



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 2002

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 2002

GENERAL COMMENTS

The seventeenth examination conducted by the Fire Services Examinations Board produced a pass for 615 candidates and provided a pass rate of 30.3% from 2033 candidates who sat the examination. When comparing these results with those of last year they show a slight increase in the number of candidates achieving a pass (+ 15), a slightly improved pass rate from 29.4%, but a small reduction in the number of candidates (-7) sitting the examination.

When comparing the percentage of candidates achieving a pass in each of the Papers to the previous year's results, this indicates a greatly improved pass rate for Paper 1, a disappointing reduction and return to a similar result achieved in 2000 in Paper 2, a similar pass rate in Paper 3, and a reduced pass rate and return to that achieved in 2000 in Paper 4.

Whilst there were a number of excellent scripts, it cannot be said that their number improved significantly on those submitted last year. It remains clear that there are some candidates who do effectively prepare themselves for the examination, some make some attempt at studying the bibliography, and some who make little or no attempt to improve their level of knowledge and understanding of the subjects on which they are to be examined. It must be repeated that the examination will measure the knowledge and understanding of candidates in subjects considered appropriate to the rank to which they aspire. It is totally inappropriate for candidates to believe that what they have been doing or observing in their present duties will be sufficient for this purpose.

The set questions for the examination are only taken from the established bibliography. It is impossible 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.

Assuming that effective study has been achieved, it only remains for the candidate to apply basic care and examination technique when providing their responses in order to achieve the result that they desire and which their efforts should deserve.

As regards examination techniques, care should be taken to read each question and identify what information is being sought. There are no hidden catches. It would appear that many candidates quickly scan a question and then write their answer. There continue to be numerous cases where candidates provide a great deal of information not required by the question for which no marks can be awarded. It could be, of course, that those candidates do not know the answer to the set question but attempt to hide this by providing whatever information is known of the subject in the vain hope that it will attract some marks.

I must also recommend that candidates read through their scripts when they believe that they have completed their answers. Examiners can only mark what the candidate has submitted and there have been numerous cases where inadequacies within a script could have been easily recognised and corrected if sufficient care had been taken.

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

PAPER 1: OPERATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were a number of reasonable scripts where candidates who displayed a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects questioned.

However, candidates must study the national bibliography rather than rely on local practices or variations to national procedures, to gain any or reasonable levels of marks. As members of the fire service wishing to aspire to a higher rank, candidates are expected to be able to deal with questions about their responsibilities and those of personnel who work with turntable ladders or hydraulic platforms, even if they have no practical experience of them, and to know about rapid deployment breathing apparatus entry control boards, even if they serve in a brigade which does not use them. Relying on operational experience alone rather than obtaining a greater depth of knowledge and understanding through a thorough and systematic study of the bibliography, as so many candidates clearly do, is unlikely ever to be sufficient to pass this examination.

Candidates must also take the time to read the question properly, preferably more than once. Some failed to display that they had understood the question whilst more read the scenario of a question and went on to write down as much as they knew about it rather than address the specific aspects asked for in the question. Thus, a great deal of writing which provided unnecessary information often gained little or no credit.

Furthermore, candidates must follow the instructions given in the question. If a question calls for a list of five points, then only five points should be provided, which should be presented in list format. Where more than five were offered, only the first five were marked.

Similarly, where candidates presented their response in an essay style the examiner stopped marking as soon as he had, often with some difficulty, identified the number of points required by the question.

Some candidates repeated points which were contained in the question. No marks were awarded in these circumstances since no knowledge had been demonstrated.

SECTION A FIRE APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS

Attempt BOTH questions

- 1 In order to discharge your duties as the officer-in-charge of a difficult chimney fire to which you have ordered a hydraulic platform, it is important that you understand both your own role and that of the driver operator of the appliance when it arrives at the incident.

Describe both roles.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Manual of Firemanship Book 5, page 97.

This question attracted very few excellent responses with most of those who achieved more than half the available marks only just doing so.

Many candidates submitted very lengthy scripts with the number of marks awarded seemingly decreasing in proportion with their length. This was because they failed to read the question properly and by doing so failed to deal with the two specific roles referred to therein.

Candidates needlessly provided much irrelevant material such as descriptions of the methods of dealing with, for example, roof fires, thatch fires, carrying out a risk assessment for a house fire or the handover procedure on arrival or upon leaving an incident.

