



Question Papers and Report of the
Assessors and the Examiners for the
Qualifying Examination for
Promotion to the Rank of
Station Officer 2001

QUESTION PAPERS AND REPORT OF THE ASSESSORS AND THE EXAMINERS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF STATION OFFICER 2001

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Station Officers' examination held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board attracted an initial entry of 1217 candidates.

Of these, 158 (13.0%) absented themselves, which was a similar number and percentage to that experienced in the previous year, leaving 1059 actually attempting the examination, which is a decrease of 5% to last year's total. Of this number, 274 (25.9%) were awarded a pass and are now qualified for the rank of Station Officer.

This was the first application of the new examination which, although still consisting of four papers, now provides a new syllabus for each paper, includes a paper on Business Administration (Paper 4) and has only subjective questions, all of which needed to be answered by the candidates, in each paper. This was in comparison to the former provision of a choice of subjective questions in all papers and the additional use of objective questions in two of the four papers.

The flexible method of taking the examination, which enables candidates to take two, three or four papers in their first attempt, continues. Consequently, only 360 candidates taking the examination attempted all four papers.

The number of candidates obtaining an overall pass is 85 less than that of last year, and last year's results were described as disappointing. However, this should be measured against a reduced number of candidates taking the examination, the introduction of a new examination format, and a new examination syllabus which included many study notes rather than references to Manuals of Firemanship, Dear Chief Fire Officer Letters (Dear Firemaster Letters), etc.

However, the flexible system has provided 593 candidates who have achieved paper passes who may continue in the examination system.

It is considered unrealistic to attempt to compare the results obtained in this year's examination to those of previous years because of the differences that have been applied, but the findings from the scripts provided continue to remain very similar.

There appears to be four groups of candidates who take the examination:

- Those who take it seriously and effectively study the bibliography to enable them to achieve a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding. These candidates provide excellent scripts, achieve a high level of marks, obtain satisfactory results and will take their knowledge and understanding forward and apply it to the benefit of all concerned in future years;
- Those who do some study work without any effective planning and who also believe that their practical experience, no matter how limited, may be sufficient to replace effective study. These candidates provide some good answers, and some poor ones, and must welcome the flexible system of taking the examination as they usually have the capability of achieving the necessary passes in time and by applying themselves seriously to the task. These candidates would benefit from mentoring within their brigade;

- Those who believe that their practical experience, no matter how limited, will be sufficient, and see achieving a pass as a bonus rather than a just reward for achieving a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of subjects considered important for the rank or role being sought. Regrettably, such candidates usually provide poor answers that are well below the level required to achieve a pass. If these candidates consider themselves as serious contenders for promotion they should avail themselves of the available guidance within the brigade, and should benefit from mentoring; and
- Those who regrettably have already reached their limits. These can be a mixture of those included in the second and third group.

Against this, there must be many who could progress their career and increase their rank but who do not wish to do so for their own personal reasons, regardless of the needs of the service.

The most useful piece of advice that I can provide to those who take the examinations is 'read the question carefully. It contains no catches, identifies what is required from the candidate, and in what format it should be provided.' If the candidate has effectively studied the subject matter the rest will be reasonably straightforward.

The in-tray exercise in Paper 4 - Business Administration is also a test of time management. Recommended periods of time to be allocated to each section are given and it will be beneficial for the candidate if these are observed.

The following pages contain the comments of the Assessors and Examiners and a careful study of these should be helpful to future candidates.

PAPER 1: OPERATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS

There is a recurring theme running through the comments of the examiners in virtually every question in this paper.

Candidates, in the main, continue to rely heavily on their experience and knowledge of what happens in their individual Brigade. In many cases, the consequence of this is that they omit important information contained in the bibliography – which clearly has not been studied in any great depth, if at all. Answers to questions, therefore, very often appear to operate at a level significantly below that required of this senior rank, and below the requirements of the role officers attaining this qualification are likely to fulfil.

