

The Effect of Fire/EMS Job Experience on B-PAD Scores

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of an applicant's prior fire suppression or emergency medical job experience on B-PAD Overall Effectiveness (Scale 3) scores. It was hypothesized that prior job-relevant training and/or experience would provide no advantage to applicants. This finding would be consistent with previous studies of police applicants showing that B-PAD scores are not a function of job-specific work experience.

Methodology and Subjects. This study involved the administration of B-PAD for Fire/EMS to 502 firefighter/paramedic applicants to a large metropolitan fire department in the Northwest. 3-person rater panels determined B-PAD scores. The raters were not informed of the applicants' prior work experience. The scores were used in making selection decisions. The experienced applicants (those candidates having one month or more of previous work experience as a paid firefighter, volunteer firefighter, or paramedic) had an average 45.53 months of experience ($N = 381$; $SD = 41.17$). The subjects' experience ranged from 1 month to 302 months. There were 121 applicants with no prior experience or job training.

Results. The correlation between months of experience and B-PAD score was not statistically significant ($r = .096$, $p > .05$). The difference in the mean B-PAD score of the experienced candidates (mean = 22.48; $SD = 4.51$) and the non-experienced candidates (mean = 22.30; $SD = 4.90$) was not statistically significant ($p > .10$).

Conclusion. The results support the findings from previous studies of police applicants showing that B-PAD scores are not a function of prior job-specific work experience. The data also support the conclusion that the interpersonal skills and judgment of experienced job applicants cannot be assumed to be greater than those of non-experienced applicants.