

## Oral Interview Preparation Tips

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I want to share some tips after my experience serving as a rater on our department oral interviews for entry-level Firefighter/Engineers assigned to paramedic duty. We had 96 candidates scheduled over an eight-day period. 12 candidates per day, starting at 0800 hours and ending at approximately 1700 hours each day. By the time of the oral interview, candidates were required to show proof of completion of the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). There were a few no shows and some that had called stating that they were not able to provide a CPAT card by their interview time.

Just some comments on the CPAT, before I go on to the oral interviews. Many candidates waited until the absolute last minute to locate and then attempt and pass the CPAT exam. This resulted in some candidates failing it the first time and not having ample time to actually retake it, and some candidates just not finding a time and place to take the CPAT that worked into their schedule. This dropped the numbers we interviewed into the high 80's if I remember correctly.

### **Moral of the story regarding the CPAT?**

1. If you have never taken it before, do so a.s.a.p. so that you know you can pass it and so you can get the certificate that most departments accept for one year.
2. If you don't know where to take the CPAT, please visit the California Professional Firefighters (CPF) website section on the CPAT at [www.cpatonline.org](http://www.cpatonline.org) to view more information including locations to take the test.
3. Do attend the voluntary practice sessions, do review the informational material that is out there regarding each event, and do allow yourself ample time to retake it should you fail the first time (yes, I know we have to be positive, but we also have to have a plan b, just in case). I have heard that many of the candidates who failed it had not attended the practice sessions, something to consider.
4. Realize that just because you pass the CPAT, it doesn't mean you are in the best shape you could be in or that you could pass any physical ability test being currently offered (other than the CPAT). The CPAT is a baseline test that tells you that you are at an acceptable level of physical fitness to perform the job of a firefighter. There are some fire departments that do not use the CPAT and have tougher physical ability tests.

Now back to the oral interviews. We had two oral interview panels set up, one to interview people with EMT certifications and the other to interview people with paramedic licenses, or that had the ability to obtain a paramedic license by time of appointment (time of job offer). We interviewed twice as many paramedics as we did EMT's, since the majority of our vacancies will probably require paramedic licensure. Here is a reason why having your paramedic license can help reduce your competition: we interviewed almost every paramedic that had applied, had passed the written examination, and had passed the CPAT. However for positions require EMT certification, we randomly selected about 20% of the EMT's that had applied, had passed the written examination, and had passed the CPAT. Now being a paramedic certainly reduces your competition and definitely allows you to apply for more firefighter positions, but contrary to what some may think, it does not guarantee you a job.

The oral interview panel I sat on consisted of me, one of our battalion chiefs, and one of our firefighter/engineers assigned to paramedic duty. The three of us had a very challenging and difficult task – to recommend to the fire chief the candidates that we felt would best represent the department

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and also fit into the department culture, based on a number of different things, most notably how well they performed in the oral interview.

We asked a total of six questions, provided the candidates 30 minutes to answer all of the questions, and then had to make a decision on whether we felt someone would make a successful firefighter for the next 30 years. Choose right and we have an excellent employee we can feel proud to have had a part in for the next 30 years. Choose wrong and there is the potential that we will be stuck with this person for the next 30 years (assuming they pass probation). Department members and we will either be proud or ashamed of the recommendations we make, all based on a 30 minute (or less) interview. Not an easy task.

While I am not able to provide specific feedback to each candidate for confidentiality reasons, I am able to provide general thoughts and comments that I think everyone who either took the interview or will be taking a fire department interview somewhere in the world in the near future will surely benefit from. The bottom line is that we make recommendations to the fire chief, but it is ultimately the fire chief's decision to hire someone in our department (in other departments, it can be a higher authority such as the city council, the city manager, the mayor, the board of supervisors, or the board of fire commissioners, just to name a few. The last thing we want to do is to tell a specific candidate that they did an awesome job and then have the fire chief not decide to hire them for some reason. That would potentially open us up to lawsuits and inquiries that we do not need to go through. **I know this sounds harsh, but the fire department you are testing for does not owe you a job;** you are not entitled to a position, just because you tested and either you felt you did well, you feel you would be a good fit, or because someone said you had a great interview.

