



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A. Francisco Gold Condominium II Edsa Cor. Mapagmahal
Diliman, Quezon City

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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NUMBER 2008-90

**PRESCRIBING PROCEDURES, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES FOR THE
ACCREDITATION OF VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES**

I. REFERENCES:

- a. Rule 9, IRR of PD 1185 (The Fire Code of the Philippines;
- b. Section 54, RA 6975 (DILG Act of 1990);
- c. Letter dated 24 July 2007 from the Director, Company Registration and Monitoring Department, SEC;
- d. Memorandum dated 25 April 2008 of the Chief, BFP;

II. BACKGROUND

At present, the Bureau of Fire protection (BFP) has insufficient number of personnel and equipment. Hence, it welcomes the support of private volunteer fire brigades and fire fighters during fire incidents. However, because of the absence of the clearcut rules or guidelines to define the relationship between the BFP fire fighters and the Volunteer Fire Brigades (VFP) during fire incidents, problems are bound to arise especially in establishing lateral coordination among all responding volunteer units during the conduct of fire fighting operations.

In order to improve the existing cooperation between government fire fighters and Volunteer and Volunteer Fire Brigades, the Secretary, DILG called for the formulation of

standard operating procedures or set of protocols that will determine how the volunteer fire fighters can best assist the BFP during fires.

The Bureau of Fire Protection, being the agency with the legal mandate as provided for by RA 6975, should supervise the training of members of Volunteer Fire Brigades, orienting them on the decorum of fire fighters and protocol in fire fighting, and giving lectures on the maximization of the effectiveness of the personnel and synchronization with the Bureau's resources to avoid unnecessary traffic and obstacles during fire fighting operations. To this effect, the BFP has to establish SOPs that will define the role of VFBs during the conduct of the fire fighting operations.

To effect its legal mandate, the Bureau of Fire Protection shall evaluate all registrant Volunteer Fire Brigades prior to their registration with the SEC. The BFP must favorably indorse the VFB's application before the SEC issues the corresponding Certificate of Incorporation.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

ACCREDITATION

- is a process in which certification of competency, authority or credibility is granted.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

- (sometimes also referred to as the Corporate Charter) is the primary document governing the organization of a corporation, and are filed with the SEC.

FIRE INCIDENT

- a phenomenon or occurrence wherein fire poses danger to life and property.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC)

- established by virtue of the Presidential Decree No. 902-A. It has jurisdiction and supervision over all corporation, partnerships or associations organized and existing under Philippine Laws, particularly, BP Blg. 68 (the New Corporation Code of the Philippines) and the Civil Code of the Philippines.

VOLUNTEER

- a person who willingly gives unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills through an organization or a group.

VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

- an organization of private fire fighters who have joined forces to perform fire suppression.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. To prescribe a Standard Operating Procedure for the accreditation of Volunteer Fire Brigades by the Bureau of Fire Protection.
2. To enhance and strengthen the VFBs' knowledge of the existing Standard Operating Procedures at the actual fire engagement area.

V. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The guidelines and policies stipulated in this Memorandum circular shall encompass and shall be applicable to all existing fire brigades, be it a volunteer fire brigade, barangay or company fire brigade.

However, the procedures on accreditation shall apply only to Volunteer Fire Brigades applying for registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Existing VFBs with proven track record and competence shall be given automatic accreditation by the BFP.

VI. PROCEDURES

1. Once the Articles of Incorporation of a Volunteer Fire Brigade is endorsed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the Chief, BFP, shall direct the MFM/CFM of the municipality or city where the VFB main base/headquarters is located to immediately conduct an ocular inspection of the offices, fire trucks and equipment of the VFB. The MFM/CFM shall submit a report to the Chief, BFP, within five (5) days from receipt of the directive.
2. Once the SEC endorsement is received at the BFP-NHQ, the BFP shall summon a representative from the registrant VFB to appear at the BFP National Headquarters within five (15) days, and to submit the following;
 - a. Organizational Profile (with group photo, individual 2x2 photo of members, and article about the organization)
 - b. Certificate of Registration and official receipt of the fire truck issued by the Land Transportation Office (LTO)
 - c. List of members who must be aged 18 years old and above.
 - d. Personnel Profile
 - e. Certification(s) of Trainings Attended
3. The Representative shall fill up a volunteer Fire Brigade Data File form to be provided by the Bureau of Fire Protection.

