



GUYANA

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Guyana Fire and Ambulance Services

FOR THE YEAR

1969

(Printed by the Authority of the Government)

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, GUYANA.

1970

(C.G.P. & S. 2562/69.)

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUYANA FIRE
AND AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR THE YEAR
1969

Fire Service Headquarters,
Water Street,
Georgetown.

9th April, 1970.

The Honourable
The Minister of Home Affairs,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit for your information the Annual Report of the Guyana Fire and Ambulance Services for the year ended 31st December, 1969.

1. Establishment

The establishment of the Service at the end of the year was as follows:-

1 Chief Fire Officer
1 Deputy Chief Fire Officer
4 Station Officers
1 Motor Mechanic
9 Sub Officers
1 Quartermaster
24 Section Leaders
48 Leading Firemen
215 Firemen
2 Class II Clerks
3 Clerical Assistants
3 Barrack Labourers.

2. Stations

During the year, two land stations, and one Fire Boat station were maintained in Georgetown. One Land Station in New Amsterdam and one Aerodrome Fire Station at Timehri Airport.

The existing stations in Georgetown cannot now adequately provide the necessary protection for the outlying suburban areas of the City, due to the greatly increased distances to be covered, and prevailing traffic conditions in and around the City.

It has therefore become impossible to provide the expected five minute response, and at certain times of the day even a ten minute response is not possible and accordingly this could cause a fire to be well involved before adequate help could arrive on the scene.

Apart from suburban Georgetown, there are now several other areas of the Country in dire need of Fire Protection and every effort will be made during 1970 to afford some measure of Fire Protection to these areas.

3. Central Fire Station (Georgetown)

The congestion at this station continues hence decentralisation of both staff and equipment has become a matter of urgency if a high standard of efficiency is to be maintained.

The barrack room provides accommodation for 3 Sub Officers, 9 Section Leaders, 18 Leading Firemen and 60 Firemen.

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4. Fire Boat Station

There are 30 men at this station:-

1 Sub Officer.
2 Section Leaders
6 Leading Firemen
21 Firemen.

During the period under review, the fireboats Lady Woolley and Stagshaw turned out on the following occasions:-

Responding to Fires	-	39 times; in action 5: Ship fires 2
Special Services	-	62
Emergency Calls	-	13
Transporting the sick and injured from Vreed-en-Hoop to Georgetown	-	668 calls
Assistance rendered to the Police	-	15
Miscellaneous calls	-	670

Emergency Special Services

On 4 separate occasions Fire Boat Lady Woolley responded to cries for help by persons who were in danger of drowning in the Demerara River and on 9 occasions it gave help to vessels drifting out to sea with crew members aboard. These vessels were towed safely back to port.

On 49 occasions salvage operations were carried out on vessels which were in danger of sinking or which had already sunk in the Georgetown Harbour.

Miscellaneous Calls

These calls were made under various circumstances e.g. transporting Ministers of Government, Senior Government Officials, Doctors, Midwives, Magistrates and members of the Police Force to and from Vreed-en-Hoop.

5. Timehri Aerodrome Unit

There are 54 men stationed at this Unit as shown hereunder:-

1 Station Officer
1 Sub Officer
4 Section Leaders
4 Leading Firemen
44 Firemen

During 1969, members of this Unit responded to the following:-

21 Fire Calls
18 Special Services
4 Aircraft Emergencies
Ambulance Calls.

Aircraft emergencies are categorised as follows:-

(a) Defective nose gear (1)
(b) Feathered engine (2)
(c) Electrical defect (1)

6. New Amsterdam Unit

The number of men stationed at the New Amsterdam Unit was 48, as shown hereunder:-

1 Station Officer
1 Sub Officer

130000

5 Section Leaders
6 Leading Firemen
34 Firemen
1 Barrack Labourer

During the period under review, members of this Unit responded to the following:-

80 Fire Calls
50 Special Services
2,336 Ambulance Calls

7. Appliances

The appliances held by the Service at the end of the year were:-

Georgetown Unit

Five (5) Dennis Water Tenders of 6.00 g.p.m. capacity
One (1) Major Pump 900 g.p.m.
Two (2) Land Rover Fire Pumps 350 g.p.m.
One (1) Land Rover Utility Transport
One (1) Emergency Tender
One (1) Bedford Van
One (1) Bedford Ambulance
Three (3) Volkswagen Ambulances
Two (2) Morris Ambulances
Two (2) Dodge Trucks with trays
One (1) Fire Boat (Lady Woolley) 1800 g.p.m.
One (1) Fire Boat (Stagshaw) 500 g.p.m.
One (1) Morris Oxford Motor Car.

New Amsterdam Unit

One (1) Dennis Water Tender 600 g.p.m.
Two (2) Land Rover Fire appliances 350 g.p.m. with portable pumps.
One (1) Bedford Ambulance
Two (2) Volkswagen Ambulances
One (1) Emergency Tender (Land Rover)
One (1) Land Rover Utility Pick-Up

Timehri Unit

Two (2) Bedford Foam and CO₂ Tenders, 600 & 500 g.p.m.
One (1) Bedford Foam tender 650 g.p.m.
One (1) Commer Ambulance
One (1) Austin Champ with 150 lbs. Dry Chemical
One (1) Land Rover Fire Pump 350 g.p.m.