This year was the first with a format that emphasises knowledge and understanding, rather than the ability to articulate almost a straight reproduction of 'list' type answers. Consequently, examiners made a great effort to consider candidates' scripts in some depth, and to ensure that it was knowledge that attracted marks rather than just key words and/ or phrases.

Additionally, given this was the first year of a different approach, the emphasis in setting the examination was also placed on core issues - Incident Command System, BA Procedures, Insulated Sandwich Panels and Risk Assessment.

Candidates, in future, when studying for this examination should consider the importance of key knowledge and understanding for real world applications. Risk Assessment must be a significant element of candidates' studies.

Section A Operational Procedures and Incident Command

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 You are the Station Officer mobilised as part of the initial attendance to a serious house fire. The first appliance books in attendance whilst you are still en route and the following message is sent:

'From LFF Smith, 15 Any Street, Blanktown. House fire, persons reported, 2BA, 2 hose-reels in use, rapid deployment procedure in use'.

With regard to the rapid deployment procedure:

(a) describe:

- (i) its objective and the limited circumstances under which the Incident Commander may apply the procedure;

and

- (ii) the practical application of the procedure and when it should be transferred to the Stage I or Stage II procedure.

(19 marks)

and

- (b) On arrival at the incident, you find additional appliances in attendance with 6BA in use using 2 entry points and 2 persons still unaccounted for.

Identify and describe the BA entry control procedure you would expect to find being applied.

(6 marks)

Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/97 CNP2, CNP3 and CNP5.

Overall, candidates demonstrated a basic understanding of rapid deployment but failed to detail the practical application of implementing these procedures and a full understanding of the circumstances in which they can be deployed and, therefore, failed to obtain the available marks.

Candidates tended to demonstrate their Brigade or local policy rather than demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the national guidance contained within the Technical Bulletin of the syllabus.

Part two of the question provided mixed responses from candidates regarding the level of BA Control expected to be deployed at a domestic incident, with some candidates opting for Stage 2 procedures rather than having a knowledge and understanding of the scope available to them under Stage 1.

Most candidates failed to appreciate that the question was aimed at the role of the Officer arriving on the scene, supervising the control measures already deployed, and continued to detail their responsibilities as a BA Control Officer rather than the command implications of the practical application of BA Stage 1 procedures with 2 entry control points.

In conclusion, a large number of candidates appeared to rely on practical experience rather than applying the appropriate level of study contained within the bibliography and, therefore, tended to omit relevant detail in the operation of BA control procedures which, in itself, was somewhat disturbing to note.

A basic operational question and, notwithstanding the comments above, generally reasonably well answered.

2 You are the Incident Commander at a fire involving a large detached warehouse. The building is well alight with crews at work at the front and rear.

(a) For the purpose of providing and maintaining an effective command and control structure, describe:

- (i) by the use of a simple diagram how you would sectorise the incident;
- (ii) what is meant by 'span of control'; and
- (iii) the limitations, if any, you would apply to the number of lines of direct communication at:
 - a rapidly developing incident; and
 - a stable situation at an incident.

(14 marks)

and

(b) The incident has now developed to five pumps and you have introduced a Command Support Structure. You have also appointed a Safety Officer for the front of the building.

From the simple drawing below:

- (i) identify the relevant officers labelled (i) to (v) by their titles;
- (ii) identify the colour of the tabards of the officers labelled (i),(ii), (iv) and (v); and
- (iii) identify the other officers and agencies you would need to establish a line of communication with.

(11 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2 – Operations, pages 10, 11, 17 and 20.

It was noticeable that a large number of candidates were relying on practical experience rather than a clear understanding of the examination bibliography.

This was particularly apparent with regard to the identification of incident command tabard colours. Candidates' reliance on vague recollections of the procedures was invariably wrong, making potentially excellent answers ordinary.

Candidates are strongly recommended not to rely on somewhat vague recollections of what may take place in their particular brigade. This only wastes valuable time that the candidate could use to greater effect when answering other parts of the question.

