

Captain Supervisory Multiple-Choice Test Preparation

Thank you for participating in the promotional process for captain. You have already performed highly responsible work in your current position. Should you become a captain, your performance will impact many more people both inside and outside the department. You will manage station activities assuming all supervisory responsibility for your crew and serve as a role model for all firefighters in the department.

Test Content

FireTEAM Promote Captain supervisory multiple-choice test was developed to measure specific aptitudes important in fire supervisory positions. There are two components to this supervisory exam: an employee observation component based on video scenarios and a series of written test questions. All test items were developed through rigorous research with many panels of experienced firefighting and fire service professionals. You don't need experience to answer the questions in this test. Common sense is always your best guide.

The test was designed to measure your ability in the following skill areas: Communication Skills, Discipline and Managing Difficult Employees, Interpersonal Relations with Staff and Customers, Managing Change, Managing Conflict, Managing Staff Performance, Prioritization/Effective Use of Resources, Reliability/Integrity, Team Development/Delegation, Training/Career Development and Working with Management. Further definitions are attached to the end of this document.

The questions are not intended to sample your knowledge of department procedures and rules. They are, rather, questions that probe your understanding of the impact of management actions and decisions. The purpose of using a written test is to present a large quantity of questions to compare candidates on their ability to consistently display good management thinking when analyzing issues, evaluating priorities and making decisions. Here is an example question:

Example Question. As a captain, you receive a memo from your supervisor stating that the department will need to provide a firefighter for a special assignment assisting a vendor at the station. Only when the vendor arrives do you realize that you forgot to schedule a firefighter. Which of the following should you do immediately?

- a) Assist the vendor yourself.
- b) Ask your supervisor if the vendor really needs a dedicated assistant.
- c) Adjust the schedule and assign a firefighter to work with the vendor.
- d) Notify your supervisor that you forgot to schedule a firefighter to assist the vendor.

Captain Supervisory Multiple-Choice Test Preparation

Test Security and Confidentiality

Character is important in all promotional processes. You will be required to sign a security and confidentiality agreement stating that you have not and will not violate test security through coaching or exchange of specific information about test items. Breach of this agreement is subject to prosecution under federal copyright law and would be viewed as an unacceptable integrity failure for an employee, particularly a management candidate.

Marking Your Answers

The answer sheet is machine scored so mark only one answer for each question and fill in the circle completely. If you mark more than one answer, you will get the question wrong. Erase all changes completely. Mark only on the answer sheet provided; do **not** mark in the test booklet. If you don't know the answer to a question, the best strategy is to mark an answer anyway because you may get it right and you will definitely get it wrong if you don't answer. Some choices may receive partial credit.

FireTEAM Promote Video Test Questions

In the first component, you will be shown video situations involving four firefighters. For each of these firefighters you will make a series of evaluations. Instructions for the exam are provided on the video tape. Make sure you can see and hear the video tape adequately. Let the administrator know immediately if you need to be retested.

FireTEAM Promote Written Test Questions

This component of the exam has a series of written multiple-choice questions, similar to the example provided on the previous page and a series of multi-part questions. For the first section in this component, you will be asked to select the response that is the best choice. For the second section, you will be asked to select both the best and the worst responses. Consider the possible consequences of the action on the unit involved and department as a whole as well as the effect on your supervisory relationship with subordinates. The third section contains multi-part questions.

All directions are clearly stated in the test itself.

Captain Supervisory Multiple-Choice Test Preparation

Corrective or Progressive Discipline Definitions as Used in This Exam

A key part of a supervisory management job is the training, coaching and counseling of staff. In most cases, performance issues and problems can be corrected by giving verbal counseling or simply talking with the employee, determining the cause of the problem and providing appropriate feedback and training. Sometimes problems can be more severe or of a continuing nature. There may be negative consequences for the employee for failure to comply. In this case, you need to follow organizational policy and follow a progression of steps to initiate corrective action or discipline.