8. Maintenance

The maintenance staff of the Department continued its good work, in maintaining Fire Appliances, Fire Boats, Ambulances, other vehicles and equipment up to a reasonably high standard.

There is still not enough work room for the efficient carrying out of certain types of repairs, and workshop facilities and tools remain scarce.

Nevertheless, during the year 1,717 repair jobs were carried out, including 37 overhauls and major repair jobs.

9. Hose

During the year under review, the Service held 37,050 feet of delivery hose as follows:-

Georgetown Unit	21,050
Timehri Unit	7,000
New Amsterdam Unit	9,000

10. Hydrants - Georgetown Unit

During the year 31 new hydrants were installed in the following areas:-

Five (5) T.U.C. Housing Scheme
 Nineteen(19) Ruimveldt Gardens
 Seven (7) Roxanne Burnham Gardens

Twenty hydrants were removed for repairs from the East LaPenitence and East Ruimveldt areas.

The total number of hydrants in Georgetown and its environs are now 1,312.

These hydrants were inspected regularly by Fire Service Personnel to ensure their serviceability and defective hydrants were reported to the Water Commissioner who promptly effected repairs.

The incidence of deliberately damaging hydrants continue to be of much concern to this Department as large areas of the suburban districts are without serviceable fire hydrants and this could result in a major catastrophe involving tremendous loss of property and possibly life. However every effort is being made to effect repairs with the utmost urgency.

Timehri Aerodrome Unit

The number of hydrants remained at 79 at Timehri during the year, and Fire Service personnel carried out regular inspections. Defective hydrants were reported to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics who carried out the necessary repairs.

New Amsterdam Unit

There are 143 hydrants in New Amsterdam, and these were inspected by Fire Service personnel during the year. Defective hydrants were reported to the Water Commissioners, who effected the necessary repairs promptly.

11. Equipment Received

The following items of equipment and stores were received during the period under review:-

6	only fenders - Standard 32" x 9"
6	only fenders - True Line 12" x 4"
6	" " - Trouson or Corner
6	" " - Chubby 11" x 7"
6	" Bouys - Mooring 12" x 1"
2	" Generators - Hand Portable
2	" Hearth Compasses
75	" 2 gals. Chemical Foam extinguishers, complete with charges
100	" 2 gals. Chemical Foam extinguisher charges
30	" 2 gals. Nu-Swift Air Foam extinguishers complete with charges
75	" Nu-Swift Air Foam charges
6	" Nu-Swift Quart size Uni Flash Fire Extinguishers with charges
40	" Nu-Swift Water Pressure type refills
20	" Nu-Swift Auto Uni Flash pressure charges
30	" Pyrene C35 Conquest Water CO2 extinguishers complete with charges.
60	" Pyrene C35 Conquest Water CO2 gas cartridges
20	" Angus Fire Blankets 6' x 4' complete with metal containers
20	" Walter Kiddie Fire Extinguishers (51b).
875	" gals. Nicerol Foam Compound
1	" Hand Siren on wall bracket
50	" Fold-A-Bye Chairs
20	" Stack-A-Bye Chairs
27	Lengths Delivery Hose

2	only Dodge Truck engines
2	" Reconditioned Engines for Lady Woolley pumps
12	" 1100 x 20 Tyres
4	" 825 x 20 Tyres and Tubes
7	" 590 x 14 " " "
4	" 750 x 16 " " "
4	" 700 x 13 " " "
50	" Folding Bedsteads
50	" Mattresses - Dunlopillo
300	" Pillows - Dunlopillo
1	" Differential) for Volkswagen ambulances.
1	" Gear Box)

12. Special Services

During the year 1969, the Fire Service carried out a total of 335 special services, in addition to responding to Fire calls and other emergencies. Forty-four of these were classified as Emergency Calls, for which no charges were made as they were of a humanitarian nature. The other calls, classified as Ordinary Special Services were chargeable, and yielded a net revenue of \$6,606.74.

13. Fire Calls

In 1969, the Service responded to 65 Fire Calls which showed an increase of 65 when compared with the previous year as could be seen from the following table:-

<u>Georgetown Unit</u>	1968	1969
Actual Fires	343	401
Late Fire Calls	26	21
False Alarm (Good Intent)	18	20
False Alarm (Malicious)	79	91
<u>Timehri Unit</u>		
Actual Fires	19	20
Late Fire Calls		1
False Alarm (Good Intent)	1	
False Alarm (Malicious)	1	
<u>New Amsterdam Unit</u>		
Actual Fires	52	48
Late Fire Calls	14	20
False Alarm (Good Intent)	10	1
False Alarm (Malicious)	6	11