Section B Firefighting and Rescue Incidents

Attempt ALL question from this Section

- 3 You have arrived at a fire at a chemical processing plant and are informed by the Sub-Officer in charge that 3 pumps are in attendance and a request for these to be increased to 10 has been sent.

A more senior officer is attending but will not arrive for at least a further 25 minutes.

You are also informed that the flange of a pipe from a large capacity bunded storage tank has fractured and the leaking chemical has ignited. The content of the tank is a highly flammable liquid which gives off vapours that are toxic and corrosive. All employees have been evacuated and accounted for. Specialist advice is available on site.

Foam from 2 hand held branches is being applied to the leaking chemical and more branches are being prepared. Safety Officers are positioned.

You formally take command of the incident.

What considerations will you now give specifically to the interests of the **operational safety** of the fire crews?

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Safety Guide to Health and Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 5.3, pages 19 and 20.

What appears to be a straightforward question, ideally suited to a relatively concise answer, was subject to long, rambling scripts, that once more relied upon a candidate's operational experience, or guesswork, rather than knowledge of the published bibliography.

The question was also very specific, and related to 'OPERATIONAL SAFETY of fire crews'. A significant number of candidates spent valuable time on identifying matters such as safety issues regarding the public, on-coming resources or company employees. This emphasises the importance of reading the question posed.

It was also disappointing that candidates did not obtain higher marks, bearing in mind the importance of risk assessment and specifically the level of P.P.E. to be worn. At this level of examination, and given the 'bread and butter' nature of the question, this really should have been a fundamental consideration for candidates.

- 4 You are the officer-in-charge of the pre-determined attendance to an emergency call to a local football ground which is hosting a major pop concert attended by over 20,000 people. As you leave the fire station you can see large amounts of smoke coming from the spectator stand.
- (a) Describe why access difficulties might be expected. (2 marks)
- and
- (b) List the items that should be considered in the pre-planning of a response to this risk. (4 marks)
- and
- (c) Why and in what manner might the behaviour of the people at the venue present danger to the emergency service personnel attending? (3 marks)
- and
- (d) As the officer-in-charge:
- (i) describe your considerations regarding your approach to the incident and your arrival;
- and
- (ii) list the points you will need to consider as the involvement of the fire service develops. (13 marks)
- and
- (e) What other specific hazards can be expected at entertainment events of this nature? (3 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Safety Guide to Health and Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 3.8, pages 59, 60 and 62.

The majority of the candidates relied on their operational experience and gave generic answers that could have been adopted to any incident. This was not enough to obtain all the available marks.

It was evident that a number of candidates had read the bibliography but failed to demonstrate an understanding of each area within the question or they had mis-read and/or misinterpreted the question, as answers applicable to one area were given in another and no marks were gained. However, those that had studied and understood the bibliography gained an excellent level of marks.

Candidates should realise that 'Risk Assessments' follow a logical process, and if a similarly logical process was followed in relation to the question, this would have assisted candidates in structuring their answers. Each GRA has a 'List of Considerations' and if these had been understood and applied, it would have ensured a rewarding result.

For future examinations it is important that candidates study the GRAs as part of the bibliography.

5 You have been mobilised to a large refurbished storage warehouse used by a major food retailer. On arrival you are confronted by a rapidly developing fire producing large amounts of dense black smoke. The site manager confirms that all persons have been safely evacuated. He is uncertain of the building's construction but states that it was previously used as a cold store.

- (a) You believe that the building is likely to contain insulated sandwich panels.

Identify and describe in detail the three specific hazards to the safety of firefighters provided by this type of construction.

(12 marks)

and

- (b) In addition to the hazards described in (a), what other points will you need to consider to deal effectively with this incident and for the operational safety of the firefighters?

(13 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3105 – Sandwich Panels, pages 4 – 6.

This was the first time that a question on this subject has been set and due to the 'currency' of the hazards posed by sandwich panels, might have been predicted by candidates. It was, therefore, disappointing that only around 30% of candidates attracted a satisfactory level of marks.

In part (a) many candidates gave good descriptions on the construction of sandwich panels but this attracted no marks as it was not required by the question. Many candidates also confused the reasons for rapid fire spread with rapid collapse.

