

**TOP TIPS TO ACE YOUR NEXT
FIRE DEPARTMENT
PROMOTIONAL EXAM!**



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Deputy Chief (Ret.)



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WHO I AM / AM NOT:



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Steve Prziborowski

32+ years fire service & teaching experience.....

- ✓ **Fire Explorer:** Alameda (CA) F.D.
- ✓ **Student FF:** Oakland (CA) F.D.
- ✓ **Paid Call FF:** Elk Grove (CA) F.D.

Santa Clara County (CA) Fire Department:

- ✓ **Firefighter/Engineer – Captain – Battalion Chief – Deputy Chief** (Training, Ops, Admin)
- ✓ **Instructor:** Chabot College Fire Program, NFA, Leadership/Officer Development
- ✓ **Contributing Editor:** Firehouse Magazine
- ✓ **2020:** Ronny J. Coleman Leadership Legacy Award - CPSE
- ✓ **2008:** California Fire Instructor of the Year
- ✓ **Married:** Bonnie – 24 years +

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FREE RESOURCES:

Promotional Prep/Officer Development:
www.code3firetraining.com
 (click the FREE STUFF link)

Entry-Level Firefighter Preparation:
www.chabotfire.com
 (click the FREE STUFF link)

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ENTRY-LEVEL & PROMOTIONAL RESOURCES:



iTunes – Amazon
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OBJECTIVES:

- Identify 13 tips to help you prepare for your promotional exam
- Provide an overview of the fire service assessment center process & typical events encountered
- Provide tools to create an action plan to best prepare for the position & the actual testing process

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OBJECTIVES:

- Provide common mistakes candidates make when participating in promotional examinations and the specific events
- Provide typical traits of successful performers in promotional examinations

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THIS CLASS IS NOT:

- A department specific promotional class that will give you all the answers and/or nuggets to be successful...
- **Going to cover everything you need to know or do during your next exam**
- Going to have enough time to cover or practice everything we need to – we have 4 hours together.

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**TOP 13 TIPS TO HELP YOU
FOCUS & ACE YOUR NEXT
PROMOTIONAL EXAM**



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TIP #1:

Prepare for the POSITION & NOT Just for the Test



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DID YOU KNOW:

You're not just a supervisor, you're a

- ✓ HR Professional
- ✓ Risk Manager
- ✓ Health & Safety Officer
- ✓ Training Officer
- ✓ Designated Adult
- ✓ Supervisor, manager, role model, mentor, follower & leader!



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TIP #2:

Know your WHY & Have a Vision

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>MY WHY:</p> <p><u>To help others:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get hired / stay hired • Get promoted / stay promoted • Have a successful career & homelife • Have a long, enjoyable & healthy life & retirement | <p>MY VISION:</p> <p>Trying my best to <u>reduce & prevent</u> – life & career altering events while <u>ensuring organizational excellence & top-notch customer service</u></p> <p>1 person at a time.....</p> |
|---|---|

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TIP #3:

Create your Mission Statement & Values Statement

PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT:
Together with integrity, compassion & respect, WE can mentor, inspire & lead one another, focusing on continuous quality improvement while promoting emergency service professionalism & excellence – ultimately serving others to the best of our abilities & always paying it forward!

PERSONAL CORE VALUES: "Clear Tips"

- Compassion
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Service Above Self
- Respect

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TIP #4:

Start Building & Maintaining Positive Working Relationships



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TIP #5:

Don't Forget Why WE Are Here & Why YOU Are Here (In your Promoted Position)



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TIP #6:

Remember EVERY Point Counts

| Rank Order | Overall Final Score |
|------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 88.95% |
| 2 | 87.52% |
| 3 | 87.25% |
| 4 | 85.27% |
| 5 | 84.99% |
| 6 | 84.82% |
| 7 | 84.65% |
| 8 | 84.39% |
| 9 | 83.98% |
| 10 | 78.80% |
| 11 | 75.21% |

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TIP #7:

Be a Mentor for Someone Else



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TIP #8:

Find your Mentors



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TIP #9:
Know What "They" Are Looking For



I GOOGLED "FIRE ATTACK"
IT SAID WE SHOULD GO INTERIOR

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TIP #10:
**Continuously Strive for Credibility & Respect,
As Opposed to Just Being Liked**



if you want to make everyone happy, don't be a leader - sell ice cream.

DON'T WORRY GUYS

SCHROEDER IS ON SCENE

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TIP #11:
Remember We Promote People and NOT Resumes



IF I'VE GIVEN YOU THE IMPRESSION I'M YOUR FRIEND...

