



Question Papers and Report of the  
Assessors and the Examiners for the  
Qualifying Examination for  
Promotion to the Rank of  
Station Officer 2003

## QUESTION PAPERS AND REPORT OF THE ASSESSORS AND EXAMINERS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF STATION OFFICER 2003

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The Station Officers' examination held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board attracted an initial entry of 1010 candidates. However, the final number of candidates entering the examination was 904 after late entries and withdrawals had both been accepted.

Of these, 178 (19.69%) absented themselves, which is a further increase to the figure of 173 (14.3%) last year, leaving 726 actually attempting the examination, which is a decrease of 309 (29.9%) to last year's total. Of this number, 269 (37.1%) were awarded a pass and are now qualified to be promoted to the rank of Station Officer.

The number of candidates obtaining an overall pass has increased by 16 when compared to the pass rate last year and is also recognised as an improvement of 12.7% in the percentage pass rate.

The flexible system of taking the examination enables candidates to take two, three or four papers in their first attempt. Consequently, only 194 taking the examination attempted all four papers, but has resulted in 277 candidates achieving paper passes which will enable them to continue in the examination system.

We have now had three years of scenario type questions and there are a number of emerging issues. It is now clear that candidates will be able to enter this examination for at least another two years and, having entered, be permitted to use the three year period to achieve a qualifying pass.

As this continues to be the highest level of qualification in the Appointment and Promotion Regulations for the fire service until they are finally replaced by the Integrated Personal Development System, the comments of the Assessors and Examiners which follow are quite worrying and demand the attention of those wishing to take the promotion examinations, regardless of the fact that the results achieved by candidates in each paper provided improved pass rates.

There remain many who attempt this examination who are ill prepared to provide any significant detail within their responses to questions. The scenarios presented wherever possible by the question are there to assist in the development of the candidate's thoughts when considering and producing their responses. There were many cases where candidates ignored the scenario and provided responses which failed to relate to the set question. This indicates either a lack of care when reading the question or a limited knowledge of a subject which would be submitted regardless of the question scenario provided.

Application during the preparation for the examination should ensure that knowledge and understanding of a subject is achieved rather than just acknowledging that the bibliography has been read.

Whilst time management continues to be important when providing responses to the set questions, the reading of your completed script will provide you with that opportunity to reflect on your responses and make changes where these are recognised as being necessary. It is evident that many do not apply this practice and errors that could have been corrected provided incorrect answers that gained few or no marks. It must be realised that Examiners may only mark what is provided in a script.

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

## PAPER 1: OPERATIONS

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall quality of responses to the questions in this Paper was generally poor, although there were a few exceptions.

As this examination is the highest qualifying examination in the Fire Service and those achieving a pass will thereafter be enabled to progress their career to very senior rank, it is somewhat disturbing and surprising that so many candidates are insufficiently prepared to improve their knowledge and understanding in such a key subject area operations.

The questions in the paper had been carefully considered and prepared to ensure that each covered a scenario that could be expected to be met by an officer of Station Officer rank. An awareness, knowledge and understanding of the various subject matter identified as bibliography for this examination will be essential if the officer is to progress towards applying appliances, personnel and equipment to tasks in the most effective, efficient and safe manner .

It was apparent that many candidates failed to read the questions with sufficient care so as to recognise what information was being sought from them. The examiners, in their observations on the manner in which candidates had responded to their particular question, identified numerous cases where candidates ignored the information provided, and/or included information which was clearly not sought by the question.

A need to properly prepare for the examination, a realisation that the knowledge and understanding obtained could be beneficial in the future, and greater care when reading the question and identifying what information is required as a response had clearly not been fully recognised by many of those candidates who failed to obtain a pass in this Paper, and overcoming these shortfalls should assist many who wish to obtain this higher qualification in the future.

Section A OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT COMMAND

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

1 You are to deliver a training package to your Watch on BA procedures.

Identify:

- (a) the factors that will cause a team leader to withdraw the BA team from a risk area.

(16 marks)

and

- (b) the actions that a BA team leader should take when a BA distress signal is heard, giving the reason.

