



Question Papers and Report of the
Assessors and the Examiners for the
Qualifying Examination for
Promotion to the Rank of
Leading Firefighter
Part I: Written Examination 2001

QUESTION PAPERS AND REPORT OF THE ASSESSORS AND EXAMINERS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF LEADING FIREFIGHTER
PART I WRITTEN EXAMINATION 2001

GENERAL COMMENTS

The sixteenth examination conducted by the Fire Services Examinations Board produced a pass for 602 candidates with a pass rate of 29.4% from 2045 candidates who sat the examination. When comparing these results with those of last year they show an increase in the number of candidates achieving a pass (+198), an improved pass rate (20.5%), and an increase of 561 (+37.8%) in the number of candidates sitting the examination.

With only one exception, the number and percentage of candidates achieving a pass in each of the Papers increased, the exception being Paper 1, 'Operations' which provided a reduced pass rate when compared to that achieved last year.

It was pleasing to note that the number of excellent scripts increased which implied that those candidates had effectively prepared themselves for the examination and provided a base of knowledge that would assist them in future years. Unfortunately, these remain in the minority and it is evident that many had either failed to obtain sufficient knowledge and understanding of the stated bibliography for this examination during their studies or had not studied at all.

As the examination will measure the level of knowledge and understanding of candidates of subjects considered appropriate to the rank or role that they wish to aspire to, it is totally inappropriate for candidates to believe that what they have been doing or observing whilst carrying out their present duties will be sufficient for this purpose.

Assuming that effective study has taken place, it only remains for the candidate to apply basic care and examination technique to the questions set in order to achieve the result that their efforts deserve.

The set questions for the examination are only taken from the established bibliography. It is impossible, and would be incorrect, to endeavour to accept what may be policies or procedures applied in brigades. Candidates must be encouraged to study the bibliography for the examination to provide themselves with a reasonable chance of success.

As regards to examination techniques, candidates should read the question carefully. Care is taken to ensure that it simply and specifically asks for certain information on a particular subject using a scenario that could be met by a Leading Firefighter to identify its relevance and to provide a picture to the candidate that might assist in identifying the answer. There are no hidden catches. It would appear that many candidates quickly scan a question and then write their answer. In numerous cases this seems to provide a great deal of information not required by the question and for which no marks can be awarded. An alternative suggestion is that the candidate does not know the answer to the question but attempts to mask this by providing information that is known on the subject in the hope that it will attract some marks. I must advise that this is a forlorn hope.

Finally, in order to ensure that the marking of their script provides no additional problems, candidates should follow these basic rules:

- Always use a pen and not a pencil to write your answers.
- Start each question on a new page in your answer book and write the number of the question in the box provided at the top of the page.
- Always prepare your answer either in your mind or as rough notes on paper before applying it to the answer book. Having used rough notes on paper before writing out the answer, cross out the rough notes when they are finished with; and
- When it is believed that the answers to the questions in a Paper have been completed, the questions should be read yet again together with the answers provided to them. Obvious mistakes or discrepancies which would otherwise fail to attract marks may then easily be identified and corrected.

The following pages contain the detailed comments of the Assessors and Examiners and a careful study of them should be beneficial to future candidates.

PAPER 1: OPERATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

Once again, those candidates, unfortunately, few in number, who had carried out effective preparation for the examination and studied the bibliography produced good scripts and were rewarded with excellent marks. A common failing by candidates appeared to relate to taking insufficient care when reading a question. The Examinations Board has introduced scenario based questions not only to demonstrate to the candidate the relevance of the question asked but, more importantly, to help them focus on the particular issues which should be addressed in the response. Unfortunately, too many candidates appeared to have read only the first, ie scenario, part of the question and proceeded to write everything they knew about the scenario, which was often not much, rather than provide the particular information requested.

Candidates are still failing to recognise that where they are asked to list a particular number of points, only that number will be marked and any subsequent responses ignored.

Candidates are also failing to read the instructions on the front of the answer book which requires them to start a new question on a new page. This usually makes life easier for them if they have left a space and need to add anything later, when they re-read their answer. It also gives them sufficient space to lay out their responses in such a way that is easier for the examiner to mark. This is not suggesting that examiners do not identify every point for which credit can be given, but a well laid out answer will assist the examiner to more readily identify the points being made for which marks can be awarded.

