

# City and County of Denver Fire Department 2024 Assistant Chief Promotional Process

## Candidate Orientation Handout



# General Information

## Introduction

---

Ergometrics & Applied Personnel Research, Inc. is a human resource management firm specializing in personnel selection and training. Established over 40 years ago, Ergometrics has designed the most comprehensive, award-winning, video and job simulation testing programs in the nation. We have provided personnel testing services for over 2,500 clients in the U.S. and Canada.

## Components of the Selection Process

---

There are two test components included in the promotional process that contribute to your overall promotional score. These dimensions are described below and weighted as follows:

1. **An assessment center consisting of three exercises (95%):**
  - a. **Leadership Biography Presentation:** For this exercise, you will be asked to prepare a presentation that highlights your career accomplishments and how they have prepared you for the rank of Assistant Chief.
  - b. **Interview:** For this exercise, the assessors will ask you to respond to a series of questions relevant to the Assistant Chief rank.
  - c. **Tactical Exercise:** For this exercise, you will be presented with a fire tactical scenario and asked to respond in the capacity of an Assistant Chief and explain your actions to the assessor panel.
2. **Seniority (5%):** The Commission will assign a seniority score based on each candidate's tenure with the department as outlined in the Commission's Rule 6 § 6.

## Test Date, Time, and Location

---

Test Component	Date	Time	Location
Assessment Center	Oct. 28-30, 2024- Due to the larger candidate pool we will begin on October 28 <sup>th</sup> .	TBD*	Denver Post Building 101 W. Colfax Ave. Denver, CO 80202 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, CSC

\*The Commission will inform you of your reporting time prior to the Assessment Center.

## Dress Code

---

You will be required to wear your Class B uniform or business attire to the Assessment Center. You may wear your badge, but you must remove your name tag. No pins, insignia, etc., indicating names or special commendations will be allowed.

## General Test Information

---

- You are responsible for monitoring your own time during the promotional exam. A watch or timer is recommended; ensure your watch does not contain any prohibited electronic features. Smartwatches are not allowed.
- Candidates are prohibited from receiving or sending pages, texts or calls during any part of the promotional process. Candidates are prohibited from recording any of the examination process or materials. **No electronic devices are allowed** at the testing site.
- Get rest and a good night's sleep prior to your exam.
- Arrive early. This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to minimize stress.
- Candidates are prohibited from removing any material from the testing site.

## Test Security and Confidentiality

---

You will be required to sign a security and confidentiality agreement, stating that you have not and will not violate test security. 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. Additionally, to maintain test security, there are specific devices not allowed in the testing session. These include cellular phones, pagers, audio/radio headsets, cameras, recording devices or other electronic devices.

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this handout is meant to be helpful and prepare you for the general nature of the process. It is not meant to advise you of every question that will be asked. Some aspects of the process may be modified, including the order of events and times.

# Assessment Center

## Interview Exercise

---

For this exercise, the assessors will ask you to respond to a series of questions relevant to the Assistant Chief rank. At the time of the exercise, you will be informed of the number of questions and the length of time to answer each question.

### Test Tips

*[Preparation strategies below are suggestions only. Each individual is personally responsible for determining which preparation strategies and tips are appropriate for themselves.]*

- Listen to each question carefully.
- Think about the long- and short-term impact of the situation presented, on the people involved, and on the department.
- The total time given to answer each question is time that can be used to organize your thoughts and respond to the question.
- You do not have to use the entire time given to answer each question.
- Ensure your answers are clear and concise, but fully answer the question asked.
- It is important to monitor your time when answering each question.
- Speak loudly and clearly so that the assessors can hear and understand you.

## Tactical Exercise

---

The tactical exercise is designed to allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of fire tactical operations at the command level, while focusing on a specific event. Your actions should be focused primarily on the strategic and tactical levels where you will address your goals/objectives, assignment of resources, and operational intent. Your actions should be presented as if you are the incident commander, responsible for safe and effective operations.

Each candidate, operating as the incident commander, will be shown a video-based scenario. All candidates will see the same video. During the scenario you will receive incident updates. You are expected to keep track of these updates as they are communicated, including updates from Dispatch, communications from on scene crews, and the arrival of additional resources. The assessors will score candidates on how well they command the incident and communicate their responses.

## Typical Instructions

*[These instructions are only an example of typical instructions for a Fire Tactical Exercise. Candidates will be given specific instructions at the time of the assessment center.]*

You will now participate in the fire tactical exercise. You will be provided with scenario-specific instructions, shown a visual display, and asked to respond as the incident commander to a series of prompts in the video. Be sure to describe what actions you would take and what resources you would use. Be sure to explain your operational intent (i.e. why would you take a specific course of action).

## Test Tips

*[Preparation strategies below are suggestions only. Each individual is personally responsible for determining which preparation strategies and tips are appropriate for themselves.]*

- Communicate everything you are thinking. If you don't say it, it can't be scored.
- Monitor your time during the tactical exercise.
- Consider all resources available to you and how can use them (internal and external).
- Speak loudly and clearly so the assessors are able to hear and understand you.
- Be confident in your decisions.
- Display command presence.

## Leadership Biography Presentation

---

For this exercise, you will be provided with instructions ahead of the assessment center and asked to prepare a presentation that highlights the accomplishments in your career and how those accomplishments have prepared you for the rank of Assistant Chief. You will also be asked to provide documentation that verifies any accomplishments you reference in your presentation. For additional information about the Leadership Biography exercise, please refer to the Leadership Biography Candidate Handout.

