform important work-related tasks. Because we want to evaluate these characteristics as directly as possible, without having other factors such as "test wiseness" get in the way, we are offering the following suggestions.

Skim Through All Exercise Materials at Least Once Before Starting to Prepare Your Responses -- You should carefully read through the instructions and exercise materials

before starting to prepare your responses. If you don't, you may respond based on partial information.

Underline or Make Notes About the Materials That You Receive -- You will receive information concerning each scenario or problem. You should underline the issues that you think are important so that you can address them during the exercises.

Allocate Your Time Wisely -- You will need to plan out how much time you want to spend on each area of your presentation, or on the issues that you want to discuss and resolve. You should keep track of the time so that you can cover all of the areas you intended to cover. You should wear a watch to keep track of your time. The assessors will only tell you when to start and stop; they will not tell you how much time you have left.

Keep Calm If You Do Not Know How to Approach a Problem or Situation -- You may think of additional comments to make as the situation progresses.

Use Extra Time Wisely -- You may want to use the extra time to go back and clarify any responses that you think may not have been clearly stated, or to summarize the key points addressed.

Try Your Best – The exercises are designed to be difficult. Perfection is not expected. Your overall evaluation is based on your performance on each exercise. Even if you feel as though you did poorly on one exercise, continue to try to do your best on the remaining exercises.

The Exercises Are Set In A Hypothetical Fire Department – This is done intentionally so as not to give an advantage to someone with a particular work background. Do not make assumptions about the hypothetical fire department or town. Take action and make decisions based on only the information that will be supplied to you.

Tricks and Techniques - Some candidates believe that by learning a collection of tricks and techniques they can guarantee a better examination score. Candidates are coached on how to project a favorable façade (to smile, be courteous, wear certain clothes, et cetera). They may rely on this to hide deficiencies in performance. Some candidates are taught that certain exercises have specific "tricks" associated with them. These tricks may consist of anything from techniques for organizing information, to statements and actions that should be done to get better scores. Developing strategies for how to attack a problem is a good test taking technique, in that an organized approach is better than a disorganized approach or no approach at all. Predetermined strategies are fine as a starting point but cannot take the place of true problem-solving skills or the critical thinking that can be applied to changing circumstances and demands, either in simulation exercises or in real-world events.

"Tricks and techniques" will only take a candidate so far. Tricks and techniques are not part of the scoring criteria. More importantly, tricks and techniques are poor substitutes for developing skills in supervision and management areas.

The question of how to best prepare as a candidate basically comes down to one question: "Is your focus going to be the learning of tricks and techniques, or are you, the candidate, going to work on actively preparing yourself for the position being tested?" There appears to be no substitute for the hard work and persistence required to advance one's skill and knowledge levels.

V. DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. MAKE-UP POLICY

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A: 4-2.9, makeup examinations for fire promotional examinations may be authorized only in cases of:

I. Error by the Department of Personnel or appointing authority.

II. Death in the candidate's immediate family as evidenced by a copy of the death certificate; or

III. Catastrophic injury or illness requiring an extended convalescent period, provided the candidate submits a doctor's certification containing a diagnosis and a statement clearly showing that the candidate's physical condition precluded his or her participation in the examination as well as documentation from the candidate's employer noting the candidate's related leave from work.

- Military leave, which will be handled as stated in NJAC 4A:4-2.9(c).
- Exoneration from pending disciplinary or criminal charges will be handled as stated in NJAC 4A:4-2.9(d).

If you require a make up examination please call the Make-Up Unit at (609) 292-9467 within 5 days upon receipt of your Notification Card.

Please note that all requests for medical make up examinations must be accompanied by the Department of Personnel's Medical Authorization for Make-Up Examination form completed by the treating physician. The Medical Authorization for Make-Up Examination form can be obtained through the Make-Up Unit.

B. TEST SECURITY AND CANDIDATE PLEDGE

All candidates will be required to sign a pledge form at the examination center. The pledge will state that candidates will not discuss the content of this examination with any other person or study group, they understand the current examination will be administered over different days, and they will not discuss this examination with any previously processed candidate or potential make-up candidate prior to the

examination. No one is permitted to make copies or notes of exam materials during the administration of the examination.

