



British Guiana

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE

FOR THE YEAR

1959.

(Printed by the Authority of His Excellency the Governor).

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, BRITISH GUIANA.

1960

REPORT
OF THE
BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE & AMBULANCE SERVICE
FOR THE YEAR 1959.

FIRE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS,
Water Street,
Georgetown,
BRITISH GUIANA.

5th July, 1960.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor the Annual Report of the British Guiana Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service for the year ended 31st December, 1959.

1. STRENGTH

The strength of the Brigade at the 31st December 1959 was:

- 1 Chief Fire Officer
- 1 Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- 2 Station Officers
- Sub Officers
- 8 Section Leaders
- 27 Leading Firemen
- 141 Firemen
- 2 Class II Clerks
- 2 Clerical Assistants
- 1 Barrack Labourer.

2. STATIONS

There are three fire stations in the City of Georgetown (two land stations and one river station), and one in the town of New Amsterdam.

There is need for new stations but up to the present time little progress has been made in this direction.

The Hon. Chief Secretary,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

3. APPLIANCES

The appliances held at the end of the year were;

GEORGETOWN

- 5 Dennis Water Tenders of 600 g.p.m. capacity, each equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 2 Austin Champs (Firefly) of 350 g.p.m. capacity each.
- 1 Self-propelled pump of 700 g.p.m. capacity.
- 1 Pump of 900 g.p.m. capacity;
- 4 Hathaway Light Pumps of 150 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Fire Boat of 2700 g.p.m. capacity, equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 1 Fire Boat of 2300 g.p.m. capacity, equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 2 Fire Boats of 500 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Bedford Utility Truck;
- 3 Morris Commercial ambulances, each equipped with V.H.F. radio.

NEW AMSTERDAM

- 1 John Kerr Water Tender of 600 g.p.m. capacity;
- 1 Self-propelled pump of 300 g.p.m. capacity;
- 1 Austin Champ (Firefly) of 350 g.p.m. capacity;
- 2 Trailer pumps of 250 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Morris Utility Van.
- 2 Morris Commercial ambulances, one of which is equipped with V.H.F. radio.

Approval for the purchase of one Water Tender and one Ambulance was given in 1959.

4. MAINTENANCE

All vehicles and appliances have been maintained in good order by the workshop staff despite the difficulties under which they are required to work. If the efficiency of the staff is to be maintained and full use made of it, more workshop space is needed.

Repairs were effected in eighteen cases of vehicles which were involved in accidents during the year.

5. HYDRANTS AND WATER SUPPLIES

A total of forty-eight hydrants was installed in the housing estates on the outskirts of the City. This now makes the total number of hydrants in the City

and its environs 1,128.

Regular routine testing of all hydrants was carried out, and special tests of groups of hydrants around individual fire-risks were made.

Eight of the nine 6" pipeline schemes for the Water Street area have now been completed. These pipelines have stood up satisfactorily to test. The provision of these pipelines will enable fire-boats to pump water quickly into high-risk areas along the waterfront.

6. EQUIPMENT RECEIVED

The following equipment was received during the year:

- 4 Water Coolers:
- 6 - 10' lengths of 4" suction hose:
- 2 15' lengths of 6" suction hose;
- 2 Hathaway portable pumps;
- 286 gals. foam compound:
- 70 Nu-Swift foam fire extinguishers;
- 5 American La France water fire extinguishers;
- 12 C.T.C. extinguishers:
- 12 C.T.C. Pressure charges:
- 64 Air Foam charges:
- 50 Soda Acid charges;
- 100 Chemical Foam charges.

7. HOSE

A total of 29,825 feet of hose was held by the Brigad 24,950 feet in Georgetown and 4,875 feet in New Amsterdam. The hose is in reasonably good condition for fire fighting purposes.

8. FIRE CALLS

The Fire Brigade responded to a total of 337 calls, the analysis of which is given hereunder.

GEORGETOWN

Actual Fires	222
Late Fire Calls	28
False Alarms (Good Intent)	18
False Alarms (Malicious)	22

NEW AMSTERDAM

Actual Fires	38
Late Fire Calls	6
False Alarms (Good Intent)	
False Alarms (Malicious)	3

CAUSES

Boiling over of fats, oils, etc.	8
Spontaneous combustion ...	1
Careless burning of rubbish	12
Fire used as distress signal	1
Careless disposal of cigarette ends	86
Carbon	1
Children playing with matches	7
Ignition of inflammable vapour or substance	3
Careless use of fires for domestic and other purposes	15
Dirty chimneys	1
Domestic oil stoves	30
Electrical appliances	6
Electrical faults	76
Leaking of inflammable liquids	7
Oil lamps	4
Malicious setting of fires ...	7
Unknown	12
Welding	4
Motor vehicle faults ...	12
Sparks from furnace	1