I tell all candidates the same thing – do your best in the testing process for each department and what is meant to be is meant to be. When the stars line up and your time is right, you will be offered the job. The job offer may not come from the department that you most want to work for or think you did the best at during the testing process; it may come when you least expect it. Also, just because you weren't selected for our department (or any department), don't take it personal. It wasn't meant to be. Should you take our test again, then it may be the right time. Or, I hate to say it, but it may never be the right time with our department. But don't despair, it doesn't mean that you aren't meant for another department somewhere else. I truly believe there is a department out there for everybody. The key is to not give up and continue trying your best until you find that department.

Here are some general / specific thoughts that I wanted to share with you, based on my observations and experiences of ALL of the candidates. Think of this list as the good, the bad, and the ugly, so to speak. Try to learn from the good and the not so good of others, and realize that most of the things I mentioned were done by at least one person, some by many.

### RESUMES:

- **Before we go any further, realize that the main difference between the resume and the job application is that the department tells you what to put on the application (usually everything) and you put what you want on the resume.** The resume is a short and sweet, to the point snapshot of who you are and what you have to offer.
- **Don't put your picture on it.** One, it can potentially go against you negatively (that dreaded d-word, discrimination); two, it just isn't cool.

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- **Keep it short and sweet, easy to read, easy to follow.** We have less than a minute or so to even look at it. If things are wordy and do not jump out, we're probably going to miss them.
- **Keep it to one page.** I saw two page resumes, and even one five pager. Hello, we don't have time to read all that info and it takes up space. If you're having trouble getting it down to one page, here are my suggestions:
  - o **You don't have to list EVERY job you've held, like you do on the application.** Include two or three of the most relevant ones, including your current one. Also, nothing says you have to list your duties on the resume; they can take up four or more lines per job. Each job should have no more than two lines each – enough room for the employer name, city/state of the employer, dates employed, and job titles you've held.
  - o **Leave off your hobbies.** You're not getting hired for your hobbies, and depending on what they are, they can be looked at negatively and as a liability (i.e., drag car racer, motorcycle racer, bungee jumper, you know what I'm getting at). You're getting hired for your knowledge, skills and abilities – in a nutshell, your education, experience, training, and community service for the most part. Nothing says you can't talk about your hobbies during the interview; just don't waste valuable space on the resume.
  - o **Leave off any trace of high school related information.** That goes on the application and it can lead to potential discrimination depending on how senior or junior you are.
  - o **Education.** This section is for formal education and should be no more than two lines per school. Just list the name of the school, city/state of the school, dates attended, expected completion of your degree date or date you completed your degree, and major/minor as appropriate. Don't list units completed. That will go on the application and you don't have the room to spare on the resume. Additionally, if you have attended more than three educational institutions, just put the most appropriate two or three. They will all go on your application; you put what you want on the resume.
  - o **Shorten your margins, having them at 1 inch on all four sides will provide more space.** As needed, slightly decrease that number, adjust as needed.
- **Objective.** First of all, do have one at the top. Second, cater it to the department you're testing for (I hate generic resumes that look like you never change them. Personalize them to the department you're interviewing for, make us feel important and that we're you're number one (at least for now). Third, when you put the job title you are applying for on the resume, take it directly off of the job flyer and don't put what you think it is. ***We were hiring for Firefighter/Engineer assigned to paramedic duty.*** I saw titles such as:
  - o **Firefighter/Paramedic**
  - o **Paramedic/Firefighter**
  - o **Firefighter/Engineer/Paramedic**
  - o **Firefighter/Engineer**
  - o **FF/P**
  - o **Firefighter/EMT-P**
  - o **Firefighter**
  - o I know this may sound petty, but my not putting the exact job title on the application, it shows the department that you cannot follow written instructions and that you do not pay attention. These are both critical functions we expect of a firefighter. Additionally, by not putting the exact title, you run the risk of having your application discarded because of a department not currently testing for the position you applied for or not having a said position.
- **Don't assume that just because it is on your resume that we have seen and more importantly, will give you credit for it.** In an interview, remember the phrase "If you didn't

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say it, you didn't do it and don't get credit for it." If you're expecting us to give you credit for having something on the resume, what happens when the panel does not allow resumes? You're screwed. Treat every interview the same; make sure you cover everything (you feel are your key selling points) from your resume and application orally during the course of your interview.

