Division of Emergency Medical Services

Firefighter I and II

Practical Skills Evaluator Training Course Manual

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Practical Skills Evaluator Training Course Manual

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Module 1 – Introduction

Module Time: *20 Minutes*

Course Goal

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to conduct practical skills evaluations and all related administrative functions in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.), which meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) and criteria for National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) certification.

Course Overview

Course topics include:

- Module 1 - Introduction
- Module 2 - Preparatory and Legal Issues
- Module 3 - Testing Roles and Responsibilities
- Module 4 - Practical Skills Testing Administration

Target Audience

Certified Fire Instructor and Assistant Fire Instructor serving as skills evaluators on state certification practical examinations.

Delivery Method

The course delivery methodology consists of small group discussions, lectures, and practical skills activities.

Course Prerequisites

Ohio Fire Instructor or Assistant Fire Instructor certification

Course Length

4 Hours

Registration

The course participant must complete registration forms as required by the Fire Charter and sign the course attendance roster.

Attendance

A certificate of completion shall be issued to each course participant who attends the entire 4-hour course and completes all course requirements.

Instructor Note:

- The Fire Charter is responsible for maintaining course completion lists including name, address, certification number, certification level, and date of course completion.
- The Fire Charter is responsible for issuing instructor CE certificates of completion.
- The Fire Charter will maintain training records and make them available to Division of EMS upon request.

Module 2 – Preparatory and Legal Issues

Module Time: *30 Minutes*

Goal

Upon the successful completion of this module, participants will be able to complete the administrative tasks necessary to administer a practical skills testing program for the Firefighter I and Firefighter II classifications.

Objectives

1. Understand and explain the basic certification concepts.
2. Summarize Division of Emergency Medical Service (DEMS) process to become Pro Board accredited.
3. Describe how Pro Board certification has been integrated into the Ohio certification process.
4. Identify the new deadline requirements for passing exams and applying for certification.
5. Identify the legal issues related to practical skills testing.

Basic Certification / Training Concepts

This section provides a brief overview of several important terms and concepts related to certification. Understanding these basic terms and concepts help provide a foundation for conducting proper practical skills evaluations.

Fire Charter Program

A Fire Charter Program means any Ohio fire training program that has been issued a charter by the Division of EMS to offer an Ohio fire training program by successfully meeting the standards of Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 4765.55.

These standards include training curriculum, certification examinations, training schedules, minimum hours of instruction, attendance requirements, required equipment and facilities, basic physical requirements, and methods of training for all persons in positions of any fire training certification level approved by the executive director, including full-time paid firefighters, part-time paid firefighters, volunteer firefighters, and fire safety inspectors.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the review process of verifying competency and establishing that certain requirements are met. State certification agencies, educational institutions, governmental entities, and national organizations can earn accreditation.

Ohio EMS achieved Pro Board accreditation which allows Firefighter I and Firefighter II candidates to become Ohio certified and the option to become Pro Board certified.

The Ohio Fire Charter accreditation process is overseen by the Department of EMS. A Fire Charter can be issued to training program if it meets the standards of R.C. 4765.55.

Certification

The purpose of certification is to recognize individuals who demonstrate knowledge and skills competency as it relates to a standard established by an accreditation process. Ohio certification is required to function as a firefighter, fire safety inspector, fire instructor and assistant fire instructor in the state of Ohio. The certification process in Ohio for firefighter certification acknowledges:

- Formal validation of knowledge and skills
- Meeting or exceeding specific state or national criteria (i.e., NFPA objectives)
- Obtaining or exceeding a minimum standard (i.e., test score)

Certificate of Completion

A certificate of completion differs from certification. A completion certificate is a document stating that you have completed the requirements of an offered class, course, or training.

- Often does not have a testing measure or earned simply through attendance
- Is not recognized by a state or national accredited program
- May be recognized as continuing education

Program Director

A program director is the authorizing official or that person designated by the authorizing official of a chartered program to oversee the administration and operation of a Fire Charter.

Authorizing Official

An authorizing official is any person who owns or maintains responsibility on behalf of an individual, corporation, trust, partnership, or an association for the facilities, equipment, instructors, managers, and other employees of the Chartered program.

Instructor Note:

Question: *Ask participants to define "fire charter," "accredited," and "certified."*

Answers: *Agencies and Organizations are accredited, People are certified, Fire programs are chartered through DEMS's accreditation process.*

Question: *Ask participants if your Fire Charter Firefighter I and II programs are accredited.*

Answer: *Yes, a fire charter program is chartered through the DEMS accreditation process.*

Question: *Ask participants if this Skills Evaluator Training Course is certified.*

Answer: *No. Certified Fire Instructors who complete the course will receive a Certificate of Completion that can be used toward instructor CE renewal requirements.*

Question: *Ask participants if they would hire an individual with a firefighting certificate of completion or an individual with an Ohio firefighter certification.*

Answer: *An Ohio certified firefighter is preferred, because it is earned based upon state-approved standards and is required to perform firefighter services in Ohio.*
A certificate of completion does not have a standard to measure its worth.

Ohio Department of Public Safety -
Division of Emergency Medical Services (DEMS)

DEMS is the agency responsible for assuring compliance with laws and rules governing the education, certification, scope of services and re-certification of Ohio EMS and Firefighter providers. Laws are located in Chapter 4765 of the R.C., and rules are located in Chapter 4765 of the O.A.C.

Firefighter Certification Prior to April 7, 2014

- A student who is at least seventeen years old and has graduated or is enrolled in the twelfth or final grade in a secondary school program may be admitted into a Fire Charter program.
- A candidate must successfully complete a firefighter program through an Ohio Fire Charter within 12 consecutive months.
- The written examination must be passed within 3 attempts and within one year from program completion date.
- A complete initial fire application must be submitted to DEMS within one year from the program completion date.
- An Ohio firefighter may be certified at the Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I or Firefighter II level.
- Candidates must be at least eighteen years of age in order to become certified.
- An individual must hold an active Ohio firefighter certificate in order to practice in Ohio.

Additionally, a certified firefighter who successfully completed a firefighter program through an Ohio Fire Charter is eligible for college credit transfer, as approved by the Ohio Board of Regents. Credit transfer is required of state-supported career technical centers and post-secondary education institutions.

Firefighter Certification on or After April 7, 2014

- Firefighter I and Firefighter II curricula have been changed to incorporate practical skills examinations which meet the NFPA standards and Pro Board certification criteria. This allows Firefighter I and Firefighter II candidates to become Ohio certified and the option to become Pro Board certified.
- Volunteer Firefighter curricula do not include a practical skills examination. Volunteer Firefighter candidates are eligible to become Ohio certified but are not eligible to become Pro Board certified.
- Application for Pro Board certification is optional. Ohio does not require that a current or a prospective Ohio certified Firefighter I or Firefighter II be Pro Board certified in order to practice as a firefighter in Ohio.

- A student who is at least seventeen years old and has graduated or is enrolled in the twelfth or final grade in a secondary school program may be admitted into a Fire Charter program.

- Candidates must be at least eighteen years of age in order to become Ohio certified.

Ohio Volunteer Firefighter Certification Changes

- A candidate must successfully complete the 36-hour Volunteer Firefighter training program through an Ohio Fire Charter within 12 consecutive months.

- A candidate must pass the written exam within 3 attempts and submit a complete initial fire application to DEMS within one year from the program start date.

- The Ohio Volunteer Firefighter course does not include practical testing and is not eligible for Pro Board certification.

- Volunteer Firefighter candidates shall submit a complete initial fire application to DEMS.

