



Question Papers and Report of the
Assessors and the Examiners for the
Qualifying Examination for
Promotion to the Rank of
Station Officer 2004

QUESTION PAPERS AND REPORT OF THE ASSESSORS AND EXAMINERS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF STATION OFFICER 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Station Officers examination held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board attracted an initial entry of 763 candidates. However, the final number of candidates entering the examination was 685 after late entries and withdrawals had both been accepted.

Of these, 180 (26.3%) absented themselves which, although similar in number (178) to last year, is a further disappointing increase in percentage terms from 19.7%, leaving 505 actually attempting the examination, which is a decrease of 221 (30.4%) to last year's total. Of this number, 226 (44.8%) were awarded a pass.

The number of candidates obtaining an overall pass has reduced by 43 when compared to last year's pass rate, but is recognised as an improvement of 7.7% 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 214 taking the examination attempted all four papers, an increase from 194 last year, 76 attempted three, and 158 attempted two. 57 attempted a single paper, but these attempts have resulted in 195 (ie 239 less (17+27) achieving paper passes which will enable them to continue in the examination system.

There remains one further opportunity for candidates to enter this examination and, having entered, be permitted to use the total of three attempts to achieve a full examination pass.

The number of candidates withdrawing or absenting themselves from the examination this year appeared to leave a majority of serious candidates who had undertaken some studying and preparation for the examination. Generally, this resulted in better responses being provided than in previous years and an improved pass rate not only in the examination but also in each paper.

However, the comments of the Assessors and the Examiners make it quite clear that there remain some who do not adequately prepare for the examination and continue to believe that their day-to-day experiences will provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding of important subjects to enable them to produce reasonable responses to questions that will test the depth of their knowledge and understanding. The only advice that can be appropriate to such candidates is that they will be extremely lucky if their belief is found to be justified.

The advice that candidates should carefully read and understand what information is being sought by a question has been repeated over past years and yet numerous candidates still seem to apply their minds and efforts to providing an answer to a question that has clearly not been asked. No matter how correct information may be, if it does not relate to the question set, it cannot be rewarded with marks.

Section B of Paper 4, the in-tray exercise, not only requires certain station problems to be assessed and managed, it also requires the candidate to apply time management in order to complete all the questions. Such management of available time appears to be a problem for numerous candidates attempting this paper for whom a degree of practice could be beneficial.

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

Although it seems apparent that many candidates continue to rely on 'operational experience' gained in their own service in the absence of studying the bibliography, there was evidence of a significant improvement in the overall quality of responses to the Operations Paper this year.

There was a large proportion of candidates who had clearly undertaken the necessary level of work to build on their experience, and were able to apply this to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, they achieved high marks with a significant number achieving full marks on some questions.

The most prevailing concern is the aspect of 'science' and the seemingly lack of understanding of its relationship to the primary operational function of the organisation.

In this paper there were separate questions on 'bio-hazards', 'crude oil' and 'metals', all set in the operational context of dealing with realistic scenarios. In so far as candidates were able to fallback on matters such as 'PPE', they were on some solid ground especially when this was detailed. However, where there was a need to demonstrate actual knowledge of how to deal with incidents, as opposed to recount a procedure, problems were experienced.

There was great faith placed in the attendance of 'specialists' or 'experts', even to provide advice on how to fight fires with one candidate, in the question on a ruptured crude oil pipeline, suggesting that 'under no circumstances would they tackle the fire before the arrival of the pipeline engineer, and only then on the advice of the engineer'. The successful management of incidents in a real operational world cannot be left to 'specialist' or 'experts' all the time – the community would consider and expect the 'Fire and Rescue Service' to provide the experts – especially when it comes to firefighting.

It was also apparent, particularly with the question on a major incident on the motorway, that many candidate's current roles were not ones of 'command'. Many candidates quickly adopted a tactical line of dealing with the incident that was presented to them rather than stepping back to consider the wider operational and command ramifications of a 'major' incident.

SECTION A OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT COMMAND

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 You arrive at a developing fire in an historic building where a number of pumping appliances are already at work, and take over command as the Incident Commander.
- (a) When taking over the command role on the incident ground, what are the key elements of your role that you must apply? (13 marks)
- and
- (b) Identify the 'tactical priorities' that you should follow. (12 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Operations Incident Command, pages 2 – 5.