I APPOLIGIZE

EFO/CFO IS RUINING THE FIRE SERVICE
CHANGE MY MIND


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TIP #12:

Go Into the Process Positive – But NOT So Positive you Set Yourself Up for Failure!

"The garbage man doesn't get excited when he turns the corner and sees trash, because he's expecting it. Likewise, you should be expecting fire on every run." – Andy Fredericks - FDNY, Sq. 18



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TIP #13:

Last, but definitely not least....

- Demonstrate to the raters & ultimately the Fire Chief that you cannot just be a safe beginner, but that you can hit the ground running!

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WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE ASSESSMENT CENTER:

- **Candidates are assigned time/event slots**
- Standardized process for all
- **Position / job related activities**

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WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE ASSESSMENT CENTER:

- **Those evaluating you**
- May be created by inside or outside personnel
- **Most valid way to assess candidates**

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TOP 10 PITFALLS OF POOR PERFORMERS:

1. Lack of preparing / Not preparing for the position
2. **Focusing too much on “checking-the-box”**
3. Inability to think “long-term” or “big picture”

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TOP 10 PITFALLS OF POOR PERFORMERS:

4. **Lack of knowledge of SOP/SOGs, policies, standard/accepted practices, etc.**
5. Not understanding the scoring dimensions
6. **Nervousness gets the best of them**

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TOP 10 PITFALLS OF POOR PERFORMERS:

7. Lack of detail / unable to justify or defend actions or non-actions

8. Unsafe / unorthodox practices

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TOP 10 PITFALLS OF POOR PERFORMERS:

9. Inability to be the DESIGNATED ADULT!

10. Inability to demonstrate to the raters they can hit the ground running – not just be a safe beginner!

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11 STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

1. Take the process seriously

2. **Get involved**

3. Network / get mentored / mentor others

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11 STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

- 4. Keep out of trouble**
5. Train & educate yourself
- 6. Learn as much as you can**

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11 STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

7. Prepare for ALL phases of the process
- 8. Know your strengths & weaknesses**
9. Act is if you're in the position

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11 STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

- 10. Be on time for all phases**
11. Ensure your dress uniform still fits & all is correctly labeled!

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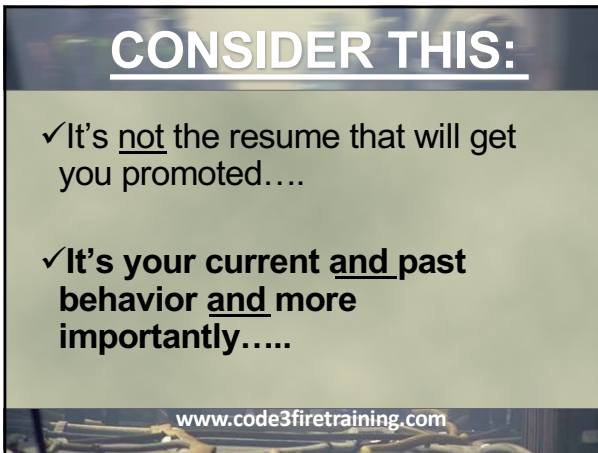
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CONSIDER THIS:

✓ It's not the resume that will get you promoted....

✓ It's your **current and past behavior and more importantly.....**

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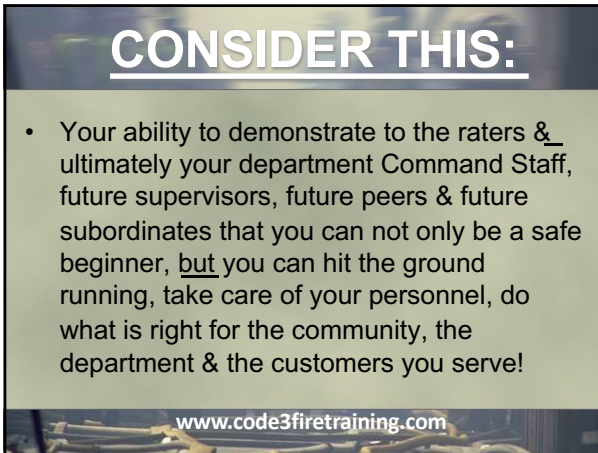


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CONSIDER THIS:

- Your ability to demonstrate to the raters & ultimately your department Command Staff, future supervisors, future peers & future subordinates that you can not only be a safe beginner, but you can hit the ground running, take care of your personnel, do what is right for the community, the department & the customers you serve!