Please note that candidates are NOT PERMITTED to bring any electronic communication or recording devices such as cellular phones, pagers, cassette/digital recording devices, laptops, etc., into the test centers. Possession of one or more of these prohibited devices inside of the examination center will result in disqualification. In addition, brief cases and other personal items must also be left outside of the test center. Upon release from the assessment center, candidates must leave the testing premises so that other candidates (still involved in the testing) will not be disturbed/distracted by outside conversations. Failure to obey the rules and instruction before, during, or after the examination may result in a candidate's disqualification from the examination.

C. POST EXAMINATION REVIEW POLICY

A detailed review policy will be provided at the examination center. Subsequent to the date of the examination, candidates who participated in the oral assessment process will be provided the opportunity to review their examination scores upon receipt of an INELIGIBILITY/ELIGIBILITY NOTICE.

D. EXAMINATION CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event that circumstances force cancellation of the examination administration, the Department of Personnel will attempt to contact the department heads, as soon as that decision has been made. In the case of inclement weather, candidates may call DOP's Information Center to find out the status of the examination or listen to their local radio station for further information. The number for the Department of Personnel's Information Center is (609) 292-4144.

E. STUDY GROUPS

No "study group" has been involved in the development or review of Department of Personnel examinations and, at no time has any examination material been provided to such groups. Finally, the Department of Personnel is not responsible for any claims made by "study groups" or the manner in which they represent themselves for advertisement purposes.

V. CONCLUSION

This orientation guide represents an attempt to familiarize candidates with all aspects of the examination, including test materials, logistics, and evaluation approach; as well as to provide some suggestions for preparation. The suggestions here are not exhaustive – we encourage candidates to engage in whatever additional preparation strategies they believe will enhance their chances of performing effectively on the exam and on the job. We hope that this Orientation Guide has been beneficial to you. Good Luck!

VI. SAMPLE EXERCISES

A. INCIDENT COMMAND – FIRE INCIDENT

You are a newly promoted Deputy Fire Chief. It is 1400 hours on a weekday and the outside temperature is 36 degrees Fahrenheit. There has been a wind blowing in a southern direction, gusting to 30 mph. There is no precipitation. You are sitting at your desk reviewing paperwork when you receive an alarm. Two engine companies and a ladder company are dispatched to an old one story automobile dealership and service garage. Based on the nature and severity of the incident, you respond to the incident.

Engine 7 is the first to arrive on the scene and reports heavy black smoke toward the center of the building. Employees are exiting the building, yelling that an explosion has occurred and that the fire is in an area used for parts storage. The buildings dimensions are 350' by 80'. On Side "B" of the building there is a four-lane highway 20 feet from the building and on Side "D" there is an empty lot. On Side "C" of the building, there is a holding area for cars requiring service and a receiving area for newly delivered vehicles. Engine 7 advises that they are stretching a line to the rear of the building. You hear over the radio that Aerial 2 has just arrived and is positioning its aerial ladder at the front of the building and other arriving companies are beginning an aggressive search and interior attack. The officer of Aerial 2 reports that fire is showing from a portion of the roof at the center of the building and also advises the companies on scene that initial reports indicate that propane tanks may have caused the reported explosion.

Just as you arrive at the scene, a second explosion occurs causing a partial collapse in the center of the building. Fire is now showing at the front of the building with heavy smoke exiting the front door. You advise the alarm office of the second explosion, collapse, and potential injuries to civilians and firefighters. Due to heavy radio traffic, you are unsure but think you may have heard calls for help from one or more companies that may be trapped as a result of the collapse. The water supply is adequate. The Chief is on vacation. Just as you are giving commands to your subordinates, you notice a news media van pull up at the scene.

Your task is to describe to the board how you would respond to this incident. In describing your response, address the following issues:

1. **SIZE-UP:** What would your size-up consist of while en route to and upon arrival at the scene?

