

2012 H-40 Battalion Chief Examination Answers to Questions from Candidates

- Q1. On role play exercise do we get to see a copy of general order before actual test day?
A1. **No, the general order will be provided on the day of the test.**
- Q2. Will we be allowed to make copies of any pages of the Disaster plan?
A2. **Yes.**
- Q3. Regarding the Role Play Exercise, what software would we be using? Will it be on a desktop computer or a lap top? Will the computer for Role Play be a PC or MAC?
A3. **During the preparation period, you may write your response by hand (pencil and paper) or use a PC. If you choose to use the computer, you will prepare your response in Word 2010.**
- Q4. What type of keyboard will we be using on the computer?
A4. **You will be provided with a standard keyboard (i.e., full size with number pad and function keys).**
- Q5. What if we have technical difficulties (settings, formatting, etc.)?
A5. **You should inform the proctor if you are having technical difficulties. Assistance will be provided as appropriate. Advanced computer skills are not required.**
- Q6. What if you experience technical problems, power failure, with the computer during the writing component of the test? Will additional time be allowed after the problem is corrected?
A6. **Any issues that arise during the administration of the test will be immediately addressed by staff.**
- Q7. Will the General Form format be available on the computer? Will it be in the same format as the General Form on AO reports?
A7. **The General Form on the computer will be similar in format to the General Form on AO Reports.**
- Q8. Will I have the use of a stapler if the document that I create is more than one page?
A8. **First, we will print double-sided. For more than two pages you will be able to staple the pages together.**
- Q9. Regarding the Meeting portion of the test- Will the role players be actors or officers from other fire departments?
A9. **The role players will be actors.**
- Q10. Will we be given a copy of the MEP manual and Rules and Regulations for use during the Role Play?
A10. **Please refer to Role Play Exercise Sample Candidate Instructions in the 2012 H-40 Preparation Guide.**

- Q11. Can we bring an electronic timer for the Role Play Exercise as well?
A11. No, you may not bring an electronic timer for the Role Play Exercise. The proctor will place a timer where you can monitor it during the role play.
- Q12. In the role-play exercise, are the captains you are meeting with the senior captains in their respective stations?
A12. Yes
- Q13. After having the meeting with the Captains in the role play exercise will we be directed to complete any documentation?
A13. No.
- Q14. Can you give a better indication of what is expected in the role play scenario? The sample is very vague?
A14. The General Order provided on the day of the test will give you direction.
- Q15. Will we be given an easel chart and markers for the Role Play exercise?
A15. You will not be provided with an easel chart, but you will be given a hi-liter.
- Q16. How much time is allowed for the initial response to each incident simulation exercise scenario?
A16. Time allotted for the initial response to a scenario will be either eight minutes or ten minutes. The narrator will tell you for each initial scenario how much time you are allotted to respond.
- Q17. How much time is allowed to respond to each developing situation?
A.17 Time allotted for the response to a developing situation will be either six minutes or ten minutes. The narrator will tell you for each developing situation how much time you are allotted to respond.
- Q18. The sample narrative referred to Control A 4 as Command channel A 4. The Incident Commander is the only person who activates the use of a Command Channel. Can we be expected to be dispatched on Control Channels or Command Channels?
A18. For the purposes of this test, the control channel will be A4. There will not be a command channel unless you call for one.
- Q19. The sample dispatch sheet shows Control A12 as the control channel and the tac channel is also listed as TAC 12. Additionally, when the narrator reads the dispatch, she instructs to "respond on Control A4." Is the A12 on the dispatch slip a typo?
A19. For all scenarios the control channel will be A4, and the tactical channel will be A12.
- Q20. In developing scenarios, how do we answer question #1 (Initial on- scene report).
A20. For all developing situations, you will answer only questions 2 and 3.