SECTION A FIRE APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS

Attempt BOTH questions

- 1 At change of watch, you have been tasked to ensure that the nominated Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer (BAECO) for each appliance carries out their checks properly.

What FIVE features on each entry control board must be checked? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/1997, EP4 page 5.

Candidates responses to questions involving breathing apparatus have been disappointing in most years. This year was an exception in that about two thirds obtained a satisfactory level of marks.

Too many candidates apparently failed to read the question properly and related their responses to the deployment of crews at an incident, rather than taking over the board at the start of the shift. A number of candidates introduced what must be assumed to be local practises rather than the nationally laid down procedures recommended in the bibliography. Others described the control board in great detail for which they gained no additional credit, since they were required to list only those features which were checked at change of Watch.

Candidates should always bear in mind that when the question requires a fixed number of responses, providing more will not attract extra credit. Indeed, the examiner will draw a line after marking the first five.

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- 2 You have been directed to take charge of the provision and application of foam at a substantial fire involving Class B liquid fuel. List TEN common sense considerations which need to be followed to ensure success in controlling and extinguishing the fire.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Firefighting Foam, Chapter 5, pages 21 and 22.

The vast majority of candidates seemed to rely on what was clearly limited operational experience when answering this question. Indeed, many showed little or no understanding of foam or its operational use. It was clear that a small number of candidates had studied this subject but, even so, the number of excellent scripts was tiny.

SECTION B OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT COMMAND

Attempt BOTH questions

- 3 When responding to an emergency call, traffic lights turn to RED as your appliance approaches. How and under what circumstances might the driver proceed against such a signal? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1103 – Proceeding to an Incident, page 2.

It had been anticipated that this would be a straightforward question involving an activity which many potential Leading Firefighters would experience on almost a daily basis. Nevertheless, less than a third achieved a satisfactory level of marks.

A large number of candidates appeared to be unaware that drivers of fire appliances may treat red traffic lights as a give way sign, whilst some of those who were aware of this, failed to state that this discretion could only be exercised when to stop would hinder the purpose for which the appliance was being used. Many omitted to mention the importance of reducing speed upon approaching a red traffic light, or that it was necessary to ensure that Fire Service vehicles did not cause a danger to other road users or cause them to alter speed or course to avoid an accident.

-
- 4 In order to discharge their role as team leaders at incidents, Leading Firefighters need to fully understand the Fire Service incident command system. In this context explain:
- (a) The role and common duties of a Sector Commander. (5 marks)
- and
- (b) The term 'inner cordon'. (3 marks)
- and
- (c) Rendezvous point. (2 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Incident Command, pages 4, 5, 12, 84, 85 and 86.

The candidate's knowledge of the role and common duties of a Sector Commander varied considerably. Many seemed to be relying on guess work rather than an understanding of the bibliography. This subject is relatively new and has been given a great deal of emphasis by many Fire Brigades, hence this observation is particularly disappointing. Nevertheless, a large number of candidates were aware of the duties with regard to health and safety with a smaller number being aware of the need to remain in communication with the incident commander.

However, it was disappointing that very few candidates recognised the importance of the Sector Commander remaining within their Sector.

A reasonable number of candidates were aware that the Sector Commander was required to discharge operational (tactical) functions, although many candidates spent too long going into great detail regarding specific tactical activities that the Sector Commander might carry out, which attracted no additional marks.

Most candidates understood the general concept of the inner cordon, many choosing to illustrate this diagrammatically. This is always helpful to the examiner and is something which should be encouraged. However, many candidates suggested that only Fire Service personnel were allowed to enter the inner cordon whilst others felt it was simply to exclude members of the public. Neither, of course, is entirely correct.

A disappointingly large number of candidates believed that the rendezvous point was nothing more than the place on the fire ground where people meet or where personnel report following an emergency evacuation. Whilst this might fit the dictionary definition of the expression, the question clearly asked for a definition in the context of incident command which means that to obtain good marks it was necessary to point out that this is where resources report for briefing and/or deployment.

SECTION C FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE INCIDENTS

Attempt BOTH questions

- 5 What are the FOUR most common electrical causes of fire? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Electricity, page 37.

Once again, candidates failed to demonstrate that they had studied the bibliography, responding with many examples of the four common causes, rather than stating the causes themselves. Answers like 'faulty equipment', 'D.I.Y' or 'botched jobs' attracted little credit. The Fire Service Manual gives very clear advice in this area and a simple list of the four headings accompanied by the briefest of explanations would have been sufficient to attract full marks.

