



F R I T O

Fire & Rescue Services ITO



Trainer Learner Resource Guide



About this resource

This resource is designed for trainers to help learners undertaking self study. In working towards a unit standard learners may complete all or some of the following:

- read Learner Notes
- complete self checks
- have self checks signed off
- attend practical training sessions
- keep a record of practical activities
- complete an assessment

Undertaking assessment

As part of assessment, learners must submit evidence that they have undertaken a range of activities. You will need to make sure that learners are keeping a record of these. You should verify that the learner has completed the activities. Assessment should only occur when the learner feels ready to complete it.

Supporting self study

You can assist a learner's progress by:

- planning the study with the learner
- aligning practical training sessions with Learner Notes where practicable
- checking for understanding
- supporting new learners who may have learning issues
- buddying learners where necessary and appropriate
- marking and signing off the completed self checks

The following pages have suggestions how each of these steps can be carried out.

Planning the study with the learner

Plan the overall study period with the learner(s), and establish a time frame for completion.

Check:

- other commitments the learner may have so that the plan will be realistic
- how much the learner thinks he / she can manage each week
- times you can meet to check progress and assist if necessary
- that you have explained the purpose of recording practical activities.

Aligning practical training with Learner Notes

You can support self study learning by referring learners to sections of Learner Notes that are being covered in practical training. To ensure that the learner gets sufficient practice, you might check that the main topics in Learner Notes are covered on a rotational basis throughout the year.

Make sure that learners are recording completed practical activities and getting them signed off.

Checking for understanding

Although most learners will manage the material with ease, some may find aspects difficult. Some of those who struggle with reading, writing or numeracy components of study may be "rusty" – e.g. if it has been a long time since they opened a study book. Some learners may speak English as a second language. Others may have experienced difficulties at school, which may have caused anxiety in adulthood. You will need to consider whether a learner needs any learning support. The following supports and suggestions can be provided for all learners, but will be particularly helpful for those anxious about reading.

Word checks

Small glossaries of unfamiliar terms are useful and should be included in a resource. These are often called "word checks". Check that each learner understands the terms in each word check. This can be done at individual meetings or in practical sessions with the whole group, as a warm up exercise, where appropriate. You can vary it /make it more fun by reading out the meaning first, and asking for the word that the meaning describes.

Self checks

If possible, check with the learner after the first self check. That way you will pick up any difficulties he /she is having early. If the self check has not been completed, or has been completed incorrectly, there is likely to be a learning barrier. Note: If you wait to check the learner's progress after all self checks have been completed, you will not be in time to help a struggling learner through the resource. As for the word checks, you can use the self checks one to one with new recruits, or as quiz-type warm-ups or sum-ups at regular practical training sessions.

Re-telling

Invite the learner(s) to explain key points of a topic in a one minute talk. Or invite one learner to make a statement about, for instance, hazards, and have others add a sentence each, until you have covered all that the group knows.

These quick checks will tell you how well learners can:

- find their way around a resource
- locate particular words
- read and understand meanings
- understand and summarise content

Supporting new learners

First, the best way to support individual learners who are struggling with reading, writing or numeracy tasks is to make the learning more manageable for the whole group i.e. by not singling learners out. Breaking up sections into smaller learning segments ("chunking") can be helpful for everyone. This is because for many people, concentration will wane after 30 or 40 minutes, especially if they have come from a day job. Check for understanding after each segment.

Reading and Writing

You will be very familiar with the language of fire safety, but new learners may find some of this language difficult. Apart from using the word checks and self checks as discussed, you can support learners by explaining words and phrases that are not in common use. Below are some triggers for supporting and embedding new learning.

- *use a whiteboard / blackboard* so that when you talk about an unfamiliar term, you can write it up. Writing can reinforce speaking and vice-versa.
- *use common language* where possible (your body heat; breathing), *as well as* specialist language (metabolic heat; respiration)
- *have frequent word check and self check quizzes* enabling individuals to learn from each other
- *turn long nouns and noun phrases into shorter verbs* (e.g. "preventative action" - prevent)
- *point out word origins* e.g. terrain from "terra" - earth, land; "retardant" from retard - delay or hold back; "hyper" - more than normal; "therm" - heat
- *point out word similarities*. Note similarities *and* differences between how the words are written. (e.g. conduction and convection). Learners can be encouraged to focus on the differences to distinguish between the two words.
- *use the visual triggers* to enhance memory of a word (e.g. convection - upward movement)
- *set up learning buddies* enabling individuals to learn from each other
- *give learners opportunities to practice* using new language where appropriate

Numeracy

Some learners will find aspects of numeracy difficult. When a concept is introduced that requires an understanding of underlying numeracy, check that learners:

- know *what* calculations have to be undertaken (e.g. adding, multiplying)
- have opportunities to practice these calculations

You may not have the resources to support learners who need a lot of help with reading and numeracy. Where a learner is having serious difficulty, discuss it with them. FRSITO can put people in touch with an experienced adult literacy support agency.