- Q21. Do the questions need to be answered in order? If there is overlapping information does it need to be repeated? Do I need to mention the company tasks in the Action Plan even though I'm assigning them in question 3?
- A21. You should answer the questions in order: your initial response, your action plan, and your assignment of companies to perform the tasks in your action plan. With regard to overlapping information, you must include enough information in your response so that the raters can understand what your plan is and which companies are assigned which tasks.**
- Q22. Will we be able to answer the primary scenario during the secondary scenario?
- A22. No you must complete your initial response to the scenario within the time allotted.**
- Q23. In the last Captain's test and Lieutenant's test, any answers given in the initial scenario had to be given again during the secondary scenario, if needed. Is that going to be true on this exam?
- A23. Your responses to any developing situation should be based on the information that you are given for that developing situation.**
- Q24. In the last H-30 test, the developing scenarios were to be treated separately from the actions we directed during the primary scenario. Are we expected to treat the H-40 developing scenarios separately from our primary scenario?
- A24. If the developing situation requires you to divert companies from their initial assignment, then you should do so.**
- Q25. Can we assume that all first alarm companies can be utilized immediately when we arrive on-scene? If we request a second alarm can we immediately use those companies? (Are they on scene right away).
- A25. For test purposes, yes.**
- Q26. Do all companies need to be assigned a task or can we have a couple in reserve. i.e. - We request a third alarm and only use two engines and a truck? Will we be penalized for not deploying second alarm companies after striking a second alarm? If we call for a second alarm and do not assign all the companies within the second alarm, will we be penalized? If so, to what degree would we be penalized? If you call for a third alarm and do not use those specific companies, will you be penalized for keeping them in Staging? Are points deducted from your score if you call for resources that are not deemed necessary by the scoring committee?
- A26. You should call for only resources that you need within the parameters of the responses defined in the Dispatch Booklet. [For example, if you use only two of the companies from the second alarm, you should not be requesting a third alarm.] and you should account for all resources that you call for. Scoring guidelines will be developed concurrent with the administration of the test.**
- Q27. How long is the narrative instruction (time wise)?
- A27. Narrative instruction will vary depending on the scenario.**

- Q28. Will developing situation(s) be given only after the response period for the initial scenario is completed? Or is it possible that we may be interrupted during our initial scenario response and be given a developing situation where we are expected to provide a response to the developing situation before completing our answer to the initial scenario?
- A28. Developing situations will be given only after the time allotted for the initial response period has expired.**
- Q29. Is there going to be the 3 bells to mark the next part?
- A29. No**
- Q30. Will any of the other responding Battalion Chiefs have an H-10 Incident Support Specialist?
- A30. No**
- Q31. The sample photos are black and white and are not very clear. Can the photos be more clear? In the overhead shot, it is difficult to locate the low pressure hydrants and to determine other details that may be important in answering the questions (i.e. are those skylights or solar panels?)
- A31. The sample photos are in color. The test photos will also be in color. The photos will be as clear as we can make them. For test purposes assume that all the autos in the photo have moved.**
- Q32. Are the buildings in the overhead shot going to have addresses or do we assume that the smoke and fire is always coming out of the address that is dispatched?
- A32. The smoke and fire will be coming from the building identified in the dispatch.**
- Q33. Are we required to draw a Street diagram with Apparatus, ladder and hose placement?
- A33. No.**
- Q34. Can we take notes during the audio instructions? During what period, and how much time, do you have to make notes before the scenarios begin?
- A34. You may begin taking notes once the proctor has started the recorded narration. However, it is recommended that you pay attention to what the narrator is saying.**
- Q35. Will we be allowed to use the same notes we made for our first scenario for subsequent scenarios?
- Q35. You may use your notepaper however you want.**
- Q36. Our usual dispatch protocol does not send a third Battalion Chief on a first alarm, or a Rescue Captain on a second alarm. The prep guide shows a Battalion Chief on a first alarm and a Rescue Captain on a second alarm. Will the test represent an actual SFFD dispatch, or will fictitious additions be made? The second Rescue Squad is not included in the dispatch slip. Is there a reason for this?
- A36. For test purposes, the responding companies will be as indicated in the Dispatch Booklet.**
- Q37. Will we be told when companies arrive, or should we expect them to be on scene directly after we call for a greater alarm?
- A37. No, you will not be told when companies arrive. For test purposes, you should expect them to be on scene directly after you call for them.**