Causes of Fire

Careless disposal of lighted cigarette end or matches	107
Electrical Faults	168
Electric, Gas and Oil Stoves	48
Malicious setting of Fire	18
Unknown	21
Ignition of Flammable vapours and Liquids	43
Bush Fires, Rubbish and Saw Dust	7
Motor Vehicles crash and defects	4
Overheating of Electrical Appliances	4
Children playing with matches	22
Boil over of fats, oil and tar	21
Oil lamps, candles, mosquito coils	6
Welding	12
Careless use of Coal Pots	5
Spontaneous Ignition	4
Chimneys, Hearth and Ovens	5
Deliberate setting of Fire	18
Lightening	1

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Method of Extinguishing

Occupants of houses, employees or members of the Public, or Police Force used the following methods in extinguishing fires:-

Buckets of Water	- 67
Wet Bags	- 22
Sand	- 5
Portable Fire Extinguishers	- 16
Switching off current or removal of Fuse	- 9
Turning off stove	- 10

Fixed installation by members of the Fire Service using the following means:-

(a) Hand Appliances	- 10
(b) Hose Reel	- 20
(c) Beating out with Fire Bats, spades etc.	- 4
(d) Buckets of water	- 6
(e) One jet of water from pump	- 145
(f) Two jets of water from pump	- 11
(g) Three jets of water from pump	- 1
(h) Four jets of water from pump	- 1
(i) Five jets of water from pump	- 1
(j) Six jets of water from pump	- 1
(k) Twelve jets of water from pump	- 1
(l) Removal of Fuse	- 11
(m) Buckets of sand	- 4
(n) By turning off stoves	- 6
(o) By allowing to Burn out	- 5
(p) By closing off fuel tank	- 1
(q) By closing off cylinder valve	- 1
(r) By electricity works	- 154

Method of calling Fire Service.

Central Exchange (Emergency Line 999)	- 563
Central Exchange (Administrative Line)	- 35
Running calls	- 20
Radio Newscast	- 2
Late Calls	- 7
Private Fire Alarm	- 7
	<u>634</u>

Georgetown Unit

Central Exchange (Emergency Line 999)	- 486
Central Exchange (Administrative Line)	- 33
Running calls	- 14
	<u>533</u>

Timehri Unit

Emergency Line	- 13
Administrative Line	- 6
Running Calls	- 2
	<u>21</u>

New Amsterdam Unit

Central Exchange (Emergency Line)	- 64
Private Fire Alarm	- 7
Late Calls	- 7
Radio Newscast	- 2
	<u>80</u>

Types of Property involved

Dwelling Houses	- 129
Overhead electrical wiring & Transformers	- 103
Open land, saw dust and rubbish heaps	- 107

Restaurant	4
Government Buildings	20
Motor Vehicles of all description	37
Ships in harbour	5
Schools	4
Office Buildings	7
Hospitals	5
Factories	10
Bitumen plants and tar boilers	13
Mechanical Workshops	16
Wharves and warehouses	7
Bakeries	3
Filling Stations	2
Hotels	2
Hostels	1
Clothing and hardware stores	10
Saw Mills	9
Sea Plane Hangar	1
Foundry	1
Fishing Trawler	1
Army Barracks	2
Airport Terminal Building	1

Hours at which calls were received

	Georgetown Unit	Timehri Unit	New Amsterdam Unit
12 Midnight to 6.00 a.m.	59		12
6.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon	129	8	23
12.00 noon to 6.00 p.m.	159	7	23
6.00 p.m. to 12.00 midnight	186	6	22

Buildings and other property severely damaged
or destroyed by Fire - Georgetown Unit

1. On 1st January, 1969, at about 5.00 p.m. the following buildings were destroyed by fire in the Commercial areas.
 - (a) A one flat wooden building, approximately 65' x 40' situated at "A" Water Street, owned and occupied by Psaila Bros. was completely destroyed by fire.
 - (b) A one flat building measuring approximately 60' x 35' with concrete walls, wooden columns and corrugated galvanised iron roofing, owned by Sankar Bros. and situated at A & B Water Street, and occupied Parsram's Broadway Fashions, was completely destroyed by fire.
 - (c) A two flat building measuring approximately 60' x 40' bottom flat of concrete and top flat of timber, owned by Sankar Bros. situated at A & B Water Street, and occupied by Thani Bros. (Upper Flat) and Ashoka Store (Bottom Flat) was completely destroyed by fire.
 - (d) A one flat wooden building approximately 1008 x 40' with cast iron columns and corrugated galvanised iron roofing, owned and occupied by Sankar Bros. was completely destroyed by fire.
 - (e) One wooden wharf, approximately 150' x 50', owned by Sankar Bros. and occupied by Georgetown Seafoods was completely destroyed by fire.
2. On Monday 27th January, 1969, at 9.34 p.m. a one flat building approximately 28' x 24' situated at 84 Robb Street, Bourda and owned by Manuel Figueira was severely damaged by fire.