Similarly, no credit was given for detailed descriptions of how to operate a hydraulic platform at an incident. Some candidates suggested the use of monitors in some cases supplied by two 4500litres per minute pumps. Others dealt with the question as if it was about turntable ladders.

As an aside, it is disappointing to note that a few candidates are still using imperial units when the Service and the Board adopted the metric system in the mid 1970's.

There was a good deal of confusion about the respective roles of the officer-in-charge of the incident and the officer-in-charge of the hydraulic platform. The responses provided by some candidates implied that the officer-in-charge of the hydraulic platform would take charge of the whole incident.

Some candidates merged their responses to the two parts of the question. This created ambiguity and whilst, where possible, candidates were given the benefit of the doubt, it is likely that some candidates failed to obtain marks because of this.

Very few candidates seemed to be aware that it is not only important to decide when a hydraulic platform is required and where it should be sited, but also what it is required to do.

- 2 Having ordered the use of chemical protective clothing at an incident, what factors might influence your approach to BA control and your additional expectations of the BAECO?

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/97, Chapter 4, SP4, page 7.

Operational experience alone appeared to be the basis upon which most candidates based their responses to this question. Only about 20% of candidates attracted more than 50% of the available marks and of those only a small number provided a sufficiently detailed response to demonstrate that they had studied the bibliography.

A large number of candidates read the question as being predominantly about decontamination whereas, in reality, it was about the breathing apparatus control aspects of decontamination. Consequently, scripts which contained a great deal of detail about the wider aspects of decontamination attracted no extra credit.

Marks failed to be gained by those candidates who specified that wearing time **must** be limited to 20 minutes. Some candidates also believed that this also included time for decontamination when, in fact, it may be the case that wearing should be limited to 20 minutes excluding decontamination time.

Whilst there was a reasonably widespread recognition of the need for reliefs, there was a common failure to realise that they need to be deployed early in this situation.

It was worrying to note the number of candidates that thought BA control should be set up downwind of the incident.

SECTION B OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT COMMAND

Attempt BOTH questions

- 3 You arrive at a house fire with your appliance and crew. You undertake a dynamic risk assessment and consider using the breathing apparatus wearers rapid deployment procedure.
- (a) Under what exceptional circumstances may this procedure be used? (6 marks)
- and
- (b) Explain how this procedure should be implemented. (4 marks)

Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/97, Chapter 1, CNP3, page 3.

Generally speaking, most candidates answered part (a) reasonably well, many seeming to rely on their operational experience, with unusual success. As a result, a reasonable number of candidates achieved acceptable marks.

However, candidates did not obtain credit for saying that they would only use the rapid deployment procedure in exceptional circumstances or that they would carry out a risk assessment since this information was contained in the question. Similarly, lengthy explanations of how to carry out a dynamic risk assessment attracted no marks.

Part (b) of the question was, in general, poorly answered demonstrating a widespread failure to study the bibliography since operational experience was completely insufficient in this context. It was of particular concern to note that a number of candidates believed that BA teams should don and start up en-route.

-
- 4 As officer-in-charge of the first attendance at what is clearly an escalating incident, good communications are particularly important when you hand over command to a more senior officer. What matters would you include in your handover and how would you convey it? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2 – Incident Command, Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2.1, page 2.

A reasonable number of candidates achieved satisfactory results. Never the less, few candidates achieved high marks, the majority seeming to rely on their operational experience.

With few exceptions, candidates failed to highlight the importance of a handover being easy to assimilate, ie, clear and concise, or the need to include site specific information.

It was also disappointing to note the large number of scripts containing incomplete information. It is insufficient to describe the need to provide the oncoming officer with details of action taken so far by giving one simple example such as the number of jets in use.

SECTION C FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE INCIDENTS

Attempt BOTH questions

- 5 You are the officer-in-charge of a relatively small incident in a building involving asbestos.

List FIVE operational command and control procedures you might implement as a consequence of your risk assessment. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1105 – Asbestos, pages 3 and 5.

Many candidates gained high marks by displaying a sound level of knowledge and understanding of this subject.

However, about a third of the candidates failed to demonstrate that their actions would provide adequate protection for either their personnel or the public.

A large number submitted text rather than the list requested. This meant that the examiner had to search for the five points amongst a lot of irrelevant material. Similarly, a number of candidates provided up to ten points. In both circumstances only the first five are marked, any more being regarded as excess and ignored by the examiner.