- **Don't put your birthdate on it.** Legally we cannot discriminate you, don't give us any ammunition to load our gun with. Some departments like young candidates so they can mold them, some like older ones with more life experience and perceived maturity and some just don't care. My department doesn't even ask for your date of birth on the application. Yes, we can somewhat figure it out based on your high school graduation date, but don't put something on there that has the potential to work against you.
- **Spell check and grammar check.** What more do I need to say on this? Have someone that actually is very versed at the English language review it for you for errors and omissions.
- **Leave off the words "references available upon request."** We're not going to request them, we don't have time to look at them, and I bet many of you don't even bring them with you to offer if we did ask you for them. Rest assured, when it comes time for the background investigation, we'll ask you to write down the contact information for those references in the background investigation packet. Also, by offering them, you run the risk of having those names go against you. If you list people that are known by the board members as being not-so-stellar individuals (ones we wouldn't associate with), then you run the risk of having it go against you.
- **Names/addresses/phone numbers on the resume.** The only name on a resume should be your own. Not a place to put names of references or supervisors. The only address info should be your own; for employers, educational institutions, volunteer organizations, you should only put the city/state of that place (leave the street address off). The only phone number on the resume should be your own. Remember, all that information that I'm asking you to not put on there will go on the application. The resume is a shortened version of the application and you put on it what you want; versus we tell you what to put on the application.
- **Pronouns versus action verbs.** Keep the pronouns such as I off your resume. Instead, use action verbs to start off sentences. Looks more professional.
- **Leave off anything to do with high school.** It shows your age and you have more things to sell the oral board.
- **Pass it out at the beginning of the interview, not at the end.** At the end, we have typically finished grading you and all we can do is put it in your file and let it collect dust. Having it at the beginning of the interview allows us to review it while you are talking and possibly even ask you questions off of it.
- **At least offer one.** I bet almost 50% of the candidates did not even offer us a resume. Don't assume that we have a copy of it. Our panel only had copies of your application to review.
- **Bring at least five copies.** One candidate passed out two resumes and asked if we could share them. Tacky, and unprofessional. If you don't have enough, don't even offer them.
- **Offer them to the panel; don't drop them in front of us.** Nobody likes anything forced down their throat, and some oral boards might not allow them at all. At least find a moment after being introduced to the panel to offer them. I found some candidates just dropping them in front of me while I started asking the first question, and I felt that to be rude.
- **Leaving it next to you to view during the interview.** The verdict is out on this one, and I'm not sure what I think. Numerous candidates actually passed out resumes to us, and then left one for themselves to view in front of them. On one hand, I think this is pretty ingenious so that you

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don't forget what to tell the board. On the other hand, I almost look at it as cheating. Just not sure what to make of this yet.

### APPLICATIONS:

- **Do spell check.** I saw a candidate misspell the name of his current fire department (that's bad) and almost one out of two applications had spelling errors.
- **If you can, type it out.** It looks more professional, especially since most people don't write neatly. Plus, having your wife write it out doesn't impress me either – we're trying to hire you, not your wife.
- **Fill in all the blanks.** I was amazed at how many candidates left blanks or even worse, put N/A in areas that were applicable. Some common areas where candidates did not complete the information required:
  - o **Salary**
  - o **Reason for leaving your employer**
  - o **Supervisors name/contact information**
  - o **Dating the application after they signed it**
  - o **Education (yes, a couple of candidates put nothing in the box for all educational institutions attended).**
  - o **Job duties/Job title. Some candidates filled one out, but not the other.**
- **Read all the questions.** Yes, there were some that only provided some of the information requested or provided information differing from what we requested.
- **Read everything carefully.**

### GENERAL THINGS TO NOT TELL THE ORAL BOARD:

- **Don't apologize for things, focus on the positive.** Some of the apologies I heard are:
  - o I'm probably the youngest one you'll see; please don't hold that against me. Why even say this?
  - o I don't have any education in fire science, but I'm willing to learn. I know that sounds sincere, but maybe just use the last half of the sentence (I'm willing to learn...).
  - o I really didn't have any time to research the department. Don't even bother.
  - o I'm not that experienced.
  - o I only had the chance to visit one fire station. Just say I visited a fire station and this is what I found out....
  - o The list goes on; I would venture over half of the candidates apologized about something.
- **Don't state that you have learning disabilities or other major issues in life because it's going to make us look differently at you** (yes, I know legally we cannot, but it's hard not to). One person said he reads at the seventh grade level and is dyslexic. I'm just not convinced that is something you need to tell the oral boards. I think I know why he told us that, I'm assuming because he was trying to show an example of how he overcame something and is trying to get better. If you were an employer, do want that person trying to get better on your dime?
- **Don't mention your age.** Once again, we're not supposed to discriminate based on age. Don't give us more ammunition to sink you. Many candidates in their opening statement started out something to the effect of "my name is Steve and I am 39 years old." Just don't go there.
- **Don't start crying, or getting teary eyed.** You might think that you're touching our sympathetic side, but we just don't find it professional. Many candidates had very tear-jerking

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stories to share with us. Yes, I felt sorry for them and sympathetic, but it didn't help their score in any way because I almost felt that they were trying to use that to have us gain sympathy for them (I was probably way off base, but it is what it is).

### OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT:

- **At least know the name of the department.** One incorrectly called us by the wrong name eight separate times. One time is understandable; eight times shows me you either don't care, you didn't do your research, or you just didn't properly prepare. If you can't get the name right now, how are you going to be when you're representing us in the public eye? We have enough problems as it is having people confuse us with Santa Clara City Fire Department. They are a great department, but they are not our department – two separate departments.
- **Name dropping.** If you really feel compelled to name people in the department, at least ensure you are pronouncing them correctly. One candidate pronounced our fire chief's name wrong, and it is not that difficult of a name. My name, I understand; but even then, unless you can get it right, don't bother. Also on this subject, be careful of name-dropping. The names you think that might be stellar individuals might not be so stellar in the eye of the receiver. You might think that person helped you get the job, but in my eyes, I'm thinking otherwise because they incorrectly prepared you in some way.
- **Do better research.** Don't state facts that are incorrect (wrong number of stations, wrong number of apparatus – trucks, engines, etc.). One person said "you have a great budget." I don't know of any fire department that has a great budget. If it so great, why don't we have 4 person engine companies and more stations, newer apparatus, etc.? Don't get me wrong, we have an adequate budget, but nothing great. We don't transport patients; we provide ALS first responder services on our first out apparatus (engines, trucks, rescues and haz mat). Many candidates were answering questions like they were still a transport paramedic or that we were a transporting agency.
- **Be careful what you say.** Some examples "I know the streets really well." Yeah right, I bet if I gave you a street and told me to tell the board where it was located, which direction it ran, where it stopped and started, you probably wouldn't be able to. Don't open yourself up to failure. Plus, do you really know them that well? I doubt it. I bet you know the major streets, but we can teach anyone major streets.
- **Use appropriate terminology.** Many departments call their Truck Companies "Ladder Companies," their Ambulances "Rescues," and so on. Not using proper terminology shows me you didn't do your research.

### GENERAL:

- **Listening skills.** Most folks have terrible listening skills.
- **Time.** We only have so much time to give you – use it wisely. We told candidates you have 30 minutes for your interview. That only gives us 5 minutes to grade candidates and then 30 minutes for the next. A few candidates felt it was their right to use up more than 30 minutes. I guess shame on us for not stopping them. We ended up running over, into our breaks, into our lunch hour, and into other candidate's times.
- **What to bring into the building besides yourself.** Resumes should be the only thing you bring into the building with you. Don't think you can leave your items on the chair outside the room either. One candidate brought in the daily paper (I assume he was reading it in the hallway while waiting his turn) and then put it on the interview table when he sat down. Just

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didn't work for me. **We don't want your certificates, references, letters of recommendations, or life stories contained within your binders.** We don't have time to look at that stuff – you're getting graded for what you say, not what is on paper. Plus, that stuff just takes up valuable table space.

### NERVOUS HABITS:

- **One candidate kicked the floor continuously.**
- **One candidate fidgeted with his ring so much it distracted me from what he was saying.**
- **Numerous candidates swiveled back and forth in the chair.**
- **The dreaded words – uhm, uh, ah, you know, etc.** These are all filler or slang words. Why do people say uhm or uh? Because they are pausing, waiting to find something to say. One candidate had to have said uhm over 100 times. Instead of saying uhm or uh, pause and remain silent. Force yourself to be aware of your speech and you will improve. Yes, you are getting graded on oral communications and we want to have people that will represent us very well, every time you are giving station tours, public education demonstrations, talking to the media, or just talking to the general public in your everyday work. Here are my suggestions to improve your speech:
  - o **Be aware of what you are saying at all times, have your “edit feature” working.** Awareness is half the battle; doing something about it is the other half.
  - o **Listen to yourself answer questions in a tape recorder or through a video camera during mock orals.** Yes, that is you you're listening to.
  - o **Take some speech classes at a college.**
  - o **Take every opportunity to get in front of audiences and speak or teach classes.**
  - o **Join Toastmasters.**
  - o **Watch the news reporters deliver their news stories.** Most newscasters are excellent oral communicators; they have to be or they would be out of a job. Nobody wants to watch the news just to be put to sleep. Newscasters punch their words, accentuate and emphasize their words, modulate their speech as needed, and do not sound as monotone or boring as most candidates do during an oral interview.
  - o **Don't learn from athletes or musicians.** Athletes are not getting paid for their speaking ability; they are getting paid for their athletic ability. That said, just because a famous ball player is saying “you know” and “like” or other slang words consistently, it doesn't mean you have to follow their lead.