3. On Saturday 15th March, 1969, a small wooden building approximately 6' x 4' owned by Mr. H. Persaud of 106 Garnett Street, Newtown, used as a storeroom was severely damaged by fire.
4. On Saturday 22nd March, 1969, a one flat wooden building approximately 20' x 18' situated at 56 Graham Street, Plaisance, and owned by Mr. Lucan was severely damaged by fire.
5. On Tuesday 25th March, 1969, a one flat wooden building, approximately 30' x 20', situated at Lot X D'Urban Street, Wortmanville, and owned by Mrs. M. Moe was completely destroyed.
6. On Thursday 3rd April, 1969, the kitchen of an apartment situated at 113 Pine Apple Street, East Ruimveldt, owned by the Guyana Government and occupied by Mrs. Iris Dodson, was completely destroyed.
7. On Saturday 5th July, 1969, the Motor Launch Lictor II owned by the Guyana Police Force, was involved in a fire while moored alongside Bond Stelling. The Wheel House compartment, and sundry items of electrical wiring were damaged.
8. On Sunday 6th July, 1969, a one flat wooden building approximately 18' x 10' situated at Craig Village, East Bank Demerara, and owned by Mr. Bacchus of Grove Village, was completely destroyed.
9. On Saturday 16th August, 1969, a shed used as a Light Sea Plane hangar, approximately 40' x 22' situated at Ruimveldt Riverside back of the Police Station, and owned by Mr. A.P. Clavier, was severely damaged by fire.
10. On Thursday 28th August, 1969, a two flat wooden building, approximately 35' x 25', situated at Lot 'B' Bent Street and Louisa Row, and owned by Mr. C. Braithwaite of the same address, was severely damaged by fire.
11. On Friday 5th September, 1969, a two flat wooden building approximately 40' x 28', situated at 9 Lamaha Street, Alberttown, and owned by Mr. Leslie Jabour was severely damaged by fire.
12. On Tuesday 30th September, 1969, a one flat wooden building, approximately 10' x 10' situated at 16 William Street, Campbellville, used as a storeroom, and owned by Mr. Claude Cave was completely destroyed.
13. On Thursday 30th October, 1969, a one flat wooden building situated at 80 William Street, Kitty, measuring approximately 24' x 18', and owned by Mr. Mohamed Khan was completely destroyed.
14. On Thursday 25th December, 1969, a one flat wooden building, approximately 30' x 20', situated at 80 Leopold Street, Werk-en-Rust, and owned by Mr. Samuel Primo was severely damaged by fire.

Timehri Unit

15. On Saturday 1st February, 1969, a one flat wooden building approximately 16' x 12', situated at Supply Village, East Bank Demerara and owned by Mr. Joseph Henry was completely destroyed.
16. On Friday 14th February, 1969, a one flat wooden building approximately 16' x 10', situated at Robert Road, Soesdyke, East Bank Demerara and owned by *BASMAH1 DeFoa was completely destroyed.*
17. On Friday 31st October, 1970, a racing Motor Car owned by the Guyana Motor Racing Club was destroyed by fire on the South Dakota Racing Circuit.
18. On Saturday 27th December, 1969, a motor van GL 956 owned by Mr. Alvin Sampson was destroyed by fire on the Timehri-McKenzie Highway.

New Amsterdam Unit

19. On Friday 24th January, 1969, a two flat building top floor of wood, and bottom floor of concrete approximately 60' x 48', situated at the corner of Strand & Pitt Street, New Amsterdam, and owned and occupied by Mr. Sonny Lallman was severely damaged by fire.

20. On Friday 2nd February, 1969, one Setakki Multi Stage Rice Mill, situated at No. 70 Village, Corentyne, and owned by Mr. Jaipaul, was severely damaged.
21. On Monday 30th June, 1969, a one flat wooden building, approximately 14' x 12', situated at Ankerville, Port Mourant, Corentyne, and owned by Mr. Rajo, was completely destroyed by fire.
22. On Saturday 5th July, 1969, a two-flat wooden building, approximately 24' x 20', situated at Hopetown, West Coast Berbice, and owned by Mrs. M. Albert was completely destroyed by fire.
23. On Sunday 31st August, 1969, a two flat wooden building, approximately 25' x 25', situated at Cumberland, East Canje, and owned by Mr. A. Mandilla, was severely damaged by fire.
24. On Monday 29th September, 1969, a one flat wooden building approximately 16' x 10', situated at Angoy's Avenue, West Canje, and owned by Mr. Edmund Solomon, was completely destroyed.
25. On Thursday 6th November, 1969, the lean-to kitchen approximately 8' x 8' of one flat wooden building situated at No. 51 Village, Corentyne, and owned by Mr. Samuel Sheppard was completely destroyed.
26. On Friday 28th November, 1969, a one flat wooden building, approximately 18' x 12' situated at Tain foreshore, Corentyne, and owned by John's Co-operative Society, was completely destroyed by fire.

