

**City and County Denver Fire Department**  
**2024 Engineer Promotional Process**  
**Candidate Handout**



# General Information

## Introduction

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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 2,000 clients in the U.S. and Canada.

## Components of the Selection Process

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

1. Multiple-choice exam (35%): A 120-item multiple-choice test of professional knowledge and leadership skills based on sources identified by the department.
2. A practical exam consisting of four stations (60%):
  - a. **Station 1: Pumping:** For this exercise, you will be asked to perform a series of commonly performed pumping evolutions in accordance with JPRs.
  - b. **Station 2: Safe Driving:** For this exercise, you will be asked to perform a series of commonly performed driving evolutions in accordance with JPRs.
  - c. **Station 3: Aerial Operations:** For this exercise, you will be asked to perform a series of commonly performed aerial operations in accordance with JPRs.
  - d. **Station 4: Maintenance:** For this exercise, you will be asked to perform a series of commonly performed maintenance checks in accordance with JPRs.
3. Seniority (5%): The department will assign a seniority score based on each candidate's tenure with the department and any other seniority factors as determined by the department.

## Test Date, Time, and Location

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Test Component	Date	Time	Location
Written Examination	April 9, 2024	Registration Opens <b>7:30 am.</b> Registration Closes 7:45 am. <b>Latecomers will not be allowed to test.</b> 3-hour exam	Lakeside Union Hall 12 Lakeside Lane Denver, CO 80212
Practical Examination*	May 20 – May 23, 2024 (May	TBD	Rocky Mountain Academy, 5440 Roslyn Street, Denver, CO 80216

	24, 2024 reserved for bad weather)		
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\*The Commission will inform you of your reporting time prior to the Practical Exam.

### **Dress Code**

You will be required to wear your Class B uniform to both the written and Practical exams. **IN ADDITION, YOU MUST BRING YOUR WORK GLOVES, EYE PROTECTION, AND STEEL TOED SHOES WITH YOU TO THE PRACTICAL TEST.** 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 is recommended; ensure your watch does not contain any prohibited electronic features.
- Candidates are prohibited from receiving or sending pages, texts or calls during any part of the promotional process. **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 order of events and times.

# Written Exam

On April 9, 2024 you will take a multiple-choice written examination consisting of 120 multiple-choice questions based on the reading list you have been provided. The written test has been developed and prepared by Ergometrics and Applied Personnel Research, Inc., a human resources consulting firm that specializes in the development of fire department promotional examinations. The questions in the examination have been selected and reviewed by a panel of Denver Fire Department subject matter experts (SMEs). Following is some information that will assist you in preparing for the written examination.

## **Book-Referenced Written Exam**

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At your scheduled time, you will take a multiple-choice written test consisting of 120 questions. You will have three hours to complete the written exam. Your department has determined the source materials necessary to read in preparation for your upcoming promotional process. You are competing with other outstanding members of the department. Studying the publications assigned is one way you may improve your chances of ultimately being the top competitor.

The complete list of source materials can be found at:

<https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Civil-Service-Commission/Promotional-Fire-Tests>

## **Purpose of Book-Referenced Test**

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Higher-level positions call for deep knowledge of technical topics. The department is interested in promoting future leaders who will do the necessary studying and use the information on the job. As a promotional candidate, these tests are your opportunity to demonstrate your study ethic and effectiveness. The books assigned for this exam represent only a small portion of the formal study that will be required upon promotion. This test is not intended to measure all aspects of your promotional potential. It is designed to look at your ability to absorb important information that comes from reading materials.

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

## **Preparation Strategies**

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Studying the selected publications is one way to improve your chances of ultimately being the

top competitor. There are many different approaches that one can take to studying. An excellent way to prepare for a multiple-choice book-reference test is to read each publication twice. First, read it straight through so that you understand the general focus, as a whole. Then, reread the publication, making notes and highlighting the most important points that you see in each section. Other strategies are to use acronyms for remembering information or to form a study group. In the end, the choice is personal. When you find a strategy that works best for you, test yourself by considering how you would explain the content of a section to a subordinate.