- 6 You attend an incident where it is necessary to commit firefighters for rescue purposes into a confined space via a vertical access using ropes and harnesses. Explain the precautions that must be taken in connection with the use of ropes and harnesses under these circumstances.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health and Safety Volume 3, Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 5.5, pages 37 and 39.

Rescues from confined spaces via a vertical access point using ropes and harnesses are relatively uncommon. Nevertheless, any potential Leading Firefighter must accept the possibility of being confronted with such a situation and should, therefore, at this stage in their career, have an understanding of the necessary precautions that would need to be applied. With only a small number of candidates achieving a satisfactory level of marks, it is clear that this is not generally the case, and implied that many had not effectively studied the relevant bibliography.

It was even more disappointing to note that a quarter of the candidates indicated no knowledge or understanding of this subject.

Some candidates spent a great deal of time mentioning the need to check equipment, ensure test records were maintained and up-to-date. The question was related to a particular operational scenario and these actions would be taken as part of the normal maintenance regime rather than at an incident. It should be anticipated that all equipment carried on operational appliances would be properly maintained, checked and appropriate records kept prior to leaving the station.

SECTION D SCIENCE AND FIREFIGHTING

Attempt BOTH questions

- 7 Two trainee Firefighters are posted to your watch and you have been tasked to develop their understanding of the effects of applying water to a compartment fire. You decide to initially instruct them on the behaviour of water as an extinguishing medium when properly applied.

Explain briefly the FIVE effects of water in such circumstances. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Compartment Fires and Tactical Ventilation, page 4.

It was evident that some candidates had failed to read the question with sufficient care. The question required the candidate to explain behaviour of water as an extinguishing medium in a particular scenario. Unfortunately, many candidates went on to describe a whole range of features connected with compartment fires but did not provide the information asked for in the question thus gaining little or no credit.

Most candidates were aware of the cooling effects of water but failed to explain in sufficient detail the effects on fuel, the smoke plume and the compartment itself. Some candidates were aware that water absorbs a great deal of heat as it turns to steam. Surprisingly, one or two candidates thought that water formed one side of the triangle of fire and thus, if any one was removed, the fire would go out.

-
- 8 Upon arrival at a building in which a fire has been reported, there is no immediate visible sign of fire.

(a) By what other signs might you confirm that the building or its contents are on fire? (5 marks)

and

(b) Should smoke be issuing from the building, why might this mislead you as to the location and size of the fire? (5 marks)

Bibliography: Manual of Firemanship, Book 11, page 16.

In general, this was a well answered question with many candidates achieving a good level of available marks. However, it was clear that some candidates had not studied the bibliography and had relied heavily on their operational experience. Others failed to take the necessary care when reading the question and provided a great deal of information regarding backdrafts, which attracted no credit.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

This year's Leading Firefighter Paper 2 on Fire Safety, Education and Enforcement continued the move towards measuring candidate's awareness of community fire safety issues. For the Service to embrace the culture of risk reduction there is a need for potential junior officers to acquire the skills and knowledge to underpin their ability to impart the community safety message.

The result of this Paper demonstrates a continuing trend of improvement, indicating that a large number of candidates are studying sensibly, and adopting a community safety 'mind set'.

There are, however, still a number of poor scripts that obviously result from candidates being ill-prepared, and not applying good examination techniques.

SECTION A FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Attempt THIS question

- 1 During a visit to an office building, the occupier informs you that the company wants to alter the position, number and design of internal and external doorways, and asks you for advice regarding the provision of fire exits.

List the main criteria which emergency escape routes and exits must comply with to satisfy the requirements of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1201 - The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 – Awareness, pages 3 and 4.

This question required a simple list of the main criteria for which escape routes and exits must comply. It was not generally a well answered question with a number of candidates failing to understand the requirements of the question by confining their answers to fire door criteria instead of fire exits, and escape routes. It is disappointing that the awareness of a number of candidates on a basic topic such as means of escape was so poor.

SECTION B COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Attempt ALL questions

- 2 A member of the public has called at the fire station to ask your advice in connection with the refilling of a recently purchased paraffin heater which she uses to heat her greenhouse.

List FIVE precautions she should take when refilling the heater. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 - Fire Safety in the Home, page 5.