Ohio Firefighter I and Firefighter II Certification Changes

- A Firefighter I and Firefighter II candidate must complete all requirements for certification within a 12 consecutive month period from program start date (an exception applies for the transition course as set forth in O.A.C. 4765-20), as follows:

    - pass an Ohio Fire Charter training program and receive a Firefighter I or Firefighter II course completion document
    - pass the practical exam, within 3 attempts
    - pass the written exam within 3 attempts
    - submit a complete initial fire application to DEMS

- An active Ohio firefighter certificate is required in order to practice in Ohio.

- An active Pro Board certification is not required in order to practice in Ohio.

Accreditation with National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board)

Agencies that achieve Pro Board accreditation are recognized as having met the rigors of review by an independent organization. This independent review is the best way of assuring candidates and governing bodies that the training meets the national standards.

As an accredited Pro Board agency, DEMS has the authority to issue internationally recognized credentials to Ohio Firefighter 1 and Firefighter II candidates who demonstrate proficiency in Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) specified in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

The process to become Pro Board accredited includes the submission of a comprehensive self-study assessment, an onsite visit from a Pro Board evaluation team, and the audit of DEMS testing processes. DEMS was successful and became Pro Board accredited in 2011.

Following the issuance of an Ohio Firefighter I or Firefighter II certificate to practice, the firefighter will be emailed a notice of eligibility and a link to apply for Pro Board certification.

Fire Charter Programs Commencing Prior to April 7, 2014

- Students enrolled in a Fire Charter Program commencing prior to April 7, 2014, will not fall under the updated fire rules and will not be eligible for Pro Board certification as part of the State examination process.

Fire Charter Programs Commencing on or after April 7, 2014

- Students enrolled in a Fire Charter Program commencing on or after April 7, 2014, will fall under the updated fire rules and will be eligible for Pro Board certification as part of the State examination process.

Grandfathering Provision for Current Ohio Certified Firefighter I

- An active Ohio Firefighter I, certified prior to April 7, 2014, is eligible to attempt the State practical examination for Pro Board certification if the Firefighter I training program met one of the following NFPA standards:

    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter I Standard 2003 Edition
    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter I Standard 2008 Edition
    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter I Standard 2013 Edition

- An Ohio certified Firefighter I, whose training program did not meet one of the NFPA standards listed above, will need to pass the State practical and written examinations in order to apply for Pro Board certification.

Grandfathering Provision for Current Ohio Certified Firefighter II

- An active Ohio Firefighter II, certified prior to April 7, 2014, is eligible to attempt the State practical examination for Pro Board certification if the Firefighter II training program met one of the following NFPA standards:

    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter II Standard 2003 Edition
    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter II Standard 2008 Edition
    - NFPA 1001 Firefighter II Standard 2013 Edition

- An Ohio certified Firefighter II, whose training program did not meet one of the NFPA standards listed above, will need to pass the State practical and written examinations in order to apply for Pro Board certification.

- Ohio certificate holders interested in Pro Board certification should contact the Division of EMS at EMSFireEducation@dps.ohio.gov, (800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Instructor Note:

***Question**: What Ohio firefighter levels are eligible for Pro Board certification?*

***Answer:** Firefighter I and Firefighter II*

***Question**: Ask participants to explain the difference between holding Ohio certification vs. Pro Board certification.*

***Answer:** Ohio certification is required by all firefighters to perform firefighter services in Ohio. Pro Board is an option to become nationally certified for Ohio Firefighter I and Firefighter II levels.*

***Question**: Ask participants why Ohio became Pro Board accredited, and describe the process of becoming accredited?*

***Answer:** DEMS became accredited so that Fire Charter Programs can offer programs for students to gain the nationally accredited Pro Board certification. DEMS was required to complete a comprehensive self-study and a Pro Board site visit to earn accreditation.*

***Question:** Ask participants the benefits of earning Pro Board certification.*

Answer:

- *Third-party validation*
- *Training accepted outside Ohio*
- *Increased job opportunities*

***Question**: Ask participants what State exams must be passed in order for a Firefighter II (Ohio certified in 1999) must pass to be eligible for Pro Board certification.*

***Answer**: Firefighter II practical and written*

***Question**: Ask participants if a student enrolled in Fire Charter Firefighter I program on January 1, 2014, can become Pro Board eligible after completing the course and passing the State exam.*

***Answer**: No, because the Fire Charter program started before April 7, 2014. Once certified, the Firefighter I can then apply to take the Practical exam through the "Grandfathering" process.*

***Question**: Ask participants if a student enrolled in Fire Charter Firefighter II program starting on May 1, 2014, is required to become Pro Board certified after becoming Ohio certified.*

***Answer**: Ohio does not require Firefighter I or Firefighter II levels to become Pro Board certified, even if the Fire Charter program started after April 7, 2014. Pro Board certification is optional.*

Legal Issues

Standards in testing and assessment have their roots in civil rights legislation and professional standards derived from legal principles. The unifying theme behind the standards is that occupational testing and assessment should be unbiased and fair to all groups.

In the classroom, fire instructors try to create a sense of realism for the students. The same holds true for skills testing. In general, a setting that is more “realistic” increases the candidate’s performance and enhances the skills evaluator’s ability to accurately judge the skill. Considering safety first, it becomes necessary to balance simulation with reality. For example, live fire might be used to practice offensive fire attacks, but safety routes and back-up lines should be in place prior to crew entry. Skills evaluators must be prudent in balancing the risk of a “realistic” skills station with the safety risks associated with high-hazard training.

Breach of duty or failure to act in a reasonable and prudent manner while testing can directly implicate a skills evaluator and Fire Charter Program. Therefore, skills evaluators must be aware that they can be found negligent for wrongful performance (malfeasance) or for not performing when an action should have been taken (nonfeasance).

In a number of court cases related to training accidents, instructors and skills evaluators are rarely found to have willfully caused harm. Unintentional acts and negligence are the most common causes cited for accidents and injuries. Unintentional acts are those that occur without the willful intent to do harm. Negligence is the failure to use reasonable care (i.e., doing something that would not be done by a reasonably prudent person, or failing to do something that would be done by a reasonably prudent person under similar circumstances).

To reduce liability, the skills evaluator must determine:

- All equipment is in working order.
- Surrounding conditions are acceptable and do not pose risks to the candidates.
- Candidates do not pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Equipment is regularly checked for safe operating conditions.
- A candidate’s information is kept private, according to policy.

Finally, the skills evaluator should be aware of the following illegal practices, particularly as it relates to the testing process:

- *Discrimination* - Assessing bias and unfairly treating a person or group on the basis of age, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- *Sexual Harassment* - Unwanted and offensive sexual advances, remarks or acts, especially by a superior, as a condition of a passing skills evaluation.
- *Hostile Environment* - The inability to effectively test due to the harassment or interference of peers and / or superiors.
- *Discriminatory Language* - The unfair treatment of individuals based solely on their use of language.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 36.309(a) Examinations and Courses, states:

> "Any private entity that offers tests or courses related to applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing, for secondary or post-secondary education, professional, or trade purposes shall offer such tests or courses in a place accessible to persons with disabilities or offer alternative accessible arrangements for such individuals."

DEMS offers reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not fundamentally alter the nature of the examination. To discuss the process for requesting an accommodation and the types of accommodations which may be available, contact DEMS at (800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447.

Safety Factors

Firefighter safety is the number one priority in the profession and is also a priority in instructional settings, particularly during skills testing. Where safety is concerned, it is the skills evaluator's role to inform the program director or skills coordinator if a candidate poses a safety risk to himself / herself, other candidates, other skills evaluators, or equipment during skills testing.