(9 marks)

*Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/97 Breathing Apparatus, Command and Control Procedures, CMP 5 and CMP 6C.*

This question asked the candidates to identify the key actions of BA procedures which are vital factors to be considered by BA team leaders.

The response was generally poor with candidates relying on experience rather than studying the correct bibliography.

Many candidates failed to identify the important factors to be considered or relied on one-word answers with no explanation. Responses such as 'BA SET FAILURE' covered a number of points and failed to attract the marks which were available for the identification of examples of individual set failures. A great number of candidates failed to be awarded marks by detailing 'Entrapped Procedure' in response to part B when clearly the question asked for the actions of a Team Leader on hearing a BA distress signal.

This was a question that should have attracted high marks but failed to do so.

There is a need for all candidates to study and understand the subjects in the relevant bibliography and also to read and understand what the question is asking. NO CANDIDATE ACHIEVED FULL MARKS which is highly disappointing for such a fundamental question.

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2 You are appointed the logistics Officer within the command structure at a major train crash and fire, where there are multiple fatalities. It is clear that this incident will create significant post-incident issues for the Brigade.

- (a) List the post-incident considerations that you must attempt to assess on behalf of the incident commander.

(14 marks)

and

- (b) Identify the steps that will need to be undertaken to enable these issues to be dealt with.

(11 marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Operations Incident Command, pages 10 and 11 New Manual.*

Knowledge of the bibliography for this question lent itself to a bullet point style of answer and candidates who had clearly studied for this examination gained high marks with short concise scripts in a similar form.

However, many candidates failed to apply sufficient care when reading the question and thus appreciate the words POST INCIDENT. Consequently, they spent considerable time discussing an ongoing incident dealing with such items as appliance access points and equipment dumps resulting in very few marks being awarded.

Part (b) asked candidates to identify what steps needed to be taken to support their response to part (a). Again many candidates wanted to discuss the actual ongoing incident in terms of logistical equipment provision. Those candidates who failed to understand the need for 'post incident considerations' in part (a) consequently scored few marks in part (b) in trying to support their incorrect answer of part (a).

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## SECTION B FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE INCIDENTS

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 3 You arrive at a serious fire in a large volume distribution warehouse, constructed using insulated sandwich panels, with the core of the panels comprising of expanded polystyrene.

These panels are now involved in the fire which is spreading.

Explain why this form of construction will provide additional hazards to the life safety of firefighters dealing with this fire, giving reasons.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3105 – Sandwich Panels, pages 4 and 5.*

This question required candidates to explain **why** sandwich panel construction will provide additional hazards to the life safety of firefighters. The issue of sandwich panels has had a high profile for some time and is a subject area that should attract a level of operational awareness in any event, and for the purposes of examination at the highest level for operational command, it merited study beyond a superficial awareness. Therefore, the many candidates who just provided a list, without providing further details attracted few marks.

A number of candidates did not apparently understand the question and gave detailed examples (sometimes with diagrams) of the type of premises which might use this type of construction.

Candidates at this level must be able to demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of this type of construction which is still in wide use throughout the country, if not the hard lessons of firefighter deaths and injury will be lost.

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4 You are present with your two appliances and crews at a local airport when a jet aircraft carrying cargo crashes on landing. You attend together with the senior airport fire service officer and the airport fire tenders. The cargo is quickly confirmed as non-hazardous and the aircrew are in the process of being assisted from the aircraft by other airfield staff when you arrive at the scene.

There is a small fire developing around one of the engines.

Having assessed the situation, identify:

(a) your immediate considerations and actions to deal with the situation.

(15 marks)

and

(b) the likely areas of particular danger to the firefighters.

(10 marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health & Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk assessment, Section 4.3 pages 26 – 30.  
Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Operations Aircraft Incidents, pages 48-52.*

This was a relatively straightforward question, which afforded candidates an excellent opportunity to attain good marks. Those candidates who had studied the bibliography took advantage and scored high marks easily. However, the majority of candidates appeared to rely upon the application of what they perceived as 'common-sense and experience'. Only in a few cases was this approach good enough to gain a significant amount of marks.

Overall, this question was poorly answered and serves to highlight the need for candidates to commit themselves to a structured programme of study.