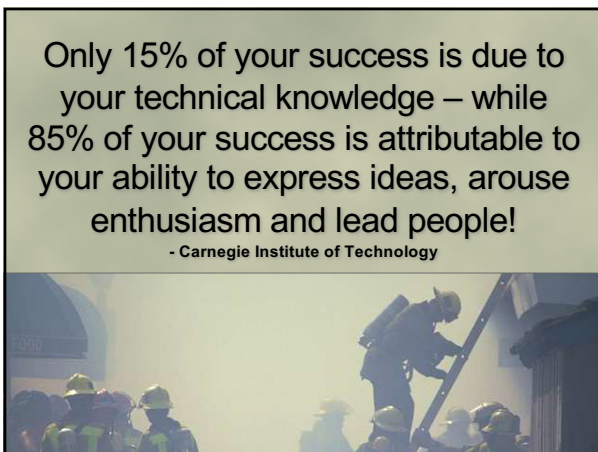
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Only 15% of your success is due to your technical knowledge – while 85% of your success is attributable to your ability to express ideas, arouse enthusiasm and lead people!

- Carnegie Institute of Technology



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What do “they” want in a promotional candidate?



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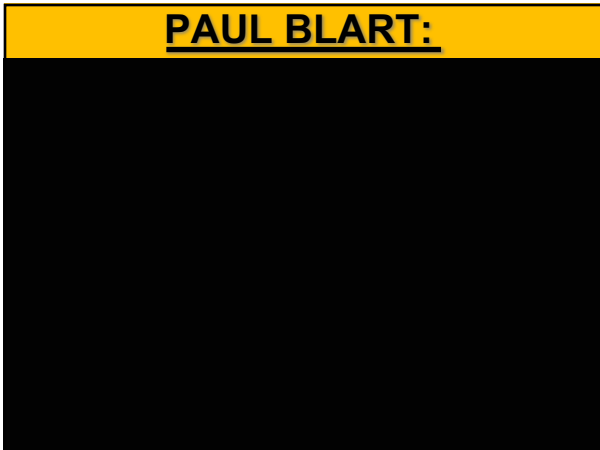


- Mission, Vision, Values
- SWOT analysis
- Critical Issues & Service Gaps
- Goals, Objectives, Critical Tasks

SOMEONE WHO GETS THE BIG PICTURE (Thinks Strategically)

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PAUL BLART:



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COMMON SCORING DIMENSIONS:

- **Oral communications**
- Written communications
- **Leadership**
- Command presence
- Decision making
- **Delegation**
- Problem analysis
- **Problem solving ability**

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COMMON SCORING DIMENSIONS:

- **Organizational skills**
- Planning ability
- **ICS**
- Flexibility
- Situational awareness
- **Time management**
- Strategy/tactics
- **Judgment**

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COMMON SCORING DIMENSIONS:

- **Knowledge of F.D. SOGs/SOPs, Rules and Regulations, etc.**
- Safety
- **Interpersonal skills**
- Ability to remain calm under pressure

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COMMON SCORING DIMENSIONS:

- Knowledge of local, state and federal standards and laws (OSHA, NFPA, accepted industry standards)
- **Risk management**
- Customer service

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HOW WILL THEY RATE ME?

- Standardized score sheets
- **Think of school – A, B, C, D & F or 100% to 90%, 89% to 80%, 79% to 70%, 69% to 60% etc.**
- If you don't say it or do it, you don't get credit for it!

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HOW TO BEST PREPARE:

- Talk to those who've taken or assisted with developing tests (inside & outside your FD)
- **Understand & practice the events you may see on the test**
- Review the job flyer
- **Review the job specifications**
- Prepare for the position!

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RESUME TIPS:

- Remember the main difference between a **resume** and an application
- Ideal length – 1 page
- **May be used as a screening mechanism (make sure you accurately showcase yourself)**
- Accentuate things with UPPERCASE, **bold**, *italics*, underline, bullets/dashes – using each sparingly and in various combinations

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RESUME TIPS:

- Use major headings such as Objective, Education, Experience, Community Service, etc.
- **Spell check, proofread, ensure accuracy**
- No references, hobbies, pictures, items that may show your age (high school, date of birth) or be used to discriminate against you

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THE WRITTEN EXAM:
- What to expect -

- Usually 100 questions, multiple choice
- **May be a % of your final score, or used to determine whether you'll go farther**
- Common subject areas include supervision, leadership, management, ICS, department manuals, strategy & tactics, etc.