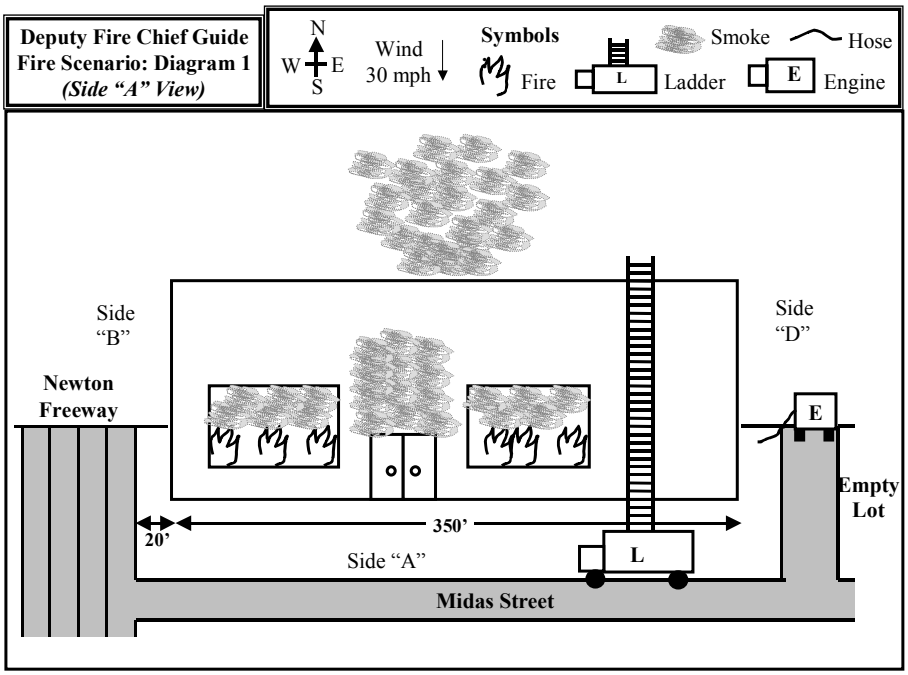
2. **TACTICS AND STRATEGIES:** What steps would you take to mitigate this incident?

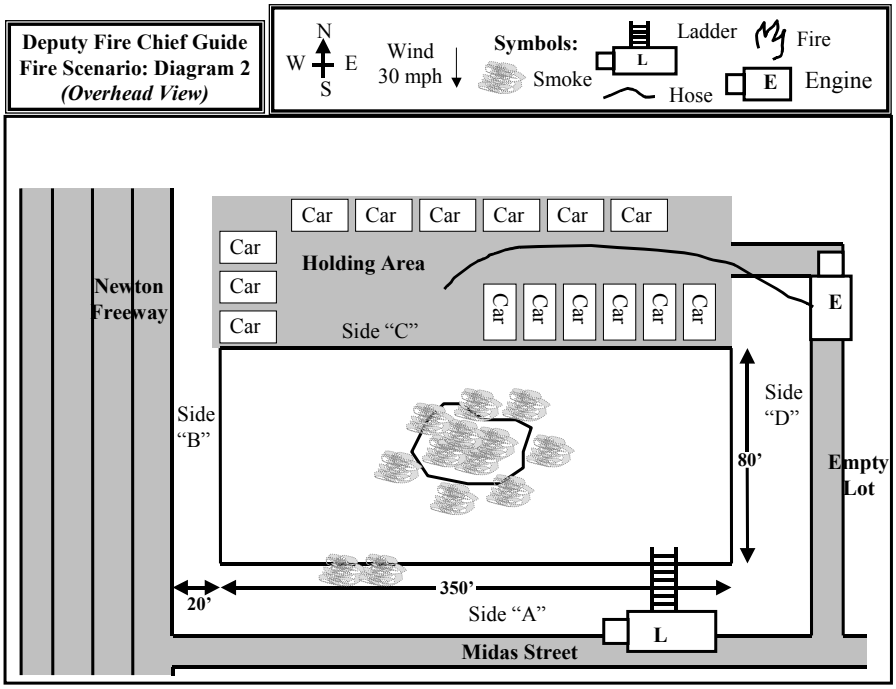
3. **RESOURCE ALLOCATION:** How would you assign resources to achieve your tactical objectives?

4. **SAFETY:** What concerns might you have relative to the safety of your personnel and the general public?

5. **CONCLUSION:** Once the fire is under control, what steps would you take prior to leaving the scene?

Please note that you will have 10 minutes to present your response to the board.