The candidates who obtained good marks in part (b) had obviously read the study note on sandwich panels and were able to answer the question in a concise manner. No marks were awarded to candidates who referred to operational planning and training for incidents of this nature.

The hazards to firefighters posed by sandwich panels are widely documented. Candidates are repeatedly advised to study the bibliography in order to enhance their knowledge. Answers based solely on operational knowledge and experience is usually insufficient to provide all the information being sought.

Section C Science and Firefighting

Attempt the question from this Section

- 6 You arrive as officer-in-charge of the first attendance at a vehicle repair workshops in which there is a substantial fire. The owner informs you that there are cylinders containing liquefied petroleum gas and oxygen in the fire, although they are turned off. The cylinders are full.
- (a) In the early stages of the fire, describe the different effects the heat would have on each of the cylinder contents and the relevance, if any, of the gas laws. (13 marks)
- and
- (b) If the temperature of the liquefied petroleum gas cylinder continued to rise due to the fire, explain why an explosion may happen? (6 marks)
- and
- (c) Ignoring the fire scenario, why would a cylinder pressure reading on the liquefied petroleum gas cylinder be no indication of the amount of gas in the cylinder? (6 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 1 - Technology Equipment and Media, Physics and Chemistry for Firefighters Chapter 4, Thermal Expansion, pages 26 - 30 and 63 - 64.

The majority of the candidates answered the question well by applying the basic principles that when gases are heated the temperature will increase and, thereby, if contained in a vessel the pressure will increase.

It was, however, disappointing to note that a minority of candidates could not even state the effects of heating a gas filled container.

A number of candidates seemed to fail to read the question properly and did not attempt to explain the effects on the oxygen cylinder.

Once again an excellent level of marks were achieved by candidates who had clearly read the bibliography and understood the gas laws.

PAPER 2: FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

It was pleasing to note the number of excellent scripts from candidates who had clearly set out to obtain a level of knowledge and understanding of the subjects contained in this Paper so that they would have a better than even chance of success. Regrettably they remained in the minority.

The questions attempted to relate to scenarios that any candidate who obtains this rank is likely to meet, and must be prepared to satisfactorily deal with. As in real life, there is little point in providing information that is not relevant to the enquiry made so it is essential to assess what information and to what degree of detail is being sought. In the case of written questions, this is easier than dealing with oral questions as time can be spent on establishing what is needed.

Regrettably, many candidates still seemingly ignore this basic need and appear to write what they know of a subject without carrying out this simple task.

The weaknesses of the candidates in general have been identified by the examiners in their comments related to their findings on each question. Candidates of future years and those who provide pre-examination courses should benefit from reading them with care.

Section A Fire Safety Legislation

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 You have been asked to set up an interview with the owner of a commercial premises who is suspected of involvement in criminal offence(s) regarding fire safety matters within their premises. He has indicated he will be attending with his solicitor.

Detail the procedural issues you will need to take into account for carrying out such an interview.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3201 – Cautioning Suspects, pages 4 and 5.

Generally, a well answered question with many candidates obtaining a satisfactory level of marks. It was evident that those candidates who had read the study note were able to draw on the information gained and provide short concise answers that attracted high marks.

However, it is essential to know that any interview carried out regarding a criminal offence must require a formal caution to be given to the person to be interviewed. Those candidates who 'hedged their bets' by indicating that a caution may or may not be given failed to attract the available marks.

The candidate who suggested that the interviewer should advise the owner of the premises of the case for the defence should think again. Similarly, the few who implied that they would threaten the occupier with closure of the premises should realise that they would not be likely to obtain much more information from that point on.

- 2 A local factory owner informs you that she needs to use highly flammable liquids in her factory process and requests advice regarding their safe storage and use. Describe the:
- (a) four acceptable methods of storage; (13 marks)
- and
- (b) precautions to take against spills and leaks; (8 marks)
- and
- (c) methods for controlling sources of ignition. (4 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3202 - The Highly Flammable Liquids and Liquefied Petroleum Gases Regulations 1972, pages 4 and 5.

