



Question Papers and Report of the
Assessors and the Examiners for the
Qualifying Examination for
Promotion to the Rank of
Station Officer 2005

QUESTION PAPERS AND REPORT OF THE ASSESSORS AND EXAMINERS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF STATION OFFICER 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Station Officers' examination held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board attracted an entry of 374 candidates. Of these, 129 (34.5%) absented themselves which is a further disappointing increase in percentage terms to that experienced last year, leaving 245 actually attempting the examination. Of this number, 112 (45.7%) were awarded a pass. These figures signify a significant reduction in the number of candidates sitting the examination, mirrored by a similar decrease in the number achieving a pass, but a slightly improved pass rate from 44.8%.

It was apparent that many of the candidates who sat the examination had made a serious attempt to prepare themselves and many quality scripts were submitted which were rewarded with a high level of marks. It was pleasing to report that each of the four papers provided an improved pass rate to those achieved last year.

There now remains a maximum of two further examinations to enable those candidates who remain in the system to achieve a pass in all papers and, consequently, the examination.

It must be realised that candidates wishing to pass this examination must effectively study the bibliography. Those who believe that they will be able to achieve this standard by relying on work done in the past and/or their day-to-day experiences in life and the fire and rescue service in particular can only achieve disappointment. Studying this relevant information will not only assist them in achieving the possibility of a pass but will also assist them should they achieve the higher managerial roles.

The marking of the responses submitted this year has again enabled the Assessors and Examiners to identify weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of various subjects. They believe that they have also identified certain basic weaknesses in examination techniques. These are not new and have been identified previously and circulated in previous reports issued for the guidance of future candidates.

In addition to this advice, which is provided in the comments of the Assessors and Examiners that follow, I can only add that candidates approach the examination seriously, by undertaking an effective study programme and then reading the information provided within the question as this will invariably provide a basis of information on which the answer should be constructed. Do not rush to put pen to paper but read the question a second time and prepare your thoughts on what you intend to write as your response.

Please remember that the Examiner cannot assume a meaning from what is written so provide a clear response that will be readily understood.

Finally, take the opportunity to check all that you have written as your answers before the paper is handed in as this will allow you to recognise basic errors that can be corrected and also enable you to add further detail which then comes into your mind.

The following pages contain the detailed comments of the Assessors and Examiners to which I have previously referred. A careful study of these comments should be beneficial to those preparing for the examination.

PAPER 1: OPERATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS

Given the status of the statutory examinations and the imminent changes, it is difficult to offer commentary on how candidates should use this examination as a basis for planning their future study. Notwithstanding, examiners do offer comments below. It is also pleasing to report a notable improvement in the level of knowledge and understanding displayed by the majority of candidates as this important 'Operations' paper enters its final stages.

A number of the questions in the paper had very **current** operational relevance, in particular the high rise building question and it was obviously pleasing that in large measure this was well answered. It also emphasises, however, that these are not just matters of theory but have a real world anchor point.

It remains the case that any question around 'science', even when presented within an operational scenario, is poorly answered. For a service operating in an increasingly complex and technological world this lack of understanding of even rudimentary science is quite worrying.

It suggests that the days of the all-round operational officer may be numbered given the number of candidates who 'wait for specialist advice' as a matter of routine. The danger, of course, is that with a dynamically moving operational incident and the high level of public expectation to act, waiting is sometimes not an option and managers will be expected to take some action, even if it is one of taking a 'holding position' to secure the safety of the public and firefighters alike. For the future, therefore, the assessment of competence in these areas where some study and continuous development is necessary, must be rigorous to ensure there is an understanding.

SECTION A OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT COMMAND

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

1 You are mobilised as the officer-in-charge of a two-pump attendance to a building fire. On arrival you are faced with a rapidly developing fire in a large building. You make 'pumps ten' and commence firefighting operations.

(a) You nominate a 'Command Support Officer' (CSO).
Identify the actions and responsibilities of the CSO. (12 marks)

and

(b) As the incident develops and the additional resources arrive, a senior officer takes over and you are given the role of 'Operations Commander'.

Describe the role of 'Operations Commander' and the primary functions of the role. (13 marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Manual, Volume 2, Incident Command, pages 17 – 18.