### Study Tips

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1. **Minimize environmental distractions.** Try to limit the amount of distractions in your environment when studying. This includes, but is not limited to email, cell phones and even other people. Eliminating distractions will make it easier for you to concentrate and retain the information you are studying.
2. **Avoid burning the midnight oil.** For many people, it is harder to retain information when tired. If possible, try to study when you are well rested and ready to concentrate.
3. **Review chapter overviews or summaries.** Chapter overviews and summaries typically provide information on the most important points in a chapter. Many times, it is helpful to review these areas before reading a chapter to help you understand what the important topics are in the chapter. After reading the chapter, overviews and summaries can be used to test yourself on critical knowledge from the chapter.
4. **Quiz yourself.** After reading a chapter or section, quiz yourself on important topics, definitions, etc. You can also develop questions regarding the material based upon headings and specific terms prior to reading it and then, while reading the section or chapter, try to answer those questions.
5. **Have someone quiz you.** After reading a text, a great way to see if you have retained information is to have someone ask you questions regarding the material you just read.
6. **Avoid cramming.** Spreading your studying out over time will help you concentrate and retain the information you read.
7. **Look up words or phrases you don't know.** Have a computer or dictionary available when studying so that you are able to look up words and phrases that you don't know.
8. **Mark it up.** Highlight and/or underline important sections of the text while you study. This will help you concentrate on important topics and make it easier to review the material again later.
9. **Take notes.** Taking notes of the important topics in the text you read can help you remember what you read and be an efficient study aid.

### Test Taking Tips

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The written test items have four answer choices. To get the highest score, always select the best choice listed, even if more than one seems good to you. Be sure to read all answers before

deciding your final answer. Don't focus on a choice that is not given to you. Don't get distracted by thinking of other possible responses that are not among the choices presented. Don't get stuck on the idea that you want to combine two responses. Show your judgment by picking the one answer that, by itself, is better than any other answer, by itself.

Prepare yourself physically and mentally for your exam as you would prepare yourself for any special assignment that requires concentration. Get the amount of sleep that will leave you most alert. It's also a good idea to eat a nutritious and hearty meal to help you stay focused throughout your exam. Unusual changes in your routine may cause you problems during your exam. For example, consuming more caffeine than usual may make you jittery; less than usual may leave you listless. Try to remain calm and relaxed before and during your exam. If you feel anxious, take a few moments to calm yourself down. Bring to the test administration site whatever personal items you need for the exam, such as eyeglasses or tissues.

Here are some additional tips to help you during the book-referenced exam. These simple procedures help you avoid marking the wrong answer when you know the right one.

- 1. Listen to the instructions.** Before you begin the exam, it is important that you read and/or listen to all instructions carefully. Ensure you know how to correctly fill out the answer sheet. Specific instructions will be provided at the test site.
- 2. Get familiar with your test.** When you begin the multiple-choice written test, glance through it to acquaint yourself with the task ahead of you. You do not have to go through the questions in the order you find them.
- 3. Check the time.** Check your watch periodically throughout the exam so that you know how much time you have remaining.
- 4. Don't spend too much time on one question.** If you have a difficult time with a question, go on and come back to that question later. Do make a note to come back to it, though. You may come back with a fresh approach, and a question you had trouble with earlier may seem easy.
- 5. Read thoroughly.** Read every question carefully before you attempt to answer it. This advice may sound too simple, but it is important. The major reason people miss questions when they know the material is that they do not read the question completely.
- 6. Circle or underline key words.** When reading a question, circle or underline key words that are important to the question stem. This will both help you focus on the critical aspects of what is being asked, as well as help you remember the important aspects of the question if you need to skip it and return to it later in the test session.
- 7. Break a sentence up if you don't understand it.** Sometimes sentences in a question stem can be long. If you don't understand the sentence, use slash marks to break it into smaller sections to better understand the sentence.
- 8. Read all of the answers before choosing one.** The most common answer people choose is **a**, whether it is right or not. That is because they think the first answer looks okay, so they stop reading. Don't make the mistake of not reading all of the answers before making a selection. Even if **a** looks like a really good answer, one of the other answers

may be better. When you read the other alternatives, you may think of something you had missed at first.