14. Deaths by Fire

Unfortunately there were three deaths by fire during 1969, and they occurred as follows:-

1. On 14th February, 1969, Zaleeni aged 3 years and Vishram aged 4 months died in a fire which destroyed their parents home at Roberts Road, Soesdyke, East Bank Demerara.
2. On 24th December, 1969, Mr. Alvin Sampson of 165 Charlotte Street died on the Timehri-McKenzie Highway when the van he was driving crashed and burst into flames, pinning him in the vehicle.

15. Ambulance Calls

This branch of the Service performed creditably throughout the year. 13,028 calls were answered during the year, an average of 35.4 calls per day, a slight increase on the 33.8 per day for last year. Of the total number of calls 11,484 were emergency calls while the remaining 1,544 calls were private calls. Private calls were mainly for the transportation of indigent persons from one place to another; e.g. Amerindian Hostel, Palms, Dharam Shala to the Georgetown Hospital, as well as from the Hospital to the various institutions, also from one ward of the Hospital to another.

Requests for this kind of service were received from the Social Service Branch of the Georgetown Hospital, Police Stations, the Georgetown Prison and institutions catering for old and indigent persons.

The ambulances covered a distance of 75,620 miles while responding to both emergency and private calls, but this does not give a true picture, as on numerous occasions, various other vehicles of the department had to be pressed into service, when the ambulances were engaged.

16. Mental Cases

During the year 353 mental cases were transported from the Georgetown Hospital to the Georgetown Railway Station, then from New Amsterdam Ferry Stelling to the Mental Hospital.

17. Training - Local

Apart from the normal day to day training at station level, the above-mentioned members of the service attended various courses sponsored by the In-Service Training Centre.

Station Officer	Carter	- District Management Course	-	5	days
"	"	Adams - " " "	-	5	"
"	"	Norton - Conference Leadership Course	-	3	"
"	"	McDowell - Training Methods	-	5	"
Sub Officer	Sam	- Personnel Procedures Course	-	5	"
Section Leader	Ramroop	- Junior Supervision Course	-	5	"
"	"	Ferrell - " " "	-	5	"
"	"	Brijlall - " " "	-	5	"
"	"	Hercules - " " "	-	5	"
"	"	Rogers - " " "	-	5	"
Section Leader	Bernard	- " " "	-	5	"
Mr. V.L. Robertson		- Training for Junior Officers	-	5	"
Mrs. K. Ramlogan		- Private Secretary and Personal Assistant Course	--	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
Miss N. Massiah		- Induction Course	--	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
Section Leader	Tucker	- Basic Photography with the Police Department	-	21	"

The following members of the service attended the Government Technical Institute on the following trade courses:-

(a)	Leading Fireman Haywood	-	Motor Mechanic Work
(b)	Leading Fireman Payne	-	Fitting and Machining
(c)	Section Leader Ferrell	-	Mechanical Engineering
(d)	Fireman Ross	-	Radio Service Engineering
(e)	Fireman Phillander	-	Radio Servicing
(f)	Fireman Mars	-	Welding

Three members of the service attended courses at the Critchlow Labour College in various aspects of Trade Union work.

One member of the service is a student at the University of Guyana.

External Training

It is with deep regret that no external training was offered during the year to any member of the service.

18. Leave - Annual

Two thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine (2,999) days were granted to members of the service at an average of 11.4 days per man, as compared with 10.9 days per man in 1968.

Sick

A total of three thousand, nine hundred and ten (3,910) days were granted in respect of sick leave to members of the service at an average of 14.9 days per man as compared with an average of 18.2 days per man in 1968.

This shows a decrease which is attributable to the fact that a number of men who were on extended sick leave during 1968, have since retired from the service on medical grounds.

Vacation

Forty-three members of the service were granted a total of two thousand two hundred and twenty-eight days vacation leave during the year at an average 51.8 days per man, as compared with 73.8 days per man for the previous year.

Special Leave

Eleven members of the service were granted a total of 82 days special leave at an average of 7.5 days per man as compared with an average of 4.25 days per man in 1968.

19. Discipline

The discipline of the service was maintained at its usual high standard. Thirty cases of breaches of discipline were disposed of in the following manner:-

Reprimanded	2
Severely Reprimanded	6
Fined One day's pay	- 6
Fined two days' pay	1
Fined three days' pay	1
Fined \$1.00	- 4
Fined \$2.00	2
Fined \$3.00	1
Fined \$5.00	2
Awarded 3 days confined to Barracks	1
Awarded 1 day confined to Barracks	1
Admonished	1
Found not guilty	2

In addition to the above, one member of the service was served with a Warning Notice.

20. Resignation

During the year three Leading Firemen and eight Firemen resigned from the Service.

21. Retirement During the year 1969, five Leading Firemen retired as follows:-

- a) Mr. C. Roberts, having attained the retirement age, retired from the service on 1st October, 1969.
- (b) Mr. O. Abrams retired on grounds of ill-health on 28th August, 1969, after completing 16 years service.
- (c) Mr. O. McLeod, retired on grounds of ill-health on 16th December, 1969, after completing 29 years service.
- (d) Mr. H. Forde having attained the age of 50 years exercised the option of retiring from the service, after completing 23 years service.
- (e) Mr. C. Persaud having attained the retirement age, retired from the service on 1st June, 1969.

