



# Fire Services Examinations Board

**REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY  
PRIME MINISTER AND THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS ON THE QUALIFYING  
EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF  
SUB-OFFICER PART II – PRACTICAL TEST 2003**

1. This was the eighteenth occasion on which the practical test was conducted by the Board in accordance with the rules and syllabuses published in May 2002.

It consisted of three sections:

SECTION A	The conduct of one standard drill.
SECTION B	Fireground procedure: taking charge of the situation and controlling the exercise.
SECTION C	An instructional talk on a specific fire risk within the candidate's brigade area.

2. Mr H E Wright was the Lead Assessor and Mr Ian Kerr (Shropshire) the Assessor for the practical tests.
3. The tests were held at local examination centres during the months of April, May and June.
4. The organisation of the tests was undertaken by 21 local examination boards.
5. 525 candidates initially entered for the examination as at the Board's closing date for entries (1 February). However, the final number of candidates entering the examination was 476 after late entries and withdrawals had both been accepted. 40 (8.4%) absented themselves from the examination. Thus, the number of candidates who attended the examination was 436.

## RESULTS

6. Of the 436 candidates who attempted the test 324 (74.3%) were awarded a pass and 112 (25.7%) failed. The 324 successful candidates are now qualified for promotion to the rank of Sub-Officer.
7. Of the 17 female firefighters who attempted the test, 13 (76.5%) were successful.
8. 40 candidates were absent from the examination and under the Restriction of Entry Scheme, 5 candidates appealed to the Board. Under the delegated authority given to the Chairman all appeals were individually considered and the 5 were upheld. These candidates will have a further year to complete their examination.
9. A further 13 candidates have failed to pass their Part II examination within the three year period which means they must now re-sit their Part I examination.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

10. The practical test for the qualifying examination for promotion to the rank of Sub-Officer held during 2003 was the eighteenth held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board.
11. Of the 476 who entered the test, 40 (8.4%) absented themselves leaving 436 candidates actually taking the test. 324 (74.3%) were awarded a pass and are now qualified for promotion to the rank of Sub-Officer.
12. When compared to the figures relating to last year's test, the figures for 2003 indicate an increase of 104 (+28%) in the number of candidates entering the examination, a regrettable increase in the number absenting themselves both in numerical and percentage terms. However, this resulted in an increase of 84 (+23.9%) in the number of candidates taking the test. The number of candidates passing the test increased by 70 and the pass rate increased by 2.1%.
13. The Assessor for the practical test, the Lead Assessor and the Secretary of the Board visited a number of the examination centres to access the facilities provided and observe the tests in progress. Where improvements associated with the organisation of the local board arrangements were considered necessary, advice was given. Examiners were observed and questioned regarding their assessments and were considered competent and fair. The considerable amount of pre-planning applied to the successful provision of these tests is fully realised and the efforts of all those personnel involved are greatly appreciated.
14. The test consists of three parts. Section A requires candidates to organise a composite drill for two crews using their appliances and equipment. In this section of the test, 89.2% of the candidates obtained a pass mark, which is a slight reduction of 2.8% to that achieved last year. It has been very difficult to identify general reasons for the failure of the 10.8% of candidates, but the lack of attention given to the command, control and safety aspects were the most common. It is regrettable to note that the failure to demonstrate command and control is a repeated reason for failure each year.

15. In Section B of the test, candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to take charge of a simulated operational incident, control the work of two crews and disperse the appliances and equipment satisfactorily. In this section of the test the recorded pass rate was 87.1%, which is higher than that achieved last year and demonstrates a gradual improvement. General weaknesses of those who failed in this section are, again, difficult to identify but the most common were inadequacies in exercising the required level of command and a failure to relate the risk assessment process to the subsequent system of work applied. A general improvement in the debriefing of the crews has again been identified, but there are still some candidates who need to understand its purpose and the how it might be best applied.
16. Section C of the test requires candidates to provide an instructional talk on a specific risk within their brigade area. In this section, 87.6% of the candidates achieved a pass mark, which is higher than that achieved last year. The general weaknesses of failed candidates related to the provision of generic rather than specific plans on how they would deal with an incident at the identified risk premises, the poor use of the time available, and the general opinion that their presentations had not been adequately prepared.
17. The majority of failed candidates did so due to a failure in only one of the three sections of the test. The general feeling of examiners regarding this fact was that these candidates had not prepared themselves adequately for the examinations.
18. The aforementioned comments have been made to assist those who are preparing themselves for this test in 2004, but the high standard produced by the vast majority of those who did present themselves for the test should be noted.