- 9. Use process of elimination.** If you aren't sure of the correct answer use process of elimination. Eliminate answer choices that you know are definitely wrong. Then focus on selecting the best answer from the choices remaining.
- 10. Do not read something into the question that is not there.** On a situational question, assume that everything is normal unless the question tells you differently. Assume that the pavement is dry; visibility is good; your supervisor is competent; and citizens are behaving normally. When something is amiss, the question will tell you. Stick to the facts of the questions.
- 11. Answer every question.** There is no penalty for guessing. Even if you don't know the correct answer, you have one chance in four of choosing the right one. If you can eliminate one or two of the alternatives, your chances are even better.
- 12. Fill out your answer sheet correctly.** In marking the answer sheet, be sure to fill in the blank that corresponds to the answer you have chosen. If you skip a question, make sure you skip to the right space on the answer sheet. If you mark the wrong answer and want to change it, erase your first mark completely. Remember to only mark *one* answer for each question.
- 13. Use your time wisely.** If you finish early, use the remaining time to answer questions you skipped, re-evaluate questions you were unsure of and check to ensure that you filled out your answer sheet correctly.
- 14. Test Proctor/Procedures.** A test proctor will be available during the exam to help the candidates with the testing procedures only; however, he or she will not explain the meaning of any question, define words, or give information which may be of help in answering a question. If you have any questions about the testing procedure, make sure to ask for assistance before the test begins.

## Test Your Assumptions

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When taking your test, don't compromise your chances of success by trying to follow test-taking tips you may find online. Many of these tips are just bad advice and could cost you points. Use the following statements to test your assumptions.

### True or False?

**True**

**False**

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\_\_\_\_\_

1. If you don't know the answer to a test question, take a guess.

*True! Guessing is not penalized and you just might get it right.*

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2. Choose the longest answer option.

*False! General pattern responses like this are a very poor way to approach a modern test. The length of the answer choices is not an indication of an incorrect or correct response.*

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3. Choose the answer option that seems most logical to you.

*True! Rely on your knowledge of the assigned publications to think critically and logically when answering a question.*

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4. Choose the answer with a middle value when other options are higher or lower.

*False! This is another piece of bad advice you might come across somewhere. No such pattern as this is present on Ergometrics' tests.*

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5. More often than not, the correct answer is B or C.

*False! Once again, poor advice. General pattern strategy is not a way to pass a modern test. There is no pattern to Ergometrics' correct answers. Answer questions by content, not by old, incorrect advice or superstitions.*



# Practical Examination

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## Practical Examination

The practical examination is scheduled for May 20 – May 24, 2024. The practical exam consists of four stations: Pumping, Aerial, Driving, and Maintenance. These exercises have been developed to simulate real situations performed on the job by Denver Fire Department Engineers. Ergometrics facilitated meetings with Denver Fire Department SMEs to develop and review all materials related to these exercises.

You will be provided written and verbal instructions before each exercise. If you do not understand any instructions, ask the rater for clarification. Raters will provide as much information as deemed appropriate and fair to all candidates participating in this exam. No question will be answered that would provide an unfair advantage to a candidate.

Each exercise will be based on department operations manuals (e.g., JPR's, aerial manual, pumping manual) maintenance rig protocols, and department charts (e.g., friction loss pump).

You will be escorted to the starting point of each exercise. Once you start an exercise, you will be evaluated by trained raters. The raters will be observing your performance and rating your performance based on a standardized scoring sheet.

