

# **TAMIL NADU FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

## **DEMAND No.23**

### **POLICY NOTE 2006-2007**

#### **I. FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES – A GLIMPSE**

Fire hazards and occurrence of fire accidents pose a continuous threat and danger to life and property of the citizens of this State. Irreparable losses, severe damages and untold miseries are caused by fire mishaps. The ever-increasing number of units of Oil, Chemical and Thermal Industries, rapid urbanization and construction of new markets and Multi-storied buildings, also increase fire hazards day by day. Chemical-Industries make industrial fires and gas-tragedies a real possibility. Under these circumstances, adequate protection, not only from fire, but also of life and property is an essential and imperative need. The Fire and Rescue Services Department takes pride in having a well established organisation in the State, and it contributes significantly in the prevention and control of fire hazards.

The role of this department is not restricted to rescuing life and property, and it also offers emergency relief and rescue to victims of natural calamities and other disasters like building collapses, explosive accidents, bomb blasts etc. Thus, the Fire and Rescue Services as a specialized agency of the Government of Tamil Nadu, have been performing the twin tasks of fire fighting and rescue

operations. Conscious of the changing needs of a rapidly modernizing society, the Department is constantly engaged in the task of modernizing its operational abilities.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department is a public service oriented department with the motto of “ We Serve to Save” , and its functions are varied and substantial. Besides the essential service functions, it has also got Statutory, Advisory and Regulatory roles to play. It has a major role in Fire prevention also by creating safety-awareness among the public through propaganda and publicity, and by conducting mock drills in Schools and Colleges. It performs an advisory role to the various licensing authorities for inspection of premises and trades proposed to be licensed by them to ensure fire-safety under various laws and rules. In addition, its services are extended to the Police Department during elections, communal riots, fairs, and festivals etc. The ambulance services available with the Department are used to transport the sick and the injured to hospitals for immediate medical attention. This Department is undertaking standby arrangements during the visits of VIPs and during important conferences and meetings /festivals where huge pandals are erected. Standby arrangements are also provided for private functions on payment of prescribed charges.

The Government of Tamil Nadu have constituted a high-level Disaster Management Authority under the chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary in which the Director of Fire and Rescue Services has been included as one of the members of the Committee. Further, the Disaster

Management Authority has given the responsibility of formation and training of Search and Rescue Teams to this Department, and hence by way of planning and preparation, this Department's capabilities for tackling major disasters have been increasingly enhanced. District-wise Search and Rescue (SAR) teams under the head of an Assistant Divisional Officer along with personnel of this Department have been formed in which engineers from PWD and Doctors have also been included as members. Mock drills with the Joint SAR teams in districts are being conducted every month. While conducting mock drills, priority has been given to conduct drills in large Schools in various districts.

### **III. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services (TNFRS) functions under the administrative control of Home Department, Government of Tamil Nadu. The Director of Fire and Rescue Services, who is currently an IPS Officer in the rank of an Additional Director General of Police is in charge of this Department. There are four Deputy Directors to assist the Director, each in charge of a Region. The Regions are divided into 29 divisions, and each division is under the control of a Divisional Officer. Except the Divisional Officers, Coimbatore-Nilgiris Division and Ramanathapuram-Sivaganga Division, others have their jurisdiction over one Revenue District only. Each Division has 4 to 16 Fire and Rescue Services Stations. A Station Officer holds charge of a Fire and Rescue Services Station. 12 Divisions have Fire Prevention Wings. A State Training Centre, located at Tambaram and functioning under the control of a Deputy Director designated as Director (Course) organizes and conducts training for the personnel of this

Department, as well as for others on a nominal payment. There is also a State Workshop in Chennai which works under the supervision of the Director (Course). The Organisational Chart showing the organisational structure of the Fire and Rescue Services Department is appended as Appendix.

#### **IV. INTEGRATED SYSTEMS OF OPERATIONAL APPROACH**

The basic unit of the Department is a Fire and Rescue Services Station. The State of Tamil Nadu has 282 Fire and Rescue Services Stations besides 1 Station for Rescue Services at Hogenakkal. New Fire and Rescue Services Stations are commissioned wherever necessary, following the criteria that at least one Fire and Rescue Services Station should be available within a radius of 25 Kilometers, for an area with a population of 50,000, and the likelihood of fire hazards with a loss of property of Rs.50,000/-.