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THE WRITTEN EXAM:
- *What to expect* -

- Know reading list well in advance
- **Obtain your own copies**
- Obtain any study guides
- **Study a little every day**

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THE WRITTEN EXAM:
- *What to expect* -

- Start reading at least a year in advance
- **3 x 5 cards to study & be quizzed on**
- Write down questions afterward
- **Don't read into the questions**

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ORAL INTERVIEWS:
- *What to expect* -

- **15 to 45 minutes of questions**
- Opening / closing statement
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- **Questions on:**
 - The dept., the community, the position
 - Your vision, values, leadership style, etc.
 - How you would handle different situations
 - Your background / current and future goals
 - Customer service

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ORAL INTERVIEWS:
- *What to expect* -

- Know yourself inside and out.
- **Rehearse answers for all questions**
- “Don’t just answer the question, answer the question!”
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- **“Intro/Body/Conclusion” method**
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ORAL INTERVIEWS:
- *What to expect* -

- **Back up statements with facts**
- Use personalized stories
- **Use experience to prove a point**
- Listen to the question
- **Answer how you would do it - not how you think they want you to**
- Show passion & enthusiasm!!!!

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- *What to expect* -

- **Role players or video based**
- May have follow-up questions
- **Is usually based on current issues relating to the department or fire service in general**
- Multiple problems
- **Expected to diffuse highly stressful situations**
- For sample Personnel Counseling scenarios, go to– www.code3firetraining.com - Free Stuff link

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- Key Points -

- Remember, **it's the behavior, not the person!**
- Understand progressive discipline & any rights personnel may have & how you fit in
- **Be able to be the designated adult**
- Ask open-ended questions

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- Key Points -

- **If role playing, don't expect immediate agreement**
- Understand resources available to your department (EAP, CISD, etc.)
- **Create personnel expectations in advance**
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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- FRISK Documentation Method -

- **F = FACTS** evidencing employee's unsatisfactory conduct.
- **R = RULE** or authority violated by the employee's behavior.
- **I = IMPACT** of the employee's unsatisfactory conduct on the workplace.

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- FRISK Documentation Method -

- **S = SUGGESTIONS** to assist the employee in improving performance and directions as to the proper conduct the employee is expected to follow in the future. These directions are also referred to as directives such as “Effective immediately, you will...”

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- FRISK Documentation Method -

- **K = KNOWLEDGE** of the employee’s right to respond to corrective documentation placed in personnel file.
- Created in 1994 by Stephen J. Anderson

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- FRISK Documentation Method -

- **Primary Objectives:**
 - Effect **positive change** through clear communication
 - Identify **common elements** necessary for legally sufficient documentation
 - Simplify the drafting of documentation by **establishing a framework**

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8 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL COUNSELING SESSION:

1. Start with a friendly greeting
2. Briefly state the problem
3. Let the employee explain their side, while you listen
4. Now you explain your side, what you have witnessed, and what facts you have while the employee listens

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8 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL COUNSELING SESSION:

5. State the rules for desired behavior
6. Develop an action plan to get the desired behavior
7. Review with feedback from the employee
8. Have a positive closing

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PERSONNEL COUNSELING:
- Key Points -

- Items you need to address ASAP:

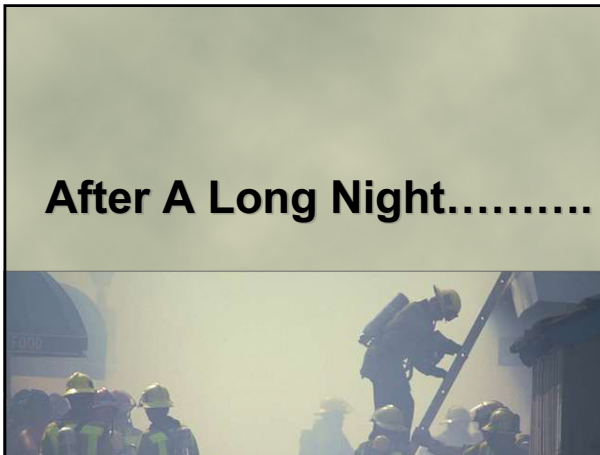
1. Issues relating to not treating others with **respect and courtesy**
2. Issues affecting **customer service**
3. Issues affecting **service delivery**
4. Issues relating to **character traits**

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BASED ON PREVIOUS VIDEO:

- **How could this have been prevented?**
- **Issues?**
- **Policies violated?**
- **What would you do and why?**
- **Level of discipline and why?**
- **Would you notify your supervisor?**
- **What documentation to complete?**

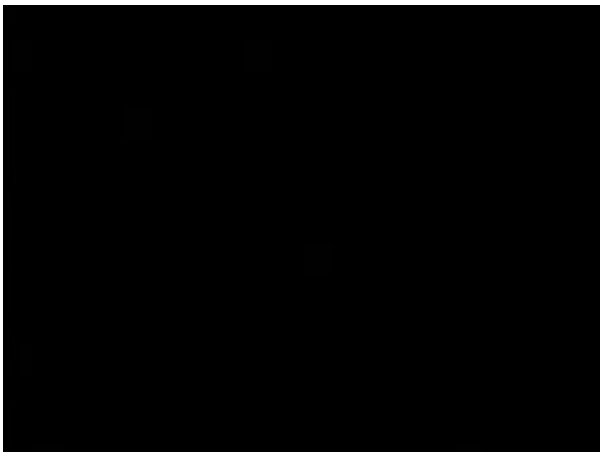


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The Kitty.....