Prior to testing, skills evaluators must check equipment to ensure it is in proper working order. Skills evaluators should also ensure that equipment, facilities, and conditions do not pose a safety risk to the candidates or staff. Two areas of particular importance are:

- *Emergency medical support:* In the event of an emergency, the program director will provide on-site emergency medical personnel contact information to all skills testing personnel. Ideally, emergency medical transportation would be available at the skills test site.

- *Facility and equipment inspection:* The skills coordinator and skills evaluator should inspect the facility prior to conducting skills testing to ensure the testing area is safe, can be made secure, and can accommodate all requirements of the skills. All equipment must be checked prior to testing to ensure proper working order.

Instructor Note:

Question: *Ask participants what safety issues could arise during the course of skills testing?*

Answer: *Inclement weather (too hot, too cold, or electrical storms), reckless candidates, careless evaluators, and malfunctioning equipment.*

Module 3 – Testing Roles and Responsibilities

Module Time: *1 hour 30 minutes*

Goal

Upon the successful completion of this module, participants will be able to explain the practical skills testing process, to include the personnel and components necessary to conduct practical skills certification examinations.

Objectives

1. Explain the professional expectations of a skills evaluator.
2. State the process for beginning the skills test, including provision for reading instructions and not coaching.
3. Specify how evaluator tendencies can affect the testing process.
4. Describe the expectations for skills evaluators while observing candidates during testing.
5. Identify the three types of practical skills testing.

Skills Evaluator Qualifications

A skills coordinator and skills evaluator must hold an Ohio certification to teach as a Fire Instructor or Assistant Fire Instructor. Skills evaluators can staff a practical skills station up to their firefighter certification level. (A skills evaluator holding a Firefighter I certification cannot staff a skills station for Firefighter II candidates.) Skills coordinators and skills evaluators must complete the DEMS approved practical skills evaluator training prior to skills testing. Fire Charter training program staff completing the practical skills evaluator training can then train other eligible Fire Charter training program staff. Program directors are responsible for ensuring practical skills evaluators are annually refreshed on evaluator skills testing.

Professionalism

The practical skills examination for Firefighter I and Firefighter II certification is composed of skills stations that measure a candidate's ability to perform the specific tasks as outlined in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard. All persons associated with the examination are expected to act in a professional manner at all times. Successful testing occurs when the program director, skills coordinator and skills evaluators are thoroughly familiar with the testing process, follow *all* standardized administration procedures, and understand their roles before, during and after testing.

Skills Evaluator Expectations

1. Conduct yourself in a manner that will command respect and confidence.

2. Have a positive attitude and focus on the practical skills testing.

3. Refrain from public criticism of candidates, other skills evaluators, Fire Charter program staff or policies, or DEMS staff or policies.

4. Be considerate of and treat candidates with respect and dignity, regardless of gender, place of origin, race, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or economic status.

5. Be prepared. Have all equipment and practical skills sheets ready so that testing starts and ends on time.

6. Refrain from using profane, insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language.

7. Keep a professional appearance, dressing appropriately based upon weather conditions and wearing the appropriate safety garments while testing.

8. During testing, focus entirely on the performance of the candidate. All skills evaluator phones or electronic devices must be turned off or put on silent.

9. Do not pack up gear toward the end of testing so you can leave the testing area site quickly.

10. Safety is a priority. Be aware of the potential for injury. Ensure a safe testing environment at all times.

Because of the critical nature of adhering to policies and procedures, skills evaluators can be removed from all skills evaluator duties by the Executive Director of the Division of EMS at any time for several reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to, falsification of skills sheets; inconsistent, incomplete, or incorrect skills sheets; or putting a candidate in danger.

Instructor Note:

Question: *Ask participants to list skills evaluator appropriate / inappropriate skills evaluator actions during testing.*

Possible Answers:

- *Skills evaluators shall turn off or put on silent cell phones.*
- *No eating or using tobacco products*
- *Take task seriously, be attentive and prompt*
- *Do not talk / joke with other evaluators during testing*
- *Dress appropriately and use proper language*
- *Do not pack up gear toward the end of testing so you can leave the testing area site quickly*

Objective Skills Testing

A test is considered reliable if the same result is produced repeatedly under similar conditions. Therefore, a skills evaluator must be objective, consistent and focused so that every candidate has the same testing experience in order for the skills test to be reliable and fair.

Instructor Note:

Question: Discuss the differences of an effective skills evaluator and an effective instructor.

Skills Evaluator: Analytical, detail-oriented, objective, unflappable, observant, thick-skinned, unbiased

Instructor: Coaches, helpful, accommodating when possible, effective communicator

Evaluate—Don't Coach!

The skills evaluator is not to coach a candidate in any way. Examples of coaching include:

- Giving candidates instructions other than what is provided on the practical skills sheets.
- Using verbal or nonverbal "coaching" while reading instructions.
- Prompting the candidate during the skills evaluation by asking,"Anything else?" or "Are you *sure* you're finished?"
- Non-verbal communication, such as looking at your watch, using body language to show the candidate what they are missing, or using your eyes to point out missed areas.
- Answering questions after the evaluation has begun. You may not, under any circumstance, reread the instructions after the test has started.
- Evaluator coaching or assisting, either well-meaning or unintentional, may invalidate the test and ultimately result in the candidate having to retest.

Instructor Note:

Question: *Ask participants to describe ways that evaluators coach either intentionally or inadvertently.*

Answer:

Tapping watch	*Gestures with eyes*
Clearing the throat	*Asking "Are you sure?"*
Assisting with material, equipment, etc.	*Conversing with candidates*

Evaluator Tendencies

An area that evaluators should be aware of is evaluator tendencies or biases. Evaluators must remain neutral when observing and scoring candidates. Some of the common evaluator tendencies include:

Halo Effect

The halo effect is created when the evaluator's overall impression of a candidate's skills is perceived as excellent because of an outstanding skill or appealing personality trait. In this case, the evaluator tends to rate the candidate higher than is warranted.

Leniency Effect

This is the tendency for an evaluator to "feel sorry" and be "lenient" toward a candidate, and the evaluator assesses more favorably than what is warranted.

Stringency Effect

This is the tendency to be "strict" and impose higher standards of performance than what is intended. As a result, candidates are scored lower than is warranted.

Personal Bias

This is the tendency to allow non-job-related prejudices and stereotypes about different cultures, lifestyles, personalities, or appearances to affect the evaluation of a candidate.

Recency Effect

This is the tendency of an evaluator to rate a candidate on a recent event that altered the evaluator's opinion of the candidate. Recent actions—good or bad—affect the ability of the evaluator to objectively score the candidate.

Error of Perception

This is when evaluators score candidates based upon their perception of them (such as being "important" or "unimportant"), instead of measuring their actual performance.

Remember: Your role as a skills evaluator is to closely observe the candidate and objectively determine if they can or cannot successfully perform the skills as stated on the practical skills sheet. Be aware of these tendencies, and try not to let personal actions of the candidates influence your observations and scoring.

Participant Activity

Purpose: To allow participants to identify and recognize common evaluator tendencies.

Instructor Directions:

1. *Either individually or in breakout groups, ask participants to read each scenario and agree on the evaluator tendency being exhibited.*
2. *After participants have completed the activity, discuss each scenario as a class.*
3. *Note that some scenarios may have two or more answers. Find out the reasoning behind multiple answers, and focus on the rationalization for each answer. The focus should be on creating an awareness of evaluator tendencies so they can be avoided while skills testing.*

Scenario 1

Jack was recently given an award by the local fire department for actions above and beyond the call of duty. He is now in your test group. You noticed during the course that he is proficient at donning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). However, during the evaluation, he does not pull on his hood. Because he is exceptional firefighter, you let this slide and pass him.