-
- 6 You are to attend a training exercise where a lift engineer is trapped in machinery on the top of a lift car and needs to be rescued. There will be a need to direct crew members to work on the top of the lift car and in the lift motor room. You decide to advise your crew on the dangers that will be met.

List the FIVE ways in which lift machinery might cause injury to firefighters under these circumstances. (10 marks)

Bibliography: A Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 2.2, page 8.

This question was badly answered by most candidates and it was evident that they had not taken sufficient care to read the question properly.

Instead of listing the five hazards associated with lift machinery which may cause injury to firefighters, many provided details of operational procedures, safe systems of work or seemed to rely on their operational experience. This approach attracted few marks.

A number of candidates provided answers that were related to training in general rather than the specific situation which was the subject of the question.

It was clear that most candidates had not studied the bibliography with a few notable and easily recognisable exceptions. This resulted in a small number of outstanding scripts.

A number of candidates failed to follow the instructions in the question and did not provide a list as requested.

SECTION D SCIENCE AND FIREFIGHTING

Attempt BOTH questions

- 7 You arrive at an incident as the officer-in-charge and observe the signs and symptoms of a backdraught. List them. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2 - Compartment Fires and Tactical Ventilation, Part 1, Chapter 2, page 9.

This question presented the opportunity to gain marks by the provision of a short simple five point list. This was achieved by a small number of candidates who submitted excellent scripts but in reality the overall response to this topical and relevant question was disappointing.

Unfortunately, most candidates based their responses on operational experience alone and gained, at best, only average marks. Others wasted their valuable time and made life difficult for the examiner by providing lengthy answers containing a great deal of padding.

Many colourful descriptions of smoke that bore no relation to the correct answer attracted no marks as did descriptions of operational procedures for dealing with backdraughts.

Many candidates made reference to a low neutral plane. Not only would it not be possible for an officer-in-charge to recognise this phenomenon on arrival, this is a feature of a flashover.

-
- 8 You arrive with your appliance and crew at a building which is rapidly filling with smoke and decide to apply tactical ventilation.

Identify FIVE significant beneficial effects which, if used properly, tactical ventilation can provide to trapped occupants, firefighters and the building. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2 - Compartment Fires and Tactical Ventilation, Part 2, Chapter 1, page 22.

Overall, the response to this question was reasonable as might be expected from a question which could be attempted by the application of common sense and logic. Indeed, the vast majority achieved more than fifty per cent of available marks. It was clear that some candidates had studied the bibliography and a few submitted scripts which were awarded excellent marks.

Unfortunately, a few candidates failed to read the question properly and explained how they would position and use PPV equipment.

Again a number of candidates provided more than five beneficial effects. Any in excess of five were ignored by the examiner.

PAPER 2: FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

The results obtained from this year's Fire Safety, Education and Enforcement paper were disappointing with a low percentage pass rate on most of the questions set. For the service to continuously improve their performance in risk reduction, it is important that firefighters, and particularly junior officers based within communities continue to increase their skills and knowledge in respect of the community safety messages.

From this year's paper, positive evidence has emerged that those candidates who have studied well and produced good scripts, are thinking differently in respect of community fire safety, which demonstrates the culture change to prevention.

Unfortunately, there were too many candidates who were poorly prepared for this examination through lack of study, weak application in respect of examination technique, and the usual over reliance on operational experience and guess work.

SECTION A FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Attempt this question

- 1 As part of a Health and Safety project being undertaken by a student of a local college, the student has come to your fire station to ask you questions related to fire safety.

The student is aware that some types of premises have been designated under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 as requiring a fire certificate, however the student is unsure what **type** of premises have been designated and the criterion required before this requirement takes affect.

- (a) What are the two **types** of premises which have been designated under the Act? (2 marks)

and

- (b) What criterion needs to be met in each type before a certificate is required? (8 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1202 - The Fire Precautions Act 1971 – Awareness, page 3.

Most candidates who failed to register a satisfactory level of marks had clearly mis-read the question or failed to grasp the simple requirements of it.

In part (b), a very common mistake was to specify incorrect numbers, for example '6 or more' when it should be 'more than 6'. Another was to detail the requirements (criteria) contained within a fire certificate.

SECTION B COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Attempt ALL questions

- 2 During a visit to a residential care home, one of the residents asks your advice about the storage and use of a recently purchased electric underblanket.