Deputy Fire Chief Guide
Fire Scenario: Diagram 1
(Side "A" View)
N
W
E
S
Wind
30 mph
Symbols
Fire
Ladder
Smoke
Hose
Engine
Side "B"
Side "D"
Newton Freeway
Empty Lot
20'
350'
Side "A"
Midas Street


Deputy Fire Chief Guide
Fire Scenario: Diagram 2
(Overhead View)
N
W
E
S
Wind
30 mph
Symbols:
Smoke
Ladder
Hose
Fire
Engine
Car
Holding Area
Side "C"
Newton Freeway
Side "B"
Side "D"
80'
Empty Lot
20'
350'
Side "A"
Midas Street

B. INCIDENT COMMAND – NON-FIRE INCIDENT

You are a newly promoted Deputy Fire Chief. It is 1500 hours on a weekday and the outside temperature is 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The wind is blowing to the east at 5 mph. There is no precipitation. You are sitting at your desk reviewing paperwork when you receive an alarm. Two engine companies and one ladder company are dispatched to a multiple vehicle accident at the intersection of Jamison Drive and Wheatley Avenue. One of the involved vehicles was reported to be a tanker truck. You recognize the fact that a large school is located nearby the intersection and the time indicates that the students will be dismissed shortly. Based on the nature and severity of the incident, you decide to respond.

Engine 14 is the first to respond and reports that a 5,000-gallon tanker is sitting in the middle of the intersection with a passenger car that crashed into it. The driver of the passenger car requires extrication, and the driver of the tanker is out of the vehicle. Another passenger car that swerved away from the accident struck a utility pole that fell and severed several electrical wires. There are two passengers trapped inside the second car.

You arrive on scene and notice an unknown liquid leaking from the tanker. You see a placard with a red background on the tanker. There are live electrical wires on the ground nearby. You advise the alarm office of the situation and request a HAZMAT team.

At this point, the HAZMAT team is on its way to the scene. The Chief is on vacation. Just as you are giving commands to your subordinates, you notice students from the nearby school starting to gather near the scene.

Your task is to describe to the board how you would respond to this incident. In describing your response, address the following issues:

1. **SIZE-UP:** What would your size-up consist of while en route to and upon arrival at the scene?

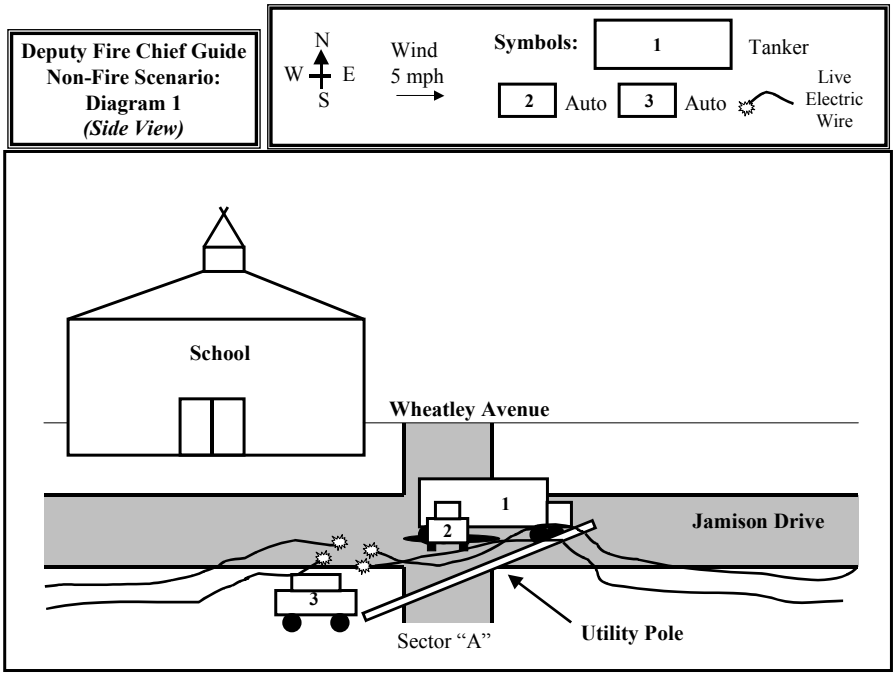
2. **TACTICS AND STRATEGIES:** What steps would you take to mitigate this incident?