Answer: *Halo Effect*

Scenario 2

Jennifer was the fastest in class at donning PPE. She was also the most capable at naming the parts and contributed informative discussion on PPE in class. Furthermore, her father was well known as a long standing, honored fire chief. You feel that you do not really need to test her on the use of PPE because you are certain that she already has the required knowledge.

Answer: *Error of Perception*

Scenario 3

The crew of firefighters in your class just returned from working long hours at a major fire in Northwest Ohio. They are tired and dragging, but their department did not want to reschedule their testing. You figure that you will give them the benefit of the doubt and go easy on scoring them.

Answer: *Leniency*

Scenario 4

A candidate, who performed well in the firefighter course, scored unusually low compared to other candidates. The candidate's skills evaluator had a conflict with the candidate the day before testing. What evaluator tendency most likely applies?

Answer: *Recency Effect*

Scenario 5

When reviewing the skills tests conducted at practical skills testing, the Office of Fire Services notices that all candidates scored unusually low when compared to other practical skills testing sessions. While it is possible that everyone performed poorly, which evaluator tendency was most likely exhibited?

Answer: *Stringency Effect*

Scenario 6

An evaluator has preconceptions about the abilities of women vs. men. His evaluations showed that women in his class scored unusually low when compared to other practical skills testing sessions. Which evaluator tendency was most likely exhibited?

Answer: *Personal Bias*

Instructor Note:

<u>Discussion Points</u>:

Ask participants the implications of a serious accident that occurred during candidate training or testing.

Ask participants if anyone has an experience of an investigation being opened due to a training-related accident.

Ask participants to explain the consequences if investigators found incomplete / inaccurate skills evaluation forms for those involved in the accident.

Reiterate that the point of the practical skills testing is to certify individuals that can demonstrate competency and to fail those that do not demonstrate competency.

Inter-Rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability is the degree to which two or more individuals (evaluators or raters) agree. Inter-rater reliability is essential to consistency of a rating (or grading) system. Clearly stated guidelines for scoring are necessary for continuity and reliability purposes.

Instructor Note:

- *To demonstrate inter-rater reliability, ask the participants to role play as evaluators with you (the instructor) being the candidate.*
  - *The directions read: Raise your hands above your head and say "done" when complete.*
  - *Now, you should raise your hands so the tips of your fingers are just above the top of your head and say "done."*
  - *Ask the participants if you passed or failed.*
    - *Some participants will fail you because your hands were not fully extended above your head.*
    - *Some participants will pass you because your hands were raised above your head.*
  - *After discussing this, ask participants to assess the candidates' assessment outcomes (test is not reliable as some would pass and some would fail under the same circumstance).*
  - *Discuss the importance of inter-rater reliability as it relates to the importance of expected processes and outcomes during skill assessments so that candidates are tested consistently.*

Objective Skills Analysis

Validity

A key element to an effective testing program is to ensure the test is valid.

Test validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment—determining if the test actually measures what it is supposed to measure. Test questions should cover relevant knowledge areas in order to measure competency and knowledge.

If the test accurately reflects the candidates' abilities to perform skills or tasks, the test is valid.

Instructor Note:

***Question**: Ask participants to provide an example of a test that is not valid.*

***Example:** An EMT Basic scope of services question on a firefighter exam is not valid.*

Reliability

While validity focuses more on how accurately a test covers knowledge and skills areas, reliability relates to the consistency of test results. A measure is said to have a high reliability if repetition produces similar results under similar conditions.

Instructor Note:

***Question**: Ask participants why it is important for a test to be reliable.*

***Answer:** All participants should have an equal opportunity at passing. You do not want some people passing or failing because a test is administered differently each time.*

***Question**: Ask participants if a test can be reliable but not valid.*

***Answer**: Although test takers may get similar scores on a test, which does not ensure the test is valid (measuring what it is supposed to measure).*

***Question**: Ask participants if a test can be reliable without being valid.*

***Answer**: Yes, a test can be reliable without being valid. However, a test cannot be valid unless it is reliable.*

Cut Score

The cut score is an important concept in certification. A cut score refers to the minimum score needed to pass a standardized test. Anyone scoring below the cut fails, and anyone scoring above the cut passes. For example, if a cut score is 70, scores of 75, 80, or 90 are treated equally. All of the scores are “above” the cut, and the actual score has no additional consideration.

Instructor Notes:

Question: *Ask participants to determine passing / failing scores with a cut score of 70%:*

1. *Passed 4 skills out of 5 skills*
2. *Passed 6 skills out of 10 skills*
3. *Passed 7 skills out of 10 skills*
4. *Passed 16 skills out of 23 skills*

Answer:

1. *Pass* *4 divided by 5 = 80%*
2. *Fail* *6 divided by 10 = 60%*
3. *Pass* *7 divided by 10 = 70%*
4. *Fail* *16 divided by 23 = 69.56%* *(score is NOT rounded up)*

Performance-Based (Skill) Assessments

Development

Performance–based (skill) assessment evaluates hands-on skills, such as fire suppression. Practical skills sheets are created through the DEMS Office of Fire Services with the guidance of subject matter experts from Ohio. The DEMS Office of Fire Services and the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Committee continue to work with many organizations and subject matter experts (SME) to develop and review the practical skills sheets to ensure they meet NFPA standards.

Categories

The practice skills required fall into four categories, Mandatory Skills, Simulated Skills, Flip the Switch Skills, and Random Skills. Each fire classification practical examination includes both mandatory and random skills.

Required Practical Skills by Level

Firefighter I	7 Mandatory Skills + 3 Random Skills
Firefighter II	3 Mandatory Skills + 1 Random Skill
Firefighter I and II	10 Mandatory Skills + 4 Random Skills

Mandatory Skills

"Mandatory Skills" are skills that must be passed by each student completing a Firefighter I and / or Firefighter II fire training program:

1-1	FFI	PPE – Inspecting SCBA
1-2	FFI	PPE – Donning PPE
1-3	FFI	PPE – Donning SCBA
1-4	FFI	PPE – SCBA Emergency Procedures
7-3	FFI	One-Firefighter Extension Ladder Carry and Raise
10-1	FFI	Search and Rescue - Primary Search
13-1	FFI	Interior Structure Fire Attack
13-2	FFII	Establishing Command and Coordinating Crews
25-1	FFII	Flammable Gas Fire
26-1	FFII	Vehicle Extrication

Simulated Skills

"Simulated Skills" allow the candidate to perform the skill by simulating the required task as an alternative to actually performing the skill:

19-1	FFI	Securing Building Utilities
19-2	FFI	Emergency Scene Illumination
20-1	FFI	Ground Cover Fire
21-1	FFI	Equipment Maintenance – Cleaning and Inspecting Ladders
21-2	FFI	Equipment Maintenance – Cleaning and Inspecting Rope
21-3	FFII	Equipment Maintenance – Cleaning and Inspecting Power Tool Maintenance
22-1	FFI	Hose Maintenance – Cleaning and Inspecting Fire Hose
24-1	FFII	Ignitable Liquid Fire

*Skills Permitted to be Evaluated <u>During</u> Fire Charter Course**

At Fire Charter Program discretion, the following skills tests can be evaluated by a skills evaluator during the course:

8-1	FFI	Passenger Vehicle Fire
10-1	FFI	Search and Rescue – Primary Search
13-1	FFI	Interior Structure Fire Attack
24-1	FFII	Ignitable Liquid Fire
25-1	FFII	Flammable Gas Fire
26-1	FFII	Vehicle Extrication

* These skills may be tested as "Flip the Switch". Flip the Switch testing allows the Fire Charter Program to conduct fire training and practical skills testing on the same day.

Random Skills

A complete listing of random skills can be found on the DEMS Web site at www.ems.ohio.gov.