Although this question was looking for the key elements of the command role of an officer, too many candidates answered by making reference to the key elements of the Incident Command System. Those relying upon experience, and previously received ICS training, failed to secure all the marks available as these responses were not made from a command perspective.

In attempting part (b) of the question, many candidates failed to differentiate between 'tactical priorities' and 'tactical modes'. Lengthy descriptions of offensive, defensive and transitional modes did not secure the marks available. In detailing the tactical priorities, an Incident Commander is indicating those operational tasks to be completed; it is for subordinate members of the command team to ensure they are completed within the framework of ICS.

- 2 You attend to a report of a major road traffic accident on a motorway. On arrival, it is discovered that there are numerous vehicles involved producing multiple fatalities and casualties. The incident is self evidently a 'major disaster', which will be protracted, cause a severe disruption of the motorway system and require considerable resources from all the relevant agencies.
- (a) Describe the primary and immediate role of the fire service at this incident. (13 marks)
- and
- (b) Identify the initial information that you should ensure is collected and conveyed to the Fire Service Control centre to enable the planning to take effect in relation to the fire service's role. (12 marks)

Bibliography: Manual of Firemanship Book 12, Practical Firemanship, Part 1 Chapter 4, pages 74 and 75.

In the main, this question produced some very good responses from those candidates who, having read and understood the question, were able to cover all the points with little effort. Some candidates failed to recognise that the question was asking for information relating to a Major Disaster and consequently gave a great deal of information on dealing with incidents on motorways in general. It is also important that candidates recognise that the examiners are not able to guess what the candidate means by the use of one word statements.

SECTION B FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE INCIDENTS

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 3 You attend a call to a reported pipeline rupture in a rural area. On arrival, you discover that a pressurised overground pipeline conveying light crude oil has cracked near to a valve grouping. A pool of product is developing to the side, and also underneath the pipeline itself.
- (a) Outline your understanding of the term flash point in the context of this incident. (10 marks)
- and
- (b) The pool of product ignites. Identify your actions to control and extinguish the fire. (15 marks)

Bibliography: *Study Note 3107 – Petrochemical Incidents, pages 3, 7 and 8.*

This question was well answered by the majority of the candidates. However, it was clearly evident that those candidates who had not studied the bibliography had great difficulty in providing relevant answers to part (a) of the question.

Part (b) of the question provided candidates with the opportunity to relate to their own operational experience as well as the bibliography. It was extremely pleasing to see that many candidates were able to use both sources to demonstrate knowledge and achieve extremely high marks.

A small number of candidates seemingly failed to read the question with sufficient care and provided excellent but totally irrelevant answers.

- 4 There is a risk of injury to firefighters should they come into contact with biological hazards.
- (a) How can biological hazards and pathogenic organisms be transmitted to affect an unprotected firefighter? (5 marks)
- and
- (b) Describe the control measures necessary for the safety and well being of firefighters when firefighting, and when performing rescues from a building involving biological hazards. (20 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health & Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 5.4, pages 28, 33 and 34.

The marks achieved by candidates divided them into two broad categories, those who had clearly studied the bibliography and those who appeared to rely on their operational experience.

Part (a) of the question was understood and reasonably well answered with most candidates attracting at least half of the available marks.

Part (b) attracted some good answers from the candidates who had obviously studied, but too many candidates attempted to get by using their operational knowledge. The key control measures least mentioned in responses were:

- Training and briefing crews;
- A supervisory officer attending and taking command;
- The need to strictly supervise personnel;
- The need for additional resources and specialist appliances;
- The appointment of safety officers; and
- The need for reliefs.

Some answers lacked a depth of knowledge of the subject matter, with candidates writing lengthy scripts detailing BA entry control procedures, the levels of PPE that are available and all stages of decontamination. These form just 2 of the 17 control measures that could be applied at this type of incident and not surprisingly such scripts attracted only a few of the available marks. Some candidates still fail to carefully read and understand the question. Describing the control measures for a radiation incident in great detail attracted no marks. At this level of examination, using vague expressions like 'sufficient resources' or 'conduct a risk assessment' will attract few marks. The examiner expects the candidate to explain what those resources are and to detail the likely actions stemming from the risk assessment.