The majority of candidates who obtained a satisfactory level of marks on this question secured them mainly from the answers provided on part (a). Some confusion was evident on types of storage and references were made to containers, tanks, vessels, cans or tins, with some candidates giving detailed and elaborate answers on highly flammable gases rather than the liquids mentioned in the question.

For part (b), many unsuccessful candidates listed equipment required and measures to take to subsequently deal with spills rather than the precautions that would prevent them from occurring.

It is believed that for parts (b) and (c) of the question, candidates attempted to answer by describing something possibly observed during visits to premises rather than using the more correct information contained in the bibliography.

For part (c), the suggested provision of a suitable sign to prevent smoking was not what was being sought. The banning of sources of ignition from the area where there was a dangerous concentration of vapours was far more meaningful to attract the marks.

-
- 3 You are a Station Officer in the fire safety section of the Brigade and receive a telephone call from the owner of a small restaurant concerned that the emergency routes and exits from the premises may not be adequate.
- Detail the advice you would give so that the owner will be able to comply with the requirements of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3204 - The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, pages 5 and 6.

Many candidates provided long answers that detailed the concept and content of the fire safety detail within the (Workplace) Regulations without actually dealing with the query being made by the owner of the restaurant.

Whilst it was somewhat rewarding to note that many had clearly read and grasped the detail within the Regulations, candidates are advised to read the set question and identify what information is being sought. Those candidates who advised that they would arrange for a fire safety officer to carry out a risk assessment of the premises do not seem to understand that the purpose of the examination is to test their knowledge and understanding of a subject rather than have their powers of delegation demonstrated.

Those other candidates who advised the owner to either purchase a copy of the Regulations, or the guidance on its application, or to carry out their own risk assessment process failed to obtain marks.

Section B Community Fire Safety

Attempt the question from this Section

- 4 Last year there were a number of complaints regarding the control exercised over an organised bonfire and fireworks event held annually. Because of this the brigade has agreed to assist the organiser in the planning and running of the event and you have been instructed to oversee the safety aspects.

Detail the points that you will need to consider to ensure a safe event.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: *Study Note 3207 – Safety at Community Events, pages 15 and 16.*

The majority of candidates effectively used all the available information in the study note to display their knowledge of necessary safety provisions.

There were many excellent responses but few included that they should comply with guidance issued by the HSE or the Home Office.

Those candidates who had either not read the study note or failed to understand the detail in it were easily identified. A sketchy recollection of precautions observed when attending such an event is unlikely to make any officer appear knowledgeable or effective should they be approached for advice on this subject.

Numerous candidates related their answer to a bonfire and fireworks event on a fire station, to which the study note partly relates. As this was not the case in this question, references to appliance turnouts and station premises earned no marks, but it did indicate that the study note had been read.

Statements, such as 'identify any hazards', 'wind direction', 'weather conditions', and 'environmental factors', needed to be further explained to earn marks.

Section C Fire Safety Risk Assessment

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 You have been tasked to carry out a fire safety risk assessment of a large multi-storey building.

List the particular factors that will need to be considered:

(a) when assessing structural fire precautions; (14 marks)

and

(b) when assessing the operational facilities for brigade firefighting. (11 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3210 – Principles of Fire Safety Risk Assessment, pages 8 and 11.

A generally poorly answered question with many candidates not achieving a satisfactory level of marks and in which many candidates obtained most of their marks from part (b).

Some candidates provided a detailed explanation of the means of escape from a building, the methods of securing those means of escape, travel distances, etc which implied that they had overlooked the key words 'structural fire precautions'.

Candidates used valuable time in describing in great detail the width of access roads, turning circles of appliances, rising mains and the requirements of a 'wet or dry' system.

A high proportion of candidates had clearly inadequately studied the bibliography and, not knowing the subject, resorted to providing some information that they did know, whether or not it was applicable to the question.

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-
- 6 As part of a fire safety risk assessment course for fire officers, you are to provide instruction on the prevention of fire and fire safety management of buildings.