Practical Skills Sheets

Skills stations will have one or more skills sheets for evaluating a candidate's performance. Some skills tests are mandatory (M) and will be included in every test administration, while others are Random (R) and will be randomly selected by the DEMS Office of Fire Services from the group specified.

One practical skills sheet should be used for each candidate. If a candidate fails, score columns are included for Retest 2 and Retest 3.

Identify the following components on a practical skills sheet:

- Primary task
- Job performance requirements (JPRs) number
- Reference source
- Skill number
- Candidate instructions
- State maximum allotted time limit
- List of performance steps
- Initial test, 2nd retest and 3rd retest sections
- Critical point and / or non-critical skills (shown under performance steps)
- Score – Write in number of skills passed
- Skill time
- Evaluator comments
- Skills test date
- Overall indication of pass / fail
- Evaluator signature line

Types of Practical Skills Evaluations

Individual Practical Skills Evaluations

In individual practical skills evaluations, the candidate performs the skills without an assistant or not within a team. Depending upon the skills station, the candidate may need to verbalize actions. Upon completion of testing, candidates should clap or announce they are done. The skills evaluator will then direct the candidate to the holding area or next skills testing station.

Team Practical Skills Evaluations

There are some skills that can only be accomplished in a team setting, such as skills involving live fire and rescue. The candidates are required to verbalize their actions, and they also must verbalize to team members as appropriate. Upon completion of team testing, candidates should individually clap or announce they are done separately.

Team practical skills stations may require more than one skills evaluator. The skills coordinator and program director will determine the appropriate number of skills evaluators required at team practical skills stations.

In team skills, although candidates work as a team, they are evaluated separately as to their competence in performing specific skills. For example, if a candidate(s) in a team fails his / her portion of the team skills, only that candidate(s) fails. Candidates in a team passing his / her portion of the team skills will pass. The failing candidate's score does not affect the pass / fail results of other candidates in the team.

Practical Skills Evaluation Requiring a Testing Assistant

There are some individual skills stations that require a "testing assistant," such as skills involving salvage covers. Testing assistants must meet the requirements of a skills evaluator. The candidates are not only required to verbalize their actions, they also must verbalize to the assistant exactly what task(s) to perform. Upon completion of testing requiring a testing assistant, candidates should clap or announce they are done.

Module 4 – Practical Skills Testing Administration

Module Time: *1 hour 40 minutes*

Goal

Upon the successful completion of this module, participants will be able to conduct practical skills certification examinations.

Objectives

1. Identify the components that comprise the practical skills sheet used to document a candidate's performance.

2. Describe the expectations for skills evaluators while observing candidates during testing.

3. List the process of evaluating candidates during a skills test and become comfortable in completing the practical skills sheets.

4. Identify errors that can be made by skills evaluators on practical skills sheets.

5. State the consequences of not accurately and / or thoroughly completing the practical skills sheets.

6. Describe the retesting procedures for candidates who fail.

7. Describe the process for distributing practical skills sheets and returning them upon test completion to the program director.

Practical Skills Testing Process

Set Up of Skills Testing Area

The program director, with the assistance of the skills coordinator, is responsible for determining the date, location and set up of the skills testing area. The program director is also responsible for establishing an organized, effective, and efficient skills testing program. The program director has overall responsibility for the following:

- Skills station rotation is understandable and efficient.
- Candidates are tested confidentially.
- Holding areas are properly identified.
- The necessary equipment is in operable condition and readily available.
- On-site emergency medical personnel have been identified and contact information has been provided to all skills testing personnel.

Refer to the program director policies and procedures for detail on planning and conducting skills testing.

Skills Test Holding Areas

A skills test holding area is a rotation mechanism for candidates waiting for the next testing station. One candidate is allowed per holding area, unless skills testing personnel are present. No discussion is allowed with other candidates. Candidates must be efficiently directed to and from skills stations directly without observing other candidates' skills performances.

Skills Test Stations

Prior to conducting practical skills testing, the skills evaluator will inspect the testing location and set up the testing area. The following should be adhered to when setting up skills test stations:

- The skills stations need to be clearly identified and / or marked off.

- Skills stations are near holding areas and contain the facilities and equipment required for testing.

- Skills evaluators should have no obstructions when observing the candidate's performance.

- Skills stations must be arranged so that candidate testing is confidential.

Emergency Medical Personnel

The program director, with the assistance of the skills coordinator, will ensure and identify on-site emergency medical capability, including personnel and equipment. An emergency contact phone list will be provided to all practical skills personnel. Ideally, emergency medical transportation would be available at the skills test site.

Candidate Orientation

The program director or skills coordinator will give testing candidates an orientation prior to testing to discuss the testing process and candidate expectations. The orientation is included in the Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing.

Test Anxiety

Most people feel some anxiety about taking a test. For otherwise qualified individuals, test anxiety can have a paralyzing effect on performance. To help alleviate anxiety:

- Be prepared. All practical skills sheets, equipment, and facilities should be ready in advance of the scheduled sessions. An organized testing session will reduce test anxiety.
- Greet candidates in a friendly and professional manner.
- Be prompt. A long wait can raise the anxiety level of test takers.

Skills Testing Instructions

After completing the candidate orientation, the program director or skills coordinator will bring the candidates to the skills test station. After introductions, read the testing instructions as follows:

- Read instructions to the candidates verbatim from the practical skills sheet. Do not rephrase the instructions.
- If testing has not begun, you may repeat the instructions as specified on the practical skills sheet. If testing has begun, you may <u>not</u> repeat the instructions.
- For multiple skills that are lengthy or complex, the skills instructions may be read and performed in stages, as long as it is *consistently* done among all candidates.
- To indicate that testing is complete, remind candidates to clap their hands or announce "done."
- Advise candidates that they <u>are</u> permitted to ask how much time is remaining.
- Ask candidates to confirm they understand the instructions before proceeding with the skills assessment.

Interrupted Skills

If a practical skills test is interrupted due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control, the candidate is allowed to repeat the skills station. The skills station must be repeated in its entirety. In this situation, repeating the skills station is not counted as a failure; therefore, the same skills evaluator is allowed to evaluate the candidate's repeat test.

Safety Issues During Testing

If the skills evaluator feels that a candidate poses a safety risk to himself / herself, other candidates, skills evaluators or equipment during their skills testing, the skills evaluator should immediately stop the examination and notify the skills coordinator. Direct the candidate to a holding area while you discuss the situation with the skills coordinator or program director.

- If the candidate is the cause of the safety risk, the skill is considered a failure. If the failure occurs on the initial practical testing date, the candidate is allowed to retest after being allowed adequate time for remediation.

- If the candidate is not the cause (i.e. equipment malfunction), the candidate shall be allowed to repeat the skill. The skills station must be repeated in its entirety. In this situation, repeating the skills station is not counted as a failure; therefore, the same skills evaluator is allowed to evaluate the candidate's repeat test.

- The program director will have the final authority in the event of a conflict of opinion.

Conducting Practical Skills Evaluations

- During testing, focus entirely on the performance of the candidate.

- The practical skills sheet can be completed during the testing and <u>must</u> be finalized immediately upon candidate completion of testing. Skills evaluations <u>cannot</u> be completed at a later time.

- Practical skills evaluations must remain with the skills evaluator or skills coordinator at all times. Candidates cannot have access to practical skills sheets at any time.

- If appropriate, remember that candidates must verbalize their actions while testing and clap or announce when they are done. Failure to follow these instructions may result in a skill being failed.

- Failure to pass any portion of a tested skill requires retesting of the entire skill. Failing any critical point item automatically results in failing that skill.

- Once a candidate has completed the skills testing station within the allotted time, the skills evaluator will direct the candidate to a holding area or to the next skills station.

- The program director, skills coordinator and / or skills evaluator will confidentially inform candidates if they passed or failed.