In part (a), a significant number of candidates saw the role of the command support officer as that of the incident commander and, accordingly, delegated tasks to personnel to carry out risk assessments. Consequently, these candidates failed to identify that, as the title suggests, this officer supported the incident commander by gathering and recording information and key aspects of the incident. A number of candidates also failed to identify the key function of command support in providing the communications link between the Incident and the Control Centre.

In part (b), very few candidates identified that the purpose of the operations commander is to minimise the span of control of the incident commander and thus to facilitate and improve communications and control. There was also confusion about the responsibilities of the operations commander with a number of candidates giving an undue emphasis to liaison with external agencies.

- 2 You are the officer-in-charge of a three-pump initial attendance to a fire on an upper floor within a high rise building with persons reported. When considering your tactics for dealing with the incident you quickly identify the need for breathing apparatus to be used.
- (a) When undertaking your risk analysis of this incident, identify the considerations that you will need to take into account before reaching your decision about the tactics to be employed.
(10 marks)

and

- (b) You need to consider the establishment of a 'bridgehead'.
Identify:
- (i) the purposes of a 'bridgehead'; and
- (ii) the factors that should be taken into account when assessing whether and where to establish a 'bridgehead'.
(15 marks)

Bibliography: Technical Bulletin 1/1997 CMP 2, page 3, SP 3, page 6.

This question attracted a high percentage of candidates with a high level of marks. The major criticism for those candidates who did not fall into this category was that they either did not know the answer or failed to identify what information was being sought by the question.

The question asked for a risk analysis rather than a risk assessment and some candidates fell back on a particular approach rather than the broader operational considerations.

SECTION B FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE INCIDENTS

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 3 You are the Incident Commander of a fire at a medical research establishment. The owner informs you that there are Biological Hazards within the building in which the fire is situated.

Describe in detail the factors that are particularly relevant when you consider your tactical plan of operations. (25 Marks)

Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health & Safety, Volume 3 - Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 5.4, page 30.

This was a straightforward question requiring the candidate to detail the factors that are particularly relevant when considering the tactical plan of operations for a fire in a medical research establishment containing Bio Hazards. Those candidates who had seemingly studied the bibliography, attracted some good marks. Some candidates provided answers that included information on how Bio Hazards can enter the body which implied that they had not read the question with sufficient care. Some candidates answered the question as though there was no involvement of Bio Hazards when the question clearly indicated their involvement. Many candidates wasted valuable time by explaining what Bio Hazards are, which was not what the question asked for.

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- 4 You attend as the Incident Commander at a factory where there is a need to rescue a worker who has fallen from a gallery and remains in contact with live overhead electrical power lines carrying 3300 volts.

Identify the safety precautions you will apply in your plan to rescue the worker. (25 marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Guide to Health & Safety, Volume 3 – Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 5.1, pages 7 and 8.
Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Electricity, pages 43 and 44.*

A reasonably well answered question with a high percentage of candidates gaining a good level of marks.

The question posed a realistic scenario for candidates to identify a number of safety precautions to carry out a rescue of a casualty from live electric power lines. Candidates were able to use their own knowledge of the generic risk assessment of incidents involving electricity to obtain marks. Candidates also recognised that the use of electrical gloves and non-conducting equipment was important when dealing with 3300 volts or less.

However, it must be firmly recognised that the supply of electricity must be isolated on all such occasions, and prior to any rescue attempt.

5 You are the officer-in-charge of a first attendance to a civil aircraft that has crashed in a remote rural area.

(a) Once the incident has been found, what information should be passed to Brigade Control? (10 marks)

and

(b) As you make your assessment of the situation, the implementation of safe systems of work becomes a priority.

With reference to command and control, detail the factors you will need to consider in order to minimise the immediate risks. (15 marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Aircraft Incidents, page 54.
Fire Service Guide to Health & Safety, Volume 3 – A Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Section 4.3, pages 28 and 29.*

Some candidates failed to analyse the question. Often, detail of the actions to be taken to deal with an incident involving a military aircraft were provided, when the question clearly stated that it was a civil aircraft that had crashed.

Part (a) of the question was well answered by most candidates. However, it was evident from the scripts that many of the answers were borne out of operational experience or common sense, and not an intimate knowledge of the bibliography.