#### **ASSESSORS' REPORT**

19. Detailed comments of the national assessor in connection with the practical test will be prepared and issued to brigades.

#### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

20. The following tables show the results of the examination as a whole in both graphical and tabular format. Graphs showing the numbers attempting and passing the examination and percentage passing is attached at Appendix A. A summary of the results as a whole and by individual sections of the examination is attached at Appendix B and a full statistical report for the examination, including an analysis by brigade is attached at Appendix C.

G Meldrum  
Chairman

D J Stanley  
Secretary

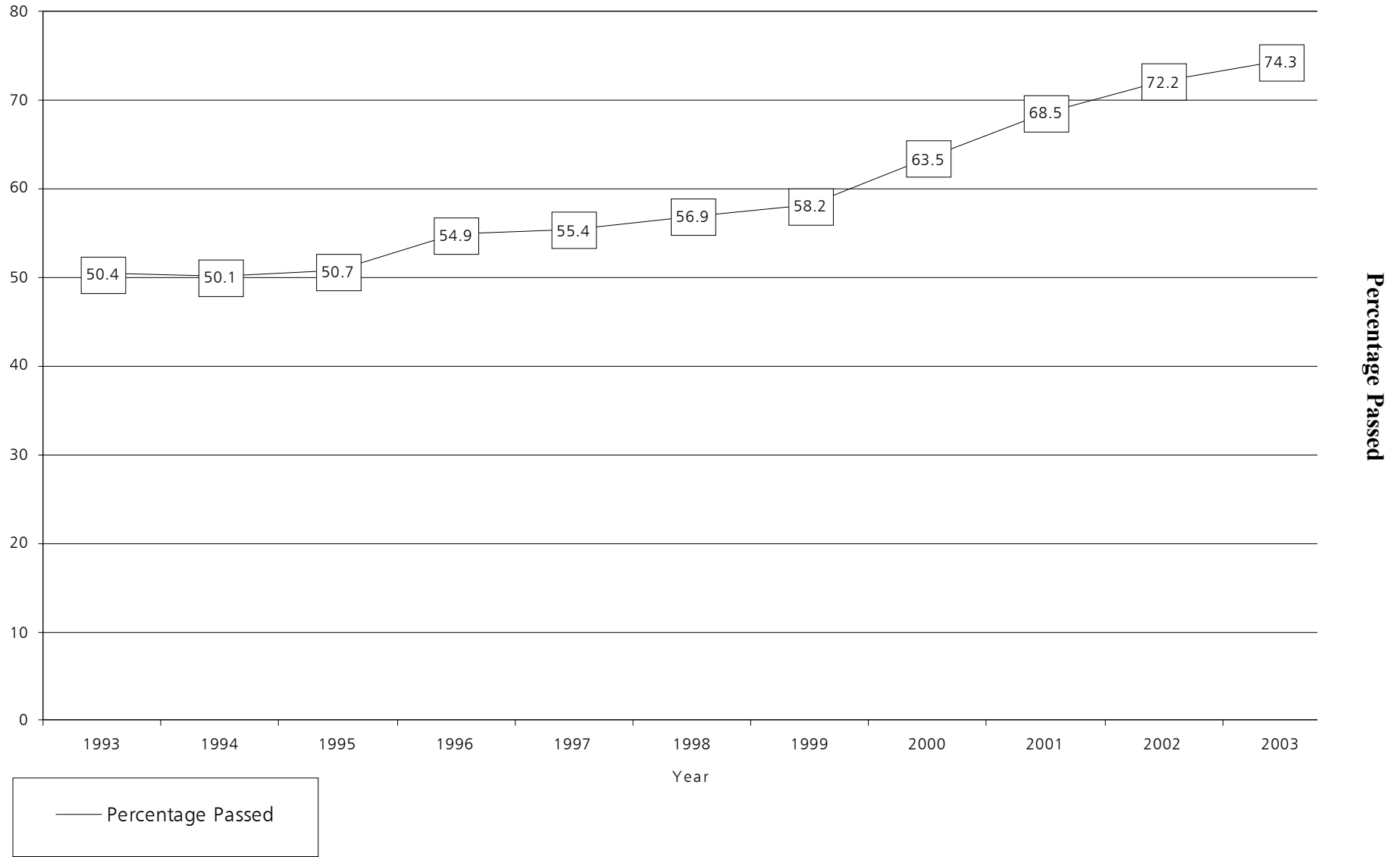
# Sub-Officers' Practical Examination 1993 - 2003