- 5 You are officer-in-charge at a fire involving a small distribution warehouse. All persons are accounted for and you decide to use Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) fans to assist at the incident.
- (a) Identify:
- (i) the benefits of using PPV; and
 - (ii) the hazards and risks associated with its use. (10 marks)
- and
- (b) Identify your operational considerations to ensure the safety of firefighters and the effectiveness of applied PPV. (15 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health and Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 3.6, pages 47, 49, 50 and 51.

This question was reasonably well answered.

In part (a), the vast majority identified the benefits, though many sought to bring into their answers 'general' benefits of ventilation, as opposed to those specifically relating to PPV.

It was of some concern to note that the hazards associated with PPV were not as well understood.

The increased risk of uncontrolled fire spread and worsening of conditions were identified. However, it was disappointing that the vast majority did not refer to the risk of firefighters being trapped between the fire and the vent outlet and the exposure risk of ignition of the expelled smoke at the outlet vent. Those who had apparently studied the bibliography gained high marks, others who seemingly relied almost exclusively on their operational experience did not do so well.

SECTION C SCIENCE AND FIREFIGHTING

Attempt the question from this Section

- 6 Metals pose particular hazards to firefighters for a number of reasons.
- (a) Identify the properties of metals. (15 marks)
- and
- (b) When faced with separate fires involving barium, chromium, lead and bismuth:
- (i) what would be the expected reaction of each, if water was applied; and
- (ii) what single common precaution would firefighters need to take at any fire incident involving such metals? (10 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 1, Physics and Chemistry for Firefighters, pages 76 and 77.

This was a reasonably answered question with those candidates who had apparently studied and understood the bibliography achieving high marks.

Unfortunately the quality of some of the answers submitted indicated that a large proportion of the candidates were not prepared for this question. Candidates must understand the importance of studying all aspects of the examination syllabus and not rely on their past operational experiences if they are serious in their endeavour to pass this examination.

Candidates are also advised to seek advice on good examination technique, as some clearly did not read the question with sufficient care, electing to give a list of metals and their individual properties rather than provide the generic properties applicable to all metals as required by the question.

Marks failed to be obtained in part (b) (i) by those candidates who gave a generic statement on the way in which all four metals would react if water was applied to them during a fire, rather than for each individually as required.

PAPER 2: FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

The results obtained in this Paper were better than those experienced last year, but weaker subject areas related to questions two and three.

There were cases where it was apparent that inadequate study had taken place and candidates had seemingly relied on information obtained during their day-to-day duties. Regrettably, this did not provide them with the depth of knowledge and understanding required.

It was pleasing to see far fewer scripts that presented a serious challenge to examiners due to very poor handwriting. Nevertheless, as has been said before, observing the following simple rules would improve candidate performance significantly.

- Read the question carefully.
- Think about the structure of the answer.
- Write clearly in ink.
- Check the answer before moving on.

More important than anything else, however, is to use the available Study Notes.

SECTION A FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 You are investigating the scene of a fire in a hotel when you identify a padlocked fire exit. You suspect that the owner may have committed an offence. The owner is present and you decide to speak to him. Before questioning the owner you must decide whether or not to caution him.

Describe:

- (a) the circumstances when a caution must be given; (14 marks)

and

- (b) the circumstances when there is no need to issue a caution. (11 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3201 – Cautioning Suspects, page 3.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of candidates were aware that a 'caution' is required if an offence is suspected and that a 'caution' was not required for, amongst other things, establishing the identity of a suspect.

Many candidates fell into the trap of writing the words of the 'caution' in full. This was not asked for and subsequently gained no marks.

The required answers were relatively straightforward, but candidates made the mistake of complicating the issue by discussing unconnected matters such as fire investigation and 'Section 10'. Neither were asked for and, once again, gained no marks.

- 2 The occupier of a factory, as an employer, has asked you for advice about the requirements of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations regarding the provision of appropriate firefighting equipment, fire detection and alarms in order to safeguard the safety of employees in case of fire.