22. Suspension

During the period under review, three members of the service who were suspended resumed duty.

23. Promotion

During the year, several promotions were made to fill existing vacancies as follows:-

- (a) 1 Sub Officer to Station Officer
- (b) 3 Section Leaders to Sub Officers
- (c) 10 Leading Firemen to Section Leaders
- (d) 4 Firemen to Section Leaders
- (e) 24 Firemen to Leading Firemen.

24. Communications

Quick and reliable means of communications are of vital importance to the efficiency of any Fire Service.

Telephone

There is need for a more efficient telephone service, and every effort should be made to acquire a new switch-board to replace the one now in use.

Radio

The Service depends to a great extent on the efficient working of our V.H.F. radios, however, a large number of our Fire Fighting appliances and one of the Ambulances now in the service are not fitted with a serviceable radio. This is due to the fact that there is no longer anyone in the service with the necessary qualification to instal and service these radios. Attempts to have a member of the Service trained to do this job, met with no success.

With an eye to the future, and thinking of the possible expansion of the Fire Service, serious thought should be given to the provision of a more powerful type of Master Sets having enough range to be able to contact stations in outlying areas, as well as to have a suitable person trained to instal and service these radios.

25. Auxiliary Unit

This Unit continued to function as a part of the Service, though not as vigorously as in previous years. There was a marked drop in the enthusiasm of all members of the Unit, due in large measure to the serious shortage of appliances which could be used for drill. Even though the position in respect of appliances remain the same, a concerted effort by the Administration to revive the flagging interest of members of this Unit is now being made.

26. Welfare

The Fire Service Sports Club continued to function during the year, and were hosts to a touring party from the Barbados Fire Service. The touring party consisted of fifteen men, and they engaged their counter-part at Cricket, Billiards, Table Tennis and Dominoes. The Barbadian Firemen also participated in our Independence Anniversary Day Parade, having brought their Ceremonial dress for the purpose.

In New Amsterdam, the Fire Service Steel Band continued its good work by providing entertainment for the Hospitals and charitable organisations in the area.

27. Visits

During the year, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Honourable Desmond Hoyte visited Fire Service Headquarters. He inspected a Guard of Honour, and was then conducted on a tour of various sections of the Unit.

28. Organised Tours

During the year organised tours were laid on at all stations for various groups comprising school children, police recruits, members of youth clubs, scouts, guides and cubs.

Short lectures and in some cases practical demonstrations were given by Senior Subordinate Officers.

Fire Prevention Section

During the year under review 2,997 Fire Prevention inspections were carried out in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and rural districts throughout the country. These inspections involved Government as well as private buildings, factories and industrial premises. A number of these may be classified as

original inspections, but the majority were follow-up and goodwill inspections in pursuance of the aim to exploit the goodwill aspect of fire prevention to the fullest extent.

The purpose of each inspection was to evaluate any existing danger to life or property on premises and to recommend ways and means of minimising such danger. These recommendations were invariably implemented immediately or as soon as possible. It was therefore necessary to prosecute only one firm for failing to comply with the requirements of a Notice served on them under the terms of the Fire Prevention Ordinance. This firm was found guilty and subsequently the recommendations were implemented.

During the year, the Fire Prevention Ordinance, and Regulations made under that Ordinance, were amended to apply to all areas of the country. This was a welcome step, as a number of swiftly expanding residential and commercial areas needed immediate attention to check growing fire hazards epitomised by improper building methods and careless storage of flammable substances.

It is hoped, however, to carry out a vigorous educational programme in fire safety in those areas which formerly fell outside the ambit of the regulations. This is considered important as it will not only secure a higher percentage of compliance, but also ensure that fire loss occasioned by large fires, and its resultant effect on the country's economy, will be reduced to a minimum.

A number of problems attracted special attention during the year. These included the removal of hazardous conditions in large tenement buildings in the most congested areas of the city of Georgetown and New Amsterdam. It was observed that many of these buildings were designed for use by single families on each floor. However, the floor areas were compartmented to create separate rooms for rental to different family units. This situation often led to tenants cooking in their rooms even where adequate kitchen facilities were provided.

A number of old and dilapidated buildings were also recommended for dismantling or urgent repairs some of these were unoccupied, but offered effective cover for criminals at night. The fact that these persons smoked, as evidenced by discarded cigarette ends on the floors, posed a danger of fire. A few of these buildings were also occupied, although the state of these structures was a danger both to the occupants and to the safety of persons living nearby. It was necessary, therefore, for the City Council to issue closing orders or press for the dismantling of such buildings.

The increased use of calor gas for cooking was another problem calling for attention. Where large cylinders were installed along with piped connections to stoves, conditions were quite safe as such cylinders were sited outside of buildings. In the case of the smaller cylinders of 20lb. size there was always the temptation to stow these away in closed cupboards which were not ventilated. It is therefore necessary to make appropriate recommendations in the interest of ensuring the safe usage of such cylinders.

