

FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD

STUDY NOTE

EXAMINATION	STATION OFFICERS' EXAMINATION
PAPER	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUBJECT	TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
ITEM	SCENARIO BASED TRAINING
STUDY NOTE No.	3308

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY NOTE

This study note has been prepared as the basis of study in connection with the qualifying examinations for promotion.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the information contained in the study note and understand how it should be applied:

The 'References' made at the end of the Study Note are included for information only and candidates will not be expected to study these as part of the bibliography.

SCENARIO BASED TRAINING

1. Introduction

Scenario based training is the simulation of operational incidents, either in part or as a whole, conducted under controlled conditions, at an appropriate tempo and to the extent necessary to meet the training objectives. Training which reproduces or simulates reality will be more meaningful, help to reinforce the learning experience and enhance the awareness and confidence of the firefighter at an operational incident.

2. Purpose

The main purpose of such training is to enable firefighters and others to practice and implement the skills and knowledge required at incidents. Therefore, the scenarios that are used should incorporate realism based on knowledge about operational incidents, which allow firefighters to apply the tactics, procedures, techniques and equipment employed on the incident ground in a realistic and often challenging environment.

Scenario Based Training is used to develop and maintain competent firefighters who are capable of meeting the demands of the job, whilst ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of themselves and others.

3. Legislation

If, in order to discharge their duties under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the employer has to expose firefighters to an element of risk on the training ground, then the Health and Safety at Work Act does not prevent it. This is subject to all being done in the way of supervision and the provision of safeguards to ensure that overall the arrangement is as safe as it can sensibly be.

Therefore, scenario based training may include the necessary exposure to risk only where there is a clear justification. The exposure of firefighters to risk on a training ground must be a planned exposure with a definite purpose in mind and one for which the way has been prepared in previous training.

4. Learning Outcomes

Typically, the learning outcomes associated with the techniques used within scenario-based training include:

- (a) Experience of the hazards and risks associated with the scenario;
- (b) The application of dynamic risk assessment;
- (c) The selection and application of appropriate safe systems of work; and
- (d) The application of a combination of core skills and techniques.

5. Planning Scenario Training

When preparing for scenario based training there are a number of planning considerations, these are **before, during** and **after** the event and are described in the following paragraphs.

6. Before the Scenario Event

(a) Linking the Scenario to the Operational Risk Assessment:

The foundation for scenario based training events must be the brigade's operational risk assessments to ensure that the key control measures that relate to specific incident types are in place.

No scenario-based training should, therefore, be undertaken without reference to the operational risk assessment.

This link ensures that:

- (i) All training events are directly relevant to identified operational activities; and
- (ii) The operational activity has been risk assessed by the brigade;.

(b) The Training Aims and Objective of Scenarios:

Scenario based training should support and be relevant to the Fire Service Role Maps and having made reference to these and the operational risk assessments the training aims and objectives should be specified.

The **training aim** is a statement of a particular performance requirement related to the type of incident involved.

The **training objectives** are statements of what personnel will be expected to do to achieve the aim.

(c) What Prior Learning is Required:

When considering the activities to be performed during the training event, it is necessary to identify and ensure that the individuals and crews taking part are able to apply the necessary core skills and knowledge.

The levels of knowledge and ability within the crew will vary and due regard should be given to this when assessing individual task performance and overall achievement of the aims and objectives.

The levels of competence will range from an awareness of the significant findings of the operational risk assessment, to the ability to demonstrate the safe and effective handling and operation of equipment.

(d) **Risk Exposure:**

There are two types of risk that will be introduced into training events:

(i) **Simulated**

Where the training benefit would not warrant exposure to a real risk, the hazard is simulated.

(ii) **Real**

A degree of risk exposure may be required to meet the training aims and objectives of scenario based training events. It is important that any exposure to risk is planned and controlled.

(e) **The Location of the Event:**

Brigade training facilities will often be used as the location for scenario based training, however, there are obvious benefits to be gained by both officers and firefighters from planning and undertaking off-station exercises and training particularly on sites where crews may attend potential incidents.

Specific scenario based training events should reflect the reality of operational incidents, albeit in a controlled environment.

Crews gain first-hand experience and knowledge of the risks in their respective turnout areas. This will play a significant part in gathering information as part of the risk assessment for operational incidents.

Off-station training provides a realistic environment in which firefighters can improve and consolidate their skills.

