

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11589, September 10, 2021]

AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

TITLE I

TITLE AND DECLARATION OF POLICY

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the “Bureau of Fire Protection Modernization Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure public safety through the prevention and suppression of all kinds of destructive fires, with the active support of the community.

Towards this end, the State shall formulate and implement plans and programs to enhance and modernize the Bureau of Fire Protection, expand its mandate and capability, and ensure its responsiveness to the changing needs of the community.

TITLE II

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BFP

SEC. 3. *Strengthening of the Bureau of Fire Protection.* – The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), created under Republic Act No. 6975, otherwise known as the “Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990”, as amended, shall exercise the following powers and functions:

(a) Prevent and suppress all destructive fires on buildings, houses and other structures, including those that occur in economic zones, agro-industrial economic zones, free ports, and special economic zones, Information Technology (IT) parks and centers, tourism economic zones, and other similar entities; forests; land transportation vehicles and equipment; ships or vessels docked at piers or wharves or anchored in major seaports, petroleum industry installations; and airports, in the event of plane crashes and other similar incidents: *Provided*, That the BFP shall collaborate with various local government units (LGUs) on fire protection services, such as fire prevention and preparedness, response planning, and information sharing, as well as on handling fire management and operational issues;

(b) Respond to natural or man-made disasters and other emergencies, including the conduct of rescue operations, medical emergencies, and containment of hazardous materials (HAZMAT), chemical biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) materials: *Provided*, That the BFP shall actively coordinate and cooperate with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the LGUs on disaster response, risk reduction and management, in line with Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991,” and Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010”;

(c) Issue implementing rules and regulations, and prescribe standards, schedule of fees, fire service charges and administrative penalties, in connection with the enforcement of Republic Act No. 9514, otherwise known as the “Fire Code of the Philippines of 2008” and other related laws;

- (d) Require building owners to submit plans and specifications of their respective buildings and other pertinent documents as listed in the BFP's Citizen Charter pursuant to Republic Act No. 11032, otherwise known as the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 and evaluate the same to ensure compliance with Republic Act No. 9514 and other applicable codes and standards. For this purpose, a fire safety evaluation clearance shall be issued as a prerequisite for the issuance of the building permit in accordance with Republic Act No. 11032;
- (e) Investigate all causes of fires, and if necessary, file the proper complaints with the city or provincial prosecutor who has jurisdiction over the case;
- (f) Maintain regional offices which shall formulate and implement policies, plans and programs of the BFP, with prior consultation from the LGUs and monitor, evaluate and coordinate the operations and activities of the fire service units at the regional levels in coordination with the Central Office;
- (g) Establish and maintain fire laboratories and research and testing facilities with complete equipment, one (1) each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao areas;
- (h) Conduct training of its personnel and officers including fire volunteers, fire safety practitioners and fire volunteer organizations, pertaining to fire prevention and suppression, fire inspection and clearance, investigation, disaster preparedness, rescue, emergency medical response, HAZMAT, CBRNE, and other operations: *Provided*, That the conduct of such training must be in coordination with the LGUs;
- (i) Conduct monthly fire prevention campaigns and information drives in partnership with the LGUs, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Transportation, and economic zones;
- (j) Develop, promote, and implement a comprehensive fire safety and protection program that aims to strengthen the capacity of the national government and LGUs, to build the fire resilience of communities, and institutionalize measures for reducing disaster risk, and enhancing disaster and emergency preparedness and response capabilities. The BFP shall also empower existing community-based fire volunteer brigades and encourage the creation of the same in all LGUs;
- (k) Enter into contracts, agreements or similar undertaking for the acquisition, ownership, possession, use, administration, lease, disposition, or acceptance of real or personal property in its name;
- (l) Request assistance from the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), or any government agency or instrumentality, including government-owned and/or controlled corporations and LGUs, in the exercise of its powers and functions, including the use of these agencies' personnel and facilities upon approval of the head of the agency concerned; and
- (m) Perform such other functions as the President or the Secretary of the DILG may assign.

TITLE III

BFP MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

SEC. 4. *BFP Modernization Program.* – The BFP shall, in coordination with the DILG, establish and implement the BFP Modernization Program which shall be geared towards the enhancement of the capability of its personnel and acquisition of state-of-the-art fire prevention, fire suppression, fire investigation, and emergency medical and rescue services facilities and equipment. The BFP Modernization Program shall consist of the following components:

- (a) Fire Protection Service – The BFP Modernization Program shall include the establishment of Fire Protection Service including the establishment of rescue hotlines in all LGUs: *Provided*, That priority shall be given to municipalities with no existing fire protection services;

(b) Force Restructuring and Organizational Development – The BFP Modernization Program shall develop the BFP into a compact, efficient, responsive and modern firefighting force with the capability to implement Republic Act No. 9514. Within ninety (90) days from the promulgation of rules and regulations to implement this Act, the BFP shall recommend and submit to the Secretaries of the DILG and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the revised organizational structure and staffing pattern for officers and personnel of the BFP. The BFP shall design and establish a qualifications upgrading program for the BFP officers and personnel in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission;

(c) Capability, Material, and Technology Development – Upon the effectivity of this Act, the existing fire protection equipment and services of the BFP shall be upgraded through the acquisition of new and modern equipment, vehicles, and personal protective equipment: *Provided*, That the acquisition of new equipment shall be synchronized with the phase out of uneconomical and obsolete major equipment and systems in the BFP inventory;

(d) Specialized Services Development – The BFP Modernization Program shall establish specialized fire protection services such as high-rise building fires, forest fires, aircraft and airport fires, chemical fires, disaster rescue services, and emergency medical services. It shall also include the establishment of a Search and Rescue Force, HAZMAT units, Fire and Arson Investigation Unit, and Security and Protection Unit in every region and city, as well as an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in every municipality and city: *Provided*, That each EMS unit to be established shall be comprised of an ambulance with adequate medical equipment, and qualified and trained personnel: *Provided, further*, That every Security and Protection Unit (SPU) shall be composed of two (2) team leaders with the rank of at least Fire Inspector and team members, who shall undergo a neuropsychological examination and periodic trainings: *Provided, furthermore*, That BFP personnel with the rank of Senior Fire Officer III may be given priority to be appointed as SPU team member: *Provided, finally*, That SPU shall be provided with appropriate equipment to protect firefighters during fire suppression, containment of HAZMAT and CBRNE materials, fire investigation, and in the performance of all other acts pertinent to their mandate; and

(e) Human Resource Development – The modernization program shall include the development of a comprehensive training program for BFP personnel and BFP volunteers, including mandatory training for new entrants and newly-appointed personnel of the BFP, and BFP volunteers, and establishment of training facilities.

In order to accelerate the Personnel Development Program, the BFP shall encourage and promote volunteerism and shall develop guidelines for the enlistment and training of BFP volunteers, Internationally accredited training consultants and advisers may be hired if the BFP determines that there is no Filipino citizen who is competent, able, and willing to provide the same expertise.

The BFP shall, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), provide necessary trainings for its EMS, which include infection control and exposure, emergency vehicle response, incident rehabilitation, critical incident stress management, response to HAZMAT, response to mass casualty incidents (MCI), and response to vehicle accidents, among others.

SEC. 5. *Submission to Congress.* – Within one hundred eighty (180) days from effectivity of this Act, the BFP shall, in consultation with the Secretaries of the DILG, DBM and the Department of Finance (DOF), submit the BFP Modernization Program to Congress. It shall contain the following:

(a) Personnel strength and inventory of facilities and equipment;

(b) Modernization projects and activities to be undertaken and the particular component and corresponding objective to which such projects relate to;