What advice will you give in relation to:

(a) the storage of the blanket when not in use; (2 marks)

and

(b) safety precautions to be taken when being used; (4 marks)

and

(c) ongoing maintenance, and checks? (4 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 - Fire Safety in the Home, page 7.

This was a key community fire safety based question, which in reality will be asked regularly by communities, and may play a major role in reducing the risk to vulnerable people. It is therefore disappointing that most candidates did not have this basic knowledge and had apparently not studied the bibliography. Those candidates that were successful, highlighted the specific safety precautions relating to electric underblankets as well as those relating to general electrical safety.

- 3 Fire extinguishers are provided in premises to allow people to tackle fires in their very early stages, if they feel able to do so safely.

Before tackling the fire however, persons should be aware of the limitations of the extinguisher and how it should be used.

What advice would you give to the public on the precautions that need to be followed if a small fire occurs? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 - Fire Safety in the Home, page 16.

This basic fire safety question was poorly answered by many candidates. It was evident that once again practical experience was relied upon as a substitute for studying the bibliography. Candidates also made the common mistake of not taking sufficient care to understand what the question required. Subsequently, many candidates either outlined how to operate a fire extinguisher, how to apply the different medium, or identified the fire classifications.

- 4 To ensure automatic fire detection and alarm systems fitted to buildings operate effectively, owners or occupiers of buildings fitted with such systems need to appoint a responsible person who is tasked to ensure the system will be effective.

What are the duties of this responsible person? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1204 - Unnecessary Fire Calls, pages 9 & 10.

The reduction of unwanted fire calls to automatic fire alarms is a key target in the community fire safety agenda. It is therefore crucial that junior officers have a clear understanding of this specific issue.

Most candidates displayed a very poor level of knowledge in respect of this question which resulted in a low percentage obtaining a satisfactory level of marks, which should be of some concern within the fire service.

- 5 A local resident visits the fire station for advice on the safety precautions to be taken when changing the cylinder of a portable, liquified petroleum gas (LPG) heater which he has recently purchased to heat his home.

(a) What advice would you give on how to change the cylinder safely? (6 marks)

and

(b) What advice would you give about safety checks that should be carried out at this time? (4 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1203 - Fire Safety in the Home, page 4.

A reasonably well answered question that with sensible study of the bibliography and the use of operational knowledge clearly enabled a satisfactory mark to be gained.

The question required specific answers rather than general comments. Several candidates made some statements that are of concern and they clearly need to distinguish between LPG and other gas use.

PAPER 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

Last year's encouraging improvement in the quality of responses to the set questions was repeated with excellent scripts being provided by some, but with different levels of quality in the responses provided by the majority. Unfortunately there remain some who provided levels of response that suggested that they had undertaken little or no proper preparation for the examination.

The weaker responses were generally to questions 3, 4 and 5. Greater care in reading the question, identifying what was required as a response, and then reading through the response that they had written would have definitely been beneficial to numerous candidates. Carelessness of this nature can be obviated and could result in that difference between failure and pass being overcome.

SECTION A EMPLOYMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

1 During a station visit by a group of young adults you observe two of them studying an advertisement for wholetime firefighters. You decide to talk to them about it and find them to be keen on the role but uncertain on the part concerning equal opportunities in employment.

(a) State briefly what is meant by the term 'equal opportunities' in employment. (5 marks)

and

(b) To ensure equality of treatment and the elimination of discrimination in the workplace, list the grounds that must never be considered by the brigade. (5 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1302 - Equal Opportunities, page 2.

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a basic understanding of 'equal opportunities' in employment with more than half obtaining a satisfactory level of marks. However, many candidates failed to explain that equal opportunities must also relate to provisions in the workplace as a whole, and not just restricted to recruitment, as implied.

It would seem necessary to suggest that candidates read the question more than once before committing themselves to an answer, and then to read their answer to ensure that it states what was meant. Evidence of this need is provided from numerous candidates stating 'employers must discriminate against...'

Candidates also failed to take note of the key word within part (b) of the question which asked for a 'list'. Many candidates could have saved much time if they had provided their response in this manner rather than providing a lengthy paragraph of prose.

2 In the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985, a schedule identifies 'offences' that will enable disciplinary action to take place.

List TEN 'offences' as set out in that schedule. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1303 – Fire Services Code of Discipline, pages 2, 3 and 4.

The majority of candidates provided excellent responses and obtained a high level of marks.