Identify:

- (a) (i) what the employer will need to consider when assessing such provision? and
(ii) what would need to be considered to ensure that these are appropriate? (16 marks)

and

- (b) what specific advice would you provide regarding non-automatic firefighting equipment? (9 marks)

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

This was a weaker subject for most candidates and it seemed obvious that many candidates were relying on their personal experience in order to construct an answer. The correct answer is easily found in the appropriate Study Note, however, very few scripts demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding in this area.

- 3 As an officer in the fire safety section, you are discussing with the architect, the fire safety provisions for a proposed small factory. As the proposed factory will have a low-light environment, the architect asks for advice on the intrinsic features of illuminated safety signs for emergency escape and firefighting provisions.

Detail the intrinsic features that will make such illuminated signs satisfactory. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3203 – The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, page 11.

Candidates saw the words 'intrinsic' and many then went on to mention 'BASEEFA', 'flashproof equipment not igniting the surrounding atmosphere' and other such phrases connected with intrinsically safe equipment.

Many candidates decided the question was about illuminated exit signs incorporating emergency lighting. Some quoted BS5266 and some discussed illumination levels in corridors and the amount of time lighting should remain on.

Those candidates who decided to deal with the positioning of such signs and the activation of flashing signs and audible signals, failed to obtain many of the available marks.

Those candidates who had read and understood the bibliography obtained available marks by mentioning colours, graphics and pictograms. The additional available marks for stating that signs may be of 'single colour' or a 'pictogram on specified background' were gained by few candidates.

Overall this was a generally disappointing result.

SECTION B COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Attempt the question from this Section

- 4 You have been tasked to review your brigade's Community Fire Safety (CFS) plan.
- (a) List the essential statistical information that would need to be included upon which assessments of CFS issues are based. (10 marks)
- and
- (b) List the responsibilities of specialist core personnel that will need to be identified in the plan. (15 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3206 – Planning for Fire Safety in the Community, pages 7 and 8.

A reasonable attempt was made by most candidates to list the statistical information that is likely to be needed to inform the construction of a CFS plan. However, part (b) of the question produced less satisfactory answers.

It is important to read the question carefully and recognise the information being sought, as in part (b) there was a tendency to describe individual roles at tactical level(s) rather than strategic 'core' specialist role as requested.

Many candidates also described the national issues instead of those that would relate to an individual brigade for its CFS plan.

It was readily obvious to examiners which candidates had read and understood the bibliography and those who had not.

SECTION C FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 You are required to consider the provision of fire mains in a major building project.
- (a) Specify the different types of fire mains installed inside buildings and when each type should be provided. (9 marks)
- and
- (b) Describe where the outlets from the internal fire mains should be located. (2 marks)
- and
- (c) Specify the fire brigade appliance access requirements for the different types of internal fire mains. (14 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3208 – Access and Facilities for the Fire Service, page 6.

Overall, this was a reasonably well answered question, however, too many candidates were obviously drawing on their practical experience rather than on knowledge gained from the Study Note.

Many candidates may have achieved higher marks if they had recognised that part (c) of the question related to the fire brigade's access requirements to internal fire mains and not the general fire brigade vehicle access needed for high reach appliances.

6 You are lecturing to fire service trainees on the subject of building materials, in particular the applications and performance of concrete.

(a) Define:

- (i) plain concrete;
- (ii) pre-tensioning and post-tensioning;
- (iii) pre-cast concrete;
- (iv) pre-stressed concrete;
- (v) reinforced concrete; and
- (vi) spalling. (15 marks)

and

(b) List the five factors that determine the fire resistance of a concrete column. (10 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3209 – Building Design and Structural Fire Precautions, pages 9 and 23.

Most candidates obtained a reasonable level of marks on this question, but there were some recognisable shortfalls in the knowledge expected.

In (i) a large number of candidates failed to state plain concrete was simply concrete with no reinforcement.

The most common area where candidates failed to obtain marks was in (iv) pre-stressed concrete, where most simply repeated or stated (ii) pre and post-tensioning, rather than the criteria that 'the induced stresses are to counteract the stresses of the applied load of the structure when it is in place'.

Candidates often failed to use the words 'compression' or 'tensile strength' appropriately, which would have achieved higher marks.