#### **V. INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE**

##### **a) Man Power**

The Department has an executive and ministerial strength of 6,643. Divisional Officers, Automobile Engineer (State Workshop), Station Officers, Junior Assistants, Typists, and Steno-Typists are recruited by direct recruitment by Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission. Direct recruitment of Firemen is done by the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board. The Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board has furnished a list of 678 selected candidates for the post of Fireman out of which 582 candidates, who are so far cleared by Police

Verification and Medical examination, are undergoing training for the post of fireman by appointing them as Fireman with effect from 3.7.2006.

## **b) Vehicles and Equipment**

This Department has a number of modern vehicles to deal with fire fighting and rescue operations. The Department has been provided with 338 Water Tenders, 80 Ambulances, 13 Small Foam Tenders, 5 Emergency Rescue Tenders, 1 Hydraulic Platform (Simon Snorkel of England), 1 Turn Table Ladder (Isuzu-Morita of Japan), 2 Hydraulic Platform-cum-Turn Table Ladders of 37 Metres and 42 Metres of Bronto Skylift from Finland, 1 Hose Laying Tender, 53 Water Lorries, 1 Wrecker, 2 Mobile Repair Vans, 228 High Range Portable pumps and 93 Floto Pumps. Apart from this, 62 support vehicles, including vehicles with wireless equipment, Jeeps, Buses and Motor Cycles are available for its operations.

For effective fire and rescue management, this Department has been provided with modern equipment like Lifting Bags, Smoke Exhausters, Poisonous Gas Detectors, Generators and other Combi-tools as required. The Department has 8 Mechanised Fibre Boats and 36 inflatable boats for use during floods and cyclones. This Department also possesses 1 Helmet Type Thermal Imaging Camera, 2 Hand-held Thermal Imaging Cameras, 2 Life Detectors, 2 Multigas Monitors, 81 Fire- Entry Suits, 83 Chemical Protective Suits and 222 pairs of heat resistant gloves.

## **VI. COMMUNICATION FACILITIES**

### **(a) Telephones and Wireless sets**

Timely service is an essential element in fire fighting and rescue operations. Every Fire and Rescue Station in the State has been provided with a telephone. A toll-free telephone facility with the number '101' is available in certain District headquarters towns. All Fire and Rescue Stations in Chennai City, Thiruvallur District, and Kancheepuram District have low band VHF Wireless sets including Walkie-talkies and Repeater Stations to look after the communication needs. Further, the State Headquarters have been connected with all district headquarters, and other sensitive places with HF sets. In all, 42 HF sets have been installed and are functional.

### **b) Response Time**

Response time is the time taken by the first Fire Tender to reach the spot of fire accident. The Department constantly strives to reduce the Response Time in the event of a fire or rescue situation. In Chennai City, the Department has succeeded in restricting the response time to a period of 10 minutes or less. A separate Communication Wing and a Control Room with '101' & '102' telephone connections are available to monitor the response time. It is proposed to establish Hi-band VHF communication system in Chennai City and surrounding areas to modernize the communication system through which messages can be transmitted quickly to reduce the response time. All efforts are being made to reduce the response time further in mofussil areas.

### **c) Departmental Web Site**

A Web-site for Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services with the address <http://www.tn.nic.in/fireservice> is maintained by National Informatics Centre. The website plays an active role in educating the public about fire-safety and provides information about rules and licence conditions. It is user friendly, and contains information needed by the public.