- The candidate has the option to retest on the initial test date after adequate time for remediation. The skills evaluator coordinates all retesting.

- It is the skills evaluator's responsibility to make sure the practical skills sheet is completed clearly and accurately.

- Once practical skills sheets have been signed off, any lost or incomplete checklists may be considered an incomplete for the candidate. If the practical skills sheets are determined to be incomplete, the candidate must repeat any skills stations having an incomplete practical skills sheet.

Finalizing Practical Skills Sheets

Immediately after the candidate has completed the skill, the skills evaluator should review the practical skills sheet to verify the following is completed:

- Candidate name
- Testing date
- Charter Name and Charter #
- Clearly check "pass" or "fail" on each skill (under Test 1, Retest 2 or Retest 3)
- Enter number of passed skills under "Score"
- Record the amount of time to complete the practical skills
- Evaluator's comments should include specific reason for any failed skills, including critical points resulting in automatically failing the practical skills testing
- Compare number of correct skills with the amount required for passing, shown after the last skill to be completed during testing
- First, Second or Third Evaluator Name / Certification Number and skills test date
- First, Second or Third Evaluator Name Signature and Overall Skills Sheet Score (pass or fail)
    - If score is 70% or higher, check "pass" on *Overall Skill Sheet Score* in appropriate testing column
    - If score is under 70%, check "fail" on *Overall Skill Sheet Score* in appropriate testing attempt

Instructor Note:

As a class or in groups, ask participants to practice completing practical skills sheets based upon the following scenarios:

- *Candidate failed a critical point*
- *Calculating test scores (cut score is 70%)*
- *Candidate scored less than 70%*
- *Candidate passed*
- *Candidate does not verbalize*

As a class or in groups, ask participants to discuss the Evaluator's role based upon the following scenarios:

- *Candidate is hurt while testing and needs medical attention*
- *Testing stopped due to unsafe practices*
- *Candidate is talking to another candidate about testing*
- *Candidate asks questions during testing*

Program Director Practical Skills Test Summary Sheet

A Practical Skills Test Summary Sheet lists the required testing skills stations (for Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and Firefighter I and II courses) and the candidate's test results on the initial test, 2nd retest and 3rd retest, if applicable.

The candidate, skills coordinator, and program director will sign and date the Practical Skills Test Summary Sheet upon the candidate's successful completion of practical skills testing.

Retesting

The following guidelines apply to any practical skills retesting:

1. The skills coordinator will organize any retesting.

2. If the candidate fails a skill or skills, the program director or skills coordinator should privately explain to the candidate the guidelines for skills retesting.

3. Do not give candidates the reasons for the failure at a skills station. The candidates are fully responsible for self-remediation.

4. A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts. Skills evaluators must be rotated for retesting purposes.

5. An applicant retest cannot be evaluated by the applicant's instructor who taught the practical skills test course content.

6. Practical skills retests must be completed in their entirety. No consideration (positive or negative) is given toward the candidate's previous test.

7. The same practical skills sheet is used for retests, scoring each skill by indicating either a "pass" or "fail" in the appropriate "Retest" column.

8. All retests shall be completed at the candidate's original Fire Charter Program unless the original Fire Charter Program agrees that retesting can occur at an alternative Ohio Fire Charter Program. Note, however, that the original Fire Charter Program MUST approve the candidate for certification. Therefore, it is the alternative Ohio Fire Charter Program's responsibility to provide the original Fire Charter Program with any retest results that occur within 12 months from the start of the original Fire Charter Program.

9. Remind the candidate of the certification requirements deadline:

    - In addition to passing the practical skills testing within 3 attempts, the candidate shall also pass the written examination within 3 attempts <u>and</u> submit a complete application to the Division of EMS within twelve consecutive months from the course start date.

1st Failed Practical Skills Test

1. The candidate may, at his / her discretion, take advantage of one retest opportunity on the initial test date after an adequate time to remediate.

2. If a candidate who fails an initial skills test decides not to retest on the initial practical skills test date, the candidate, at his / her discretion, may retest later but shall be reminded of the certification requirements deadline:

    - In addition to passing the practical skills testing within 3 attempts, the candidate shall also pass the written examination within 3 attempts <u>and</u> submit a complete application to the Division of EMS within twelve consecutive months from the course start date.

2nd Failed Practical Skills Test

1. If the second test is failed, the candidate must wait one business day before attempting the third and final testing attempt at any unpassed skill(s).

2. The program director will meet with all candidates prior to the third and last testing attempt to ensure the candidate understands the retest process.

3. All third testing attempts will be observed by the program director, and the results will be given to the candidate by the program director.

4. Remind the candidate of the certification requirements deadline:

   - In addition to passing the practical skills testing within 3 attempts, the candidate shall also pass the written examination within 3 attempts <u>and</u> submit a complete application to the Division of EMS within twelve consecutive months from the course start date.

3rd Failed Practical Skills Test

If the candidate fails all three practical skills testing attempts, the program director will advise the candidate that the course of training must be repeated in order to be certified to that level.

Team Evaluation Retesting

The program director, skills coordinator and / or skills evaluator should confidentially advise candidates if their performance within the team evaluation was passed or failed. Candidates shall be allowed to remediate before retesting. When retesting, all candidates on the team should be involved in the test; however, only the candidate failing the initial skills test for that station should be evaluated. Candidates are retested performing the same role.

Request for Testing Change

If a program director or skills coordinator has a suggested change to a practical skills sheet or any recommended change to the practical skills testing process, a Request for Change (RFC) form can be submitted to the Division of EMS.

Final Processing

After all candidates have completed their initial tests and retest(s), the skills coordinator must:

1. Review the practical skills sheets for accuracy and completion
2. Confirm there is a practical skills sheet for each candidate
3. Deliver the skills sheets to the program director

The program director will validate if the candidate has successfully passed the practical skills examination and whether the candidate is eligible to take the written State examination.

Program Director Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Pre-Test Planning

Testing Facility / Resources

- ☐ Plan and coordinate with your skills coordinator the testing date, time, and location.
- ☐ Verify the skills coordinator has the equipment, resources, and materials needed for skills stations.
- ☐ Approve the planned skills stations set-up and holding areas for efficiency and confidentiality.
- ☐ Identify possible safety concerns and plan for emergencies.
- ☐ Identify on-site emergency medical personnel, and prepare an emergency contact phone list to be distributed to skills testing personnel.
- ☐ Ideally, emergency medical transportation will be available at the skills test site.

Personnel

- ☐ Verify the skills coordinator has pre-scheduled the skills evaluators.

Practical Skills Sheets

- ☐ Discuss any ADA accommodations with skills coordinator. Verify the Division of EMS approved all accommodations prior to testing.
- ☐ With skills coordinator, determine who is responsible for distributing and collecting practical skills sheets to and from skills evaluators.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Program Director / Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Candidate Orientation

Introduction:

a. ☐ Greet each candidate in a friendly and professional manner and introduce yourself.

Emergencies:

a. ☐ Explain the location of fire exits and fire extinguishers.
b. ☐ Discuss a meeting location in the event of a fire or other emergency.
c. ☐ Discuss the availability and location of emergency medical services.

Bathroom Breaks:

a. ☐ Candidates requesting to use the restrooms must go one at a time.
b. ☐ Bathroom breaks cannot disrupt the practical skills testing process.

Candidate Personal Electronic Devices:

a. ☐ Candidates cannot be in possession of any personal electronic devices.
b. ☐ Candidates must turn off and surrender all cell phones, pagers, radios, flash drives, or other electronic devices.
c. ☐ Failure to surrender electronic devices will result in the candidate's dismissal.