This question was reasonably well answered, with most candidates demonstrating that they had read the Study Note. However, some candidates failed to read the question correctly and proceeded to give answers relating to LPG heaters, and in some cases the storage of paraffin. Some candidates also demonstrated poor examination technique by supplying a long text instead of a simple list as required.

- 3 Faulty electrical wiring is a major cause of fire.

(a) List FOUR warning signs of dangerous wiring. (4 marks)

and

(b) List FOUR other dangerous situations that may be found which may lead to overheating or short circuits. (6 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 - Fire Safety in the Home, pages 6 and 7.

Clearly some candidates failed to read the question correctly, going into great detail on how electrical plugs should be wired, and the correct fuse ratings for appliances with different wattage. Over reliance on personal experience of working with electrical wiring is no substitute for appropriate study. Not a well answered question!

- 4 Your station commander has asked you to give a short talk to children about the correct way to call the Fire Service in an emergency and provide the information required.

What points should you include in this talk?

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 – Fire Safety in the Home, page 14.

This is a fundamental topic for the Service and therefore resulted in a generally well answered question. It was disappointing that some candidates took insufficient care when reading the question and therefore often proceeded to cover the problems of hoax calls and the contents of a fire action plan, which was not what the question asked.

- 5 As officer-in-charge you attend a call to a house fire which turns out to be a false alarm that has possibly been made by a seven year old child.

What should be your immediate actions and considerations.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1204 - Unnecessary Fire Calls, page 5.

This was a very poorly answered question, with a number of candidates not accepting that they have a responsibility for community fire safety. It was apparent that the majority of candidates had not studied the bibliography and relied too heavily on their own thoughts on this subject or operational experience. It is of concern to note that potential junior officers showed in their answers that they were prepared to quickly off-load their responsibility to a dedicated community fire safety department without prior thorough investigation.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

It was encouraging to see some general improvement in the standard of answers provided when compared with last year's examination. There was evidence that candidates had spent time in preparation and study of the bibliography and were therefore able to apply their knowledge and understanding to the interpretation of the scenarios. This resulted in some clear, concise and well laid out responses with a number of candidates achieving maximum marks. Unfortunately, there were too many candidates who were ill-prepared for this examination, did not apparently read the questions carefully and consequently provided inappropriate responses, relying upon guess work or in some cases omitting to answer at all. Candidates must try to avoid writing lengthy scripts when the question simply asks for a list.

SECTION A EMPLOYMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

- 1 A firefighter who has just completed recruit training has joined your watch. The Brigade Policy requires you to carry out induction training. Your watch commander has asked you to ensure that the firefighter is aware of employment rights under the Employment Rights Act 1996.

There is a section in the station Training Package on Contracts of Employment. You have to prepare a new lesson plan to include other rights under the Act.

- (a) List FIVE employment rights, other than 'Contracts of Employment', which you would include in your plan to ensure the main areas of the Act are covered. (5 marks)

and

- (b) Identify FIVE elements which should be included in the written statement of employment in covering the section on Contracts of Employment. (5 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1301 - Employment Rights Awareness, page 2.

It is important for potential crew commanders to have an appreciation of employment law and how this may affect individual rights. Candidates who had studied the bibliography were able to gain maximum marks with ease. The questions required five responses to be listed in each section. Some candidates included much longer lists in the hope of achieving the correct answer. Candidates must consider their answers before committing these to the list. Additional points above that required will not attract any consideration for marks.

2 As a Leading Firefighter in charge of a watch for a tour of duty, you observe that a normally outgoing crew member is unusually quiet, withdrawn and remote from the activities on station. The individual has also made some uncharacteristic mistakes in carrying out normal duties.

(a) What could be the possible reasons for this behavioural pattern? (5 marks)

and

(b) Identify FIVE qualities you would exercise when counselling personnel in this type of situation. (5 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1304 – Informal Discipline, pages 2 and 3.

The candidates who had taken the time to read the bibliography and therefore establish a greater understanding of this subject did very well in answering this question. A large number of candidates failed to interpret the scenario and provided responses unrelated to the question. Candidates must read the scenario carefully and link this to the answer required.

The majority of candidates recognised that in its basic form, the question required two lists of five responses. Of those who failed, it was apparent that there was a dependency on writing as much as possible with the hope that sufficient marks could be attained.

