

IFE Level 3 Diploma in Fire Science and Fire Safety

Unit 6 – Fire Service Operations and Incident Command (Zone 1)

Examiner Report – March 2020

Introduction

Performance was good with 77% of the candidates who sat the examination achieving a Pass. There were few high scores with most candidates achieving a Pass within the D grade.

Candidates performed particularly well on question 4 (where the average mark achieved was 14) and question 3 (where the average mark achieved was 10). Candidates performed least well on question 6 where the average mark achieved was 5.

Question 1

- a) *Explain the purpose and use of dynamic risk assessment at an incident.* (4 marks)
- b) *Describe the stages of a dynamic risk assessment.* (16 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Part a) was usually answered well and it was common for candidates to secure all four of the marks available.

Part b) was less well answered as some candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the stages of dynamic risk assessment. Some candidates suggested that the stages were initial, development and closing. Candidates who were familiar with the process and were able to describe the stages scored high marks. Candidates should be aware that the stages are:

- Evaluate the situation
- Are the benefits of actions proportional to the risks?
- Select systems of work
- Declare tactical mode
- Tactical Control
- Additional/Alternative control measures
- Review

Question 2

- a) *State five objectives for Fire and Rescue Services when responding to a flood rescue incident.* (5 marks)
- b) *Describe the factors to be taken into account when determining the resources required to deal with a flood rescue situation.* (5 marks)
- c) *Explain the control measures to be put in place to safeguard crews when carrying out flood rescues.* (10 marks)

Examiner Feedback

The average mark obtained for this question was 8.

Part a) was not answered well. Candidates usually identified the need to save lives and maintain crew safety but few recognised other objectives such as relieving suffering, protecting property, containing the emergency (limiting its escalation or spread), maintaining critical services, safeguarding the environment or restoring normality as soon as possible.

Most candidates secured some marks for part b) but few attained all five of the marks available.

In responding to part c), most candidates focussed on the operational methods of search and the use of lines to secure crew. Few candidates provided more than a few points or sufficient detail to secure all of the marks available.

Question 3

Describe the following roles in relation to the Incident Command structure at a large fire:

- a) *Incident Commander* (8 marks)
- b) *Sector Commander* (6 marks)
- c) *Safety Officer* (6 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was usually answered well and candidates appeared familiar with the roles.

Responses to part b) were often less full than other responses with candidates appearing to have less understanding of the responsibilities associated with this role.

Question 4

- a) *In relation to fires in buildings:*
- i) *define the term "ventilation" (2 marks)*
 - ii) *explain the difference between natural ventilation and forced ventilation (4 marks)*
- b) *Describe the benefits of ventilating buildings involved in fire. (4 marks)*
- c) *Define each of the following and provide examples of signs and symptoms:*
- i) *flashover (5 marks)*
 - ii) *backdraught (5 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was one of the most popular options for candidates and was usually answered well. Candidates appeared to have studied the subject areas in detail and provided full and clear responses.

Ventilation was sometimes less well understood and candidates need to increase their understanding of this area to improve their safety and skills at incidents.

Examiners were pleased to note the very high level of understanding demonstrated in relation to flashover and backdraught.

Question 5

You are the officer in charge of a fire on board a passenger train.

- a) *Describe the factors to be taken into account when managing this type of rail incident. (8 marks)*
- b) *Describe the safety precautions to be employed at all incidents involving railways. (12 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was often answered well with the average mark attained being 8. Candidates usually attained marks for both parts of the question.

In responding to part a), candidates often failed to give consideration to the construction of the train or to the materials used throughout the train.

Part b) was often answered well although some candidates provided brief responses and failed to take advantage of the 12 marks available.

Question 6

You are the Incident Commander at an incident involving a lawful detention centre/prison. Describe the control measures that you would put in place when attending a secure site of this nature. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was the least popular option for candidates. Those candidates that did attempt the question often provided only brief responses that considered only the need for fire crews to be accompanied by prison staff.

Further marks could have been attained for describing measures related to liaison officers, safety briefings, RVPs, evacuation signals, security of equipment, maintaining communication etc.

Question 7

You are the Incident Commander dealing with a fire in a high rise building. State the information that you would gather to achieve situational awareness in order to manage the incident. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was a popular option for candidates but responses were often limited and the average mark attained was 7.

Candidates generally mentioned the need to consider access, risk to surrounding buildings and the need for an evacuation strategy. However, further marks could have been attained for considering the age and construction of the building, the use (including previous usage) of the building, the fire safety installations and utilities.

Question 8

You are the Incident Commander at an aircraft accident off-site.

a) Describe the steps that Incident Commanders can take to identify and preserve evidence at the scene of a fire. (12 marks)

b) Describe the actions that an Incident Commander should take following an incident. (8 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Responses to this question often lacked sufficient detail to secure high marks. Although there were high marks available for both parts of the question, candidates often provided only minimal information.

In responding to part a), candidates often cited actions such as setting up cordons but few went on to describe actions such as:

- Whenever possible, an officer should be appointed to map out as accurately as possible the location and position of bodies
- If cameras are available then photographs or video should be taken of the wreckage, the accident site and the position of the bodies.
- Most passengers on aircraft carry a number of personal effects and papers, such as passports, driving licences, reservations etc. These articles should be left in situ or where they need to be moved, their location and position should be recorded.
- The number of people allowed on the incident site should be controlled so that evidence such as personal effects are not disturbed, or are disturbed as little as possible.
- When the situation permits, there should be a careful withdrawal of all personnel and vehicles that are not essential.
- The wreckage of an aircraft must not be moved or disturbed until the Air Accident Investigation Branch gives its permission.
- A large number of documents are carried on aircraft, and rescue and firefighting personnel should carefully gather any documents that they find and hand them over to the Police or the investigating team.
- Flight Recorders - All civil passenger aircraft as well as most others carry flight recorders known in the media as the "black box". If they are found, they should not be handled unless absolutely necessary and preferably left where found.
- Ensure that crews take everything that they brought away with them
- Identification of Key Personnel: The names and location of witnesses to important events should be obtained and recorded for later interviews.
- Identify and record the effect of any media was used to extinguish the fire.

When responding to part b), candidates often failed to consider issues related to crew welfare.

Date issued: November 2020