In addition, safety precautions on heavy vehicles transporting petroleum products were accorded appropriate attention. Steps were taken to ensure that such vehicles were fitted with static conducting strips and provided with an adequate amount of fire equipment at all times.

Hospitals

Inspections were carried out regularly at the Georgetown and Berbice Hospitals, and visits were made fortnightly to the Best Sanatorium and the Mental Hospital, and once monthly to the Mchaica Hospital. On these occasions lectures and drills were carried out. The need is great, however, for providing suitable films and other forms of visual aid to assist with the general educational and fire safety training programme being pursued.

It was necessary to make certain recommendations in the interest of safety in each of these buildings from time to time. While quite a few of these recommendations were implemented, it was observed that too much time was taken over a few that were of vital importance.

For instance, it took many months for heaps of combustible rubbish to be cleared from alongside a ward, although the danger of fire from a lighted cigarette end carelessly thrown through a window was real.

Recommendations were also submitted for consideration regarding fire safety procedures and how to evacuate patients in event of an emergency. Despite several offers to discuss these at length, no positive action has been taken by the hospital authorities. Evacuation in this context is of vital importance because of the fact that a large number of patients cannot be expected to help themselves. Panic and confusion could not help in any effective way, but these could certainly be avoided or reduced by regular training, and the adoption of correct procedures during emergencies.

Hospital staffs were also kept in constant touch with knowledge of the use, care and maintenance of fire equipment sited in the buildings.

During the year, the disorganised storage of old records and unserviceable materials in the attic of the New Amsterdam Hospital was attended to. Records will in future be stored elsewhere under safer conditions.

The fire alarm system of the New Amsterdam and Mental Hospitals did not improve during the year despite several efforts to have them attended to. It is vitally important that automatic communication between these institutions and the Fire Service Unit should be maintained, since prompt response of appliances in event of a fire could make a lot of difference between loss of life and the safe evacuation of patients. It was suggested that both systems should be completely overhauled but nothing was done.

The position with respect to hydrants in the Mental Hospital compound remains the same as reported previously. Since 1960, it was recommended that these hydrants be standardised, and that twelve which were considered obsolete should be replaced. Nothing has been done. In the meantime, water supply for fire fighting purposes on the premises continues to be a formidable problem, aggravated as it is by the present unserviceable condition of the fire pump sited there.

Government Buildings

Inspections of various categories of Government buildings were carried out during the year. Recommendations, some of which dealt with necessary structural alterations, were also submitted for consideration and implementation. A few such recommendations which were submitted during the previous year on the question of providing alternative means of escape from the upper floors of some Government buildings were not carried out.

In Georgetown the New Amsterdam, the care and maintenance of first aid fire fighting equipment were attended to by the staff of the Fire Prevention section. In order to achieve this, frequent visits were arranged and in this way defects to equipment and any departure from safe practices were observed in their early stages.

In the rural districts, the condition in which fire equipment was found in many areas was far from satisfactory. Simple advice and instructions given from time to time on how to maintain and service such equipment were not heeded. As a consequence, fire extinguishers, for instance, were permitted to become unserviceable because of the corrosion of the operating mechanism. Periodic attention could very easily have avoided the onset of such conditions and prevented the total loss of the equipment.

Early in the year a full scale inspection of buildings and premises at Matthew's Ridge and Port Kaituma was carried out. During this exercise, it was necessary to service and rehabilitate equipment left in position by the mining company. Such equipment were kept in order in a few instances where persons with the required zeal and some knowledge of how to effect their maintenance were to be found. In areas such as this, it is quite sensible for fire safety to be accorded serious attention especially since facilities for combating a major conflagration and non-existent.

A visit was also made to Humatumari and first aid fire-fighting equipment was sited where necessary. One of the chief fears of the people in this area was bush fires. Advice was given on this subject in recommendations submitted for attention.

During the year, the Fire Prevention Officer was also sent out, in answer to an urgent request to inspect all the more important interior air strips, and to recommend safety measures. This request was made by Guyana Airways Corporation.

Apart from these inspections, much difficulty was experienced in visiting rural areas which required vehicular transport. This observation did not affect the Fire Prevention staff stationed in Berbice. The provision of a vehicle for Fire Prevention work in that area was instrumental in improving the frequency of visits along the Corentyne Coast in the main. Follow-up inspections were also facilitated.

Schools

Inspections of schools were done in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Wismar-Cristianburg-Mackenzie and other areas of the country. Lectures on safety were delivered and evacuation drills were carried out whenever the weather permitted. Despite the fact that full co-operation was not received in quite a number of schools in seeing that evacuation drills were done regularly, every opportunity was taken during the inspection visits to stress the importance of this. Suitable films were shown in many schools, and the response was good, particularly in remote areas such as Matthew's Ridge.

The production of films with a local bias is seen to be a necessity. However, in view of the fact that this is a very costly exercise, it is hoped that appropriate films and other forms of visual aid, suitable to the purpose, could be obtained from sources outside of the country.