Those candidates who had not effectively studied the bibliography did not answer the needs of part (b) of the question so well. Here, many candidates provided answers that described a risk assessment process, instead of detailing the factors you would need to consider when dealing with a crashed aircraft, eg. The terrain, wind direction, use of foam to cover unburned fuel etc.

SECTION C SCIENCE AND FIREFIGHTING

Attempt the question from this Section

- 6 You are the Incident Commander at a road traffic incident that involves a car and a pressurised road tanker carrying a full load of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). The tanker has remained upright, but the car is on fire and adjacent to the tanker.

As you decide on your strategy for dealing with this incident, one of your key considerations relates to the properties of LPG, specifically its critical temperature.

- (a) Define the term 'Critical Temperature'. (3 marks)

and

- (b) Should gas be expelled through a pressure relief vent on the tanker:

- (i) why would this be of concern to you; and
(ii) what actions would you implement to minimise your concern? (10 marks)

and

- (c) Explain the effects a fire impinging on the bottom half of the tanker will have on the container and its contents, when the tank contains:

- (i) a full load of LPG; and
(ii) the tank is only a quarter full. (12 Marks)

*Bibliography: Fire Service Manual Volume 1, Physics and Chemistry for Firefighters, pages 30 and 63.
Fire Service Manual Volume 2, Petrochemical Incidents, pages 98,105, 107 – 110.*

The response to this question achieved a disappointing level of marks for most candidates despite having real operational significance and relevance. The term 'critical temperature' was largely misunderstood and therefore its effect on the incident could not begin to be considered. Many candidates also did not appreciate the relevant difference between a full tank and a part full tank and how this would effect the potential for a BLEVE to occur. Some candidates did achieve high marks and had clearly studied the required material demonstrating a clear understanding of the principles involved.

PAPER 2: FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

It was generally pleasing to see that candidates achieved good scores in this paper. Five of the six questions attracted high marks and it was clear that many candidates had prepared themselves well for the examination. Indeed one candidate achieved one of the highest scores ever recorded in this paper.

Those candidates who did less well often repeated many of the common mistakes that the examiners have identified many times before. It is essential that to avoid these mistakes candidates:

- (i) study the bibliography;
- (ii) do not rely on experience alone;
- (iii) read the question carefully;
- (iv) think about the structure of the answer before starting to write; and
- (v) check the answer on completion to ensure that nothing has been missed in error.

Many questions lend themselves well to the use of a list in constructing the answer. Candidates who use this technique often find it easier to ensure that all of the necessary points have been included in their answer.

SECTION A FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Attempt ALL questions from this Section

- 1 You are a fire safety officer investigating allegations concerning breaches of fire regulations in a commercial premises. You decide to interview the occupier, who is a suspect regarding involvement in a possible criminal offence. The occupier has indicated that a solicitor will be in attendance during the interview.

Identify the procedure that you will need to apply for this interview.

(25 marks)

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

This questions was answered particularly well with a significant number of candidates achieving a satisfactory level of marks.

Marks were gained for stating that accurate records of an interview have to be kept and that these records must be offered to the person being interviewed, as well as their solicitor, to read and sign.

Additional marks were also gained for identifying the important point of giving a caution. Some candidates attempted to state the wording of the caution when this had not been asked for.

- 2 The owner of a commercial premises has asked you for general advice in relation to fire safety signs.

Explain your general advice to the owner on:

- (i) what the number and positioning of such signs will depend upon;
- (ii) the provision of information, instruction and training to employees with regard to fire safety signs; and
- (iii) the maintenance of such signs. **(25 marks)**

Bibliography: Study Note 3203 – The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, pages 4 and 6.

This was a generally well answered question with more than half of the candidates achieving satisfactory level of marks.

Often candidates relied too much on personal experience. This is no substitute for a proper study of the bibliography.

This was a straightforward question and some candidates over complicated their answer and, therefore, wasted valuable time by providing information not required by the question.

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- 3 As a fire safety officer you are giving a talk on the use of acoustic signals designed to give warning in case of fire.

Identify what could adversely affect the effectiveness of such acoustic signals. **(25 marks)**

Bibliography: Study Note 3203 – The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, page 12.