### POLITICAL CORRECTNESS:

- **Agree with it or not, but you have to try to be politically correct,** if nothing else to show the board you have an edit feature and you can represent us well in the public eye.
- **I heard fireman a few times** (if you have a female grading you, this is the kiss of death).
- **Old people should probably be called “elderly.”**
- **Be nice to everyone you come in contact with in life, but especially when you are in the testing process.** You never know who you will be talking to and if I was a fire chief making hiring decisions, I would be asking all of my staff, including secretaries, to provide their feedback as to how nice you were and how you treated them. When it is 3 a.m. and the fire chief is at home sleeping, he or she wants to know you'll be representing the department in the best light when nobody else is watching.

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### ATTIRE:

- **Take a look in the mirror.** I saw candidates that had a gap between their shirt top button and their tie. Tighten it up, and straighten that tie.
- **Shave the stuff under your chin, you're not here trying to score a date or look cool.** You're trying to get a job.
- **Dress shoes.** Please polish them before you show up to the interview.
- **Dry clean the suit.** I saw some candidates that looked like they had slept in their suit because of all of the wrinkles.

### EDUCATION:

- **If you're going to start something – finish it.** This includes education. So many candidates have not finished their formal education. The ones that did get degrees really stuck out; getting the degree doesn't guarantee you the job, but it makes you stand out positively and prove to the board that you can finish something and you have a basic level of education to offer.
- **If you don't have any fire education on your resume, do what it takes to get some!** Go to your local junior college and start working towards that two year degree in fire technology and get into a firefighter academy as well. Take as many fire classes as you can to show your commitment to the fire service. There were many paramedics that had years of experience on a private ambulance, but did not have a clue about what the job of a firefighter entails or what the fire service does and stands for. Just because you work on an ambulance and respond to calls with the firefighters doesn't mean that you have a clue as to what we do or why we do what we do. Getting some college fire technology education will be one way to make you have a more well-rounded background. Just because you have a lot of paramedic or EMT experience on an ambulance, it doesn't mean that you're going to be sure thing for the department. We're not hiring licenses or experience. We're hiring people that we hope will turn out to be successful assets to the department and the community for many years.

### OPENING STATEMENT:

- **Do have it written out and prepared in advance.** There is a great chance at every interview (no guarantee) that you will have the opportunity to provide an opening statement. Something to the effect of "tell us how you have prepared yourself," "tell the board how your education, experience and background have prepared you for a position with our department," etc. These questions, like the closing statement, are the freebies. There is no reason you shouldn't nail this one, assuming you have prepared and practiced in advance.
- **What I suggest is having it on your computer so you can modify it as needed.** Yes, it should be continuously changing as you add more information to it and you find things that need to be added, deleted, or altered.
- **Keep it under five minutes, preferably under four minutes.**
- **Contain the info found in your resume and application, as well as some personal characteristics.** Don't assume we'll give you credit for something on the resume or application; if you don't say it, you don't get credit for it. Talk about your training, education, experience, community service, bilingual ability, personal characteristics and attributes.
- **Don't tell us your age or name in the opening statement.** For that matter, sorry to sound harsh, but I really don't care to hear about the names of each of your five children, three dogs and two cats. I'd love to find out their names if we hire you as I get to know you better, but for



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the purposes of the interview, I don't think it's appropriate. You can say you're married with kids, but then move on.

### CLOSING STATEMENT:

- **Keep it from 30 to 90 seconds, nothing more, and nothing less.** When we asked them do you have anything else to say, we heard everything from “thank you very much, I appreciate the chance to be here” to five minute dissertations. Anything over 90 seconds is going to bore us and possibly hurt your score, especially if it makes you go over your allotted time.
- **Show us your passion for wanting to be here with us, in our department.** Some candidates did not do this, and it sounded like they just wanted any fire job. At least make us feel like we are your number one choice, and hopefully in a sincere way.

