Response to Appeal by Exam Consultant Ken Hargis & Associates

Response to Matthew Short Challenge

Candidate Short failed the Large Water Flow exercise because he completed the exercise in more than 30 seconds over the allotted time. He claims that two factors contributed to him running over the allotted time.

First, he connected his 2 ½ inch attack line to a pump panel discharge but then noticed that neither of the 2 ½ inch discharges on the pump panel was labeled. He did not want to risk charging the wrong discharge, so he spent extra time disconnecting the attack line and then hooking it up to a new discharge. This connecting and reconnecting was a direct result of the candidate's lack of familiarity with the apparatus. Candidates are responsible for having a good working knowledge of the operational characteristics of all of the Department's apparatus since on any shift they could be assigned to any rig. Candidate ran over the time limit because of his lack of operational knowledge, not because of the test conditions.

Second, later in the evolution the candidate noticed that the passenger side discharge gauge was moving back and forth, plus or minus 10-15 psi, and would not maintain a constant pressure. He said that he made an attempt to correct the problem by shutting the line down and recharging it, hoping the gauge would reset itself. He claims that re-performing this part of the evolution cost him valuable time.

There was no indication throughout the testing process that there were any problems with the gauges. All of the other seven candidates successfully completed the exercise without reports of any problems with the pressure gauges. Thus, there was no equipment or mechanical problem that caused the gauge fluctuation.

The gauge fluctuation and extra time to complete the evolution were caused by the candidate's own operational error. The assessors documented the following in their notes: "Candidate ran into problems when he was trying to adjust the ground monitor pressure. He was gating down the discharge and running up the throttle and almost lost water. Finally, he opened up the discharge and got the pressure up but ran over time." Losing water on the fire ground is a dangerous situation, and his actions could have produced the pressure and gauge fluctuation. Thus, the extra exercise time used was caused by candidate error and lack of operational knowledge and not by mechanical or equipment problems.