

BILL No. 34 OF 1956.  
FIRE BRIGADE ORDINANCE, 1956  
ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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A BILL  
INTITLED

AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE AND FOR PURPOSES CONNECTED THEREWITH.

Enacted by the Legislature of British Guiana:—

1. This Ordinance may be cited as the Fire Brigade Ordinance, 1956. Short title.
2. In this Ordinance —
  - “auxiliary member” means a member of the Brigade other than a regular member; Interpretation.
  - “Brigade” means the British Guiana Fire Brigade established under this Ordinance;
  - “fire-fighting purposes” means the purposes of the extinction of fires and the protection of life and property in case of fire;
  - “fireman” means a member of the Brigade below the rank of leading fireman;



- “local authority” means in relation to the city of Georgetown and the town of New Amsterdam the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown and the Mayor and Town Council of New Amsterdam respectively and in relation to any other area the local authority, if any, of that area within the meaning of the Local Government Ordinance;
- “officer” means a member of the Brigade holding a rank senior to that of sub-officer;
- “Police Force” means the Police Force established under the Police Ordinance or any Ordinance replacing the same;
- “regular member” means a member of the Brigade liable for whole-time service therein;
- “regulations” means regulations made under this Ordinance;
- “subordinate fire officer” means a member of the Brigade, other than a fireman, below the rank of station officer and includes a member of the Brigade of the rank of sub-officer, section leader or leading fireman;
- “the appointed day” means such day as the Governor in Council may by Order appoint for the purposes of this Ordinance not being a day within three months of the commencement of this Ordinance;
- “unit” means a unit of the Brigade constituted in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- Cap. 150.
- Cap. 77.
- Establishment of the Brigade.
3. (1) On and after the appointed day there shall be established in and for the Colony a fire brigade to be called the British Guiana Fire Brigade.
- (2) The Brigade may be composed of one or more units constituted in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- Constitution of units of Brigade. Schedule.
4. (1) Units of the Brigade shall be constituted in respect of the areas of the Colony specified in the schedule to this Ordinance and shall be maintained primarily for fire-fighting purposes in such areas.
- (2) The Governor in Council may by order from time to time amend the schedule to this Ordinance by adding thereto new areas of the Colony or by varying any areas specified therein.
- Maintenance of Brigade out of revenues of Colony.
5. It shall be lawful for the Governor, with the consent of the Legislative Council, to authorise the payment from the revenues of the Colony of such sums of money as may from time to time be necessary for defraying the cost of maintaining the Brigade.
- Contributions by local authorities.
6. (1) Anything in section 5 of this Ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding a portion of the total cost of maintaining any unit shall be borne by the local authority or local authorities as the case may be of the area in respect of which the unit is primarily maintained.
- (2) The contribution to be made by a local authority towards the maintenance of any unit under the preceding subsection shall be determined by the Governor in Council after consultation with the local authority or local authorities concerned, and shall be deemed to be expenditure which the local authority is by law authorised to incur.
- Types of members of Brigade.
7. The Brigade may be composed of regular members or of auxiliary members or of both regular and auxiliary members.
- Composition of Brigade.
8. The Brigade shall consist of a Chief Fire Officer, a Deputy Chief Fire Officer and such number of officers, subordinate fire officers and firemen as the Governor may from time to time direct.
- Appointment of Officers.
9. The Governor may from time to time appoint fit and proper persons to be officers of the Brigade and they shall hold such rank as the Governor may think proper.
- Appointment of subordinate fire officers and firemen.
10. Subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and of the regulations the Chief Fire Officer may appoint fit and proper persons to be subordinate fire officers and firemen of the Brigade.
- Right of election of members of Police Force.
11. Any member of the Police Force serving with the Georgetown Fire Brigade or the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade and who was assigned for duty with either such Brigade without having been specifically recruited for any such assignment may at any time within three months of the date of the commencement of this



Ordinance by writing under his hand addressed to the Commissioner of Police, a copy whereof is sent to the Superintendent of the Georgetown Fire Brigade, elect to terminate his service with the Georgetown Fire Brigade or the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade as the case may be, and any person electing as aforesaid shall as soon as possible thereafter and in every case before the appointed day be assigned by the Commissioner of Police to such other duties in the Police Force as the Commissioner may determine.