## **VII. TRAINING FACILITIES**

As a public utility service, the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department focus on improving the quality of training given to its personnel at the entry level, and as well as refresher courses at all levels, so as to keep abreast of the modern developments in rescue techniques and fire fighting technology. These training courses are conducted in a well-maintained State Training Centre at Tambaram. The State Training Centre also conducts training for persons from industries, public sector undertakings and other government organizations from other States and Central Government on nominal payment of fees. The State Training Centre at Tambaram, is equipped with all modern Teaching Aids including an Emergency Rescue Tender, Trolley Type Light Tower Mast, Computers, Chemical Suits, Diving Suits, Multi Media Projector, Mobile Repair Van and Gym Equipment. An all-weather concrete Parade Ground, Smoke chamber and V-Notch tank enable good outdoor training. Spacious classrooms, an excellent library, cut models and a good mess and staying facilities, all add to the quality of training imparted. This Training Centre is on par with the National Fire Service College in Nagpur. The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi has designated the State Training Centre of Tamil Nadu Fire

and Rescue Services Department as one of the Regional Training Centres in our country for conducting courses offered by National Fire Service College, Nagpur.

In addition, all the Divisions have been provided with computers for improving training facilities and for improvement of the quality of administration. The Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services State Training Centre has also been notified as State Level Nodal Training Institute for Specialised Search and Rescue Teams under Disaster Management.

### **VIII. WORKSHOP**

The Fire and Rescue Services Department is maintaining a State Workshop at Chennai for attending to repairs of Departmental vehicles and equipment. The Automobile Engineer attached to the State Workshop is empowered to accord technical sanction for estimates for repairs to vehicles upto Rs.20,000/-.

### **IX. CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES STATIONS**

There are 282 Fire and Rescue Stations and 1 Rescue Station at Hogenakkal in the State. Of these, 161 are now functioning in their own buildings, 30 in semi-permanent structures and 91 in rented buildings.

### **X. SERVICES RENDERED**

#### **a) Fire Prevention**

Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services regards prevention of fires as a primary function. For creation of

safety awareness among the members of the public, the Department has Fire Prevention Wings in 12 Divisions. These Wings teach fire prevention methods to the rural and urban population so that risks by fire are reduced. Fire Prevention education is being taken up in schools, industries, offices, villages and slums through lectures and the holding of demonstration sessions for the target groups so that they are sensitised to fire safety and fire prevention methods. In the year 2005, Fire Prevention education was conducted in 3897 places throughout the State. 7 Ambulances have been modified for use as "Theatres on Wheels" in which projectors, CD Players and other equipment such as speakers, switchboards, cables etc., have been provided and they are used to educate the public on fire safety methods in various parts of the State. A mandatory fire safety inspection is being undertaken in schools by the Station Officers to ensure adequate provision for entry, exit and emergency exits. In order to channelise the potential of public participation in creation of an atmosphere of safety, Safety Volunteers have been registered in Chennai City. This scheme is proposed to be extended to other areas in due course. 20 Commandos have also been raised in every district, and they have been given intensive training also for Search and Rescue Operations during disasters.

#### **b) Outposts**

To tackle fires quickly in slums during summer, outposts are opened every year. Such outposts with high capacity synthetic or collapsible water tanks, portable fire pumps with hoses and wireless sets have been opened in slums at 19 places in Chennai City during this summer. The outposts are manned round the clock, and they constantly keep a vigil in fire sensitive areas.

**c) Prevention of Fire in Cinema Halls/Buildings:**

Cinema Halls are highly prone to fire accidents. The Department is committed to ensuring fire safety in cinema theatres. A Multi Departmental Committee is conducting inspection of cinema theatres in the State once in a year, and bring to the notice of licencing authorities the violations of licence conditions, if any, for appropriate action. 915 Cinema Halls were inspected during the calendar year 2005. Further, about 19,728 buildings were inspected during the calendar year 2005 under various Acts and Rules from fire service point of view.

**d) Fire Calls**

During 2005, a total of 14,819 fire calls were received. 87 lives were lost in fires and 234 lives were saved. Properties lost were worth Rs.14.05 crores and properties saved were worth Rs.94.20 crores. In Chennai City, the services of Metro Water lorries are being utilised to refill the Fire Tenders at the place of fire accidents, which helps in continuous fire fighting. This has greatly helped to save lives and public property from destruction by fire.

**e) Rescue Calls**

Rescue Calls received and attended by the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department mostly relate to emergencies like road accidents, train accidents, accidental fall into wells, attack by insects, inhalation of poisonous gases, building collapses and other natural and man made calamities.