**The verification documents will be due to the Denver Civil Service Offices on Wednesday October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, by 3pm MST.** Please note, any accomplishments (such as a degree or commendation) will not be considered by assessors in their evaluation of this exercise unless there is proper documentation turned in for verification.

**Failure to turn in verification documentation by the deadline will result in a disqualification from the promotional process and you will not be allowed to participate in the assessment center.**

## Test Tips

*[Preparation strategies below are suggestions only. Each individual is personally responsible for determining which preparation strategies and tips are appropriate for themselves.]*

- **Make sure you set aside time to prepare your presentation and verification documents.** If you do not provide verification documents for a particular accomplishment and still discuss it in your presentation, the assessors will not consider it in their evaluation.
- **Ensure your presentation is clear, concise, and demonstrates how your professional and personal experiences have prepared you for the role of Assistant Chief.** There are essential skills for this role that can be developed in areas outside of your time in the fire service. You are welcome to use these experiences or accomplishments (such as service to a non-profit) in your presentation, but make sure you show how those experiences connect to the role.
- **Use your time wisely.** The time limit for this exercise requires you to be judicious in what experiences you include in your presentation; you will not be able to list them all so choose wisely.
- **Assessors will have to listen to your responses.** If you do not speak in a clear and understandable manner, this will impact your communication score. Plus, the assessors may not be able to properly credit your response. Assessors will not be giving “the benefit of the doubt” to responses that are hard to interpret. It is up to you to communicate your responses clearly and professionally.
- **This is a management test.** It does not focus on unimportant details. You will be scored on the quality of work you can accomplish in a given time and your understanding of what is important.

# Assessment Center Preparation Tips

The information below is meant to be a brief general overview to help you prepare for assessment components that take place before the assessor panel. There are many other resources available as well, including books, classes and on-line resources.

As you approach a promotional process, the most important thing is your own personal readiness for assuming a higher-level position and how that compares with the readiness of others. That does not mean formal preparation only, such as education and study. It also means your mental, intellectual and developmental readiness.

In the assessment center, you will interact directly with a panel of assessors that will ask questions, listen to your answers and observe your behavior. There is nothing to be gained, and much to be lost, by trying to pretend you are someone other than who you are. You do, however, want to show yourself to your best advantage.

## Arrive early

---

Plan your transportation and know how you are getting to the assessment center. Arriving early is one of the easiest and most effective ways to minimize stress. Plan for weather and traffic issues.

## Prepare

---

You may be able to do well without preparing, but you can always do better with preparation. Remember, you are competing against others who are also very good and you need to do your best to stand out as excellent. The more prepared you are, the more relaxed and confident you will be. There are many ways you can prepare, including:

- **Understanding the job.** Understanding the job itself is the most important way to improve your competitiveness for promotion. The more you understand about supervision, management, department practices and organizational goals, the better you will be able to answer potential questions relating to the job and organization. Expand your understanding of management issues and solutions through study and seeking mentors. Even reading one management book can give you more depth.
- **Minimizing how much you will need to “wing it.”** An assessment center is like an emergency response. You never know precisely what the demands will be, but the more you have practiced what you can, the easier it is to improvise and adapt. You will always have to demonstrate flexibility and on-the-spot thinking. Try to develop your

thinking as much as you can in advance. Study this handout. Think about how you would handle management challenges like those you have seen during your employment.

### **Don't pretend**

---

Represent yourself honestly and don't try to fake it. Don't spin your experience to sound like something it's not. Don't use words you don't know as that is a quick way to cast doubt on your credibility, intelligence and integrity. It is easy for assessors to identify candidates who have memorized or scripted answers to questions that they don't really understand or believe. Assessors are also trained to recognize when candidates do not address questions they are asked.

### **Display confidence**

---

You are applying for a position of great responsibility. You will need to be a role model of confidence and credibility. In order to display the utmost confidence, consider the following:

- **Show that you can communicate openly with managers.** Answer questions directly and be sure to use eye contact.
- **Never answer a question you don't understand.** Let the panel or proctor know if you are uncertain about what is being asked. If you are confused, ask the panel for clarification.
- **Don't self-deprecate or apologize for your answers.**

### **Think aloud**

---

Whatever your answer to a question is, the panel may understand it better if you think aloud. Considering options is an important part of management thinking.

### **Imagine yourself in the assessor panel's place**

---

Be friendly and respectful to the assessor panel; they are trying to do a good job, just like you. Don't act offended or defensive if they ask for information that you think they should already know. This is your chance to show how easy you might be to work with.

### **Don't make assumptions**

---

The panelists are considering large amounts of complex information about many candidates. Don't assume anyone has memorized or knows anything about you. If something is important for understanding what you are saying, just tell them.

**Be concise in your communication**

---

Sufficient time is provided in each exercise to communicate the necessary responses to questions and situations. Time management is a critical management skill that requires preparation and organization.

**Relax as much as you can**

---

Try to maintain physical relaxation and use appropriate gestures. Smile - don't act like you are in pain and don't feel you have to fill every silence. Answer questions and then wait for the next question. At the end of the exercises, thank the assessors.

**Do your best**

---

Remember, the most important thing is to represent yourself honestly and do your best. We and the Denver Civil Service Commission hope you have a positive promotional experience. If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Denver Civil Service Commission.