Buddying

Buddies can be useful in helping those who are weak or rusty with basic operations. But they are a useful tool for *all* learners, not just those who are struggling. Assigning buddies as a matter of course avoids discrimination. The buddy does not complete the work for the learner, but discusses information and processes that the learner is having trouble with, and provides encouragement. It is less daunting to ask a "buddy" questions than someone more senior. A buddy can be:

- an experienced fire fighter assigned to a new recruit
- two beginners supporting each other through the self study resource
- buddying across fire forces (using either of the above combinations).

Marking and signing off completed self checks

If you can mark self checks after the first section, this will let you know whether the learner needs any support or not. Marking and signing off as soon as possible after completion is likely to motivate the learner to do more.

User friendly materials

Sometimes, the training resource itself can make it more difficult to learn. For instance, many learners will be put off by a thick training manual. For those who are struggling with the necessary skills, time and / or motivation for reading and writing, the sight a bulky manual may even make them want to give up. FRSITO is making every effort to ensure that Learner Notes are easy to manage. They are designed of have clear headings, illustrations, white space, with a font size and sentence length that is easy to understand. Make sure that other learning resources you use are accessible and user-friendly.

Planning for a structured course

Where there are more than one or two new recruits, you may wish to run a structured course. Learners would work through the Learner Notes first, and then participate in a short course, usually held over a weekend. Features of this training include:

- the learning is sequentially structured
- there is more time for learners to ask questions and practice difficult tasks
- DVDs and other resources can provide graphic examples of fire behaviour
- there is more opportunity to review learning and correct misunderstandings
- the formal learning environment can be more threatening to some learners

If you do decide to run a structured course, the following is a suggested process, for you to adapt as you think necessary.

Start	Action	Completion
	Book the venue and dates for the training course.	
	Advertise the course. Make sure you include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training dates and times, and location - The cut off date for applications 	
	Receive applications	
	Confirm that the course can go ahead Order the materials needed for the course	
	Send out Learner Notes, and any other material to learners with a covering letter	
	Discuss any completed self assessments with each participant	
	Prepare for the course – become familiar with the resources you are going to use. Check you have all the equipment you will need including whiteboard, pens, flip charts etc.	
	Complete the course.	
	Follow FRSITO approved assessment processes	

Organising the room for the learners

To ensure a safe learning environment, have tables arranged so that people can see they will be working in pairs and small groups, rather than always having to speak in front of the whole class. Make sure that all learners can see any screen and/or whiteboard.

Housekeeping

Does everyone know the catering arrangements (including break times), emergency procedures, and where exits and toilets are?

Warm-ups and learner introductions

Have the title of the course clearly written on a whiteboard, flip chart or PowerPoint screen. During introductions and warm-ups, keep your own introduction brief. Below are some quick and easy examples of warm-up activities:

Example 1: "Stand up if..."

You can make your own up the list, some examples are below:

You travel more than ___ kms to get here

You have helped at a fire

You have used _____ (fire fighting equipment)

You've been to all training sessions this year

Example 2: "Fist to five". Ask people to rate themselves on their perceptions of their own knowledge of the material. They raise their fist with none, or a number of fingers displayed (five being "excellent").

Outlining the course

Explain what you are going to cover

Circulate the attendance register

Explain how assessment will happen

Delivering the course

Running a course allows for discussion to happen. It is important that a variety of groupings and interactive activities is used to keep learners interested and to engage at their level.

Group discussion and activities

While self-directed learning requires individual application, courses allow people to learn from each other. Maximise this advantage by organising discussions and activities in pairs, small groups (3-4), or whole groups. Varying the group size will alter dynamics and maximise the contribution of all learners.

Paired work is best for when learners don't know each other and when speaking up in a whole group may be threatening.

Small groups work well when you want people to cooperate or compete with another team as part of their learning. An example of this is "scenario" development – where you create a problem that each group of learners must work together to solve.

Whole group work includes:

"Brainstorming" – learners call out responses. All ideas are accepted without modification

Collaborative problem solving

Discussion and debate

Slides and DVDs

When showing slides or DVDs, you will enhance learning if you ask learners to do something that will keep them focused on the content. For example, you might ask them to:

- prepare two questions they need answered, as they watch
- look for and write answers for prepared questions
- complete a prepared checklist
- refer to other material

To support those who may be struggling with writing, learners can be asked to do these activities in pairs.

Learning Mentoring for trainers

FRSITO Regional Training Coordinators are available to discuss any training issues that you may have.