A pass rate of about 90% indicates that a study of this area of the syllabus has been effective. However, the inability of those others who failed to obtain a reasonable level of marks suggested a lack of any reasonable attempt to study this subject.

SECTION B TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

- 3 As a newly appointed crew commander you have been given an introductory talk by your station commander. During the discussion the importance of your management role is highlighted with particular emphasis on leadership, motivation and communication responsibilities.

Briefly define the terms:

(a) Management. (3 marks)

and

(b) Leadership. (3 marks)

and

(c) Motivation. (2 marks)

and

(d) Communication. (2 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1305 – Leadership, Motivation & Communication, pages 2, 3, 6 and 10.

Part (a) – A number of candidates placed a great deal of emphasis on demonstrating an understanding of the three principle roles of management which regrettably did not attract any marks. Marks were obtained by identifying controlling, directing and co-ordinating fire service personnel and resources within the answer.

Part (b) – A number of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the different types, theories or styles of leadership which did not attract any marks. Marks were obtained by indicating the practice of leading, guiding and inspiring or motivating others to achieve an objective.

Part (c) – The answers provided attracted a high level of marks for many candidates. However, some candidates spent considerable time and effort linking issues of management and leadership already considered in parts (a) and (b). The theories of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y were frequently demonstrated but attracted no marks.

Part (d) – This was the most successfully answered part of the question. However, candidates often spent time in describing the different communication media, choosing the method most suited to various scenarios.

- 4 As a leading firefighter you have become aware of mistakes being made by the watch due to the ineffective way in which information is transmitted to them.

List FIVE techniques to ensure effective communication with the watch to overcome this problem.

(10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1305 - Leadership, Motivation & Communication, page 10.

The responses provided by candidates to this question were generally disappointing.

It was apparent that many candidates had given insufficient care and thought when providing their answers with some being beyond comprehension. This reflected a lack of practical understanding of effective methods of communication.

Those candidates who suggested that in order to be an effective communicator, you must 'be forceful', 'speak orally' or 'talk in the same language' achieved none of the marks available and would seem to have some distance to go with their studies.

The candidates who had prepared themselves by reading the study notes were very evident and obtained high marks.

SECTION C HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Attempt BOTH questions

- 5 As a crew commander you have been asked by your station commander to review the stowage of equipment on your appliance. As part of your initial work you have suggested that slide/tilt shelves are fitted. The response to you has been that this is not possible under the terms of 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

Briefly define the phrase 'so far as is reasonably practicable' in terms of the employers duties as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

(10 marks)

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

The importance of this phrase had clearly not been appreciated by many candidates with the majority providing inadequate answers that suggested a lack of understanding and study of the subject.

Some candidates appeared to write about the subject of health and safety in general in the vain hope that this would trigger the award of marks, but in doing so many further demonstrated a lack of understanding of the difference between 'risk' and 'hazard'.

6 Following a recent review of accident statistics, concern has been raised by your station commander at the increase in manual handling accidents. You have been tasked to consider and determine appropriate solutions to resolve this problem.

- (a) List FOUR examples of ways in which manual handling accidents could be reduced at little or no cost. (8 marks)

and

- (b) Some lifting and manual handling operations may justify a completely mechanical solution. List TWO mechanical aids that could be used for many activities. (2 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 1310 – The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, page 4.

It appeared evident that some candidates failed to take reasonable care when reading the question which resulted in them providing much more than was required and/or, in some cases, failing to provide the detail required by the question.

Where a list of 4 items is required, be they examples or otherwise, candidates should not write a full page of prose.

Candidates who had undertaken proper preparation were evident and seemed to experience no difficulty in providing the information required, in the proper format, and obtaining high marks.

Where a list of 4 is required, it is useful to number each item. No benefit was gained by those candidates who exceeded this number.

Part (a) asked for 4 examples that could be applied at little or no cost. Some of the examples provided had significant cost implications which could not possibly satisfy that requirement.

Part (b) asked for aids that could be used for many activities. Some candidates clearly used their imaginations and provided examples that had very limited applications and some provided aids that were not mechanical.

In some cases, candidates provided their responses using part sentences and generic descriptions, apparently leaving it to the examiner to interpret what was being suggested as a possible answer, with little success.