No Talking About Exam

a. ☐ Remind candidates that this is a State certification exam, and there should not be any talking about the practical skills test.

Explanation of Testing Process:

a. ☐ Station Rotation and Holding Areas
b. ☐ Instructions
c. ☐ Individual Testing
d. ☐ Team Testing
e. ☐ Testing with an Assistant
f. ☐ Verbalize during testing and clap hands or announce "done" when done testing
g. ☐ Allotted time
h. ☐ Critical points
i. ☐ Safety issues
j. ☐ Interrupted skills
k. ☐ May ask how much time is remaining
l. ☐ Pass / fail given after each skills station
m. ☐ Retests available on initial exam day after adequate time to remediate
n. ☐ Deadline reminder: 12 months from the start date of the training course to meet certification requirements and submit application.

Program Director Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Day of Testing

Testing Facility / Resources

- ☐ Confirm that skills station set-up ensures that candidates are tested safely, efficiently and confidentially.
- ☐ Confirm location of emergency medical services.

Personnel

- ☐ Ensure testing personnel keep a professional appearance, in both dress and actions.
- ☐ Remind skills evaluators not to coach, to be objective in their evaluation, and to provide an equal testing experience for all candidates.
- ☐ Distribute an emergency contact phone list to all skills testing personnel.
- ☐ Verify that the skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course does not evaluate that skills station, either initially or as a retest.
- ☐ A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts. Skills evaluators must be rotated for retesting purposes.
- ☐ Confirm with your skills coordinator which additional personnel are available to direct candidates between skills stations and holding areas.
- ☐ If the skills coordinator advises you that a skills evaluator is deviating from the skills evaluator guidelines, immediately notify any compromise to the Division of EMS, Office of Fire Services.
- ☐ Be prepared to assist the skills coordinator in addressing specific testing issues with candidates. The candidates may need to be reminded that we are not certifying them on specific equipment but on performing certain tasks outlined in the NFPA standard.

Practical Skills Sheets

- ☐ Confirm the process for distribution and receiving practical skills sheets upon testing completion.

Program Director
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

After Testing

- ☐ Verify you have practical skills sheets for all candidates testing on that day.
- ☐ Confirm the skill evaluator has clearly written the reason for any failure(s).
- ☐ Verify practical skills sheets are completed correctly and all required fields are filled in.
- ☐ Determine if the practical skills sheet is acceptable or rejected as incomplete. If the practical skills sheets are determined to be incomplete, the candidate must repeat all skills stations having an incomplete practical skills sheet.
- ☐ The program director shall complete a practical skills test summary for each candidate.
- ☐ The program director will determine if the candidate has successfully passed the practical skills examination and whether the candidate is eligible to take the written state examination.
- ☐ The program director, skills coordinator, and / or skills evaluator will meet individually with the candidates to inform them of pass / fail results. For those who failed skills testing station(s), the candidates will be informed of the retest procedures.
- ☐ The program director, skills coordinator and candidate will sign the Practical Skills Test Summary Sheet upon successful completion of practical skills testing.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Program Director
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Retesting

- ☐ Inform the candidate which skills station(s) was failed, but do not inform the candidate of the reason for the failure.
- ☐ Provide the candidate with an adequate amount of time to remediate before retesting.
- ☐ The candidate is has the option of retesting the failed skill(s) test one time on the initial practical skills examination date.
- ☐ The program director will meet with all candidates who are retesting prior to the third attempt to ensure they understand the retest process.
- ☐ All third testing attempts will be observed by the program director.
- ☐ Verify that the skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course is not the skills evaluator for the retest.
- ☐ A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts. Skills evaluators must be rotated for retesting purposes.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Pre-Test Planning

Testing Facility / Resources

- ☐ Plan and coordinate with your program director the testing date, time, and location.
- ☐ Provide the *Skills Evaluators Practical Skills Testing Guidelines* to the skills evaluators.
- ☐ Plan the rotation set-up of skills stations so that candidates are tested safely, efficiently and confidentially.
- ☐ Identify the equipment, resources, and materials needed for skills stations.

Personnel

- ☐ Schedule and assign skills evaluators to practical skills stations. In selecting skills evaluators, remember:
  - ✓ The skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course does not evaluate that skills station, either initially or as a retest, and
  - ✓ A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts. Skills evaluators must be rotated for retesting purposes.
- ☐ The skills coordinator cannot serve as a skills evaluator.

Practical Skills Sheets

- ☐ Prepare practical skills sheets for all candidates. Based upon firefighter program, verify that candidates are completing the correct practical skills tests.
- ☐ Discuss any ADA accommodations with the program director and list the accommodations on the practical skills sheets.
- ☐ With your program director, determine who is responsible for distributing and collecting practical skills sheets to and from skills evaluators and back to the program director.

Program Director / Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Candidate Orientation

Introduction:

a. ☐ Greet each candidate in a friendly and professional manner and introduce yourself.

Emergencies:

a. ☐ Explain the location of fire exits and fire extinguishers.
b. ☐ Discuss a meeting location in the event of a fire or other emergency.
c. ☐ Discuss the availability and location of emergency medical services.

Bathroom Breaks:

a. ☐ Candidates requesting to use the restrooms must go one at a time.
b. ☐ Bathroom breaks cannot disrupt the practical skills testing process.

Candidate Personal Electronic Devices:

a. ☐ Candidates cannot be in possession of any personal electronic devices.
b. ☐ Candidates must turn off and surrender all cell phones, pagers, radios, flash drives, or other electronic devices.
c. ☐ Failure to surrender electronic devices will result in the candidate's dismissal.

No Talking About Exam

a. ☐ Remind candidates that this is a State certification exam, and there should not be any talking about the practical skills test.

Explanation of Testing Process:

a. ☐ Station Rotation and Holding Areas
b. ☐ Instructions
c. ☐ Individual Testing
d. ☐ Team Testing
e. ☐ Testing with an Assistant
f. ☐ Verbalize during testing and clap hands or announce "done" when done testing
g. ☐ Allotted time
h. ☐ Critical points
i. ☐ Safety issues
j. ☐ Interrupted skills
k. ☐ May ask how much time is remaining
l. ☐ Pass / fail given after each skills station
m. ☐ Retests available on initial exam day after adequate time to remediate
n. ☐ Deadline reminder: 12 months from the start date of the training course to meet certification requirements and submit application.

Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Day of Testing

Testing Facility / Resources

- ☐ Confirm that skills station set-up ensures candidates are tested efficiently and confidentially.
- ☐ Advise skills evaluators of the skills stations rotation flow and holding areas.
- ☐ Verify with skills evaluator that skills station is ready for testing.

Personnel

- ☐ With program director, identify testing personnel to help direct candidates between skills stations and holding areas and inform skills evaluators.
- ☐ Confirm skills evaluators have read and understand the *Skills Evaluators Practical Skills Testing Guidelines*.
- ☐ Ensure skills evaluators keep a professional appearance, in both dress and actions.
- ☐ Remind skills evaluators to read directly from the candidate instructions on the practical skills sheets and to provide no additional or rephrased instructions.
- ☐ If a skills evaluator is deviating from the skills evaluator guidelines, immediately notify the program director.
- ☐ Ensure skills evaluators are focused on testing.
- ☐ Be prepared to address specific testing issues with candidates.

