

# IFE Level 3 Certificate in Fire Service Operations and Incident Command – Zone 1

## Examiner Report – March 2026

### Introduction

Only 5 (14%) of the 36 candidates that sat the examination achieved a Pass. Candidates generally performed best on question 4 where the average mark was 6.3 and least well on questions 1 and 3 where the average mark was 3.9.

### Question 1

*As the Incident Commander of a fire in a warehouse containing chemicals, describe the pollution control hierarchy which you would deploy to protect the surrounding environment? (20 marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

Candidates generally found this question challenging, with many responses focusing on operational tactics and incident procedures rather than the pollution control hierarchy required by the question. A number of candidates were able to identify elements of the hierarchy but were not able to fully or accurately describe each stage. Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding of the structured hierarchy approach and were able to outline the key stages in protecting the surrounding environment, although this was not consistent across all candidates.

### Question 2

*a) As the Incident Commander it is important to manage the spans of control. What are the advantages of sectorising an incident? (10 Marks)*

*b) As a Sector Commander, what are your specific responsibilities? (10 Marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

Candidates generally found this question challenging. In part (a), many were unable to clearly explain the advantages of managing spans of control through sectorisation at an incident. Some responses also showed confusion between the roles of Incident Commander and Sector Commander.

In part (b), knowledge of Sector Commander responsibilities was limited, with a number of candidates instead focusing on Dynamic Risk Assessments and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), rather than the specific duties required in that role. Overall, this resulted in incomplete or misdirected responses across both parts of the question.

### **Question 3**

*You are the Incident Commander of a fire that requires water to be brought to the incident ground from a distant source. Describe the options and methods available to you. (20 marks)*

#### **Examiner Feedback**

Many candidates were able to identify water relay and water carrying as methods of supplying water to an incident. However, responses often did not extend beyond these two approaches, limiting access to the full range of available marks. A small number of candidates also included methods not directly related to water supply.

Stronger responses demonstrated a broader understanding of the available options and methods for transporting water from a distant source to the incident ground, such as HVP, hose layers, and aircrafts, allowing for more comprehensive coverage of the question requirements.

### **Question 4**

*Describe and explain the following including the signs and symptoms of:*

*a) Backdraught. (8 Marks)*

*b) Flashover. (8 Marks)*

*c) Fire Gas Explosion. (4 Marks)*

#### **Examiner Feedback**

Overall, this question proved challenging for many candidates, consistent with previous examination sessions. Responses often showed difficulty in clearly distinguishing between backdraught, flashover, and fire gas ignition, with some confusion evident in both the definitions and the associated signs and symptoms.

In part (a), many candidates were unable to provide a clear definition of backdraught and frequently confused its indicators with those of flashover. Similarly, in part (b), understanding of flashover was limited, with a lack of accurate identification of its key characteristics and development signs. In part (c), fire gas ignition was often incorrectly described, with some candidates instead referring to gas explosions rather than the specific fire-related phenomenon being assessed.

### **Question 5**

*a) Automatic Sprinkler Systems must be provided with suitable and acceptable water supply. What are the types of acceptable water supplies? (8 Marks)*

*b) Life Saving Systems are basic sprinkler systems enhanced to give a higher standard of reliability. Describe the requirements required for Life Saving Systems (12 Marks)*

#### **Examiner Feedback**

Part (a) was generally better answered, with several candidates able to identify suitable and acceptable water supplies for sprinkler systems and therefore accessing higher marks. However, a number of responses instead focused on describing how sprinkler systems operate, which was not required by the question.

Part (b) was less well answered, with many candidates achieving only limited marks. Responses often lacked detail regarding the specific requirements of Life Saving Systems, indicating a need for a clearer understanding of the enhanced reliability standards expected for this type of system.

### **Question 6**

*Firefighting foams have been developed primarily to deal with liquid fuel fires.*

- a) Describe the main properties of firefighting foam. (14 marks)*
- b) What factors will influence the performance of firefighting foam? (6 marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

Part (a) was answered well by a small number of candidates, who demonstrated a good understanding of the main properties of firefighting foam and were able to access higher marks. However, a significant number of responses focused instead on types of foam and their operational uses at incidents, which did not fully address the question requirements. Part (b) proved more challenging, with many candidates again focusing on the types of incidents where foam may be used, rather than the factors that influence foam performance. As a result, marks were limited for a large proportion of responses.

### **Question 7**

- a) As the Incident Commander at a military aircraft crash, briefly describe the hazards specific to military aircraft. (10 Marks)*
- b) As Incident Commander, what are the considerations when setting up cordons at an aircraft crash site? (10 Marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

Candidates generally found this question challenging, with many appearing to lack the underpinning knowledge required. In part (a), responses often focused on the crash site itself or on general descriptions of military aircraft types, rather than the specific hazards associated with military aircraft. A small number of candidates introduced their own scenarios, which did not fully align with the requirements of the question. In part (b), candidates also struggled to address the specific considerations for establishing cordons at an aircraft crash site, with some responses instead focusing on general incident management actions such as undertaking risk assessments.

### **Question 8**

*You are the Incident Commander of an incident involving missing sewer workers who have not returned to the surface. Explain the risks to your firefighters responding to this incident. (20 Marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

Candidates generally found this question challenging. A small number were able to identify relevant risks to firefighters, although many were unable to develop these points in sufficient detail to access the full range of marks. As a result, responses often remained brief and limited in scope.

A number of candidates focused instead on operational procedures rather than clearly explaining the specific risks associated with the incident scenario, which reduced the overall effectiveness of their answers.