12. Any person who being a member of the Police Force is on the appointed day serving with the Georgetown Fire Brigade or the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade shall be deemed to be appointed a member of the Brigade under this Ordinance with such designation of rank as the Governor may determine:

Members of Police Force deemed to be appointed members of Brigade.

Provided that no such person shall in respect of his salary or emoluments as a member of the Brigade suffer any direct pecuniary loss by virtue of his being deemed to be appointed a member of the Brigade as aforesaid.

13. Any person who is immediately before the appointed day a member of the Georgetown Auxiliary Fire Brigade shall on the appointed day, be deemed to be appointed an auxiliary member of the Brigade under this Ordinance with such designation of rank as the Governor may determine.

Members of Georgetown Auxiliary Fire Brigade

14. (1) Regular members of the Brigade recruited thereto on or after the appointed day and members of the Police Force deemed to be appointed members of the Brigade under section 12 of this Ordinance to whom the provisions of the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, would not otherwise apply or continue to apply shall be eligible or shall continue to be eligible as the case may be for pensions and gratuities at the same rates and on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to non-commissioned officers and constables of the Police Force enrolled after the first day of September, nineteen hundred and fifty, and such pensions and gratuities shall be computed as though service in the Brigade were service in the Police Force.

Pensions and gratuities of members of the Brigade. Cap. 73.

(2) Anything in subsection (1) of this section to the contrary notwithstanding, the power conferred on the Commissioner of Police by proviso (b) to subsection (1) of section 91 of the Police Ordinance, shall, in relation to members of the Brigade referred to in this section, be exercisable by the Chief Fire Officer.

Cap. 77.

15. (1) The Chief Fire Officer shall, subject to the general order and direction of the Governor have the command and superintendence of the Brigade and he shall be responsible to the Governor for the efficient conduct and administration of the Brigade and for the proper expenditure of all public moneys appropriated for the service thereof.

Authority and responsibilities of Chief Fire Officer.

- (2) It shall be the duty of the Chief Fire Officer —
  - (a) to maintain the discipline of the Brigade;
  - (b) to see that the fire-engines, fire-boats and other fire equipment are kept in good order and thorough repair and are used to the best advantage for fire-fighting purposes;
  - (c) to take cognizance of and to cause prosecutions to be instituted either in his own name or in the name of any officer of the Brigade in respect of offences under the Fire Prevention Ordinance, 1954, or any other law for the prevention of fire;
  - (d) at the close of every financial year, or oftener if required by the Governor, to report to him in writing the condition of the stations, hydrants, hose, vehicles, fire-boats, fire-engines, and all other fire equipment and property under his charge; the income and expenditure of the Brigade in detail for the previous year; the number of fires and causes thereof, or as near as can be ascertained; the number and description of buildings destroyed or seriously damaged, together with the names of the owners or occupants, all accidents by fire which may be known to him; together with such other information or suggestions as may in his opinion be desirable.

No. 19 of 1954.



(3) The Chief Fire Officer shall have his headquarters in the city of Georgetown.

Duties of  
Deputy  
Chief Fire  
Officer.

16. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer shall act as principal assistant to the Chief Fire Officer in the performance of his duties in respect of the Brigade, and shall have power, during the absence or incapacity of the Chief Fire Officer, or when authorised by him, to do or suffer any act or thing which may by law be done or suffered by the Chief Fire Officer.

Duties of  
members of  
Brigade.

17. (1) The officers of the Brigade shall perform such duties of the Chief Fire Officer as may be legally delegated to them and all such duties as devolve upon them under the regulations.

(2) The subordinate fire officers and firemen of the Brigade shall perform such duties as devolve upon them under the regulations and such other duties as the Chief Fire Officer may determine.