Those candidates who referred to rescuing the crew when the scenario presented indicated that the aircrew were in the process of being assisted from the aircraft, together with those who advised that the ejector seats should be made safe, showed a misunderstanding of the scenario and/or a disturbing lack of knowledge of a cargo carrying aircraft.

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- 5 You are mobilised as the officer-in-charge to a reported fire at a local university. Following a recent Section 1(i)(d) visit, you are aware that the building contains radioactive substances.

On arrival, a senior member of staff confirms that the fire is in the laboratory which uses the radioactive sources, which emit gamma radiation and low-level Beta particles, and that he can offer relevant advice on dealing with the situation.

Identify your initial actions. (25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3102 - Incidents in Premises Involving Radioactive Substances, pages 8 and 9.*

This was a relatively straightforward question, which afforded candidates an excellent opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Those candidates who had studied the bibliography took advantage and scored high marks.

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## SECTION C SCIENCE AND FIREFIGHTING

Attempt the question from this Section

- 6 You arrive at a serious fire in a vehicle repair workshop in which a number of storage tanks full of various liquids and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders are involved and being heated.
- (a) Outline the properties of LPG that are significant from a firefighting perspective. (12 marks)
- and
- (b) Explain why a storage tank that is completely full of liquid may be a hazard in a fire situation. (13 marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Manual, Volume 1, Physics and Chemistry for Firefighters, Chapter 4, page 26 and Chapter 8, pages 63 and 64.*

This question was poorly answered. The majority of candidates did not relate any scientific knowledge requirement to the question.

Part (a) of the question simply required candidates to give the properties of LPG that would be significant to firefighters at the incident described in the question. Candidates who gave long descriptions of the various gas laws did not attract any marks, nor did the candidates who presented various mathematical and scientific formulae which did not apply to the question. Despite the straightforward and practical nature of the question, the responses of the answers from many candidates displayed a fundamental lack of understanding of the properties of LPG.

Part (b) of the question was also related to the incident described in the introduction to the question which specifically mentioned a fire in a vehicle repair shop which contained a number of storage tanks. Despite this, many candidates went on to describe 'slopover' and 'boilovers' which is very difficult to envisage in storage tanks inside a building and naturally attracted no marks. The question was seeking candidates to show a basic understanding of thermal expansion of a liquid when compared to that of a metal storage tank, especially when involved in a fire situation. A basic description of the scientific principle was all that was required.

Many candidates again supplied a description of the various gas laws which once more attracted no marks. Nearly all candidates gave a description or a mention of Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosions (BLEVE). While this was not directly in the bibliography for this question it was considered that as a BLEVE is caused by thermal expansion of the contents of a storage cylinder, causing an explosion, and was sufficiently appropriate to be awarded marks for this. For many candidates these were the only marks obtained.

It is recommended that future candidates spend more time studying the Fire Service Manual, Volume 1, Physics and Chemistry for Firefighters.

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## PAPER 2: FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, candidates this year achieved a slightly better performance on this paper than in 2002. Nevertheless, the quality of answers varied enormously with a few candidates scoring very high marks and some scoring extremely poorly.

Sadly, the following general comments are frustratingly similar to those made in previous years, yet are still observations that remain relevant.

- Candidates need to read the question carefully and ensure that they understand what is asked of them before they start writing.
- Candidates need to think about the structure of their answer before they commence work, in order to be confident that it is set out in a logical and readable manner.
- Candidates with poor handwriting need to take special care to ensure that their text is legible.
- Candidates should avoid using felt tip pens and should not use pencils.
- Always allow some time to read through the answer given in order to provide a final check.
- Finally, candidates, particularly in this paper, should examine the study notes with care and not rely on previous experiences or guesswork.

These few general points would improve performance overall.

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## SECTION A FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 The owner of a business has asked for your advice about the provision of firefighting equipment and signage relating to it. You have established that the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations apply.

Explain:

- (a) the requirements of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations for the provision and use of non-automatic firefighting equipment.

(9 marks)

and

- (b) the method by which the location of non-automatic firefighting equipment must be identified.

(8 marks)

and

- (c) the method by which the latest fire extinguishers and their types are identified.