Safety in this practical testing process is paramount. If at any time you feel there is a situation that is not safe, you should inform the raters. If you feel you are being asked to do something that is not safe, you have the responsibility to inform the raters. Furthermore, the raters will stop you if they feel you are creating an unsafe situation.

If an unsafe event is caused by you, the exercise will be stopped until the situation is rectified. During this time, the exercise timer will remain active and points will be deducted as appropriate. If you are not responsible for the unsafe condition, you will not be penalized and the timer will be stopped until the situation is resolved. There are no unsafe conditions that have been purposely incorporated in the testing process.

When you report at your appointed time for the practical test, you are required to wear a Class B uniform. In addition, you must bring your work gloves, eye protection, and steel toed shoes with you to the practical test. However, no name tags will be permitted.

## **Station 1: Pumping**

This exercise was developed to simulate commonly performed pumping activities as outlined in the JPRs. These activities will include calculating hydraulics problems and hands-on performance to demonstrate your ability to pump the conditions established in the problems. You will be provided with a Denver Pump Chart and the appropriate writing materials. You will be provided written and verbal instructions before each exercise and your performance on these evolutions will be evaluated by a trained rater.

## **Station 2: Safe Driving**

The exercise was developed to assess your ability to perform routine driving maneuvers based on the JPRs. You will be provided with written and verbal instructions before each exercise and your performance on these evolutions will be evaluated by a trained rater.

## **Station 3: Aerial Operations**

This exercise was developed to simulate commonly performed aerial operations based on the JPRs. This exercise will include driving set-up and operations, as well as knowledge of aerial backup systems and emergency overrides. This will include, but is not limited to, driving, spotting, preparing for operations, operating the aerial and securing the aerial for driving. You will be provided written and verbal instructions before each exercise and your performance on these evolutions will be evaluated by a trained rater.

## **Station 4: Maintenance**

This exercise was developed to simulate commonly performed maintenance checks based on the JPRs. You will be expected to identify and verbalize the tasks as identified in the JPRs. You will be provided written and verbal instructions before each exercise and your performance on these evolutions will be evaluated by a trained rater.

## Practical Exam Preparation

The information below is meant to be a brief general overview to help you prepare for practical exam components that take place before several raters. There are many other resources, including books, classes and on-line resources that are available, should you choose to use them.

As you approach a promotional competition, the most important thing is your own personal readiness to assume 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 practical assessment center, you will interact directly with several raters 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.

### Practice Dates

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Denver Fire Department will offer practice dates for the pumping and aerial/driving exercises. The practice dates are TBD and will be announced and confirmed by the Civil Service Commission. The department will confirm times with the candidate.

### Arrive early

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This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to minimize stress.

### Prepare

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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:

- **Understand 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.
- **Minimize how much you will need to “wing it.”** A practical 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 have to demonstrate flexibility and on-the-spot thinking. Try to develop your thinking as much as you can in advance. Study your handouts. Learn as much as you can about the job. Think about how you would handle management challenges like those you have observed.

### **Don't pretend**

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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 answers to questions that they don't really understand or believe.

### **Display confidence**

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You are applying for a position of greater responsibility. You will need to be a role model of confidence and credibility.

- **Show that you can communicate with managers.** Answer questions; use eye contact.
- **Never answer a question you don't understand.** Ask for clarification when needed.
- **Don't act confused.** If you are confused just say so and ask the raters for clarification. Don't self-deprecate or apologize for your answers.
- **Think aloud.**

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

### **Imagine yourself in the rater's place**

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

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

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The raters 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**

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Sufficient time is provided in the exercises to communicate the necessary answers to questions asked. Time management is a critical management skill that requires preparation.

**Relax as much as you can**

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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 raters.

**Do your best**

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Remember, the most important thing is to represent yourself honestly and do your best.

Good luck to you in the promotional process.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Denver Civil Service Commission.