Call out of  
auxiliary  
members.

18. It shall be lawful for the Chief Fire Officer in any case where in his opinion additional assistance is required for fire-fighting purposes to call out for service any auxiliary members of the Brigade and unless the context otherwise requires the provisions of this Ordinance and of the regulations with respect to the powers, immunities, duties and obligations of members of the Brigade shall in relation to auxiliary members apply only to such members as are called out as aforesaid.

Illness,  
bodily in-  
jury and  
death of  
auxiliary  
members.

19. (1) Where any auxiliary member of the Brigade through no fault of his own, contracts any illness, or sustains bodily injury while in the actual discharge of his duties as such, he shall be provided with medicines, medical comforts and medical attendance at the public expense on the written authority of the Chief Fire Officer.

(2) Where any auxiliary member of the Brigade sustains bodily injury in the circumstances specified in the preceding subsection, and is permanently disabled (either totally or partially) as a result thereof, the Governor in Council may grant him a pension or gratuity, the amount of which shall be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council.

(3) Where any auxiliary member of the Brigade as a result of the actual discharge of his duties as such and through no fault of his own contracts any illness or sustains any bodily injury and due to such illness or bodily injury suffers any loss of earnings in his normal occupation, the Governor in Council may grant him compensation therefor, the amount of which shall be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council.

(4) Where the aforesaid bodily injury results in death, the Governor in Council may award to the dependants (including any illegitimate children to whose support the deceased was contributing) a pension or gratuity, the amount of which shall be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council.

Cap. 111

(5) Auxiliary members of the Brigade shall not be regarded as workmen for the purposes of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, but the principles of the said Ordinance may be followed in computing compensation granted under the provisions of this Ordinance in respect of permanent disability or death.

Rights of  
entry for  
fire-fighting  
purposes.

20. (1) Any member of the Brigade who is on duty, or any member of the Police Force may enter and if necessary break into any premises or place in which fire has or is reasonably believed to have broken out, or any premises or place which it is necessary to enter for the purposes of extinguishing a fire or of protecting the premises or place from acts done for fire-fighting purposes, without the consent of the owner or occupier thereof, and may do all such things as he may deem necessary for extinguishing the fire or for protecting from fire, or from acts done as aforesaid, any such premises or place or for rescuing any person or property therein.

Control of  
operations  
at a fire.

21. At any fire, the senior member of the Brigade present shall have the sole charge and control of all operations for the extinction of the fire, including the fixing of positions of fire engines and apparatus, the attaching of hose to any water pipes or the use of any water supply, and the selection of the parts of the premises, object or place where the fire is, or of adjoining premises, objects or places, against which the water is to be directed.