SECTION B TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

3 Shortly after the opening of the fire station and you taking up the appointment as Leading Firefighter on a watch, you believe that the overall leadership of the watch could be improved and plan to discuss this with your Watch Commander.

What functions would you identify that must be fulfilled by the watch leadership to meet the watch needs? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1305 – Leadership, Motivation and Communication, page 5.

It should be recognised by potential crew commanders that an understanding of leadership and command functions is critical to this role. Whilst the examiners were pleased to recognise a number of good scripts the overall standard was poor.

Again, candidates apparently failed to read the question, producing scripts that described leadership theories and management styles revolving around Maslow and Macgregor's theories; rather than identifying the functions that should be fulfilled by the watch leadership.

Candidates who wish to be successful cannot rely on daily watch experiences and must prepare adequately before attending future examinations.

- 4 In terms of command, the decisions made will vary according to the complexity of the problem or situation, but there are a number of phases to be applied in the decision making process.

Having realised that something is affecting the overall effectiveness of your crew at an incident, what are the FIVE distinct phases that you will need to address before this situation can be resolved?

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1305 – Leadership, Motivation and Communication, page 3.

Many candidates who attempted this question failed to realise the need to identify the problem, analyse it, develop possible solutions, decide on the most appropriate of these and effectively apply it. Many responses referred incorrectly to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, or Task, Group and Individual needs which attracted no marks.

Unfortunately, many candidates seemed ill-prepared and apparently relied solely on their existing experience to answer the question, which resulted in them achieving few or no marks. Many candidates who had clearly studied the bibliography and gave a simple account of the five phases attracted full marks.

SECTION C HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Attempt BOTH questions

- 5 Your Station Commander, with your assistance, is to deliver a lecture to your watch on health and safety. Your part in the presentation is to explain the general provisions which an employer must satisfy under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees.

Identify FIVE general provisions you will include in your presentation.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1308 – The Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 – Awareness, page 2.

This question was poorly answered. The Health and Safety at Work Act is an extremely influential piece of legislation affecting the Service. Potential crew commanders therefore should be aware of the important sections of this Act and how they relate to policies and procedures.

It was clear that few candidates had read and understood the Study Note. Therefore, many candidates attempted the question using their own knowledge and interpretation of health and safety in the workplace rather than the provisions of the Act, which was less than satisfactory.

- 6 You have been tasked to provide an inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) selected, provided and maintained for operational use at incidents by firefighters, as required by the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

List TEN examples of PPE that could be included in such an inventory.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1311 – The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992, page 2.

This question was well answered with many candidates obtaining very high marks. However, it was disturbing to note that a few candidates failed to obtain any marks bearing in mind that listing the standard fire kit issue would have ensured the award of some.

PAPER 4: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

The overall performance of candidates on this paper was improved from that of previous years. Generally, improvements in both grammar and spelling have contributed to the overall increase in marks. It is however clear that attention to this important area by candidates is still required as a number of familiar mis-spelt words again appeared in the scripts submitted this year.

The following words were most frequently mis-spelt in this year's papers:

Inconvenience
Campaign
Initiative
Safety
Unfortunately
Utmost
Dealt
Kerb
Grateful
Vehicle

Disappointingly, despite comments made in previous reports of this nature, it was clear from the responses that some candidates failed to take time in identifying what was required. For example, a significant number of candidates only answered one question when the paper clearly stated that **both** needed to be answered.

Candidates are reminded of the need to ensure they provide their responses in the format required, be that a report, memorandum or letter. Some scripts provided letters without paragraphs which lost marks, as did using the incorrect protocol for the commencement and finish to letters or memoranda.

Once again, it is worth repeating the following advice to candidates:

- (a) Read the instructions
- (b) Do not write in pencil
- (c) Start each answer on a new page
- (d) Pace your time to ensure a balance of effort is given to both answers
- (e) When required, indicate the number of words used
- (f) Ensure that any rough work is crossed through

Please DO NOT use your name in any of the answers.

Attempt BOTH questions

- 1 You are Leading Firefighter McLean with the responsibility of developing the station's community fire safety initiatives on Green Watch at Longham Fire Station which is in Wessex Fire and Rescue Service. Your Station Commander, Station Officer Jackson, has asked you to prepare for him a memorandum to the Brigade Public Relations Officer reporting on the growth of incidents attended by your station over the last five years. Station Officer Jackson hopes to see the information used in a press release. Since 1998, you have seen the station become the busiest one pump wholetime station in the brigade. The statistics are shown below.