List the particular fire prevention and fire safety management measures they will need to assess. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3210 – Principles of Fire Safety Risk Assessment, page 7.

Only a small number of candidates made effective reference to the information provided in the bibliography.

Those candidates who obtained available marks displayed a general understanding of the question. Whilst few were able to recall all the measures, their study of this subject provided some success.

Surprisingly few candidates provided a list as requested by the question, and many provided rambling prose from which it was difficult to identify the information sought.

The stem of the question mentioned a risk assessment course and, seemingly as a consequence, quite a few candidates provided answers as if they were constructing such a course. It is suspected that many candidates did not take sufficient time to read the question properly, which led to a number of responses that did not effectively relate to the question. Many candidates simply outlined a risk assessment process.

PAPER 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

In view of the restricted range of the new bibliography, and the clarity of the Study Note, it was disappointing to see that some candidates were still attempting to rely on their experience, rather than proper study, to succeed.

Where candidates had followed a structured study programme this was reflected in some very good scripts, which attained high marks.

At this level of examination candidates need to study all the bibliography and not try to 'second guess' the assessor's likely choice of questions. Such an approach rarely results in the necessary level of marks being achieved in any Paper.

Section A Employment

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 1 You have been transferred to the staff department to help in the design of a new Contract of Employment for employees. Part of your duties is to advise on the legal requirements placed on your employer by employment related legislation.

List the elements of information that must be contained in a Contract of Employment.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3301 – Contracts of Employment, page 3.

In general this was a well answered question, with many candidates gaining a high level of marks.

However, despite the bibliography being very specific, some candidates appeared to be reliant on their experience of local contracts, whereas the question clearly asked for elements that **must** be included.

On the one hand it was particularly worrying that many candidates referred to an 'entitlement to sickness' but, on the other, it was pleasing that most candidates actually did what the question asked and presented a clear, logical list of the required points.

2 You have been asked to prepare a briefing note for members of your Fire Authority who may have to form a disciplinary appeals panel under the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985 (in Scotland, the Fire Services (Discipline) (Scotland) Regulations 1985). In particular they wish to have a thorough understanding of 'awards' made under the Regulations.

(a) Describe, in detail, the six disciplinary awards available under the Regulations. (17 marks)

and

(b) Explain the recommendations referring to removal of disciplinary awards and final warnings from records. (8 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3304 - Fire Service Discipline - Awards and Appeals, pages 2 and 3.

Approximately two-thirds of the candidates attempting this question obtained a satisfactory level of marks

Unfortunately, several candidates described the disciplinary hearing process rather than what was asked for in the question.

It was quite obvious to the examiners that many candidates had not studied the note in detail, which is concise and easily understood, and they seemed to rely upon unsuccessfully, sketchy knowledge obtained some time in the past.

At this level, it is expected that candidates should be better prepared and have a greater degree of knowledge of a very basic and important fire service topic.

- 4 In designing a new training system for your Brigade you have been asked to use the principles of a Performance Management System.
- (a) In addition to auditing the system, what should the other four activities of a Performance Management System identify or describe? (10 marks)
- and
- (b) In providing a qualitative measurement and review process, what features must the audit of a Performance Management System satisfy? (15 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3307 - Performance Management, pages 3, 5 and 6.

The least popular question and poorly answered by most candidates who attempted it. In part (a), the candidates who described the other four activities of a Performance Management System as identifying organisations objectives, identifying the service and individuals performance outcomes and how the organisation would support the individual were awarded the available marks.

In part (b), many candidates displayed a total lack of understanding of the features that the audit must satisfy. Answers ranged from descriptions of a training for competence framework to assessment of best practice and, as a result, gained no marks.

It was evident that candidates were unfamiliar with the bibliography contained in the Study Note. At this level of examination candidates need to display a greater understanding of the subject matter.

The few candidates who did study the bibliography and were able to demonstrate an understanding of it provided good answers and attained high marks.