22. On the occasion of a fire the Chief Fire Officer or other member of the Brigade in charge may in his discretion —
- (a) take the command of other persons who may voluntarily place their services at his disposal;
  - (b) remove or order any member of the Brigade to remove any person who by his presence interferes with or obstructs the operations of the Brigade;
  - (c) employ persons to aid in extinguishing any fire or in removing furniture or goods from any building on fire or in danger of fire, or to guard and secure the same;
  - (d) cause any water to be shut off from the mains and pipes of any district in order to give a greater supply and pressure of water in the district in which a fire may break out;
  - (e) generally, take any measures that may appear expedient for the protection of life and property.
23. It shall be the duty of all members of the Police Force and they are hereby authorised, to aid members of the Brigade in the execution of their duties.
24. The senior officer of the Police Force present at any fire, or in the absence of any such officer the senior member of the Brigade present, may close to traffic any street or may stop or regulate the traffic in any street whenever in the opinion of that officer or member as the case may be it is necessary or desirable to do so for fire-fighting purposes.
25. Any water undertakers shall, on being required by any such member of the Brigade as is mentioned in the last preceding section to provide a greater supply and pressure of water for extinguishing a fire, take all necessary steps to enable them to comply with such requirement and may for that purpose shut off the water from the mains and pipes in any area; and no authority or person shall be liable to any penalty or claim by reason of the interruption of the supply of water occasioned only by compliance of the water undertakers with such a requirement.
26. No member of the Brigade acting bona fide in the exercise of the powers conferred upon him under this Ordinance shall be liable for any damage or for any act done under this Ordinance.
27. Any person who wilfully obstructs or interferes with any member of the Brigade who is engaged in operations for fire-fighting purposes shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars.
28. Any person who knowingly gives or causes to be given a false alarm of fire to the Brigade or to any unit or member thereof shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both such fine and imprisonment.
29. Any person who on the occasion of a fire, or with intent to exercise any power conferred by this Ordinance on a member of the Brigade, impersonates or in any way pretends to be a member of the Brigade, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or to both such fine and imprisonment.
30. Any member of the Brigade who neglects or refuses to serve or refuses to obey any lawful command, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.
31. The Governor in Council may from time to time make regulations relating to all or any of the following matters, that is to say,—
- (a) the admission of members into the Brigade, and the period of service, training, discipline, good conduct, and discharge of the men belonging to the same;
  - (b) the scale of issue, and the type of uniform to be worn by, the hours of training and exercise of, and the distribution of duties among, the members of the Brigade;
  - (c) the speedy attendance of members of the Brigade with engines, fire escapes, fire-boats and all necessary equipment on the occasion of any alarm of fire;

Powers of person in control of operations at a fire.

Members of Police Force to aid Brigade.

Closing of streets at a fire.

Duties and immunities of water undertakers.

Immunities of members of Brigade.

Interference with Brigade.

False alarms of fire.

Impersonating member of Brigade.

Insubordination.

Regulations.



- (d) for the attendance of members of the Brigade with or without engines, fire escapes, fire-boats and all necessary equipment on the occasion of any call for the special services of the Brigade;
- (e) the maintenance of the Brigade in a due state of efficiency;
- (f) the hours of duty and leave of absence of members of the Brigade;
- (g) the ranks, pay, and allowances of members of the Brigade;
- (h) appeals with respect to dismissal of or disciplinary action against members of the Brigade;
- (i) promotion to any rank in the Brigade;
- (j) generally for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Ordinance.

Repeal, savings and substitutions.  
Cap. 80.

32. (1) The Auxiliary Fire Brigade Ordinance is hereby repealed:

Provided that the repeal of the said Ordinance shall in no way affect the validity of anything lawfully done thereunder, and all rights and liabilities lawfully arising thereunder shall continue as if this Ordinance had never been enacted.

(2) Where in any Ordinance, rule, regulation or order of the Governor or the Governor in Council enacted or made as the case may be prior to the appointed day there is contained any reference to the Superintendent of the Georgetown Fire Brigade there shall be substituted therefor a reference to the Chief Fire Officer and where in any such Ordinance, rule, regulation or order aforesaid there is contained any reference to the Deputy Superintendent of the Georgetown Fire Brigade, there shall be substituted therefor a reference to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

(3) Where in any Ordinance, rule, regulation or order of the Governor or the Governor in Council enacted or made as the case may be prior to the appointed day there is contained any reference to the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade there shall be substituted therefor a reference to the unit of the Brigade constituted under this Ordinance in respect of the town of New Amsterdam, and where in any such Ordinance, rule, regulation or order aforesaid there is contained any reference to the officer in charge of the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade there shall be substituted therefor a reference to the officer in charge of such unit.

(4) This section shall come into operation on the appointed day.

Repeal and saving.  
Cap. 152.  
Cap. 161.

33. (1) Subsections (7) and (8) of section 206, section 208 of, and Part VII of the sixth schedule to, the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, and section 200 of the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance, are hereby repealed without prejudice, however, to anything lawfully done or any expenditure lawfully incurred thereunder.

(2) This section shall come into operation on the appointed day.