METHOD OF EXTINGUISHING

By occupants or other persons using buckets of water or extinguishers before the arrival of the Brigade	174
By Fire Brigade using:	
(a) Hand appliances	21
(b) Hose reels	45

(c) One jet from pumps	39
(d) Two jets from pumps	5
(e) Three jets from pumps	7
(f) Four jets from pumps	1
(g) Five jets from pumps	1
(h) Six jets from pumps	1

METHODS OF CALLING FIRE BRIGADE

GEORGETOWN

Central Exchange	233
Police Direct Line	13
Running Calls	36
By V.H.F. radio	3
Private Fire Alarm Systems	5

NEW AMSTERDAM

Central Exchange ...	36
Police	1
Running Calls	9
Private Fire Alarm Systems	1

NUMBER OF BUILDINGS DESTROYED OR SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY FIRE

GEORGETOWN

Buildings Destroyed

1. A wooden building measuring 120' x 30' situated at Atkinson Airport; owned by the Government of British Guiana and occupied by Civil Aviation, Customs and Immigration Departments, the Tourist Bureau, K.L.M., Air France, B.W.I.A., Esso Company and Shell Company. (5.8.59 - 3.12 p.m.)

2. A wooden building with galvanised roof, measuring approximately 15' x 12', owned by Amy Marks and situated at Cove and John Public Road, East Coast, Demerara. (17.11.59 - 9.13 a.m.)

Buildings Seriously Damaged

1. A wooden two-flat building with aluminium corrugated sheets, measuring approximately 30' x 25' and owned by Rosetta Keuse of 11 Walker Terrace, La Penitence, East Bank, Demerara. Part of the southern wall of the room, a portion of the roof, clothing and other household effects were seriously damaged. (19.2.59 - 11.20 a.m.)

2. A two-flat wooden building approximately 20' x 20' with galvanised roofing, owned by Mr. A.T. Gonsalves and situated at 2 First and Cummins Streets. The upper flat was completely burnt out. (24.6.59 - 2.51 p.m.)

3. A one-flat wooden building with unprotected internal columns and galvanised roofing, measuring approximately 100' x 80' and owned by Messrs. Wm. Foran Ltd.. The building houses the Briana Manufacturing Company. Half of the roof and walls and about 25% of stock were destroyed by fire. There was also moderate water damage. (26.10.59 - 2.45 p.m.)

4. A two-flat wooden building with zinc roof, measuring approximately 30' x 24', owned by Lilly Rshim and situated at 160 Alexander Street, Kitty. Top floor used as a dwelling house, bottom floor used as dry goods store, laundry depot and dwelling house. Portion of flooring on the first floor was badly burnt. The northern section of the bottom floor where a dry goods store was situated, was badly burnt. A quantity of dry goods was destroyed by fire and a quantity of household effects damaged by fire and water (16.7.59 - 12.55 a.m.)

NEW AMSTERDAM

Buildings Seriously Damaged

1. A wooden two-floor building with slate roof, measuring approximately 242' x 30', owned by the Government of British Guiana and housing the Mental Hospital, Berbice. The roof and walls on the top floor of the eastern half of the building were severely damaged by fire. In addition, the contents of the entire building suffered an amount of water damage. (20.2.59 - 10.54 p.m.)

2. A wooden building measuring approximately 20' x 8' with galvanised roofing, property of Mr. R. Codette of Savannah Road and Alexander Street, New Amsterdam. Severe damage was done to the floor, roof and walls. The contents were completely destroyed by fire. (6.3.59 - 4.00 p.m.)

3. A small one-flat wooden building, measuring approximately 12' x 10' with thatched roof, owned by Mr. Harry Gunraj of Sisters Village, East Bank, Berbice. The greater part of the roof of the building was destroyed by fire and the contents suffered extensive water damage. (20.4.59 - 4.25 a.m.)

4. A wooden building of three floors, measuring approximately 35' x 28' with galvanised roofing, owned by Mr. Rohlehr of Coburg Street, New Amsterdam. The walls and flooring of the first floor were scorched and a quantity of groceries and hardware burnt. (10.8.59 - 1.15 a.m.)

Building Destroyed

A one-flat wooden building, measuring approximately 22' x 18' with galvanised roofing, owned by Mr. Pustace Bristol of Bramfield, Corentyne, and situated at New Street, Cumberland Village. (16.10.59 - 2.25 a.m.)

