



Adaptation of the Assessment Process for Small & Medium Sized Public Safety Agencies



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Context

- During the past 15+ years have served over 100 fire and emergency service agencies
- Majority of departments range from 50 to 150 total personnel
- Law enforcement departments are primarily municipal or county in nature
- Fire and rescue agencies range from municipal and county to special district organizations



Context (continued)

- Agencies impose a number of constraints
 - Labor agreements often specify "assessment"
 - Some labor agreements specify exercises to be included
 - Management sometimes determines the use of an assessment process
 - Management will specify various types of exercises
 - Public safety agencies are often bound by "past practices"
 - "We have always done it this way"
 - All public safety agencies face cost constraints



Context (continued)

- Number of candidates processed critical
 - Typically range from 8 to 40 (Most 15 - 25)
 - Maximum number per day of 10 - 12
 - Labor agreements / announcements sometimes restrict operating hours
 - Scheduling impacted by work schedule (overtime)
 - Attempt to limit a candidate's participation to 1/2 day
 - Confidentiality of process is a severe limitation for some agencies



Job Task Analysis

- Often not available, sometimes not even known to agencies and applicable individuals
- "Why do I need that, I know what I want included"
- Often use a DACUM process to identify "Duties & Tasks" of the position / rank
- If agency will not participate in a JTA / DACUM a Summary Job Task Analysis is developed
 - Summary JTA based on current Job Description
 - Some job descriptions quite helpful, others not helpful at all

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Job Task Analysis (continued)

- DACUM is an acronym for Developing A CURriculuM)
- Originally a job identification tool, now expanded to identify Duties & Tasks associated with a job
- Quick and economical to complete
- Based on the premise that those doing the job know the job better than anyone else
- No intermediary interpretation / analysis
- Utilizes 5 - 7 individuals currently in the job / position
- Requires two days of intensive effort
- Produces Duties, Tasks, Knowledge & Skills, Positive Work Behaviors, & Necessary Tools & Equipment

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Job Task Analysis (continued)

	Duties ←		→ Tasks			
A	Respond to Emergency Calls	A-1 Evaluate Dispatch Information	A-2 Navigate Appropriate Route	A-3 Handle Radio Communications	A-4 Perform Incident Command, e.g. Street or Safety Investigation	A-5 Perform Routine Operations, e.g. Water, Fire, Arrest
B	Manage Department Personnel	B-1 Serve as Mentor	B-2 Coordinate with Station Captain	B-3 Carry Out Supervisor's Directives, e.g. Scheduling, Training	B-4 Delegate Routine Tasks	B-5 Assign Operational Duties, e.g. Medical, Fire, Report
C	Perform Routine Duties	C-1 Complete Morning Roll Call	C-2 Verify Transfer of Custody of Controlled Substances	C-3 Ensure Completion of Made-Up Checklist	C-4 Assess Medication Readiness	C-5 Monitor Practitioner with Inventions

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Assessors

- **Obtaining assessors requires effort & planning**
 - Agencies & candidates expect fire (police) officers to serve as assessors (credibility)
 - Difficult to obtain, a maximum of 1 - 2 days total
 - Specify individuals at or above the rank being assessed
 - Ensuring diversity is difficult due to characteristics of public safety personnel
- **Development of training program essential**
 - Have "trained" over 550 fire and law enforcement officers
 - Training focused on understanding assessments, the scoring system utilized, dimensions being evaluated, and consensus scoring
 - Training limited to 1/2 day maximum
- **Assessors are assigned to a specific exercise and do not follow candidates**



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Assessors (continued)

- **For some processes non public safety managers can be utilized**
 - Chief officer processes
 - Managers, educators, and HR staff can be used
 - Exercises such as interpersonal activities and other managerial tasks are appropriate for non-technical assessors
- **Critical that public safety personnel be utilized for Fire / EMS / Law enforcement operational scenarios**
 - Technical knowledge essential
 - Understanding of Incident Management System of emergency incident mitigation important
 - Also necessary for technical presentation exercises



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Scoring Process

- **Scoring of dimensions utilized**
 - Eight (8) point system (1 - 4 fail & 5 - 8 pass)
 - Individual assessor scoring utilizes only whole points
 - Consensus scoring allows half point scores
 - Each whole point score specifically defined
- 8 - This interview score is the equivalent of an "A+"
The candidate demonstrates an outstanding level of knowledge of the subject (some included in the exercise). The candidate successfully presented the dimensions as a response that would bring credit to the candidate, the department and to the governmental entity. The candidate demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the subject score relates to the position being competed for.
- 3 - This interview score is the equivalent of a "D"
The candidate demonstrates an unsatisfactory level of performance. Essential elements and/or knowledge base of the subject or some were not included. The performance system concepts and questions, consequences, alternatives, as known and available for the exercise, and how the potential to bring embarrassment to the candidate, the department, and to the governmental entity.