## TABLE I



# Sub-Officers' Practical Examination 1993- 2003

## TABLE II



## RESULTS IN TEST AS A WHOLE

Table I shows the results in the test as a whole.

**TABLE I**

	2003		2002		2001		2000		1999		1998		1997		1996		1995		1994		1993	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Passed	324	74.3	254	72.2	317	68.5	428	63.5	590	58.2	576	56.9	520	55.4	463	54.9	433	50.7	429	50.1	540	50.4
Failed	112	25.7	98	27.8	146	31.5	246	36.5	424	41.8	436	43.1	418	44.6	380	45.1	421	49.3	428	49.9	531	49.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>436</b>		<b>352</b>		<b>463</b>		<b>674</b>		<b>1014</b>		<b>1012</b>		<b>938</b>		<b>843</b>		<b>854</b>		<b>857</b>		<b>1071</b>	

### Performance in each Section

Table II shows the distribution of candidates by section and their performance in the 2003 test.

**TABLE II**

Section	Subject	Passed		Failed		Total
		No	%	No	%	No
Section A	The conduct of one composite drill	387	89.2	47	10.8	434
Section B	Fireground procedure: taking charge of the situation and controlling the exercise	378	87.1	56	12.9	434
Section C	An instructional talk on a specific fire risk within the candidate's brigade area	382	87.6	54	12.4	436



## Fire Services Examinations Board

### Qualifying Examination for Promotion to the Rank of Sub-Officer 2003 Practical Test

#### FULL STATISTICAL REPORT

#### ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY AGE GROUP

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by age and their performance in the above examination.

**Table I**

Age Group	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Up To 20 Years	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
20 To 24	12	75.00	4	25.00	16	16	3.36
25 To 29	49	77.78	14	22.22	63	68	14.29
30 To 34	125	77.64	36	22.36	161	181	38.03
35 To 39	97	70.29	41	29.71	138	149	31.30
40 To 44	33	71.74	13	28.26	46	49	10.29
45 To 49	8	66.67	4	33.33	12	13	2.73
50 +	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## ANALYSIS BY RANK

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by rank and their performance in the above examination.

Table II

Rank	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Firefighter	170	73.59	61	26.41	231	256	53.78
Leading Firefighter	154	75.12	51	24.88	205	220	46.22
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## ANALYSIS BY GENDER

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by gender and their performance in the above examination.

Table III

Title	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Female	13	76.47	4	23.53	17	19	3.99
Male	311	74.22	108	25.78	419	457	96.01
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>ANALYSIS BY LENGTH OF SERVICE</b>
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The following table shows the distribution of candidates by length of service and their performance in the above examination.