- Q38. The Preparation Guide only mentioned a few of the manuals for Incident Simulation Exercise. Was that deliberate? For instance the Transit Manual was not mentioned.
- A38. Candidates should be familiar with all Fire Department General Orders, the Fire Department Manuals, Training Bulletins and other references. Please note that the knowledge of the policies, general orders, and relevant department procedures and manuals in designing a firefighting plan is listed as one of the KSAs (under Knowledge of Policies and Procedures, page 15) for Incident Simulation Exercise in the Preparation Guide.**
- Q39. Will the engines be ALS engines?
- A39. For the purposes of the test consider all engines to be ALS**
- Q40. After the fourth and final incident simulation exercise is over, the proctor will collect all of our test materials, including notes. Will any of those materials or notes be seen or scored by the raters?
- A40. No.**
- Q41. Will we be directed to complete any documentation after the fourth scenario? There is no mention of a Post Fire Report, will that be required pertaining to the simulation exercise?
- A41. No.**
- Q42. The High rise Manual requires the IC to determine and announce a hose line size for all companies to bring and use for an operation. In the prep guide instructions specific hose line sizes are not needed. Doesn't this conflict with the manual?
- A42. In the event of a high rise scenario, responses should be based on the May 2012 High Rise Manual.**
- Q43. I and others to whom I have spoken, find Question 3, in the incident simulation exercise to be very unclear as to the scope of the response desired. For example, if arriving on a High Rise Full Box which answer would be most correct as to scope and detail expected for assignment to the first arriving officer:
- A43. In the event of a High Rise scenario, your response to question three should reflect the responsibilities of the Incident Commander as specified in the May 2012 High Rise Manual.**
- Q44. The third question asks the candidate to "Describe the tasks that you would assign to company officers to carry out your action plan." Would the candidate be able to direct the drivers and tillers of companies or would we have to direct the drivers/tillers through the company officers? For example, during a fire, the IC may want to reposition the aerial to a certain location and the truck officer may be inside the building. Can I direct the truck driver to relocate the aerial ladder or would I have to direct the truck officer to direct the driver to relocate the aerial?
- A44. For test purposes, the Incident Commander is responsible for assigning all tasks in order to implement the action plan.**
- Q45. How detailed does the Incident Action Plan need to be? A brief Action Plan may take 1 minute. A complete Action Plan could take 30 minutes to explain.
- A45. Please refer to the sample response for an indication regarding the level of detail expected. Also, note that you will have eight or ten minutes for your response to the initial situation.**

- Q46. Incident Action Plans generally include assigning tasks. Assigning tasks is the subject of question 3. Do we need to repeat the information for both questions?
- A46. For test purposes, describe your action plan, then assign companies to perform tasks to implement your action plan.**
- Q47. It was not clear to me the part about stating the company I want to assign a task. Do I need to state the company, for example Engine 53, or can I just state the type of company, for example, only saying "Engine." As an example, do I need to state Truck 33 will be laddering the fire building or can I just say a truck will be laddering the fire building? After listening to the audio tape again, it was not clear whether we need "only to identify the companies that are to perform a particular action that you ordered, for example, Engine 53, Truck 33, etc." or "The scoring keys will be designed to reflect that you have assigned a resource to a task not that you have assigned a specific apparatus to a specific task. For example, an engine versus Engine 53." My original question was do we need to specify a specific apparatus or not? The instructions seem to conflict.
- A47. It is recommended that you specify the company to which you are assigning a task to enable you to track your assignments as you make them. If you have two companies available to you, [e.g., E-55 and E-57], and one task to assign, you may assign the task to either company and still be correct. The scoring key in this instance would allow for you to assign the task to either company.**
- Q48. In the preparation guide, it states no additional points will be given for mentioning ladder types or specific tools. Will mentioning specific hose leads (readyline, monitor nozzle, 2 1/2", or a large line wyed off) be worth any points? Or is it sufficient to tell the Engine company to make a "hoselead" as was done in the sample answer?
- A48. There are no additional points given for naming specific tools. However, it is recommended that you specify the type of hose lead if it is critical to performing the tasks that you assign. For example, if you intend to send a second engine company to back up the first engine company on the fire floor, it would be important to know that you initially directed the appropriate hose lead so that both companies have a line.**
- Q49. During the incident simulation exercise, will we assign Company Officers to tasks and expect that they know what tools and equipment they need to complete those tasks?
- A49. Yes, except as otherwise clarified herein.**
- Q50. Are we responsible for rig placement for this test?
- A50. No**
- Q51. Can an engine or truck company complete more than one task, or do the number of resources need to match the number of tasks since we are being rated on "the type and number of resources that you assign to accomplish your action plan"?
- A51. Your assignments should be based as if you were at a real fire, and whatever you would expect a company to be able to accomplish in that eight to ten minute period. For developing situations, you may deem it appropriate to "re-task" companies, then back fill. Again, work as you would in the field.**
- Q52. If we were to call for a second Rescue Squad, do we have to assign it a task under Question 3?
- A52. Yes, as you would for any other resource that you request.**