(8 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3204 – The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations, pages 4 and 5.*

*Study Note 3203 – The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, page 10.*

Unfortunately, this was a poorly answered question with only about a third of candidates achieving a satisfactory level of marks and no one attracting maximum marks.

Whilst there is a wealth of information in the bibliography, candidates repeatedly failed to convey this in a clear and comprehensive manner to the examiners.

Considering the basic subject dealt with by this question, this was a disappointing performance for an examination of this standing.

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- 2 You have been asked by a local business support group to deliver a presentation at their next meeting explaining the process of applying for a fire certificate.

Identify the relevant points that you would include in your presentation regarding:

- (a) the correct method of making such an application by an occupier.

(3 marks)

and

- (b) the procedure that the fire service must follow following the receipt of the application, including the action that will result from non-compliance by the applicant.

(13 marks)

and

- (c) the fire safety responsibilities of the occupier whilst awaiting the issue of the fire certificate.

(9 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3205 – The Fire Precautions Act 1971, page 8.*

Additional marks were NOT available for those candidates who described the inspection process, 'steps to be taken' notice, and penalties and fines incurred by not adhering to the certification process, which are awarded by a court.

Many candidates confused the application for a fire certificate (Fire Precautions Act 1971) with the risk assessment process of the Workplace Regulations, and so failed to obtain available marks.

The best answers came from candidates who recognised that the question was specifically about making an application for a certificate and not the certification process, or the contents of a fire certificate.

A number of candidates suggested that normal business should cease until a fire certificate is issued – this would be highly unreasonable and is certainly not the case (unless dangerous conditions and practices are observed). These candidates need to be aware of the 'interim duties' of the applicant whilst awaiting the fire authority to deal with their application.

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- 3 You are a fire safety officer inspecting a hotel under the Fire Precautions Act 1971, following a complaint made by a member of the public about fire safety in the building. The owner of the hotel becomes increasingly obstructive and you feel that you need to explain your powers. As a duly appointed inspector, identify your powers under the Act.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3205 – The Fire Precautions Act 1971, page 20.*

This was a rather poorly answered question with only about a third of the candidates providing reasonable responses. A number of candidates described contravention procedures rather than the inspection powers requested, as provided by Section 19 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971. No marks were gained for making reference to the use of identification cards.

Many candidates had not apparently read or had failed to understand the content of the Study Note and seemed to rely on practical knowledge which was insufficient for a very specific question.

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## SECTION B COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Attempt the question from this Section

- 4 It has been agreed that a dance may be held in the appliance bay of your fire station in order to raise money for the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund. This will result in electrical equipment being brought onto the fire station by a contractor.

When considering safety precautions, what key points should you look out for regarding this equipment and the contractor?

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3207 – Safety at Community Events, page 12.*

Candidates relying on practical knowledge or experience in this question would have been unable to appreciate that the answer lay within the Study Note 3207. Those who had read the bibliography were evident and provided the answers in an extremely focused manner.

Some candidates who clearly attempted to use logic in providing their responses were able to obtain some marks, but insufficient to suggest that they had a good understanding of the subject.

## SECTION C FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 During an inspection of a large multi-storey building you check the fire safety risk assessment, but concentrate on the part relating to means of escape.

List the particular factors that the employer should have assessed regarding means of escape.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3210 – Principles of Fire Safety Risk Assessment, pages 9 and 10.*

Generally a well answered question.

Some candidates lost valuable time by writing a script rather than providing their response in the form of a list as required by the question.

There was some reliance placed on practical experience rather than the bibliography. One pleasing aspect of this was the recognition of the special needs for disabled persons with regard to means of escape.

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- 6 You are lecturing to whole-time recruits on the subject of building construction and the performance of various materials in fire situations. Explain why the performance of timber in real fires is often superior to unprotected, non-combustible materials such as steel or aluminium.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3209 – Building Design and Structural Fire Precautions, page 5.*

Generally an encouragingly well answered question with a significant number of candidates achieving maximum marks. Those who failed to obtain a reasonable level of marks did so generally because they did not answer the question that was asked – ie they ignored the matter of 'the performance of timber' but rather wrote at great length how timber can be made fire retardant. Those achieving higher marks had obviously spent time to achieve an understanding of the content of the study note and effectively used that knowledge rather than rely on 'lateral thinking' and accumulated knowledge from elsewhere.