Some of the questions in the test give choices that involve steps of corrective or progressive discipline. The information below, which is also contained in the test itself, describes how these steps are defined in the test. These steps will be bolded and in quotes. In this way, you will know that the test refers to a specifically defined action in the chart below. For example a choice might read, “The supervisor should issue a ‘**Written Reprimand**’”. Note that these definitions may not correspond exactly to the process you are familiar with in your current department.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Definition</i>
1) Oral Reprimand	An oral reprimand is a formal conversation between a captain and an employee about a specific aspect of the employee’s performance and/or conduct. Employee is put on notice that this is the first step in corrective discipline, but no record will be made in the individual’s personnel records.
2) Written Reprimand	A written reprimand is a formal written notice to the employee regarding repeated offenses or significant misconduct. Employee is given written notice of disciplinary action that will occur. Supervisors will usually involve higher level management or Human Resources and provide documentation of the employee’s actions leading up to the reprimand. The reprimand is recorded in the personnel file and is signed by the employee.
3) Unsatisfactory Service Rating or Other Consequences	Depending upon the nature of the problem, various types of actions can result, ranging from a notice of unsatisfactory service to suspension or termination.

(You do not need to bring this handout to the test session. All instructions, including the table above, are contained in the test booklet.)

Captain Supervisory Multiple-Choice Test Preparation

Dimensions Covered

Key supervisory dimensions covered in the multiple-choice test:

1. **Communication Skills.** Including: Treating employees and customers with respect and common courtesy. Friendly and informative, able to talk to you about anything. Communicating the bigger picture to staff. Encouraging open and honest communications without fear of retribution. Listening actively. Giving clear concise instructions, getting to the point, etc. Communicating at appropriate level.
2. **Discipline and Managing Difficult Employees.** Including: Taking action to improve substandard performance. Fair, treating all employees the same. Taking a calm approach. Clearly communicating expectations. Listening to employee's side of story and getting all pertinent facts before acting.
3. **Interpersonal Relations with Staff and Customers.** Including: Being customer service oriented. Able to develop rapport with whomever he/she is dealing with. Gaining respect of subordinates. Modifying opinion when presented with new and relevant facts. Negotiating adeptly with individuals and groups over roles and resources, including customers and suppliers. Understanding and respecting cultural differences. Good resource, getting answers when you need it.
4. **Managing Change.** Including: Communicating strategic direction in a compelling way to others. Taking an honest and straightforward approach. Letting employees know why things are changing. Persuading others about positive opportunities. Modifying plans in response to changing conditions.
5. **Managing Conflict.** Including: Handling conflict expeditiously by seeking common ground and redirecting conflict to problem solving. Finding positive solutions to problems and following through in a timely manner. Listening and fully understanding all key facts prior to resolution of an issue. Clearly explaining rationale for decisions. Trying to provide win/win situations where nobody is going to lose face.
6. **Managing Performance.** Including: Providing subordinates with timely and useful feedback on their work performance, discussing specific results. Recognizing and rewarding good performance. Setting goals for improvement. Motivating and involving employees.
7. **Prioritization/Effective Use of Resources.** Including: Developing work schedules. Appropriately matching people, equipment and capital resources to meet demands. Handling the flow of paperwork and monitoring traffic so as not to get behind. Flexible and adaptive in handling day-to-day emergencies and contingencies.
8. **Reliability/Integrity.** Including: Being dependable, committed and dedicated. Admitting personal mistakes, learning from them and moving on to correct the situation. Being honest with people. Taking ultimate responsibility for the problem (owning the problem) and the decisions. Following through when promises to do

Captain Supervisory Multiple-Choice Test Preparation

something. Good initiative; continually reaching for more responsibility. Promoting a safe workplace and safe environment for employees and customers. Being a positive role model in terms of compliance with organizational policies. Valuing diversity in the workplace, showing patience and understanding of differences.

9. **Team Development/Delegation.** Including: Communicating team objectives in ways that create a strong sense of shared goals. Giving staff appropriately challenging assignments and the opportunity to grow. Involving staff in decision making and delegating responsibility whenever possible. Holding meetings and taking steps to keep staff fully informed.
10. **Training/Career Development.** Including: Helping people to promote or move laterally into other departments. Supporting applications and interviewing. Developing staff so that they can be self-sufficient. Helping staff establish career goals. Having people cross-trained to provide backups. Spending enough time with employees to be sure they know how to do the job.
11. **Working with Management.** Including: Ownership of the whole organization, ownership into management. Not losing focus on department mission goals versus employee needs. Maintaining good relations with outside departments. Involving managers in problems as appropriate. Keeping them informed of key issues within the department. Building effective network with other supervisors and managers. Following chain of command. Continuously monitoring projects and keeping staff and management informed of progress.
12. **Changing Role.** Including: Moving effectively into a new supervisory role. Gaining respect as an incoming leader. Assuming greater responsibility with regard to implementation of department goals and objectives. Placing management of the department ahead of personal considerations.