

IFE Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety – Zone 2

Examiner Report – March 2026

Introduction

Of the 86 candidates who sat the examination, 8 (9%) achieved a pass mark, which reflects a marked decrease from 51% in the previous year. The best answered question was question 8 with an average mark of 7 and the least well answered question was question 5 with an average mark of 2.6.

Question 1

Wood products constitute one of the most important groups of materials used in construction. Discuss the key fire safety implications of using wood in construction with regard to:

- a) Material. (7 Marks)*
- b) Combustion. (4 Marks)*
- c) Protection (9 Marks).*

Examiner Feedback

Part (a) was poorly answered, with candidates typically gaining only 1 or 2 of the available marks. A number of responses did not identify that wood is a combustible material, which limited access to the full range of marks.

In part (b), candidates generally achieved around half of the available marks, most commonly from recognising that wood chars at a regular, measurable rate and that flaming occurs only at surface temperatures above 350°C in the presence of a pilot ignition source.

Part (c) produced a range of responses, with many candidates providing only limited or superficial detail, resulting in relatively few marks being awarded.

Question 2

Describe the different types of ventilation systems and explain their function. (20 Marks)

Examiner Feedback

Performance on this question was limited, with relatively few candidates demonstrating a secure understanding of ventilation systems. A number of responses instead focused on fire-fighting Positive Pressure Ventilation, which was not the focus of the question and therefore did not attract credit.

Overall, responses suggested limited familiarity with this area of the syllabus.

Question 3

Identify and describe five different types of dampers. (20 Marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question presented challenges for many candidates, with many responses demonstrating limited depth of knowledge. The majority of marks awarded were for correctly identifying the type of damper, while relatively few candidates were able to provide further detail or demonstrate a more comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Question 4

Describe the general principles necessary to ensure suitability of escape routes in the event of a fire. (20 Marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question generally enabled candidates to achieve over 50% of the available marks. However, responses often appeared to rely on general knowledge and practical understanding rather than demonstrating a broader depth of knowledge from the relevant syllabus material.

Question 5

According to 'The BS 9999 Handbook: Effective fire safety design in the design, management and use of buildings', sprinklers are key to reducing risks.

- a) What are the standards for commercial sprinkler systems? (2 Marks)*
- b) Name and describe the risk profiles which are not acceptable without sprinkler protection. (12 Marks)*
- c) How does fire growth rate change, when comparing one rate with the next? (2 Marks)*
- d) What building design factors mean that sprinkler systems must be fitted? (4 Marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Part (c) proved more challenging for candidates, with many responses demonstrating limited depth of understanding or incomplete coverage of the required points. In contrast, part (d) generally enabled candidates to access around 50% of the available marks, with a reasonable proportion of candidates identifying some of the key elements required.

Question 6

Two factors involved in ensuring safe egress in the event of a fire are ASET and RSET.

- a) a) Explain ASET and its components.(4 marks)*
- b) Define RSET and detail its components. (11 Marks)*
- c) What is the significance of ASET and RSET? (5 Marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question generally attracted some marks, although many candidates were unable to correctly identify the terms ASET and RSET.

In part (a), responses were limited, with relatively few candidates demonstrating a clear understanding of the required definitions.

Part (b) also proved challenging, with many candidates not fully developing the required explanation of pre-movement time and actual travel time, including the key stages involved such as recognition of the fire warning, decision-making prior to evacuation, and movement to a place of relative safety.

In part (c), some candidates confused ASET with RSET, resulting in responses that did not align with the intended fire safety principles and, in some cases, described scenarios that would not support safe evacuation outcomes.

Question 7

Discuss the fire safety advice you would give to the owner of retail premises, with regard to:

- a) Housekeeping. (10 marks)*
- b) Storage. (10 Marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Question 7 was attempted by most candidates, although a significant number appeared to merge parts (a) and (b) within their responses. In addition, many answers suggested a reliance on general or “common sense” reasoning rather than material drawn from the supporting bibliography. This resulted in varying levels of detail and completeness across responses.

Question 8

Fire doors are part of the installed fire precautions in most workplaces and keeping them in good working order is important.

- a) What is the legal requirement? (2 Marks)*
- b) What information should be kept on the organisation's fire door register? (9 Marks)*

Explain what should be checked by the responsible person on the:

- c) Door leaf and frame. (4 Marks)*
- d) Intumescent fire and smoke seals (5 Marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This was the most successfully attempted question on the paper. However, in part (a), no candidates referenced Article 17 of the RR(FS)O, indicating a gap in specific legislative knowledge.

Parts (b), (c) and (d) were generally well answered, with many candidates able to access marks through straightforward, checklist-style responses. In these sections, candidates often applied general understanding effectively, which supported reasonable overall performance on this question.