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PAPER 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

It is very disappointing to note that once again candidates generally failed to demonstrate that they had studied the bibliography. The study notes provide clear and concise information for this paper. It was apparent from the high scoring scripts that when candidates study the bibliography they can produce near perfect answers.

Candidates who rely on experience to answer the questions missed the key points that would have attracted high marks.

Far too many candidates scored very low marks, with many scoring no marks. This is disturbing when considering that many of the questions should be core knowledge for officers at all levels of the service.

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SECTION A EMPLOYMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 1 You have a probationer Firefighter on your station who is uncertain about some aspects of their Contract of Employment and your advice is requested.

What is your response to the following queries:

- (a) What is a 'Contract of Employment'? (8 marks)

and

- (b) When is it deemed that a 'Contract' has been established? (4 marks)

and

- (c) When should the 'Contract of Employment' be provided to the Firefighter? (4 marks)

and

- (d) Prior to accepting the appointment, what should the Firefighter be able to do as regards the proposed 'Contract'? (9 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3301 – Contracts of Employment, page 2.*

A fairly well answered question with some candidates demonstrating a good knowledge of the bibliography.

Those candidates who failed to achieve a pass mark had apparently failed to read the question with sufficient care. This resulted in many scripts including detailed lists of specific terms and conditions that should be included in a contract of employment, rather than a general description of what a contract is.

Those scripts which included details of grievance or disciplinary procedures also failed to attract marks.

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- 2 You have been informed that a firefighter from your station is in legal custody and that the Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster has suspended him from duty. The firefighter's partner has asked you for some clarification.
- (a) Define 'Legal Custody'. (12 marks)
- and
- (b) Explain why suspension from duty is necessary before or during a discipline investigation. (13 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3306 – Suspension from Duty, pages 2 and 3.*

Generally the responses to this question achieved a good standard of marks.

Some common errors contained within answers to part (a) were lengthy examples of why someone would be remanded in custody rather than defining 'legal custody'.

For part (b), examples of behaviour which could lead to suspension were given rather than why suspension would be deemed necessary.

Quoting numerous Criminal Law Acts, (some of which have yet to reach the Statute Book) which may be contravened were often cited, as were lists of serious offences which may be committed.

Whilst most candidates correctly stated that a reason for suspension was so that witnesses may not be intimidated, some gave examples of how witnesses may be intimidated, which was not asked for.

Finally, in order to correct a misunderstanding expressed by some candidates, under the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985, the Chief Fire Officer, does not have the power to impose a custodial sentence.

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## SECTION B TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 3 As part of the selection process following your application for a post within the Training Department, you are asked to make a short presentation on a system of training for competence.

List the objectives of a system of training for competence. (25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3307 – Training and Competence, page 3.*

This question clearly asks for a list of objectives for a system of training for competence. This was not the method used by many candidates, with some producing pages of writing, unfortunately for little reward.

It is important that candidates read the whole question and clearly understand what is being asked.

Those candidates who had clearly studied the bibliography and understood the subject generally attracted high marks, some achieving the maximum marks available.

Marks failed to be obtained by some candidates due to the provision of extremely vague answers. Using a mnemonic as an aid to memory is useful, subject to more information being provided to display knowledge and understanding in the answer – merely writing down key words is not enough.

There appeared to be a fairly high reference to Health and Safety, including the safe person concept etc and it became obvious that some candidates became confused with what was required in this question.

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4 As a Station Commander you are to implement some scenario based training, but prior to doing so you decide to enhance the knowledge of personnel by explaining certain points.

(a) Define the following terms:

- (i) training aim; and
- (ii) training objectives.

(6 marks)

and

(b) List the typical learning outcomes that are normally associated with scenario based training.

(12 marks)

and

(c) In relation to risk exposure in scenario based training, explain when you would use:

- (i) simulated risks; and
- (ii) real risks.

(7 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3308 – Scenario Based Training, pages 2, 3 and 4.*

In the responses provided in part (a), those who had studied the bibliography answered well, however there were common mistakes. Some candidates provided general aims and objectives and did not relate them to a scenario and others referred to Brigade aims and objectives which was the answer to another question in this paper.