**f) Paid Calls and Ambulance Calls**

Ambulances are available in 80 Fire and Rescue Services Stations. It is proposed to procure one Ambulance for the Fire and Rescue Services Station at Sattur. Persons injured during fire accidents and other emergencies are swiftly removed to hospitals for immediate medical aid. The sick and the injured are transported to hospital, when summoned, on payment of nominal charges. During the year 2005, ambulances were requisitioned on 1,421 occasions. Of these, the number of paid calls was 1,060. Revenue of Rs.2.24 lakhs was realised as hire charges for the paid calls attended to by the Ambulances.

**g) Standby on public grounds:**

The Fire and Rescue Services Department vehicles are utilised during the visits of VIPs and during important conferences and meetings/festivals where huge pandals are erected, Fire and Rescue Services vehicles are also utilized for bandobust and standby arrangements. Besides, standby Fire Units are provided for private functions also on payment of charges. During 2005, an amount of Rs.25.03 lakhs was collected as standby charges.

One of the noteworthy standby arrangement made by Fire and Rescue Services Department is the continuous standby arrangements made at Nagapattinam, where temporary shelters have been erected for people affected by the recent gruesome tragedy of Tsunami. Apart from the 2 Water Tenders of Nagapattinam Fire and Rescue Services Station, 14 other Water Tenders with hundreds of fire and rescue service personnel are still on continuous standby duty at the above mentioned shelters.

## **XI. MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVES**

To motivate the personnel of the Fire and Rescue Services Department to perform their duties more efficiently, and to achieve the desired goals and objectives, the following awards and welfare measures are being provided:-

### **a) Awards**

In recognition of outstanding devotion to duty, meritorious service, and gallantry exhibited by the Fire and Rescue Services personnel while performing duty, the following medals instituted by the State Government are awarded to the officers and men of the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department: -

#### **(i) The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Fire Service Medal (Anna Medal)**

The recipients of this medal are eligible for a lumpsum grant ranging from Rs.2000/- to Rs.5000/-. It varies according to the rank of the recipient. For the year 2005, 10 Meritorious Medals and 8 Gallantry Medal were awarded to the Fire and Rescue Services Personnel.

#### **(ii) The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Fire Service Medal (Given on Pongal Day)**

This medal carries with it a cash allowance of Rs.40/- per head per month for fireman and equivalent ranks and Rs.50/- per head per month for leading fireman/ driver-mechanic/fireman driver / fireman mechanic. For the year 2006, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Fire Service Medal was awarded to 80 Fire and Rescue Services Personnel.

**(iii)The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Fire Service Medal for Excellence**

This medal is awarded to enthuse the Fire and Rescue Services Personnel to perform their duties more efficiently and spur them to achieve greater heights. 3 Medals are awarded every year, one each to a Station Officer, Leading Fireman and Fireman during Fire Service Day (April 14<sup>th</sup>). Each Medal is of 22 carat gold weighing 8 grams. Further, the Medal carries a lumpsum grant for the different ranks- i.e. Rs. 3000/- for the Station Officer, Rs. 2500/- for Leading Fireman and Rs. 2000/- for Fireman. These medals are not awarded according to seniority but to those who excel in the performance of their duties.

**(iv)** Apart from the Awards granted by the State Government, the Fire and Rescue Services personnel are also awarded medals instituted by the Government of India as follows:

- (a) Fire Service Medal for Meritorious Service on the occasion of Independence Day.
- (b) Fire Service Medal for Meritorious Service on the occasion of Republic Day.
- (c) Fire Service Medal for Gallantry.

**b) Welfare measures****1. Fire and Rescue Services Benevolent Fund**

The Fire and Rescue Services Benevolent Fund, which is in operation from 1962 was created to render financial help to the members of the Fire and Rescue Services in distress. It promotes their welfare by granting financial assistance to the members for the following purposes:-

- (1) to purchase nutritious food for themselves and for their dependents who are suffering from chronic diseases such as Tuberculosis, Leprosy, Cancer etc.
- (2) to meet the cost of higher education of their children.
- (3) to provide relief to the families of deceased members.
- (4) to meet the funeral expenses of the members and their dependents.