**Table IV**

Length of Service Years	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
1	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	0.21
2	21	87.50	3	12.50	24	24	5.04
3	35	76.09	11	23.91	46	49	10.29
4	31	65.96	16	34.04	47	53	11.13
5	35	77.78	10	22.22	45	48	10.08
6	35	77.78	10	22.22	45	47	9.87
7	25	71.43	10	28.57	35	41	8.61
8	23	74.19	8	25.81	31	37	7.77
9	13	72.22	5	27.78	18	19	3.99
10	14	82.35	3	17.65	17	18	3.78
11	17	89.47	2	10.53	19	20	4.20
12	10	83.33	2	16.67	12	14	2.94
13	14	82.35	3	17.65	17	18	3.78
14	10	62.50	6	37.50	16	17	3.57
15	7	63.64	4	36.36	11	13	2.73
16	5	83.33	1	16.67	6	7	1.47
17	7	70.00	3	30.00	10	11	2.31
18	4	80.00	1	20.00	5	6	1.26
19	4	44.44	5	55.56	9	9	1.89
20	5	83.33	1	16.67	6	6	1.26
21	1	50.00	1	50.00	2	2	0.42
22	2	50.00	2	50.00	4	4	0.84
23	1	50.00	1	50.00	2	2	0.42
24	3	50.00	3	50.00	6	8	1.68
25	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
26	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.21
27	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
28	1	100	0	0.00	1	1	0.21
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>ANALYSIS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN</b>
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The following table shows the distribution of candidates by ethnic origin and their performance in the above examination.

**Table V**

Ethnic Origin	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Any Other	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.21
Black-Caribbean	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.21
Declined To Say	16	80.00	4	20.00	20	20	4.20
Indian	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.21
Other	3	100.00	0	0.00	3	3	0.63
White	304	74.33	105	25.67	409	448	94.12
White & Black African	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	1	0.21
White Other	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	0.21
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>ANALYSIS BY BRIGADE</b>
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The following table shows the cumulative results achieved in each brigade (grouped in local examination boards).

Table VI

Board	Brigade	Passed		Failed		Absentees	Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
		No	%	No	%	No	No	No	
A	Cleveland	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	2	0.42
A	Durham & Darlington	4	57.14	3	42.86	0	7	7	1.47
A	Northumberland	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.21
A	Tyne & Wear	7	70.00	3	30.00	1	10	11	2.31
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>68.42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31.58</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4.41</b>
B	Humberside	10	100.00	0	0.00	3	10	13	2.73
B	North Yorkshire	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.05
B	South Yorkshire	9	90.00	1	10.00	0	10	10	2.10
B	West Yorkshire	13	76.47	4	23.53	2	17	19	3.99
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>85.71</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14.29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>9.87</b>
C	Cumbria	4	66.67	2	33.33	1	6	7	1.47
C	Greater Manchester	16	80.00	4	20.00	0	20	20	4.20
C	Lancashire	6	75.00	2	25.00	2	8	10	2.10
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>76.47</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23.53</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7.77</b>
D	Cheshire	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	3	3	0.63
D	Isle of Man	1	50.00	1	50.00	0	2	2	0.42
D	Merseyside	4	57.14	3	42.86	0	7	7	1.47
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>41.67</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58.33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2.52</b>
E	Shropshire	2	100.00	0	0.00	0	2	2	0.42
E	Staffordshire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.63
E	Warwickshire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.63
E	West Midlands	23	74.19	8	25.81	2	31	33	6.93
E	Hereford and Worcs	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.63
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>73.81</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26.19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>9.24</b>
F	Derbyshire	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	5	5	1.05
F	Leicestershire	4	66.67	2	33.33	1	6	7	1.47
F	Nottinghamshire	1	33.33	2	66.67	2	3	5	1.05
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>57.14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42.86</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3.57</b>
G	Cambridgeshire	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	4	4	0.84
G	Lincolnshire	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	5	5	1.05
G	Norfolk	2	33.33	4	66.67	1	6	7	1.47
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>46.67</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>53.33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3.36</b>