Part (b), generally attracted good answers. Again some candidates provided answers that were relevant to the Training Department. It is important that candidates understand the difference between the learning outcomes of a general training programme and that of scenario based training. Others provided general comments, such as to test communications and command and control for which no marks were gained.

For part (c), it was pleasing to note that the majority understood the difference and gained full marks.

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## SECTION C HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 As a newly appointed Station Commander, you have been advised of the importance of auditing and monitoring health and safety, and that there are two ways to generate information - active and reactive monitoring.
- (a) (i) Briefly explain why active monitoring is carried out on fire stations to support health and safety; and  
(ii) Identify six different forms of active monitoring. (15 marks)
- and
- (b) List five different types of event that would trigger you to carry out reactive monitoring. (10 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3309 – Health & Safety Audit & Monitoring, page 3.*

In part (a), the understanding of why active monitoring is carried out was, almost without exception, poorly understood. The majority of candidates related to general statements surrounding 'prevention being better than cure' and some credit was given here in relation to this reinforcing positive management action.

The subsequent section of part (a) of the question attracted better answers, but these generally lacked sufficient detail for high marks to be awarded. General statements such as 'Health and Safety audits' and 'Carry out risk assessments' gained no marks.

Despite considerable latitude in interpretation being allowed by the examiners, it was clear that a large number of candidates had not studied the appropriate bibliography.

The responses to part (b) of the question demonstrated a generally poor level of understanding with only a very few candidates gaining high marks, with the majority resorting again to generalisations and guesswork.

Overall, a poorly answered question that addressed a fundamental aspect of the Station Officers' role. The answers clearly showed the need for candidates to study the appropriate bibliography in order to succeed.

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- 6 You have been asked to implement health and safety measures on your station. Identify the principles that you will implement to establish preventative and protective measures.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3312 – Management & Control of Health & Safety, page 3.*

The question was generally poorly answered and did not attract a satisfactory level of marks for the majority of those candidates who attempted it.

The bibliography details nine clearly defined principles of prevention/protection measures to be taken. The majority of candidates appeared to recount personal experiences at Station level in the conducting of a variety of workplace risk assessments. The question required the principles to be identified. Those candidates who understood that, tended to answer the question very well.

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PAPER 4: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Section A Principles of Management

General Comments

When candidates had evidently prepared properly for the examination by studying and understanding the Study Notes provided, they appeared to have no difficulty in obtaining very good marks. Those who appeared to rely solely on previous knowledge and experience obtained very poor marks. This conclusion was very evident to the examiners marking the questions and once again it is emphasised that success in this Section can **only** be achieved by proper study and the careful reading of the questions in order to identify the information sought.

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## SECTION A PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

Both questions in this Section carry equal marks

- 1 The fire authority has requested a re-appraisal of the brigade's provision of aerial appliances which predominantly form part of the pre-determined attendance (PDA) in A and B risk areas, although it may be considered that their attendance is necessary in other risk areas.

You have been tasked with providing the information needed under the main headings of 'Siting and Provision', 'Attendance times', and 'Crewing'.

- (a) Give five different types of risk for which an aerial appliance might form part of the PDA.

(15 marks)

and

- (b) It is a general principle that the attendance time for an aerial appliance, where it has been deemed necessary, should be proportional to that of pumping appliances to that risk area. Identify the recommended attendance time for an aerial appliance for the risk areas A, B, C and D.

(4 marks)

and

- (c) State the three main considerations when determining the crewing of an aerial appliance.

(6 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3402 – Standards of Fire Cover, pages 10 and 11.*

Generally this question was well answered and most candidates achieved good marks.

In part (a), many candidates were able to provide the necessary information available in the Study Note. Even when this was not the case many candidates were able to use their experience and still gain some marks.

Although part (b) was fairly well answered, a sizable minority of candidates were not aware that height appliance attendance times differed from the standards of fire cover laid down for pumping appliances.

In part (c), many candidates failed to obtain the available marks by quoting what appeared to be local brigade practices. Only a minority of candidates included the provision of a fully crewed appliance when mutual support is afforded to adjacent stations and neighbouring brigades.