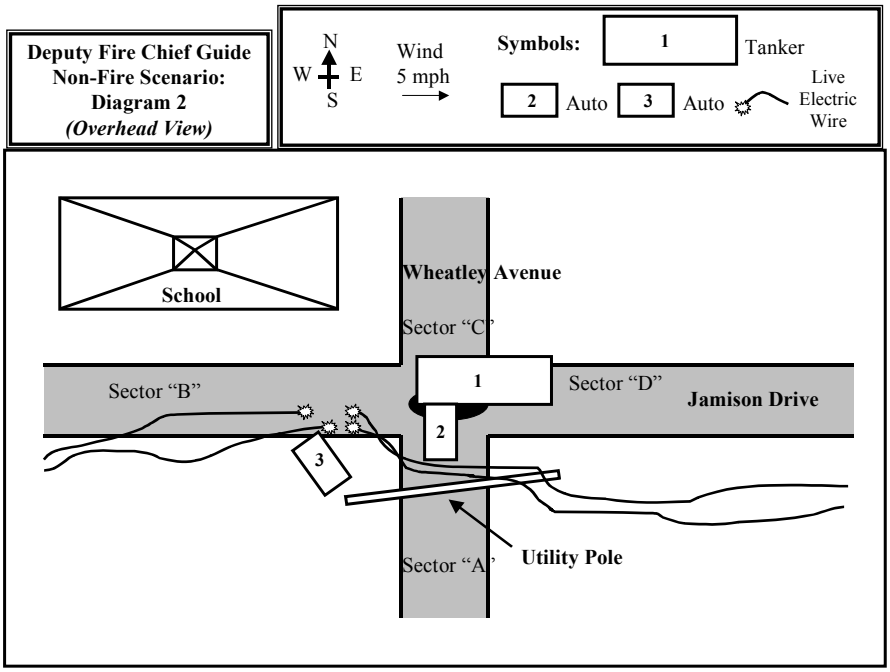
3. **RESOURCE ALLOCATION:** How would you assign resources to achieve your tactical objectives?

4. **SAFETY:** What concerns might you have relative to the safety of your personnel and the general public?

5. **CONCLUSION:** Once the incident is under control, what steps would you take prior to leaving the scene?

Please note that you will have 10 minutes to present your response to the board.


Deputy Fire Chief Guide
Non-Fire Scenario:
Diagram 1
(Side View)
N
W
E
S
Wind
5 mph
Symbols:
1
Tanker
2
Auto
3
Auto
Live
Electric
Wire
School
Wheatley Avenue
1
2
Jamison Drive
3
Sector "A"
Utility Pole


Deputy Fire Chief Guide
Non-Fire Scenario:
Diagram 2
(Overhead View)
N
W
E
S
Wind
5 mph
Symbols:
1
Tanker
2
Auto
3
Auto
Live
Electric
Wire
School
Wheatley Avenue
Sector "C"
Sector "B"
1
Sector "D"
Jamison Drive
2
3
Sector "A"
Utility Pole

C. ADMINISTRATION

As a newly appointed Deputy Fire Chief of your department, you are involved in the basic steps of fire protection management. Your municipality has begun to undergo major revitalization. A new sports arena has recently been built, as well as new commercial and residential tracts. As part of the planning process, you need to establish the levels of service risk to the new development that meet the needs and expectations of the community and the Fire Department. You also need to identify the options and opportunities for controlling fire loss and cost within the public and private sectors, and to define the fire protection standards that can serve as management criteria. Based on your own experience and in accordance with the text, Management in the Fire Service, 3rd Edition, state the primary or fundamental planning activities and how they apply to this current situation.

D. SUPERVISION

You have recently been appointed Deputy Fire Chief of the Department. Three Fire Captains come to your office and tell you that the Battalion Fire Chief is not performing up to departmental standards. Specifically, they claim that his actions on the emergency scene are in direct contrast to accepted safety standards. On some incidents he utilizes the ICS and on others he does not. He is taking leave from the job on a more frequent basis than he has in the past. He calls for more help than is needed on minor incidents and underestimates the resources needed for major emergencies. He never requests the Deputy Fire Chief to respond to major incidents. They claim their shift has become the laughing stock of the department. In accordance with the text, Management in the Fire Service, 3rd Edition, what questions would you need to ask to determine the Battalion Chief's competency level as a supervisor? In addition, utilize your experience and knowledge to explain how you would resolve this problem.