Section C Health, Safety and Welfare

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 During a drill on your fire station, when water under pressure was passed through a ground monitor, part of it fractured causing an injury to a firefighter.

You are informed that Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive will visit the fire station and that you will liaise with them.

List the eight principal powers of a Health and Safety Inspector under these circumstances.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3310 - Health and Safety Enforcement Agencies, page 3.

It was readily apparent that those who had prepared themselves for the examination obtained the high marks that their efforts deserved.

Many candidates failed to gain the available marks as a result of detailing the inspection process itself, rather than the powers held by the Inspector.

The use of the term 'enforcement notices' instead of either prohibition or improvement notices indicated that candidates were not certain of the terms or their meanings.

- 6 Following an accident on your station you are given the task of organising a system for monitoring Health and Safety practices and procedures. You have recommended a system involving both Active and Reactive Monitoring and, in order to aid understanding, have now been asked to give examples of each.

Detail five examples of:

(a) Active Monitoring; (15 marks)

and

(b) Reactive Monitoring. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3309 - Health and Safety Auditing and Monitoring, page 3.

Candidates are again reminded that preparation is essential to ensure success.

The question was, in the main, poorly answered with approximately one third of candidates achieving a satisfactory mark. It clearly tasked candidates with the responsibility of devising an Active and Reactive monitoring system to address the issue of accident reduction.

Candidates who had adequately prepared turned in some excellent well structured scripts that attracted high marks. Many candidates, however, failed to appreciate what was being asked of them, describing other hazards and their implications, or outlining corrective measures to specific incidents.

It is pleasing to note that candidates are well aware of the ethos of risk assessment. However, reference to 'carry out dynamic risk assessment', in isolation, is not sufficient to attract the necessary marks.

Candidates also made reference to 'management' being responsible for health and safety. Whilst this may be true, candidates at this level must be reminded that they form part of the 'management' structure. They must, therefore, accept that responsibility imposed under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. (1974), and study accordingly.

Section A Principles of Management

Assessor's Comments

The two questions in this section provided little difficulty for those candidates who had properly prepared by using the Study Notes provided. Those candidates who had applied themselves in this way were self evident and the quality of their scripts was rewarded by the awarding of high marks.

Attempt BOTH questions

Both questions in this Section carry equal marks

- 1 You have been nominated to review the risk categorisation of certain built-up areas within the brigade and will need to visit buildings for this purpose.

From the information provided in the Home Office Guidance on risk categorisation:

- (a) (i) what is the prose description of a Category B risk?
and
(ii) list four different examples of the type of property a Category B risk area would include. (15 marks)
- and
- (b) Describe five features that are examined when calculating the potential risk category of an individual building. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3402 – Standards of Fire Cover, pages 4, 6 and 7.

This proved to be a generally well answered question. Those candidates who had applied themselves to an effective study programme provided some excellent scripts.

Part (a) was well answered and provided the majority of the candidates with most of their marks from this question.

A number of candidates failed to obtain available marks in part (b) by only providing a list of features for calculating the potential risk category whereas the use of 'describe' in the question should have indicated that more was required so as to indicate depth of knowledge.

- 2 The fire service has now adopted the principles of continuous improvement, an element of which is forecasting and planning.
- (a) Draw a diagram to illustrate the management cycle for decision making first identified by Fayol. (10 marks)
- and
- (b) List the five main features of good organisation. (10 marks)
- and
- (c) In your role as a Station Commander, list five methods you would apply to provide a continuous review process. (5 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3401 – Business Planning and Forecasting, pages 5, 7 and 10.

In the main, the question was well answered, with a large number of candidates achieving a high level of marks.

Part (a) was particularly well answered, but the main errors in providing the required answer were:

- The elements listed in the wrong order; and
- Failure to include any arrow heads to indicate order.

Part (b) was where candidates failed to obtain the majority of available marks by failing to detail how responsibilities should be delegated whilst maintaining control.

Part (c) was generally well answered, although a minority of candidates concentrated their answers on 'delegation' rather than what was needed to establish necessary control that would enable an effective review process to be applied.