- 2 As the Station Officer commanding a fire station, there is a need for you undertake your duties diligently when exercising the effective management of financial resources. Explain the ways in which budgetary control can be so applied at fire station level.

(25 marks)

*Bibliography: Study Note 3403 – Local Government Finance and Accounting, pages 9 and 10.*

There were many excellent scripts submitted in response to this question, with many gaining maximum marks.

Those candidates who had studied the Local Government note had no problem in producing what was required with regard to factors affecting budgetary matters on fire stations.

An unusual number of candidates went on to detail information relating to either the control of official monies on station or, indeed, Revenue and Capital budget issues. As this was not what was required by the question, marks could not be awarded to these scripts for this part of their response.

There were a number of scripts submitted which were clearly reliant on practical experience only. Although some marks were available for common sense issues covered, these were insufficient to obtain all available marks.

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## General Comments

### Section B In-Tray Exercise

Unlike Section A of this paper, experience and common sense can help to achieve some success in this Section. However, this does not come without applying effort and focus to use experience on watch and station in a directed manner. This can be better gained and honed by practice in the work place with the help and guidance provided by existing officers. This should not be difficult to organize.

All the necessary information is supplied during the examination and most questions require careful reading, consideration and actions to be formulated. Other questions require responses in the form of memos or letters regarding common topics and problems which arise on an every day basis on station. Once again it is not difficult to practice the skills of responding in this manner at station level.

It should be noted that all necessary information is supplied and it is not productive to fabricate information or use imagination when responding to the written exercises set.

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### Question 3

Marks are awarded for three areas, selection of a priority rating, justifying that rating and deciding on a course of action,. Although the majority of answers attracted reasonable marks, none gained close to maximum marks.

Many candidates failed to take into account time pressures to meet deadlines. It appeared that they did not read the information presented to them and take proper account of it. Marks were also lost due to candidates not putting themselves into the position of Station Officer. The object of the exercise is for the candidate to make a decision, not refer it to someone else. A number of good answers failed to obtain all the available marks due to candidates listing justifications for their action, rather than the justifications for their ratings.

It was also surprising to read answers referring to 'firemen' rather than 'firefighters' from aspiring Station Officers in 2003.

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### Question 4

Regrettably, very few responses attracted high marks. Candidates were tasked with investigating the likely reasons for a delay in responding to a letter of complaint and were directed to record their answer as separate bullet points, yet a number of candidates responded in letter or memo format.

All the information required to answer the question successfully was readily available in the information booklet provided. Rather surprisingly, some candidates actually fabricated the reasons for the delay which demonstrated an ability to recognise a need and then undertake the necessary research of available information.

A number of respondents were misled by the fact that the Leading Firefighter in question was the subject of a previous complaint which had no bearing on this situation. Many candidates confused the issue, and rather than provide the reasons for the delay in responding to the complaint, considered the subject of the initial complaint and how this should be dealt with. This was not asked for in the question and a more careful reading of the question would have made this obvious.

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## Question 5

The question required the candidate to respond to a need to organize a training exercise. This included a need to select the most appropriate date for the exercise by taking into account the other commitments contained in the station diary, some having been provided by in-tray items.

By deduction there was only one date that was ideally suited from those suggested for the exercise and in the main those candidates who selected this date also seemed to understand what was required to arrange the exercise.

With some candidates there was confusion over what information should be provided under Pre-Exercise Notification with Appliance/Mobilising and Health and Safety also being included.

Many candidates failed to understand the importance of Post Exercise information. Almost all candidates mentioned a de-brief but failed to obtain all the available marks by not expanding their response into such areas as: objectives achieved, feedback reports, learning points, policy for PDA changes, which thus failed to provide them with valuable marks.

Finally, candidates should be aware that it is a necessary courtesy to write to participants, stations, the site owners and other agencies involved in an exercise to thank them for their commitment.

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## Question 6

Candidates apparently failed to recognise what was required by the question. All of the necessary information was to be found in the 'In-Tray'. Despite this, the overall standard of content and coherence was poor. Only a few candidates were able to attract all of the available marks with their responses. Clear communication is an essential skill for a Station Officer. Any memorandum/letter should be coherent, logical and provide clarity. Few candidates produced scripts that satisfied these criteria.

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