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Scoring Process (continued)

- **Individual scoring**
 - Undertaken by dimension
 - Extensive assessor notes encouraged (career evaluation)
 - Scoring is to a "standard" however comparative analysis among candidates is necessary
- **Consensus scoring**
 - Lead assessor selected, coordinates consensus scoring
 - Assessors allowed to use half points for consensus
 - Emphasis placed on 2 part process, first, come to agreement within one point on 8 point scale, second, come to agreement on candidate score dimension by dimension
 - Not possible to have all assessors participate in consensus scoring for each candidate across 3 - 4 exercises (time constraints)
- **Assessors must initial master score sheet**



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Assessment Process Application

- Options are to adapt the assessment process to the agencies or allow them to go off in a different direction
- Constraints really impact the adaptation process
 - Time
 - Cost
 - Availability of assessors
 - Imposed requirements
- Essential components of assessment process are still in place



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Assessment Process Application

(continued)

- The job task analysis drives the dimensions / behaviors incorporated into the assessment
- The scenarios / exercises / activities chosen must reflect both the emergency service profession and specific aspects of the agency involved
- While others are utilized, the most common scenarios / exercises utilized to demonstrate the dimensions / behaviors are:
 - Operational Scenario (Fire or EMS or both)
 - Interpersonal Activity (Internal or external)
 - Presentation Exercise (Training or outside group)



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Assessment Process Application

(continued)

- Public safety agencies / members must be technically competent
- Recognized that they must mitigate an "emergency" while chaos reigns
- The lower level positions / ranks require an increased attention to Technical Knowledge
- Company Officer (1st or 2nd level supervision) and higher combine managerial dimensions / behaviors with technical knowledge



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Operational Scenario

- May be fire, EMS, or law enforcement
- A computer simulation program is often utilized
- Technical Knowledge an absolute necessity
 - National command procedures
 - Strategic & tactical standard policies & procedures
 - Agency policies / procedures
- Other dimensions / behaviors can include:
 - Organizing & Planning
 - Decision Making / Problem Solving
 - Judgment
 - Oral Communication



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Interpersonal Activity

- Technical knowledge is essential element of evaluation
 - Knowledge of organization's rules & regulations
 - Understanding of level of authority
 - Ability to intake citizen complaints / concerns
- Other dimensions can include
 - Decision Making / Problem Solving
 - Judgment
 - Oral Communications
 - Written Communications



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Presentation Exercise

- **Technical Knowledge is also a key factor**
 - Exercise typically takes one of two directions
 - Internal presentation (Training of personnel)
 - External presentation (Community group)
 - Both types require a technical knowledge base of information coupled with other dimensions including
 - Oral communication
 - Organizing & planning
 - Judgment



Technical Knowledge

- **Technical knowledge essential in public safety profession**
- **Career management article (Firehouse Magazine 02/11) by Steve Prziborowski identified 11 reasons that candidates fail simulation exercises**
 - 7 address technical knowledge, or lack thereof
 - 2 involve managerial skills, or lack thereof
 - Time management, organizational and planning skills
 - Poor listening, oral and written communication skills
 - 2 involve personal situations
 - Preparation
 - Nervousness



Initial Promotional Level

- **Driver / Engineer or Operator**
- **Focus is almost totally on technical competencies**
- **Typically the D / E does not supervise others**
- **Technical competencies include:**
 - **Hydraulics (Pumping)** Getting water at the proper flow and pressure to crews fighting the fire or other incident
 - **Emergency Vehicle Operating Course** Focuses on the ability to maneuver the apparatus through a variety of traffic cone stations
 - **Street Driving** Requires knowledge of traffic laws and requirements
 - **Equipment Knowledge** Each driver must know where all equipment is located and how to set up for use
 - **Aerial Operations** If agency has an aerial truck this aspect may be included in evaluation



Live Technical Simulation



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First Level Supervisor

- Typically referred to as a Fire Lieutenant or Captain
- Other potential is Rescue Lieutenant
 - Supervising Paramedic
- Emphasis must still be on Technical Knowledge however, other behaviors are included and evaluated
 - Organizing and Planning
 - Decision Making / Problem Solving
 - Judgment
 - Oral Communications

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Rescue Lieutenant / Supervisor

- One method of evaluating a significant portion of the Technical Knowledge behavior is through a "live" simulation
- One type of example is for a Rescue Supervisor's position
- Live person or manikin for patient and role players for other responders
- Technical Knowledge is primary behavior but supplemental focus is on technical decision making, judgment, and oral communication skills

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EMS Live Simulation



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Higher Level Supervisors / Managers

- Generally referred to as Battalion / District / Division Chief
- Usually a second level supervisor
- Technical Knowledge still an important aspect but may include fire prevention or code enforcement as well as operations
- Other behaviors include
 - Organizing & Planning
 - Decision Making / Problem Solving
 - Judgment and / or Leadership
 - Oral and Written Communications

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Operational (Fire) Simulation

- Utilize a computer generated simulation that allows local building / location to be utilized
(www.firelabconstruction.com)
- Enables candidate to be evaluated against local policies & procedures using agency responses
- Higher the officer's level, the more complex the simulation
 - Company Officer - single family house or small commercial building
 - Battalion or District Chief - apartment, condominium, or high rise residential or commercial structure
 - Communication primarily over two-way radio with experienced facilitator

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Example of Ops Scenario



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Summary

- Cost and imposed requirements quite restrictive
- JTA often not available or must be developed
- Assessor training a real challenge
- Established scoring system utilized, including reaching consensus
- Most common exercises are Operational, Interpersonal, and Presentation
- Technical Knowledge a key behavior
- Initial promotional level almost purely technical
- Second level and higher ranks include other managerial behaviors

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Thank You

Questions?

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