In general, however, a well answered question.

GENERAL COMMENTS

This paper was generally well answered, with the majority of candidates gaining very high marks in all the questions this year, a clear indication that candidates had in the main, studied the bibliography. However there remained a number of candidates who clearly demonstrated their lack of preparation by consistently providing very poor answers in all the responses that they made.

Some candidates attempted to answer questions by apparently using their personal experience. Regrettably, this rarely attracted good marks. A small number of candidates seemed to fail to read and understand the questions and gave very detailed answers to questions not asked, which attracted few marks. Candidates who undertake examinations must apply themselves to the task and be methodical in their approach. They must read and also understand the information provided in the Study Notes, if they are to succeed at this level.

SECTION A EMPLOYMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 1 Following a lecture on equality and fairness, members of your watch have asked you to further clarify certain matters.
- (a) Explain briefly your understanding of the terms:
- (i) Direct discrimination;
 - (ii) Indirect discrimination; and
 - (iii) Racism. (13 marks)
- and
- (b) Identify and explain briefly three different forms of harassment. (12 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3302 – Fairness at Work, pages 2, 3 and 4.

It is pleasing to note that this question was answered well by the majority of candidates. This was demonstrated by not only the evidence of the candidates' knowledge of the Study Note, but also their understanding of the topic by giving good practical examples.

The candidates who didn't answer this question well seemed to have difficulty in two distinct areas. Firstly, some candidates found it difficult to distinguish the difference between Direct and Indirect Discrimination and secondly, they failed to distinguish between Racism and Racial Harassment, using in most cases, the same answer for both. This could have been addressed by a more comprehensive understanding of the information provided within the Study Note, which clearly explains the differences.

- 2 Following a disciplinary hearing in the Brigade involving 'a serious offence', a member of your watch has sought information.
- (a) Identify four types of offence that may be considered as 'a serious offence'. (12 marks)
- and
- (b) Who is allowed to be a representative of the accused:
- (i) throughout any investigation regarding an allegation; and
- (ii) at all hearings presided over by the Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster? (7 marks)
- and
- (c) Identify the three basic requirements of natural justice laid down by Employment Law which have to be complied with in disciplinary proceedings. (6 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3303 – Fire Service Discipline, pages 7 and 8.

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of this subject. However, in part (a), some confused offences considered as serious with the discipline awards, but generally most candidates achieved high marks in this part.

In part (b), a high number of candidates were not able to accurately record who is allowed to be a representative of the accused.

In part (c), a high percentage of candidates were able to show a good knowledge of the requirements of natural justice as laid down in employment law, but there were some who demonstrated a total lack of knowledge in this area.

SECTION B TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 3 When planning training for your station, you will need to carry out a training risk assessment.

Identify the information that you, as a competent person, will need to take into account when carrying out a typical risk assessment for such purposes.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3308 – Scenario Based Training, page 5.

The vast majority of candidates answered the question well, giving well structured and concise answers which demonstrated a good understanding of the information needed to be taken into account when carrying out a risk assessment of a training event. Although relatively few in number, some of the candidates who did not answer the question well described issues not specific to risk assessment but relevant to the general planning and implementation of training. In particular, some listed the equipment and resources required to stage a training event and others detailed factors relating to the maintenance of skills or focused on defining the terms 'Risk' and 'Hazard'.

- 4 You are a member of the Training Section of the Brigade with a responsibility for the training of various target groups. Whatever method is chosen for the delivery of training it is suggested that there are elements of best practice that should be adopted.

Accepting that the content of the training has been set to meet the required learning objectives, and it is accurate, identify the other elements of best practice that should be applied.

(25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3313 – The Planning and Implementation of Training, page 4.

This question revealed the two extremes of candidates who had undertaken proper preparation by reading and understanding the Study Note on this subject and those who were clearly ill-prepared. The former group achieved high marks whilst the latter group performed poorly.

There were a few cases where candidates repeated themselves within their responses which suggested a confusion in their minds or in their examination technique.

SECTION C HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 You are a member of the Brigade's Health and Safety Section. In order that the Brigade can maintain and improve their ability to manage risks by learning from experience, you have been tasked to undertake a health and safety audit.