Off-station training involving neighbouring brigades should also be undertaken where arrangements exist under Sections 2 or 12 of the Fire Services Act, 1947, thereby allowing valuable additional experience and information to be gained.

There are occasions when, for the mutual benefit of the Fire Service and the owner/occupier of a venue, a training event can be organised which utilises the facilities and or personnel on site. This may involve joint exercises between the Fire Service and local works brigade, attendance at demonstrations or the testing of equipment or procedures, etc which are relevant to Fire Service operations.

(f) **The Resources and Time Required:**

Consideration of the resources that will be required to achieve the training objectives will include:

(i) **How the event scenario will be set up;**

(ii) **The appliances and crews required to take part;**

- (iii) Material required at the training event location;
- (iv) Any additional human resources;
- (v) Attendance of other agencies;
- (vi) How the event scenario will be cleared away; and
- (vii) How long the event will take.

(g) **The Training Risk Assessment:**

Because of the wide range of training permutations, a competent person must undertake a training risk assessment for each scenario based training event. The assessments should be reviewed and revised when there are significant changes to the circumstances they describe.

A typical risk assessment should take into account the following:

- (i) The training aims and objectives;
- (ii) The physical fitness and competence of the trainees eg recruits, retained, whole time and volunteer firefighters;
- (iii) The physical fitness and competence of those acting as instructors/safety officers and supervisors of the training event;
- (iv) The hazards and risks inherent to the training site;
- (v) The hazards and risks associated with any equipment, techniques and procedures;
- (vi) The co-operation and co-ordination with others sharing the training site;
- (vii) The hazards and risks involved before, during and after the training event;
- (viii) Effective risk control measures; and
- (ix) Contingency measures such as first aid cover, exercise abort signals etc.

(h) **Briefing:**

It is essential that all personnel involved in the scenario based training event be fully acquainted with the aims and objectives of the event and their role and responsibilities.

The most practical way of achieving this is by means of a comprehensive and planned briefing. The briefing is part of the learning process. It must be carried out before the training event and should include:

- (i) An introduction;
- (ii) The aims and objectives;
- (iii) The scenario;
- (iv) The details of the location;
- (v) The mobilising arrangements;
- (vi) Communication procedures;
- (vii) The rendezvous points;
- (viii) The exercise commencement time;
- (ix) The hazard simulation (fire, smoke, spillage etc);
- (x) The type of casualties (live or dummy);
- (xi) The control measures; and
- (xii) Any other relevant items essential to the exercise.

(i) **The Use of Live Casualties:**

The use of live casualties during scenario based training events can be beneficial. Their use must be strictly controlled, due to the risk of personal injury. The training aims must justify the use of live casualties. The training risk assessments must identify the appropriate control measures which when implemented; secure the health and safety of both the casualty and trainees. These control measures must include the use of correct casualty handling techniques.

There may be scenario based training events where the use of live casualties from outside agencies, eg The Casualty Union, could be considered an advantage.

The potential benefits from the use of live casualties include:

- (i) Practising the skills required for the rescue of persons including firefighters;
- (ii) Identifying hazards or obstacles to the effectiveness of the rescue operation and casualty handling; and
- (iii) Live casualties can provide constructive feedback regarding the rescue.

At training events that involve the use of live casualties there should be a full briefing and debriefing of casualties and trainees and individuals assuming the role of the casualty must understand the purpose and objectives of the training event.

7. During the Scenario Event

The planning considerations to arrange during the event include:

Emergency Procedures:

Emergency procedures must be in place to deal with situations of serious and imminent danger that may occur during scenario based training events.

Specific emergency procedures should be identified by the training risk assessment. Control measures must include:

- (a) The nomination of person/s to initiate emergency procedures;
- (b) Notification of personnel of the nature of any likely emergency situation; and
- (c) The action that personnel should take if emergency procedures are initiated.

8. After a Scenario Event

The planning considerations to arrange at the conclusion of the event include:

Debriefing:

A debrief of personnel following a training event is part of the learning process. It must be carried out as soon as possible after the event and include the following:

- (a) A re-examination of the aims and objectives;
- (b) Evaluation of the exercise;
- (c) Evaluation of the risk control measures;
- (d) Feedback from key players;
- (e) Invite feedback from other participants; and
- (f) Identify any shortcomings of procedures or equipment and ensure they are recorded and acted upon.

References

Fire Service Manual - Training