This question was clearly found to be difficult by many candidates. A brief review of the bibliography will demonstrate that the required information was relatively straightforward.

Often candidates concentrated on human factors in relation to the effectiveness of acoustic signals with the result that they gained few of the available marks.

A brief list dealing with such factors as poor design, insufficient number, incorrect positioning, etc was what was required. Such a list very quickly gained high marks.

SECTION B COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Attempt the question from this Section

- 4 A major community safety event is planned to take place on your fire station that is likely to attract a large number of people from the local community. As part of the planning for the event you need to consider the issue of safe parking, both on and off the fire station, for the many cars that are expected.

List the issues that you will need to consider on this subject to ensure the continuing operational efficiency of the station and the safety of both the public and staff. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3207 – Safety at Community Events, page 4.

This question was generally well answered with more than half of the candidates achieving a satisfactory level of marks. It was obvious that many candidates were familiar with the bibliography. Those who had clearly relied on their experience alone fared less well.

Once again this was a question that lent itself to a list of points being used in order to construct an answer. Those that used this approach tended to more readily identify the necessary points and this achieved the available marks.

SECTION C FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 You are carrying out a fire safety risk assessment in a commercial building.

List the factors that you will need to consider when assessing the fire prevention and fire safety management measures. (25 marks)

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

This was a reasonably well answered question with a significant number of candidates achieving maximum marks. However, an equally significant number of candidates achieved very few marks indeed. These candidates either failed to take sufficient care when reading the question or undertook insufficient effective study and obviously relied on experience when providing their answers.

Candidates with high scores focused on what was required, namely, assessing fire prevention and fire safety management measures. Those who relied on the replication of their local risk assessment check lists did not do as well.

- 6 You are giving a talk to a group of university students on the fire testing of building materials. In answering a question you need to explain that tests cannot reflect a real fire situation in every respect. List what factors have a bearing on the performance of building materials in a real fire situation. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3209 – Building Design and Structural Fire Precautions, page 3.

This question was generally well answered by a majority of candidates with a fairly significant number gaining maximum marks. Again, the use of a simple list aided candidates in the identification of the necessary information and enabled them to obtain a satisfactory level of marks.

The most common error was the belief that the age of a material is a relevant factor in its performance.

Appropriate study of the bibliography confirms that this is not the case.

PAPER 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS

The candidates who studied the bibliography did very well. It was clear from the number of quality answers that candidates are using the Study Notes to good effect. However, there are still too many candidates who come to the examination ill-prepared and rely on experience. This will never be sufficient for them to be able to provide the necessary knowledge and demonstrate the understanding required for the range of areas that this paper covers.

It was disappointing to note the number of inadequate answers on health and safety, equality and training covered in this paper.

The Study Notes provided will not only assist candidates to obtain a level of knowledge and understanding that will enable them to achieve a pass in this paper of the examination, but will also ensure that they will be able to perform better in the workplace and improve the safety of others.

SECTION A EMPLOYMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 1 You have been appointed to a position in the staff department to assist in the production of a new Contract of Employment for employees. Part of your duties is to advise on the legal requirements placed on the authority (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.

A well answered question with a large number of candidates achieving very high marks. Numerous candidates who had clearly and effectively studied the bibliography managed to obtain full marks. This is a well understood area of employment judging by the quality of the answers provided for this question.

2 During a visit to your station by the Race Relations Council, you have a discussion with the local member.

Briefly explain your understanding of the following terms used during the discussion.

- (i) Positive action;
- (ii) ageism;
- (iii) sexism;
- (iv) discrimination; and
- (v) harassment. (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3302 – Equality and Fairness at Work, pages 8 and 9.

Candidates appeared to have a vague and general knowledge of the subject demonstrating basic understanding throughout the answers. They also tended to give answers supported by examples which did not always confirm understanding.

Confusion was particularly evident between the definition/understanding of discrimination and harassment.

The level of marks generally achieved from this question was relatively low. The better answers came from those who had clearly studied the subject, obtained the necessary level of knowledge and understanding related to it, and were thus able to provide very sound answers.