In this respect:

- (a) Identify:
- (i) the aims of the audit; and
 - (ii) what the audit process should involve. (15 marks)

and

- (b) Identify three sources of information that you will be able to draw from. (6 marks)

and

- (c) When the audit process has been completed and submitted, what should then follow if shortcomings have been identified? (4 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3309 – Health and Safety Auditing and Monitoring, pages 4 and 5.

This question was answered reasonably well with candidates demonstrating knowledge of the aims and process of a health and safety audit.

However, the majority of candidates chose to answer each section of the question in 'prose'. This inevitably led to the repetition of various key statements regarding health and safety audits which cannot attract any extra marks.

As always, candidates must read the question carefully, identify what is required and where possible, give concise answers. It was clear that the candidates who had done this achieved high marks.

In the main, the marks available in parts (b) and (c) of the question were more consistently achieved by candidates than those for part (a).

In part (a), many candidates attempted to use what appeared to be local knowledge and omitted many of the key points.

- 6 An Inspector from the Health and Safety Executive is to undertake a routine visit to your fire station.
- (a) What would you normally expect the Inspector to do during this visit? (13 marks)
- and
- (b) At the end of the visit, what is expected from the Inspector? (4 marks)
- and
- (c) Should something be found to be unsafe or not complying with the law, what are the various alternative enforcement actions that the Inspector could take? (8 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3310 – Health and Safety Enforcement Agencies, page 4.

This question was generally well answered, with the majority of candidates achieving many of the marks available with their responses.

Those candidates who had obviously taken the time to use the Study Note in their preparations, achieved high marks with relative ease. However, the apparent application of common-sense and experience also allowed a significant number of candidates to achieve a reasonable level of marks. A small number of candidates failed to read the question with sufficient care and, unfortunately, gave very detailed answers to questions not asked, which attracted no marks.

PAPER 4: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Section A Principles of Management

Assessor's Comments

The two questions in this section dealt with issues which are essential knowledge for officers to operate effectively in a modernised Fire Service. The first, dealing with delegation, asked questions regarding the considerations which should be given to ensure the smooth and efficient transfer of duties and responsibilities to subordinates and the checks and balances which should be put in place to ensure effective management. The second question tested essential knowledge of budgeting and finance.

Although some marks could be gained by depending on personal experience and acquired knowledge, it was again apparent that only those candidates who had studied the provided Study Notes were able to give sufficient depth to their answers in order to obtain a suitable level of marks.

There is no replacement for carrying out study of this nature and candidates who rely entirely on experiential knowledge will not succeed.

SECTION A PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

Both questions in this Section carry equal marks

1 You are a newly appointed Station Manager:

(a) You decide to delegate certain duties and responsibilities to the Watch Managers. When delegating such duties and responsibilities to an individual, what should you ensure? (10 marks)

and

(b) Having delegated duties and responsibilities, in the interests of efficiency, what points should you observe? (15 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3401 – Business Planning & Forecasting, pages 8, 9 and 10.

This question was not particularly well answered mainly due to lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and obvious lack of preparation.

Many candidates seemed to rely on their own thoughts rather than the information provided in the Study Notes.

In part (a), candidates were able to recall bullet points and key words. However, some candidates utilized much of their time writing long scripts, but failed to cover the important points.

Part (b) was answered in a similar way. However, numerous candidates confused the efficiency of delegated responsibilities with efficiency of economy and wrote lists regarding saving fuel, electricity, damage to vehicles and property. Valuable marks failed to be obtained through a lack of understanding the requirements of the question.

Those candidates who had read and understood the information contained in the Study Notes were rewarded with high marks, whilst valuable marks failed to be obtained by those who attempted to respond using their own experiences and thoughts.

- 2 Local Government finances require the setting of a budget to control the expenditure and income of the fire authority.
- (a) Explain the reasons for preparing a budget. (11 marks)
- and
- (b) Give an explanation of the two kinds of expenditure that are subject to this budget process with an example of what each is provided to finance. (10 marks)
- and
- (c) There are a number of ways of financing the two kinds of expenditure identified in part (b) above. Give two examples for each kind of expenditure. (4 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3403 – Local Government Finance and Accounting, pages 4, 7 and 8.