#### SCHEDULE

##### Section 4.

1. The city of Georgetown as defined in section 4 of the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, Cap. 152.
2. The town of New Amsterdam as defined in the First Schedule to the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance, Cap. 161.

#### OBJECTS AND REASONS

The object of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of the British Guiana Fire Brigade as an independent entity, separate and distinct from the British Guiana Police Force. The Bill seeks to establish the Brigade as a "national" fire brigade with units serving in various areas of the Colony, whose local authorities would make contributions towards the cost of maintaining the units in their respective areas.

2. Clause 3 seeks to provide that on and after the appointed day, which is a day not earlier than three months after the commencement of the Ordinance fixed by the Governor in Council, the British Guiana Fire Brigade shall be established as a fire brigade in and for the Colony.

3. Clause 4 seeks to provide that units of the Brigade shall be constituted for areas of the Colony specified in the schedule to the Bill and maintained primarily for fire-fighting purposes in those areas, and that the



Governor in Council may from time to time amend the schedule by adding new areas or varying the areas already specified.

4. Clause 5 seeks to provide for the defraying of the cost of maintaining the Brigade out of the revenues of the Colony.

5. Clause 6 seeks to provide that the local authority in any area specified in the schedule shall contribute to the cost of maintaining the unit in that area and that such contribution shall be determined by the Governor in Council after consultation with the local authority.

6. Clause 7 seeks to provide for the Brigade being composed of both regular and auxiliary members.

7. Clauses 8, 9 and 10 seek to make provision for the appointment of members of the Brigade.

8. Clause 11 seeks to provide that members of the Police Force serving with either the Georgetown Fire Brigade or the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade who were not specifically recruited into the Police Force for such assignment may, within three months of the commencement of the Ordinance, elect to terminate their services with such Brigade and that they shall thereupon before the appointed day be assigned by the Commissioner of Police to other duties in the Police Force.

9. Clause 12 seeks to provide that any member of the Police Force who is serving with either the Georgetown or the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade on the appointed day shall be deemed to be appointed a member of the new Brigade but shall not as a result suffer any direct pecuniary loss in respect of his salary or emoluments.

10. Clause 13 seeks to provide that any person who is immediately before the appointed day a member of the Georgetown Auxiliary Fire Brigade shall, on the appointed day, be deemed to be an auxiliary member of the new Brigade.

11. Clause 14 seeks to provide for the continuation of pension rights of regular members of the Brigade.

12. Clause 15 seeks to provide for the command and superintendence of the Brigade by the Chief Fire Officer under the general order and direction of the Governor.

13. Clause 18 seeks to provide for the calling out for service of auxiliary members of the Brigade.

14. Clause 19 seeks to make provision for compensation in respect of injuries sustained by auxiliary members of the Brigade while in the discharge of their duties.

15. Clause 20 seeks to empower members of the Brigade on duty or members of the Police Force to enter and if necessary break into premises in which fire is reasonably believed to have broken out for the purpose of extinguishing such fire or protecting other premises.

16. Clauses 21 and 22 seek to make provision for the control of operations at a fire.

17. Clause 23 seeks to charge members of the Police Force with the duty to aid members of the Brigade.

18. Clause 24 seeks to make provision for the closing of streets and the regulation of traffic on the occasion of a fire.

19. Clause 25 seeks to impose on water undertakers the obligation to take all necessary steps to provide greater supply and pressure of water for fire-fighting purposes when required to do so.

20. Clause 26 seeks to confer on members of the Brigade acting bona fide in the exercise of their powers, immunity from liability for any damage done thereby.

21. Clauses 27, 28, 29 and 30 seek to create certain offences.

22. Clause 31 seeks to provide for the making of regulations by the Governor in Council for the purpose of the Ordinance.

23. Clause 32 seeks to repeal the Auxiliary Fire Brigade Ordinance, Chapter 80.

24. Clause 33 seeks to repeal certain provisions of the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance and the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance relating to the fire brigade.

M. S. PORCHER,  
Acting Chief Secretary.