SECTION B TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 3 You are the Station Manager planning and organising a major off-station training scenario in your area.
- (a) Identify the benefits that may be obtained from off-station training. (6 marks)
- and
- (b) List **the resources** you will need to consider in order to meet all possible identified training objectives of the exercise. (19 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3308 – Scenario Based Training, pages 4 and 5.

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a very good understanding of this area and attracted very high marks. Those candidates who had apparently studied the relevant sections of the bibliography obtained very high marks with a number of high quality answers being provided.

Some candidates failed to provide any answer to part (a), which implied the need for further development in this area.

Overall a very well answered question.

- 4 As a member of the Training Section of the brigade, you are to advise newly appointed officers to this section of the planning and design requirements of operational training.
- What are the vital considerations that must always be applied when **planning and designing** operational training? (25 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3313 – The Planning and Implementation of Training, page 3.

The responses provided by candidates to this question suggest a general need for development within the service on this subject.

It seemed very apparent that few could provide other than a sketchy and limited knowledge and understanding of this important subject which was extremely disappointing for candidates wishing to advance to a more senior managerial role.

SECTION C HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Attempt BOTH questions from this Section

- 5 The role to which you have been appointed includes 'accident causation and prevention' and a responsibility to investigate safety critical events.
- (a) What would be considered 'safety critical events'? (10 marks)
- and
- (b) When investigating the occurrence of a safety critical event, identify the health and safety opportunities/benefits that this provides for the brigade. (4 marks)
- and
- (c) Identify the **practical** methods that could be effectively provided by the brigade to reduce the risk of accidents and develop high health and safety standards. (11 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3315 – Accident Causation and Prevention, pages 2, 3 and 6.

A number of candidates failed to obtain available marks because they were unable to identify 'a safety critical event'. Some clearly believed that drills, exercises and incidents were such events on their own!

Part (b) of the question was a poorly answered section of the question. Candidates were asked to identify the H&S opportunities and benefits to the brigade of accident investigation. Very few candidates achieved a satisfactory level of marks for this part which indicated that they had not studied this area of the bibliography.

For part (c), too many candidates seemed to rely on their practical day-to-day knowledge. This will never enable these candidates to attract good marks, and again this part was not very well answered.

- 6 As the officer with a special responsibility for health and safety in the brigade, it is important that you measure what is being done to implement the health and safety policy.
- (a) Explain why it is necessary to measure what the various sections within a brigade are doing to implement the brigade's health and safety policy. (10 marks)
- and
- (b) Identify the different ways in which accurate information on health and safety performance within the brigade may be promoted. (15 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3309 – Health and Safety Auditing and Monitoring, pages 2 and 4.

The question dealt with an area of the bibliography that clearly provided a problem for the majority of the candidates.

This was disappointing when considering that it must be a core subject for those wishing to advance to a more senior management role.

Those candidates who took sufficient care in reading the question and had undertaken effective pre-examination study did well but, generally, this was a poorly answered question.

PAPER 4: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Section A Principles of Management

GENERAL COMMENTS

The results from this paper varied greatly from question to question, some yielding high average marks, others extremely low. Future candidates would do well to study the past as well as the present comments made by examiners on individual questions.

Overall, the main comments are much the same as in previous years. No degree of professional day-to-day experience can on its own, prepare candidates for this examination. This must be supported by a study of the notes provided for candidates.

SECTION A PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

Attempt BOTH questions

Both questions in this Section carry equal marks

1 You are a newly appointed Station Manager and have been advised that the principles of management must be understood and applied to your command.

(a) Draw a diagram to illustrate the management cycle for decision making first identified by Fayol. **(10 marks)**

and

(b) Organising means the allocation of duties and responsibilities to officers to achieve the most effective use of available resources for the smooth running of the station. List the five main features of good organisation when delegating. **(10 marks)**

and

(c) List five methods you would apply to maintain control and provide a continuous review process. **(5 marks)**

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

Good marks were obtained by those candidates who had carefully read and understood the contents of the Study Note. In particular, part (a), Fayol's management cycle for decision making and part (c) which required details about methods to maintain control and provide a continuous review process, were generally well answered.

Marks were less well achieved in part (b), as many candidates failed to convey an understanding of responsibility and authority when delegating.