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BASED ON PREVIOUS VIDEO:

- **How could this have been prevented?**
- **Issues?**
- **Policies violated?**
- **What would you do and why?**
- **Level of discipline and why?**
- **Would you notify your supervisor?**
- **What documentation to complete?**

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- What to expect -

- **5 to 45 minutes**
- One or more events
- **May be the first or later arriving unit**
- 2 to 4 raters / one department proctor
- **May be static or dynamic**
- May have follow-up questions
- **Will be stressful**

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- What to expect -

- May have to document (worksheet, ICS form 201, NFIRS report)
- **May have A.S.A.P. challenges:**
 - Firefighter down, missing, trapped
 - Civilians to rescue, evacuate, treat, diffuse
 - Media in your face
 - City folks in your face
 - Exposure problems

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- Prepare for the **position!**
- Expect any type of incident!
- **Practice every day!**
- Use ICS!
- **Call sufficient resources early!**

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- Have a full alarm in staging if big event
- **Big fire = big water!**
- If you don't say it, you didn't do it!
- **Ask for "CAN" reports**

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- Provide a detailed, concise & appropriate size-up and radio reports
- **When assigning units:**
 - Advise them what they'll be called (ICS terminology) or who they'll report to
 - Give clear, concise orders that contain tactical objectives (1 to 3 total)

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- If provided paperwork, use it
- Remember the incident doesn't start when the bell goes off, & doesn't end when you leave the scene

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- Ensure "**BENCHMARKS**" are stated:
 - Establish Command / Command Post location
 - **2 in / 2 out established or not established** / RIC
 - Strategic mode / Objectives
 - **Water supply**
 - Staging area location
 - **All clear / Secondary search completed**
 - Utilities secured
 - **PARs**
 - Under control

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EMERGENCY SIMULATION:
- Key Points -

- Ensure "**NOTIFICATIONS**" are stated:
 - Utility company (gas & electric)
 - **Law enforcement (& supervisor)**
 - Ambulance (& supervisor)
 - **Key FD personnel (Safety, PIO, Fire Investigator, Senior Staff, Duty Chief, etc.)**
 - Station move-ups / Volunteer call-back
 - **Mass Casualty Incident alert**
 - Board-up Company / American Red Cross
 - **City officials (Building Official, City Manager)**

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Report On Conditions Practice

You are the first arriving Officer (Company or Chief) – write out your on scene, 30 seconds or less, radio report

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Initial RADIO REPORT:

1. Unit ID
2. **Brief description of incident situation**
3. Obvious conditions
4. **Brief description of action taken**
5. Command mode & command post location

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Initial RADIO REPORT:

6. Strategic mode
7. Obvious safety concerns
8. Need for additional resources & staging area (or release of units)
9. Corrected address (if applicable)
 - All of the above in 30 seconds or less...

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Size-Up Practice

You are the first arriving Officer (Company or Chief) – write out all of your Size-Up concerns related to the same situation

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SIZE-UP:

- **W** (Water Supply)
- **A** (Area)
- **L** (Life Safety)
- **L** (Location / Extent)
- **A** (Apparatus Responding)
- **C** (Construction / Collapse Potential)
- **E** (Exposures)

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SIZE-UP:

- **W** (Weather)
- **A** (Auxiliary Appliances)
- **S** (Special Matters)

- **H** (Height)
- **O** (Occupancy)
- **T** (Time of Day)

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Assign Your First Alarm Companies

You are the first arriving Officer (Company or Chief) – write out your assignments for your first-alarm companies (ICS designator & tactical objectives)

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848 El Monte Road

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

- You will have five minutes to:
 1. Write out or verbalize your on-scene radio report (30 seconds or less) as the 1st due officer
 2. Write out your size-up concerns (FPODP, WALLACE WAS HOT, etc.)
 3. Assign your normal first-alarm companies

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400 Rincon Avenue, #31

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

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Thank you very much for your time –
be well & stay well!

Steve Prziborowski

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