PAPER 4: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments Relating to Questions

The standard of spelling varied enormously. The improvement, noted last year, was maintained, but scripts either contained no spelling errors or sufficient to lose the candidate all the marks available for grammar and spelling for this part of the paper. Errors commonly occurred in spelling the following words: career, utmost, business, assessment, benefit, safety, successful, opportunity, profession, exciting, practical, motivate, chief, scenario, achieve, training and receive (and for those foolish enough to attempt it 'claustrophobia'). However, there was a marked improvement in the spelling of 'personnel' and 'environment'.

Many candidates clearly ran out of time and failed to complete both questions. I suspect that others also only attempted one question in the mistaken belief that the two questions were alternatives.

It was noticeable that the standard of answers in each bundle of answer papers often varied considerably, with 'runs' of good answers and others which were very poor. This may reflect the different approaches in each brigade in preparing candidates for these examinations.

Some candidates answered the same question twice without crossing out their first draft, leaving the marker to guess which was the final version. Others made two attempts at answering the question and then crossed them both out, leaving the examiner with nothing to mark!

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

Attempt BOTH questions

- 1 You are Leading Firefighter Fairbank in the Training Department and you have been asked to prepare a précis of the following text for inclusion in a training document. Your précis should consist of between 120 and 140 words. You must state the number of words used at the end of your script.

'The main benefit of risk assessment is the protection of the workforce. The implementation of appropriate controls following risk assessment will lead to a reduction in the number of accidents. Obviously there is also the benefit of legal compliance. Failure to carry out a risk assessment can result in enforcement action, and the HSE has already issued several improvement notices for failure to carry out a risk assessment. In addition, in the event of any civil claim, the organisation's risk assessment would form an important part of its defence. Tied in with this are the economic benefits to be gained from a reduction in the costs associated with accidents and loss in general, such as insurance premiums, fines, cover for absent employees, etc.

Risk assessments also enable organisational resources to be directed to where they are most needed. Most risk assessment systems include prioritisation, enabling resources to be directed at the high risks first. Rolling programmes can be established to meet targets. These allow resources in time, money and trouble to be phased in over a period of time. Risk assessment can also assist in making valid management decisions. The results can be used to highlight areas where risk could be reduced, and may also be used to assist in determining whether particular risk reduction measures would be cost-effective.

In general terms, risk assessment can help in improving an organisation's safety culture. A great deal can be learned from the risk assessment process. The systematic approach may identify hazards and risks that were previously unknown, or the process could highlight deficiencies in management systems, for example failure to adhere to written working procedures. The involvement of personnel at all levels in the risk assessment process will help get the message across that health and safety is an integral part of all work activities and thus reinforce its importance throughout the organisation.'

(25 marks)

(311 words)

Generally this question was answered well with three quarters of the candidates obtaining a satisfactory level of marks.

The art of précis is to reduce the original text while retaining all the key points of the passage in a manner which demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter.

Many candidates failed to show such an understanding, and several failed to obtain available marks by selecting words or phrases from the passage and presenting them in bullet form. Additionally, a number of candidates clearly do not understand what is required in a précis, and, unless and until it is explained to them, will never pass this paper when a précis is one of the questions. One candidate even achieved the notable feat of producing a précis which contained more words than the original passage.

- 2 The local community college is soon to hold a 'Job Focus Week' and certain selected employers have been invited to provide information on careers in their profession. The college has requested an article for the college's Careers Newsletter on the theme 'A Career in the Fire Service'.

You are Leading Firefighter Fairbank in the training section and this task has been allocated to you.

The article is to be aimed at students aged between 18 to 20 years and, to provide a common framework for all employers, they have asked that the article includes the following information:

- (i) basic trainee requirements; and
- (ii) promotion qualifications and opportunities.

The opportunity should also be taken to reflect the need for the Service to be more inclusive and the involvement of personnel in the wider community.

Your article should be between 200 and 250 words in length.

You must state the number of words used at the end of your article.

(25 marks)

It was a very straightforward question which gave the candidate several clear indications about the contents of the article. However, the question was disappointedly answered by the majority of candidates.

Many candidates produced long-winded 'letters' which either contained irrelevant information or went off at a tangent explaining 'what the job consists of' in too much detail.

They often referred to their own careers and achievements as examples, and rambled on at far too great a length.

Many scripts used the politically incorrect term 'fireman' and omitted to mention that women and people from ethnic minorities are under-represented in the fire service.

Once again, it needs to be stressed to candidates that they should read the question carefully and plan their answers before starting to write.

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