Practical Skills Sheets

- ☐ Verify the skills evaluator receives and completes a practical skills sheet for each candidate.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

After Testing

- ☐ The skills coordinator will perform a final check on all practical skills sheets for completion prior to forwarding them to the program director.
- ☐ Inform the candidate which skills station(s) was failed, but do not inform the candidate of the reason for the failure.
- ☐ Offer one retest per failed skill. If candidate chooses to retest on initial practical skills test date, provide the candidate with an adequate amount of time to remediate before retesting.
- ☐ The program director, skills coordinator and candidate will sign the Practical Skills Test Summary Sheet upon successful completion of practical skills testing.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Skills Coordinator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Retesting

- ☐ The skills coordinator will organize any retesting.
- ☐ Verify the retest date is within 12 months from the program start date.
- ☐ Rotate skills evaluators, keeping in mind:
  - ✓ The skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course does not evaluate that skills station, either initially or as a retest, and
  - ✓ A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts.
- ☐ The skills coordinator will distribute practical skills sheets to the stations where retesting will occur.
- ☐ After an adequate time to remediate, the candidate has the option of one retest for each failed skill on the initial practical skills examination date.

Team Skills Retesting

Team skills shall be evaluated on an individual basis. For example, if one candidate fails his / her part of the team skills, only that person fails that skill set, not the whole team. When retesting, all candidates on the team should be involved in the test; however, only the candidate failing the initial skills test for that station should be evaluated. Candidates are retested performing the same role.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
call the Division of EMS Office of Fire Services at
(800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447

Skills Evaluator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Prior to Testing:

a. ☐ Be thoroughly familiar with the testing procedures before administering the test.
b. ☐ Read and understand the *Practical Skills Testing Procedures*. Contact the program director or skills coordinator with questions.

Skills Evaluator Expectations:

a. ☐ Keep a professional appearance, dressing appropriately based upon weather conditions and wearing the appropriate safety garments while testing.
b. ☐ Conduct yourself in a manner that will command respect and confidence.
c. ☐ Be consistent, objective and impartial in administering the skills test.
d. ☐ Have a positive attitude and focus on the candidate's performance with the attention expected by the candidates and other skills evaluators.
e. ☐ Refrain from public criticism of candidates, other skills evaluators, Fire Charter program staff or policies, or DEMS staff or policies.
f. ☐ Be considerate of candidates and treat them with respect and dignity, regardless of gender, place of origin, race, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or economic status.
g. ☐ Start and end all testing on time.
h. ☐ Refrain from using profane, insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language.
i. ☐ Remember to stay focused on the candidate being tested. Do not talk with other skills evaluators or candidates during testing.
j. ☐ Turn off or silence cell phones and personal electronic devices while evaluating skills.

If any questions or anomalies arise,
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Skills Evaluator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Examination Setup:

a. ☐ Verify equipment and materials for the skills station are functioning and available.
b. ☐ Arrange the skills station to meet the skills testing requirements.
c. ☐ Confirm there is a practical skills sheet for each candidate.
d. ☐ Verify you are not evaluating candidates on the skills that you taught during class.
e. ☐ Make sure the candidate's full name is at the top of the practical skills sheet. Do not use nicknames or just a portion of name.
f. ☐ Review with skills coordinator or program director any ADA accommodation requests documented on the candidate's practical skills sheets.
g. ☐ Develop a system to ensure candidates do not see their own or other candidates' practical skills sheets.
h. ☐ Be aware of the skills station time limits (on practical skills sheet) and obtain a stop watch if necessary.
i. ☐ Understand the skills station and holding area rotation and know which personnel are available to assist in rotation.
j. ☐ Confirm that practical skills station set-up ensures confidential testing.

Provide Candidate with Skills Station Testing Information:

a. ☐ State the name of the skills station (shown as Primary Task on practical skills sheet).
b. ☐ Advise candidates of testing time allotted.
c. ☐ Advise candidates that instructions cannot be repeated after testing starts.
d. ☐ If skills station has multiple skills that are lengthy or complex, advise the candidate that the practical skills instructions may be read and performed in stages.
e. ☐ Advise candidates to verbalize all actions while testing (if appropriate for skills station).
f. ☐ Team or Assistant skills stations: Advise candidates they must verbalize all actions and speak instructions to team members or Assistant as appropriate.
g. ☐ Advise candidates to clap or say "done" when finished (if appropriate for skills station).
h. ☐ Tell candidates that pass / fail results for each skills station will be provided upon completion of each skills testing station.
i. ☐ If the failure occurs on the initial practical testing date, the candidate is allowed to retest after being allowed adequate time for remediation.
j. ☐ If candidate feels unsafe during testing, the candidate should immediately stop testing and state the safety reason for stopping.

Skills Evaluator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Starting the Test

a. ☐ Read the candidate instructions verbatim from the practical skills sheets. Do not add additional instructions or rephrase the instructions.
b. ☐ If testing has not begun, you may repeat the instructions verbatim from the practical skills sheet.
c. ☐ Advise candidates that they may ask how much time is remaining.
d. ☐ For multiple skills that are lengthy or complex, the practical skills instructions may be read and performed in stages, as long as it is *consistently* done among all candidates.
e. ☐ Remind candidates to clap or announce "done" upon completion of testing station.
f. ☐ Ask the candidates if they understand the instructions. Once testing begins, you cannot repeat the instructions.
g. ☐ If the candidate continues to state they do not understand the instructions, refer the candidate to the program director.
h. ☐ Start the stop watch when testing begins.

During Test

a. ☐ Do not speak during testing, unless a safety issue arises. In the event of a safety issue, immediately stop testing and direct the candidate to a holding area.
b. ☐ When the candidate claps or announces that he / she is done, stop the stop watch. At this point, candidates cannot perform any skills they may have forgotten.

After Test

a. ☐ Record the exact amount of time it took the candidate to complete the skills station. Do not round up or down.
b. ☐ Direct the candidate to the next skills station or holding area.
c. ☐ Clearly indicate the reasoning for each fail on the practical skills sheet.
d. ☐ Ensure the practical skills sheet is complete and accurate.
e. ☐ Sign and date as evaluator.
f. ☐ Prepare practical skills station for the next candidate.

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Skills Evaluator
Guidelines for Practical Skills Testing

Safety Issues During Testing

If the skills evaluator feels that a candidate poses a safety risk to himself / herself, other candidates, skills evaluators or equipment during their skills testing, the skills evaluator should immediately stop the examination and notify the skills coordinator. Direct the candidate to a holding area while you discuss the situation with the skills coordinator or program director.

- If the candidate is the cause of the safety risk, the skill is considered a failure. If the failure occurs on the initial practical testing date, the candidate is allowed to retest after being allowed adequate time for remediation.

- If the candidate is not the cause (i.e. equipment malfunction), the candidate shall be allowed to repeat the skill. The skills station must be repeated in its entirety. In this situation, repeating the skills station is not counted as a failure; therefore, the same skills evaluator is allowed to evaluate the candidate's repeat test.

- The program director will have the final authority in the event of a conflict of opinion.

Interrupted Skills

If a practical skills test is interrupted due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control, the candidate is allowed to repeat the skills station. The skills station must be repeated in its entirety. In this situation, repeating the skills station is not counted as a failure; therefore, the same skills evaluator is allowed to evaluate the candidate's repeat test.

Retesting

a. ☐ On the initial practical skills test date, the candidate has the option of retesting any failed practical skills station(s)
b. ☐ Prepare to retest at the skills station assigned by the skills coordinator, remembering:
   - ✓ The skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course cannot evaluate that skills station, either initially or as a retest, and
   - ✓ A skills evaluator cannot evaluate both the initial and 2nd testing attempts
c. ☐ The retest must be performed in its entirety (not just the portion failed previously)
d. ☐ Complete the retest column on the practical skills sheet and sign the form

Team Skills Retesting

Team skills shall be evaluated on an individual basis. For example, if one candidate fails his / her part of the team skills, only that person fails that skill set, not the whole team. When retesting, all candidates on the team should be involved in the test; however, only the candidate failing the initial skills test for that station should be evaluated. Candidates are retested performing the same role.

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