- Q53. Would any answers given during the secondary scenarios be counted toward the primary scenario. Also, would I need to repeat any resources requested or tasks assigned during the primary scenario for the secondary scenarios.
- A53. Each of your responses must be based on the information provided for that scenario. You will not receive credit for responses to the initial situation during the response period for the developing situation. However, any resources you requested during the initial situation will be available to you during the developing situation, e.g., you do not need to call for a second alarm twice.**
- Q54. Do we have to exactly match the amount of resources with the amount of tasks assigned? The directions and sample narration seem to imply this is how the raters will rate. IF so, please take into account the fact that many companies can accomplish many tasks during the different stages of an incident. Example- splitting a truck crew for vertical ventilation, forcible entry, checking for extension, and search/rescue.
- A54. You should respond to the scenarios as you deem appropriate and in accordance with Department policy and procedures.**
- Q55. Are the responses to be graded separately by question section? Specifically, if I neglect to mention an objective as part of my initial action plan but do accomplish the objective in my task assignments will I still receive full credit for my response? For example, if I fail to mention "laddering exposure Bravo" as an objective in my incident action plan, but when assigning tasks, I do order a truck company to ladder exposure Bravo do I receive full credit? Or do I have to mention it twice (i.e. in the incident action plan and again when assigning companies) as the narrator did in the sample response?
- A55. It is recommended that you preface each section with "my initial report ...", "my action plan ...", and my assignments to companies" However, if you want to add something that you forgot and the response period has not expired, simply say so. To cite your example, say "my action plan should have included laddering exposure Bravo."**
- Q56. Also, the narrator completed his size-up after his initial communication and before giving his action plan. Would I still receive full credit if I included size-up considerations as part my initial report? Regarding the "action plan"- Are we being evaluated on stating our "size-up"? This was done in the sample narration BUT doesn't answer any of the three questions. As you know- the "size-up" is taken into consideration to develop an "action plan" BUT it is not the action plan. An action plan is just that, action!
- A56. The information in your initial report should be based on Department manuals. You are not required to include size-up considerations as part of your initial report.**
- Q57. Will the developing scenario be started with the ringing of a bell, or some other prompt?
- A57. The narrator will announce the developing scenario.**
- Q58. Are we to state or indicate where arriving companies should position their apparatus. The sample narrative does not state where arriving companies should be positioned. The Preparation Guide says the aerial photo will not be evaluated. Therefore we can not indicate apparatus position on the photo.
- A58. Candidates may draw apparatus on the photos for tracking purposes, but any notations on the photos will not be scored.**

Q59. Will we be scored on directing companies to use specific hydrants or is it sufficient to tell Company Officers to obtain a supply, or supply a specific engine?

A59. You are not expected to direct companies to use specific hydrants.

Q60. How do we file a formal protest of the exam?

A60. Please refer to the Civil Service Rules available on the City's website, www.sfgov.org/civil_service.

Q61. Why are the values so evenly matched? Fires involve life safety- Counseling does not.

A61. The weights of the test components were established in a multi-step process that examined the strength of the link between the work samples in the test components and the KSAs identified as critical during job analysis.

Q62. During secondary scenarios, will we be assigning tasks to companies that are on scene, standing by at the command post?

A62. You will have available to you any resources that you have requested prior to the developing situation. Of course, you may also request additional resources as you deem appropriate.

Q63. Will candidate be personally video recorded for incident simulation exercise as well a role playing exercise?

A63. Yes, candidates will be video recorded during both exercises.

Q64. Do candidates have to be in uniform for both exercises?

A64. Yes, candidates are required to wear Station uniform for both Role Play and Incident Simulation Exercises, but are not allowed to wear anything that identifies by name.

Q65. What is the reason for video-taping the fire scene scenarios? We will have no interaction with people, only paper.

A65. The purpose is to provide the raters with the information needed to evaluate the abilities being measured in the exercise.

Q65. Will our note paper be lined? If so can we also get some blank paper? Is it possible to get blank paper without any lines?

A66. The note paper will be lined