Assessor's Comments

Section B In-Tray Exercise

This section of the examination is based on the realistic day-to-day administrative duties that can be expected of a Station Commander and required a need to analyse items of information which are typical of those that can be received by these managers.

Having established appropriate priorities to these items, decisions needed to be made regarding necessary actions by using judgement and the application of common sense. In some cases the use of such judgement and common sense was seriously lacking.

It will be realised that this type of examination is new to these promotion examinations so some station training in the application of matters included in the Study Note, and basic mentoring, should enable candidates to acquire a reasonable level of marks in this section in order to achieve a satisfactory result.

It is not possible to give candidates the details of the 'in-tray exercise' used as it is the intention of the FSEB to build up a bank of these exercises. However, this year's examination consisted of 8 'in-tray exercises', 6 of which required four tasks to be completed as part of question 3. Questions 4 and 5 dealt with the remaining two 'in-tray exercises' and expected candidates to respond in more detail to specific tasks. Question 6 was designed to assess candidates' written communication skills.

Question 3

The in-tray exercise, following an absence on leave by the Station Commander, provided a number of items on which the candidate needed to make judgements about its degree of importance, who should deal with it, and the priority each item had. A justification for the priority rating assigned to each item was necessary. Some items committed the candidate, as the Station Commander, by providing dates which needed to be included in the diary provided.

The most common errors were:

- A failure to understand that the question needed to be considered, if the candidate was the Station Commander;
 - Listing 'actions' as 'justifications' for the priority rating provided to items;
 - Failure to record the dates to which the Station Commander would be committed by certain items, in the diary;
 - Failure to recognise the timescale restrictions (or lack of) provided by certain items which would effect the priority rating provided; and
 - The use of the term 'operational considerations' without further clarification or elaboration in establishing its degree of importance and/or as a justification for the priority rating given.
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Question 4

The question related to a letter that had been received by the Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster from a member of the public which had been referred to the Station Commander. An up-date was now being sought on the action which had been taken on this matter, following a further letter to Senior Management from this person. Information was available in the reference information made available which indicated reasons why this matter had not been finalised, and this needed to be identified by the interrogation and extrapolation of this information.

This question asked the candidate to identify the likely reasons for the delay in responding to the complaint as 'bullet-points'.

Many candidates failed to concentrate on the requirements of the question and provided a written response to the further enquiry received regarding progress on this matter, which required additional information.

Many candidates failed to identify that the Station Commander had been absent and unable to apply the degree of supervision and control that would otherwise have been available.

Some candidates failed to interpret the reference information made available to them, although this provided all the information that was needed for the answer to the question.

A number of candidates gave rather fanciful and imaginary answers which were unsupported by any of the information provided. Invention of this nature is likely to provide an individual with more difficulties rather than assistance, and is not recommended. It certainly provided none of the available marks.

Greater care in reading the question and identifying what information is required is recommended to candidates in the future.

Question 5

The question required candidates to identify the most suitable date for an operational exercise and to programme all the preparatory work associated with it. This necessitated the work to be so scheduled and diaried to achieve this objective whilst satisfying all other commitments already in the diary.

Some candidates had failed to diary other events from in-tray items and their scheduling and/or confirmed date for the exercise over-committed them and required them to be in more than one place at the same time, which was not acceptable.

The non-recording of information in the diary did not enable an event to be ignored as the examiners were aware of all expected commitments.

The scheduling of work, with meaningful completion dates, is essential when planning and achieving objectives. A failure to do so in this case meant that available marks allocated for this information could not be awarded.

Question 6

This question was designed to assess the written communication skills of the candidate to deal in the most effective way with an item in the in-tray.

Apart from a few exceptions, the general standard of grammar, spelling and punctuation was reasonable. However, what was surprising was the inability of some candidates to differentiate between the formatting needs of a memorandum and a letter.

Some candidates included irrelevant information in their correspondence and omitted available detail that should have been included. This meant that many responses were inconclusive in their content and did not satisfy the outcomes that the various correspondence were expected to satisfy.

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