Incident Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
FDRI fires	121	129	136	162	145
Small fires	297	211	286	256	587
Chimney fires	25	31	37	26	38
False alarms (good intent)	156	186	193	202	195
False alarms (due to apparatus)	103	119	131	161	149
False alarms (malicious)	87	109	107	137	114
Special service calls	115	134	152	188	172
TOTALS	904	919	1042	1132	1400

Your memorandum should be no more than 250 words and draw out some of the more obvious patterns of growth and reflect on the trend, together with some possible causes, such as the hot summer of 1999. It would also be sensible to comment on how the increase in incidents has demonstrated the increasing need for the station to embrace fire safety initiatives.

You are to state the number of words used at the end of your script. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1401 – Written Communications.

Candidates were expected to demonstrate their ability to undertake a logical analysis of the data provided and use the deductions to then provide their Station Commander with their conclusions in a sequence which could be used as the basis of a press release. Candidates needed to show the logic of the approach and their interpretations of the trend of the various incidents. Those who had laid out the memorandum in a format suitable for press release attracted good marks, as did those who were able to link suggested community fire safety strategies to tackle areas of identified growth.

A number of candidates clearly spent a considerable amount of time copying the table into their scripts. This additional effort received no marks and wasted valuable time.

Once again a number of scripts were received where the candidate had used their own name or had provided a memorandum from the Leading Firefighter. The question clearly stated that the draft memorandum should be from the Station Commander. Such mistakes and lack of attention to simple detail caused valuable marks to be lost.

- 2 You are Leading Firefighter Fairbank on Red Watch at Longham Fire Station in Wessex Fire and Rescue Service. Your Station Commander has called you into the office and shown you the following letter:

18 Apple Tree Lane
Brompton
Wessex

20 July 2001

Dear Sir

I have always had a high regard for the Fire Service, but I must complain most strongly about the actions of some of your firefighters.

When I returned home yesterday afternoon I found two very deep tyre furrows which had caused the most appalling damage to my newly seeded grass verge along the front of my house. My neighbour, Mr Johnson, later told me that a fire engine (No. T999 AJP) had arrived with lights blazing yesterday morning and after a brief stop outside my house had gone to the hotel just down the road.

Mr Johnson went to the hotel (where he could see no fire) and within 20 minutes the fire engine roared off again with no apology or any attempt to deal with the damage.

I am disgusted and my insurance company will be contacting you forthwith.

Yours faithfully

E Brady (Mrs)

As you were the officer-in-charge of the appliance, you point out to the Station Commander the following information:

1. The call was to an elderly lady with a heart condition who had her arm trapped in the lift doors.
2. Apple Tree Lane is an extremely quiet, narrow road with no footpath and houses set well back. There is insufficient room for overtaking.
3. As the appliance approached the incident, a parked car was partially blocking the lane. The vehicle was locked and there was no driver to be found. In view of the seriousness of the incident, you instructed the driver to proceed, which necessitated driving partly on the grass verge.
4. At the time you were aware that the appliance had sunk into the grass verge and that you intended to return to inspect the damage.
5. On putting back the 'Stop' message you were ordered to another incident and did not return to the station until after the end of the shift.

The Station Commander informs you that the matter will need to be referred to the Brigade's insurers and asks you to draft a letter in reply to Mrs Brady for the Divisional Commander's signature.

Your letter should be no more than 250 words in length.

You are to state the number of words used at the end of your script. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1401 – Written Communications.

The question required the candidate to prepare a draft letter for the Divisional Commander in respect to a letter of complaint. To achieve high marks, candidates needed to provide a sensitive response which took the reader logically through the sequence of events.

Whilst many good scripts were received, some candidates wrote the response from themselves rather than the Divisional Commander and as a consequence lost valuable marks. Marks were also lost where the draft letter was addressed to anyone other than the complainant.

No marks were given for the introduction of additional or irrelevant information. Marks were also lost for the use of Fire Service jargon which would be meaningless to the complainant.

It should also be noted that candidates are unlikely to provide comprehensive scripts without using the full allocation of words. It therefore follows that where, as in this case, a figure is provided, candidates should aim to use them to gain maximum benefit.

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