Every year, the Government grants a sum of Rs.4 lakhs to this fund. 5,044 persons were members in this Fund and a sum of Rs 6.51 lakhs was collected from the members by way of subscription to the Fund in the year 2005-2006. Members under this scheme were granted relief totaling about Rs 7.99 lakhs from the fund during the year 2005-2006.

## 2. Family Benefit Fund Scheme

An amount of Rs. 1,00,000/- each is given by the Government from the Family Benefit Fund to its employees who die in harness.

## 3. Ex-gratia Payment

The Fire and Rescue Services Personnel are being given ex-gratia grant as follows:-

(i)	For those who die in harness while on duty	Rs.5,00,000/-
(ii)	For those who suffer permanent disability, while on duty	Rs.1,00,000/-
(iii)	For those who are seriously injured while on duty	Rs.20,000/-
(iv)	For those who suffer Minor injuries while on duty	Rs.10,000/-

## 4. Group Insurance Scheme

In order to help the families of Fire and Rescue Services personnel who die while on duty, a Group Insurance Scheme covering the entire Department from the Director, Fire and Rescue Services, down to fireman (except Ministerial Staff) is in vogue. This scheme offers relief to an extent of Rs.1,00,000/- to the family of the deceased personnel.

## **5. Food Subsidy Scheme**

Food articles such as rice, wheat, rava/maida, toor-dal and black gramdal etc., are supplied to the Fire and Rescue Services Personnel up to the rank of Assistant Divisional Officer at subsidised rates under the Food Subsidy Scheme. On an average, the Government spends about Rs.55 lakhs on this scheme per year.

## **6. Construction of Quarters**

To maintain operational efficiency and for quick mobilization during fire and other emergencies, it is essential to provide quarters for the fire and rescue services personnel near the Fire and Rescue Services Stations. This department is having 973 quarters as against the total strength of 6,323 who are entitled for rent free quarters. At present, lands are available for construction of 504 quarters in 40 places. The construction of quarters for the fire and rescue services personnel will be accelerated in the near future.

## **7. Other Welfare Measures**

One Thiru. G. Packkiri, Fireman 1122 of Villupuram Fire and Rescue Services Station, while on duty at Tsunami Shelter at Nagapattinam, after extinguishing a fire along with his crew members on 10.7.2006 in the temporary Tsunami Shelters in Thethi at Nagapattinam, fell unconscious in the fire spot and was later declared dead on arrival at the hospital. After hearing the news, financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to Tmt. P.Selli, wife of Late G. Pakkiri, Fireman and appointment on

compassionate ground to one of the legal heirs of the deceased fireman were announced immediately. Accordingly orders were issued in G.O.(Ms)No. 623, Home (Pol.XVII) Department, Dated:13.7.2006. This singular gesture will go far in maintaining the morale of the Department's personnel.

## **XII. NEW INITIATIVES**

In order to fill up the vacancies in the category of Fireman, 582 persons who were selected by the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board have been appointed as Fireman with effect from 3.7.2006. Further, nearly 300 vacancies of Fireman will be filled up early.

**Under Part II Schemes for the year 2006-2007, the following schemes would be taken up for implementation at a total cost of Rs.250.97 Lakhs:-**

- (1) The Government has provided a sum of Rs.37.05 lakhs towards procurement of 57 Breathing Apparatus sets for use by the fire fighters.
- (2) The Government has provided a sum of Rs.157 lakhs towards procurement of 10 Nos. of water tenders to replace the old ones.
- (3) The Government has provided a sum of Rs.32.72 lakhs towards procurement of 4 Cars and 4 Jeeps to replace the old ones.
- (4) Construction of a building for Divisional Office at Virudhunagar at a cost of Rs.24.20 lakhs.

**CONCLUSION**

The Department of Fire and Rescue Services is a well organized State Service consisting of technically trained and competent personnel who are devoted to saving life and property of the citizens of Tamil Nadu from fire and natural calamities and disasters. It will be the endeavour of this Government to further improve the performance of this Department by training and technological advancement to meet new challenges, and to perform their essential service in a manner intended and desired.

**M.KARUNANIDHI  
CHIEF MINISTER**