On the whole, a well answered question. Marks were missed when candidates omitted to show an understanding that revenue expenditure was a continuing annual expenditure. Most chose to say it was a one-off budget provision. A number of scripts had the financial year from 31 March to 1 April!

A few candidates mixed up their definition of capital and revenue expenditure which failed to provide them with the available marks.

Many candidates thought Credit Approvals were loans from Central Government, whilst in fact the Government controls the amount of money that each authority may **borrow** to fund Capital Schemes

Finally, a few candidates appeared to misread part (c) of this question. Part (b) required candidates to explain the two types of funding (capital expenditure and revenue expenditure) and in part (c) the candidates were required to explain the ways of financing the two kinds of expenditure. These candidates repeated the answers to part (b) in part (c), thus displaying a lack of understanding of the subject.

Assessor's Comments

Section B In-Tray Exercise

This section of the paper deals with the problems that a Station Manager confronts in every day situations in order to carry out the responsibilities of the appointment effectively.

Although common sense and experience all play a part in succeeding in this section, there is no doubt that practice on watch/station, with the guidance of more senior officers, will improve performance in highlighting areas of priority and importance.

Where candidates did perform poorly was in not analysing the information provided (imagination is not required) or not properly reading and analysing the task set.

In those questions which asked for responses in the form of a memo or letter, there are very few points to be made to gain maximum marks. This should be practised by way of study.

The final question produced few marks for numerous candidates because they had failed to manage the time available. This is an essential part of the examination and care must be taken to allow time to complete all questions.

Question 3

Many candidates scored full marks for rating the priority of each item and, although some mixed the justification for the rating with the action plan, most called upon experience or common sense to score well.

Question 4

This was a poorly answered question. It asked the candidate to investigate the possible disturbance to residents during normal sleeping hours during February and the significance of comments made by Leading Firefighter Brown.

Marks were obtainable by analysing the available data and correctly identifying the number of calls attended by the station, each watch and Leading Firefighter Brown. An analysis of the time of calls should have enabled candidates to highlight those that could have disturbed residents during normal sleeping hours. Although 'normal sleeping periods' were not defined, the candidate could have identified the hours considered for this purpose (say 2100 –0600 hours) and identified accordingly. Additionally, candidates should have been able to establish whether Leading Firefighter Brown attended any of those particular calls

Too many candidates concentrated their efforts on malicious calls only and resulting initiatives to reduce the number of this type of call. Some suggested community fire safety initiatives.

A small number of candidates attempted to write either a letter to the complainant or a memo to the Chief Fire Officer, outlining proposed actions. This was not asked for in the question, which stated that the answer should be recorded as 'separate bullet points'.

Question 5

This question required the candidates to respond to an instruction and carefully plan all the arrangements for a multi-pump exercise. This included the scheduling of all pre-exercise visits, notifications and detailed resource planning.

The best answers included consideration of the impact such an event would have on a brigade and another organisation. This included planning cover moves for appliances and liaising with other interested parties such as the Police, Water Authority etc.

The answer sheet is carefully structured and it is suggested that candidates should read through the sections first to enable their response to follow a logical progression.

The other successful answers included comprehensive consideration of health and safety issues, which included briefings, emergency procedures and nominating safety officers.

The majority of candidates scheduled post incident debriefs, but many did not follow this up by acting on learning points.

Question 6

A very well answered question by those who applied effective time management to effectively complete it, with many candidates gaining very high marks. Unfortunately, these high marks were overshadowed by a small number of candidates who gained few or no marks. It was the opinion of the examiner that these poor marks reflected a lack of effective time management and a rush to put some form of response(s) on paper.

Reference to the bibliography used for the question will show that the required style, content and accuracy of both memoranda and letter is simple and straightforward and relate to the every day work of an efficient and effective Station Manager.

Published by:
Fire Services Examinations Board
Layden House
76 - 86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Telephone: 0207 296 6600
Fax: 0207 296 6591

www.fseb.gov.uk

PDF version produced for FSEB by Electronic Equipments Ltd. eelnet@ntlworld.com

This PDF file was produced on 2 July 2004.