9. DEATH BY FIRES

During the year the following persons died as a result of injuries caused by fire:

Joseph Ramos of Golden Grove, East Coast, Demerara.	1. 8.59
Pearle Estridge of 14 Drysdale Street.	25.11.59
Rachael McGarrell of Stewart- ville, West Coast, Demerara.	27.11.59

10. SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS

The Brigade carried out 72 special services during the year, in addition to responding to fire calls. These calls are classified as chargeable and non-chargeable; humanitarian services being non-chargeable, and all other types of special services being charged at the approved standard rates.

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS
ATTENDED BY THE BRIGADE DURING
1959.

Salvaging vessels in the harbour and at sea	25
Standing by at public enter- tainments	14
Humanitarian service	4
Rescue of persons and vessels adrift at sea or in the harbour	19
Destruction of cinematograph films	10

During the year the sum of \$4,944.88 was collected from Special Services rendered:

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Deposits</u>
Land Appliances	\$1,203.95	\$ 870.33
River Appliances	<u>2,454.30</u>	<u>416.30</u>
	\$3,658.25	\$1,286.63

11. LEAVE

Casual: A total of 2,387 days casual leave was granted to personnel, averaging 12.4 days taken per man.

Vacation: Forty-eight men proceeded on vacation leave, and the total number of days vacation leave granted was 3,585. an average of 74.7 per applicant.

Sick: A total of 2,136 days sick leave was granted to personnel, making an average number of 11.1 days taken per man.

12. DISCIPLINE

Twenty-four cases of discipline were dealt with resulting as follows:

Fines awarded	4
Reprimands	9
Suspension from duty	1
Extra fatigue	2
Confinement to barracks	5
Admonishments	3

13. PROMOTION EXAMINATIONS

Qualifying examinations for promotion to the ranks of Section Leader and Sub Officer were held during the year. Eight Leading Firemen sat for promotion to the rank of Section Leader and five were successful. Five Section Leaders sat for promotion to the rank of Sub Officer. Four were successful.

14. RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

During the year one Leading Fireman and two Firemen retired on pension. In addition, one Fireman resigned.

15. TRANSFERS

One Sub Officer and four Firemen were transferred from Georgetown to the New Amsterdam Unit, and one Fireman from the New Amsterdam Unit to Georgetown.

16. PROMOTIONS

The following promotions were made:

- 1 Sub Officer to the rank of Station Officer;
- 4 Section Leaders to the rank of Sub Officer;
- 7 Leading Firemen to the rank of Section Leader;
- 10 Firemen to the rank of Leading Fireman.

17. AMBULANCE CALLS

The number of ambulance calls attended during the year was 10,565, of which 7,733 were emergency calls. The ambulances travelled a distance of 63,651 miles.

Chargeable Cases

In Georgetown 219 chargeable private ambulance cases were undertaken, and 37 in New Amsterdam, deriving an income of \$539.68.

/Mental Cases...

With the co-operation of the Director of Education, directives were circulated to all Government schools, and in the case of denominational schools letters were sent to the various governing bodies requesting that fire drills at all schools be carried out monthly.

During the year under review, 239 schools were inspected by the fire prevention staff and recommendations were made in respect of the means of escape from fire. In most cases the recommendations were complied with. Recommendations for fire extinguishers were also made in many instances and these were provided.

Evacuation exercises were conducted at several schools and approximately 18,000 children took part in these exercises, along with headteachers and assistants who co-operated readily in the process.

Lectures on fire prevention and the use and operation of fire extinguishers with demonstrations were also given, and a keen interest was shown by all. The programme continues in 1960.

Under the terms of the Fire Prevention Ordinance, No.19 of 1954, a total of 6,258 inspections was made throughout the Colony; these included 816 full scale, 1,123 special and goodwill, and 4,219 routine and follow-up visits. Proposed new buildings and alterations to existing buildings were also inspected. Special attention was given to private hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, guest houses, boarding and lodging houses, and the response generally to recommendations submitted was heartening.

Lectures and drills in the use and operation of fire equipment, and measures to be adopted for evacuating buildings were carried out on 433 occasions at Government buildings (including hospitals), convents and hotels: 8,758 persons attended. Lectures were also held at business premises and dwelling houses on 1,436 occasions and these were largely attended by all concerned.

Metal Chutes for Hospitals

In view of the need for improving the means of escape at hospitals, enquiries were made from the Crown Agents and details obtained in connection with metal chutes which have proved successful for the speedy evacuation of patients from hospitals in the United Kingdom. A survey was carried out on the hospitals with a view to determining the needs, and a total of seven metal chutes was recommended for the following:

1. Georgetown Hospital

Children's Ward, Surgical Ward C3, S-aman's Ward and Maternity Ward.

2. Palms

Ward 9.

3. New Amsterdam Hospital.

4. Mental Hospital, Barbice.