### ANSWERING QUESTIONS:

- **Don't ask us at the end of every answer you provide, “does that answer the question,” or “is that specific enough?”** Our standard answer was “whatever you feel is appropriate.”
- **Don't abruptly end your answers.** It makes us wonder if you have anything more to say. Have a nice closing to each question, even if it is only one sentence.
- **Don't immediately blurt out your answer.** It makes it seem like you heard the questions in advance. On that note, don't share questions with your buddies; you're only hurting yourself.
- **Take a few seconds to process the question and formulate an answer.** However, don't take that too literally and spend up to two minutes (or so it seemed) trying to find an answer. There were a few candidates I almost wanted to do a pulse check on or shake and shout to ensure they were still alive.
- **Don't ramble on, get to your point, but be detailed.** Saying something without backing it up is not going to get you hired. For example, don't say “I am dependable.” Back it up with a fact/example and maybe why it is important to be dependable. That will take your score from an average 70% score on that question to a score in the 80 to 90 percentile. 70% answers don't get you the job; 80% and 90% answers do.
- **Before you answer, don't tell the board “this is a tough question,” or “this is not what I expected.”** Do you think we would ask you easy questions? That just doesn't make you look to confident or prepared. You should expect any and all types of questions. If you have answers for virtually every type of question we can ask you, you'll be able to adapt to answer anything.

### INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO THE POSITION YOU ARE APPLYING FOR:

- **If you are applying for a paramedic position, expect to have questions to test your knowledge, skills and abilities you are claiming to possess.**
  - o May be actual hands-on skills scenarios
  - o May be oral questions
- **While you are not expected to know our specific county EMS protocols to do well, it wouldn't hurt to know them.** Most county EMS agencies have websites with their protocols (policies and procedures) online to download. Knowing county protocols in advance is a “value-added” answer. On that note, it doesn't hurt to know your ACLS or PALS protocols as well. Then, when describing your treatment, it doesn't hurt you to say “in Santa Clara County, I know the protocol is \_\_\_\_\_,” or “where I work in San Francisco, our protocol is \_\_\_\_\_.”

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- **Some fire departments actually have their paramedic candidates perform a hands-on skills examination.** A common one is to have you come into a room and run an adult or pediatric full arrest, or demonstrate your knowledge of treating different patients or reading different cardiac rhythms. Other items you should expect to be tested on include seldom-used skills. Discussions I have had with fire departments that use such skills assessment centers within their paramedic testing process tell me that it is not uncommon to have 50% or more of the candidates fail this station, thus removing them from the hiring process.
- **We actually had a paramedic scenario that was more of a talking station where you talked your way through your patient treatment.** I figured it would be easier and was expecting more candidates to pass. Well, our results were not much different from other fire departments out there. You might be great at what you do in the field, but if you can't talk your way through the station, you're not going to succeed.
- **Some of the main reasons candidates did not do well in the paramedic scenario:**
  - o Too aggressive in their treatment
  - o Not aggressive enough in their treatment
  - o Not having a clue as to what to do
  - o Totally missing the primary chief complaint and deviating into other treatments that would not have benefited the patient as much as the treatments we were looking for.
  - o Incorrect dosages, incorrect routes of administration, incorrect concentrations or names of medications to be used
  - o Reading too much into the scenario
  - o Not checking for expiration dates
  - o Lack of confidence in their treatment plan (saying "I would consider" or "I think I would do this."). We want confident, not cocky, paramedics to represent us.
  - o Not being detailed enough; remember, if you didn't say it, you didn't do it!
  - o Not having a good detailed patient turnover report (most were pathetic at best).
  - o Not reviewing the equipment we put in front of you. If we take the time to put some equipment in front of you, if you're given the chance to review it, please touch and handle everything and ask any questions immediately if you are not familiar with something. Also, if there are medications check the expiration dates and ask questions if something is expired. There were expired and current medications and only a few people noticed the difference.

Just some random thoughts, hope they help in some form or fashion. Realize that these are just my opinions and that opinions can and do change from person to person. Learn something from every person you come in contact with, both from the good and the not so good. Good luck, there is an oral interview out there in your future if you don't give up! For additional information about becoming a firefighter or to contact Steve Prziborowski, visit his website at [www.chabotfire.com](http://www.chabotfire.com)