Tests & Consequences: A Two-Part Saga
Part 1: The Tale of the Badly Chosen Cut Score

Is June too late to make New Year's resolutions? If it's not, then there are two things you should vow to do this year; spend more time selecting your tests and setting cut scores.

Setting cut scores is a complicated process, which (unfortunately) requires some thought. Did you know that there were multiple methods that can be used to select a cut score? And, of course, each cut score setting method has its benefits and drawbacks. Whichever method you choose, it is important that you document your reasoning for choosing it.

Although IPMA-HR cannot recommend cut scores (boy, wouldn't life be easier if we could?), we do provide a handout, Considerations in Implementing Selection Procedures, that talks about how you should pick one. In 20 pages, this handout answers many important questions like what do the law and professional guidelines say about setting cut scores and what methods can be used to set cut scores.

If you want to read another 20 pages or so, you can also get some great information about test score banding and the controversy surrounding its use. However, to make an informed decision about cut scores, you probably only need to read the first 20 pages.

You may be thinking that 20 pages is still a lot. Maybe you're even wondering, "Why can't I just call IPMA-HR for a summary?" Well, unfortunately this handout is the summary. As we said, setting cut scores is a complicated process. And, by complicated, we just mean that it takes some good old fashioned thinking. Some research has to be done, and some decisions need
Just think, the more time you take selecting your test and cut score, the more confident you will feel during the test's administration. The bottom line is that we know you're busy (we are too!), and it can be very tempting to cut corners. In today's economy, the job market is tight and law suits are on the rise, especially in public safety. The selection of your test and cut score are not places to cut corners.

If you already read our handout and don't understand what you read, talk with someone in your organization who has a background in statistics, HR, test development, or I-O Psychology and kindly ask for their help. Whatever you do, please do not select 70% as your passing score without a substantial reason. And let us be clear that, "We've always used 70%" is not a good enough reason.

Thank you for taking the time to read our little rant. We would like to leave you with one final thought. While we hope that you never find yourself embroiled in a law suit, if you do, will you wish that you had more confidence in the test and cut score? If the answer is yes, then click here to order your free copy of Considerations in Implementing Selection Procedures today. Also, be sure to look for Part 2 of Tests & Consequences in next month's ASR!

Fire Engineer Job Analysis
We are in the process of developing a test for the position of Fire Engineer (a.k.a., Driver, Master Firefighter). Fire engineers are involved with driving and positioning emergency vehicles, maintaining emergency vehicles and equipment, performing aerial ladder platform operations and performing pumping operations.

We need your help to finish the project! This project is currently in the job analysis stage, which involves the completion of questionnaires by incumbents and their supervisors.

There are a number of benefits to participation, including discounts on your agency's future test orders. Contact us today to join the project.

The New IPMA-HR.org
Our new website has launched! We'd love to find out how we can make our presence on the web better able to serve your needs for quality test and information about
utilizing all of our assessment products.

All of your requests for tests can be made online by using the built in shopping cart system. Just browse to the product page for the test you'd like to order and follow the prompts! (We're still working some kinks out, though, so don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions or see any glaring omissions.)

We've also taken the time to answer a lot of your frequently asked questions and concerns in our new Getting Started section. We hope it answers all your questions, but please let us know if there's anything else you'd like us to address.

About Us

IPMA-HR is a non-profit organization devoted to human resource professionals in the public sector. We specialize in public safety tests for hiring and promotions to include police, fire, corrections, and telecommunicators. We provide over 3,000 departments in the United States, Canada, and the European Union with cost effective employment tests. We've been developing employment tests for over 60 years and we pride ourselves on the quality of our tests and the personal measures we take to ensure all of our clients are satisfied.

You can read more about the products and services we offer on our website and e-mail us at assessment@ipma-hr.org. You can also call us toll-free at (800) 381-8378. We're here from Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm Eastern. Please don't hesitate to contact us if there's anything we can do for you.

Sincerely,

The Assessment Services Department