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Board	Brigade	Passed		Failed		Absentees	Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
		No	%	No	%	No	No	No	
H	Bedfordshire & Luton	2	66.67	1	33.33	1	3	4	0.84
H	Northamptonshire	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	3	3	0.63
H	Oxfordshire	5	83.33	1	16.67	0	6	6	1.26
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>66.67</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33.33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2.73</b>
I	Essex	13	81.25	3	18.75	2	16	18	3.78
I	Hertfordshire	3	60.00	2	40.00	2	5	7	1.47
I	Suffolk	1	50.00	1	50.00	0	2	2	0.42
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>73.91</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26.09</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5.67</b>
J	London	31	67.39	15	32.61	4	46	50	10.50
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>67.39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32.61</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>10.50</b>
K	East Sussex	5	62.50	3	37.50	0	8	8	1.68
K	Kent	3	75.00	1	25.00	0	4	4	0.84
K	Surrey	6	85.71	1	14.29	0	7	7	1.47
K	West Sussex	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	4	4	0.84
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>69.57</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30.43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4.83</b>
L	Berkshire	5	83.33	1	16.67	1	6	7	1.47
L	Buckinghamshire	6	75.00	2	25.00	1	8	9	1.89
L	Hampshire	11	73.33	4	26.67	0	15	15	3.15
L	Isle of Wight	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.21
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>76.67</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23.33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6.72</b>
M	Cornwall	4	80.00	1	20.00	1	5	6	1.26
M	Devon	6	75.00	2	25.00	1	8	9	1.89
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>76.92</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23.08</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3.15</b>
N	Dorset	2	100.00	0	0.00	1	2	3	0.63
N	Wiltshire	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.05
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>85.71</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14.29</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.68</b>
O	Somerset	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.21
O	Avon	5	83.33	1	16.67	2	6	8	1.68
O	Gloucestershire	7	87.50	1	12.50	0	8	8	1.68
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>86.67</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13.33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3.57</b>
P	Mid & West Wales	6	85.71	1	14.29	1	7	8	1.68
P	North Wales	7	100.00	0	0.00	0	7	7	1.47
P	South Wales	4	66.67	2	33.33	1	6	7	1.47
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>85.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4.62</b>
Q	Strathclyde	22	88.00	3	12.00	3	25	28	5.88
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>88.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5.88</b>

Continues...

Board	Brigade	Passed		Failed		Absentees	Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
		No	%	No	%	No	No	No	
R	Fife	7	70.00	3	30.00	0	10	10	2.10
R	Grampian	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.05
R	Highlands and Islands	1	50.00	1	50.00	0	2	2	0.42
R	Tayside	7	100.00	0	0.00	0	7	7	1.47
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>79.17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20.83</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5.04</b>
S	Central Scotland	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.63
S	Dumfries & Galloway	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.21
S	Lothian and Borders	5	100.00	0	0.00	2	5	7	1.47
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>88.89</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11.11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2.31</b>
T	Northern Ireland	4	57.14	3	42.86	1	7	8	1.68
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>57.14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>42.86</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.68</b>
U	Guernsey	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.21
U	Jersey	3	100.00	0	0.00	0	3	3	0.63
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.84</b>
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>324</b>	<b>74.31</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>25.69</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**APPEALS AGAINST EXAMINATION RESULTS  
SUB-OFFICERS' PRACTICAL TEST 2003**

**1. REPORT**

- 1.1 Following the introduction of the Appeals against Examination Results, 12 appeals were received from 12 candidates asking for their failed sections of their practical test to be re-assessed.

Section A	4
Section B	2
Section C	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	<u>12</u>

- 1.2 The Senior Examiner of the candidate's local examination board was asked to investigate the appeal and provide a report recommending whether to support or reject the appeal. As part of the investigation, the Senior Examiner was required to obtain statements from the examiners concerned and provide copies of all documentation relevant to the examination process.
- 1.3 The Appeals Panel, consisting of the Secretary of the FSEB, the Lead Assessor and the National Assessor for the Practical Tests reviewed all appeals in the light of the Senior Examiners report, examiners comments and the candidate's original submission. The decision of the Appeals Panel was:

Appeals Successful and Examination Result now 'Passed'	0
Appeals Successful but decision to Re-test candidates	3
Appeals Unsuccessful	9
Appeals pending	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	<u>12</u>

- 1.4 Candidates and Chief Officers have been notified of the decision of the Appeals Panel.

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