An effort was made to purchase a suitable camera with the aim of obtaining pictures of local situations of Fire Prevention interest. It was expected to use such films not only as aids to lectures to schools and elsewhere but also to employ them in training programmes designed for Fire Service personnel.

One member of the Fire Prevention Staff completed a course of training in photographic techniques given by the Police Department in furtherance of a photographic section.

During the year at least 20 visits of stations were made by school teachers and the children of various schools to see at first hand how the Fire Service functioned. In each case keen interest was shown. Teacher-trainees in particular were anxious to learn as much as possible about the duties of firemen and the functions of the Service in the community. One group of such teachers were also provided with the information concerning the history and development of the Service about both of which very little is generally known.

In consonance with inspections of schools, several recommendations had to be submitted to Government and denominational bodies for structural alterations and repairs to be effected. In some instances, repairs were urgently necessary to be carried out to staircases normally in use.

Additional staircases were also recommended to be erected. Where this was necessary, it was found that the schools had been serving a much larger number of pupils than they were originally designed for. There was need also to point out areas of improvement in regard to verandahs and the construction of staircases. The opportunity to do this was firmly grasped in offering comment and advice for the benefit of those concerned with the programme to build a number of multilateral schools throughout the country.

The conduct of fire drills at Queen's College was revived during the year. The pupils were shown how to handle and operate the equipment sited on the premises and they were strongly advised of the need to ensure that all such equipment were serviceable in case of fire. It is hoped that pupils of other secondary schools in the country will follow this lead.

Fire Equipment

The following fire equipment was allocated to Government building during the year. In the case of fire extinguishers, replacements were necessary because of deterioration due to lack of proper maintenance. Recharging of extinguishers was also necessary where they were either used on actual fires, discharged accidentally or because of the weakening of the charges through age.

Fire Extinguishers

Chemical Foam (2 gln.)	64
Air Foam (2 gln.)	40
Water Air Pressure (2 gln.)	15
Carbon Dioxide (5 lb.)	7
Dry Chemical (20 lb.)	1
Uni Flash (Quart size)	3

Fire Extinguisher Charges

Chemical Foam	129
Air Foam	65
Soda Acid	48
Conquest CO2	32
Nu Swift CO2	20
Carbon Tetrachloride	5

Other Equipment

Fire Buckets	28
Asbestos Fire Blankets	2
Instantaneous Blank Cap	1
Morris Rubber Washer	21

Inspections of private buildings in areas covered by the Fire Prevention Ordinance and Regulations were carried out during the year. At the inception, these areas were limited, and although enforcement was not possible in districts not covered, yet inspections were done as necessary and advice offered.

It is envisaged that urgent attention will have to be given to such rapidly developing areas at Wismar-Christianburg-Mackenzie where construction and the storage of combustible substances in particular have been done without due regard to the need for safety precautions.

By and large, the business areas of Georgetown and New Amsterdam still continued to be considered as quite vulnerable to fires. Special attention was therefore accorded to all premises involved.

Lectures were delivered to the staffs of various firms and batches of personnel at Messrs. Sandbach Parker and Co., Georgetown, and Leonora Estates on the West Coast of Demerara were given some training in the use of fire equipment in an emergency.

Many visits were made to hotels and guest houses with the view of ensuring that safety measures were not allowed to deteriorate. This was considered important because of the efforts being made to attract visitors and tourists to the country. Safety in such premises, therefore, could not be left to chance.

Gasolene Filling Stations

It was observed that quite a large number of requests were being made to operate gasolene filling stations in many parts of the country. Strict attention was given, therefore, by this Department to the maintenance of uniform standards of safety on these premises.

The need is seen however, for the incorporation of appropriate amendments to the Petroleum Ordinance to set definite standards to be adhered to in regard to such premises.

Conclusion

Although steps have been taken to effect mechanical overhauls of equipment in the Fire Service serious consideration should now be given to the replacement of some of the old machines, as the efficiency of any Fire Service must depend in a large measure upon the serviceability of its equipment.

Much pleasure is taken to mention, however, that all members of the service continue to display a keen sense of loyalty and devotion to duty which is evidenced in the high standard of Fire Prevention and Protection provided during the year.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,


Chief Fire Officer.

EXPENDITURE - GUYANA FIRE SERVICE

1969

HEAD 21 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE

<u>NO. OF HEAD</u>	<u>TITLE OF SUB-HEAD</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>
1	Personal Emoluments	\$ 633,620.26
	<u>OTHER CHARGES</u>	
2	Transport & Travelling	29,476.04
3	Miscellaneous	3,976.19
4	Uniforms & Bedding	31,908.10
5	Expenses, Training Courses	857.70
6	Funeral Expenses	
7	Maintenance & Operation of Land & Water Transport	63,448.98
8	Ambulance & First Aid Equipment	
9	Auxiliary Unit	3,701.99
10	Maintenance of Pipelines in Commercial Areas	145.52
11	Purchase of Fire Equipment for Government Buildings	14,705.14
		<u>\$781,839.92</u>