2 Management models based around performance have been increasingly used and are particularly relevant in the Fire and Rescue Service whose business relates to the reduction of risk and the control of operational incidents. Such management systems typically have six key elements.

(a) In addition to 'audit', identify the other five elements and draw a diagram that indicates the linkages between all six elements for the purpose of control and information. (17 marks)

and

(b) By using information from data, monitoring, research and external investigation methods for the purpose of examining the currency and operation of the organisation, what results should an audit of performance measurement provide? (8 marks)

Bibliography: Study Note 3405 – Management Systems, pages 3, 5 and 6.

The general quality of answers provided by candidates to this question was less than satisfactory.

The responses to part (a), provided the better level of information from candidates. Regrettably, some candidates had clearly not read the bibliography and relied upon their own perceptions of the key elements within a management system. In addition, some candidates simply made reference to their own service's policy/instructions.

Part (b) provided the less satisfactory answers and many candidates who achieved an overall satisfactory level of marks did so as a result of their answer to part (a). Many candidates answered by referring to 'best value' and the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and economy. Others listed matters or information that would form part of an annual report. This was not what the question asked.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Section B In-Tray Exercise

For the In-Tray exercise, it pays dividends if candidates can be mentored by those acting in the roles of watch and station managers in the skills required when dealing with In-Tray items. The knowledge required in this area can be quickly and easily acquired by practice.

All of the information needed for the 'In-Tray' exercises are provided at the time of the examination and careful study of it should allow candidates to score highly. It is not necessary to 'invent' information when formulating responses in the form of letters and/or memos. Candidates who used their imagination to invent various scenarios, scored nothing for them.

Once again, candidates must read the questions carefully and study the information supplied at the time of the examination.

A printing error in Question 6 was brought to the attention of the FSEB and this was taken into account when the overall marks achieved by candidates were determined.

Question 3

This question asked candidates to work through six 'In-Tray Items' and to complete four tasks:

- (a) Assign a priority to each item on a scale of A (urgent) to E (no action required).
- (b) Provide a justification for the priority rating.
- (c) Identify actions to be undertaken to resolve each issue.
- (d) Enter any information in the diary.

Overall, the question was answered well, with a significant percentage of the candidates achieving a satisfactory mark.

Areas where candidates failed to gain marks include the following:

1. Poor linkage between priority rating and justification eg scoring a high priority for action then, in the justification section, stating that the item was 'unimportant' or 'not a priority'.
2. Bland statements should not be used such as 'this is an issue that needs investigating' or 'self-explanatory' lacked sufficient explanation to gain marks. More specific statements are needed to convey a candidate's thoughts.
3. The issues were such that they were within the scope of responsibility of an officer acting in the role of a station manager, yet some candidates seemed to lack the confidence to make a decision without the prior permission of their Group or Area Manager and even in one instance the Chief Fire Officer!
4. Where issues were delegated to subordinates, candidates failed to detail to whom it was delegated or the parameters within which subordinates could operate. Statements such as 'delegate the issue' were insufficient.

For those candidates who approached the items logically and systematically whilst embracing the responsibility that comes with operating in the role of Station Manager, high marks were readily available.

Question 4

This question required candidates to list the circumstances surrounding the delay in responding to a letter of concern from the public. All the reasons were available within the information provided and candidates who did effective research, identified and listed them as bullet points, as required by the question, secured good marks. Too many candidates failed to undertake the necessary research and accurately identify the reasons provided, simply gave responses based around situations which existed solely in their own imaginations.

When the question indicates that a response is to be made directly to the Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster, one would expect accuracy in what is identified in the answer.

Question 5

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

This question realised a high percentage pass. This was an ideal opportunity for candidates to rely on their experience to gain the required marks. However, it was disappointing that no candidate identified all the areas to gain full marks.

Common errors included a failure to identify the Watch involved in the exercise and omitting the Hose Laying Unit even though this was a Water Relay exercise. The provision of fire cover during the exercise was forgotten in the majority of cases. Not one candidate considered the necessity to brief factory and other agency staff on Health and Safety matters prior to the exercise commencing.

In general, the diary was well utilised, giving candidates the ideal platform to obtain the available marks.

Question 6

In view of the printing error identified in Question 6, no comments are offered as this question was not included in the final assessment of the marks.

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