4. In case of training deficiencies, the BFP shall serve as resource person for workshops on fire suppression, rescue, emergency rescue services, first aid and the like.
5. The Chief, BFP, or his representative may visit the base/headquarters of the VFB to assess its fire fighting capabilities. In addition, this visit would serve as a way for the BFP and VFB to interact, develop camaraderie, and foster a good working relationship with each other.
6. All VFB members shall be issued an identification card. The ID shall bear the signature of the BFP Regional Director of the area where the VFB belongs. Counter-signatures by the District, Provincial or City Fire Marshall of the concerned AOR shall be obtained prior to the signature of the Regional Director. The Chief, BFP, shall be the final signatory of the VFB identification card.

In the National Capital Region, the following color-coding shall be observed:

Fire District I	-	White
Fire District II	-	Green
Fire District III	-	Red
Fire District IV	-	Navy Blue
Fire District V	-	Yellow

7. A Memorandum of Agreement shall be signed by the BFP and the VFB to fortify their partnership. Such agreement may include periodic meetings between BFP and VFB representatives.
8. The BFP shall keep a database of accredited and endorsed Volunteer Fire brigades and their members.
9. The fire truck of the VFB must bear the BFP Accreditation and its area of responsibility (e.g. BFP Accr. No. NCR-0001).
10. After every matter has been addressed, the Chief, BFP, shall endorse the Articles of Incorporation of the registrant VFB back to the Securities and Exchange Commission.
11. Only the Chief, BFP, or his authorized representative has the power to issue the official endorsement of Articles of Incorporation of VFBs to the SEC.

VII. GUIDELINES

1. A volunteer Fire Brigade (VFP) shall update its list of volunteer personnel as well as its available number of fire trucks to the MFM/CFM who has actual jurisdiction of the area.

2. Responding VFBs must follow the instructions of the BFP Fire ground commander or his duly authorized representative in the proper positioning of fire trucks as well as provision of water, if necessary.
3. When responding, the VFB must notify the BFP of its operation through the BFP Fire Control Operations Section (FCOS) or Fire Station that has jurisdiction of the fire scene for situational assessment.
4. Other than augmenting the regular BFP fire fighters during fire fighting operations, the VFB must refrain from performing functions exclusively delegated to the bona fide members of the BFP, such as enforcement of the provisions of the Fire Code of the Philippines, local ordinances or statutes pertaining to the rules and regulations of structural safety, but can pinpoint noted deficiencies, violations and hazards for proper disposition of the authorities concerned. However, the BFP may further accredit volunteer fire fighters for fire preventions function, subject to pertinent laws, rules and regulations.
5. The BFP shall have a group of instructors in the National Headquarters and in every region to train Volunteer Fire Brigades on fire fighting operations where they lack the necessary skills and competency.
6. Both parties may jointly devise a system of delegation of authority for the members of the Volunteer Fire Brigades, which would be based on qualifications, merit and experience.
7. The Volunteer Fire Brigade may submit Personal Data Sheet and supporting documents to the Municipal Fire Marshal/City Fire Marshal concerned where their stations are located, for records and other lawful purposes.
8. Each Volunteer Fire Brigade may submit to the office of the Municipality/City Fire Marshal concerned an After Operations Report (AfOR) of all fire incidents it had responded to within three (3) days from the date of the fire fighting operation.

VIII. POLICIES

1. All accredited Volunteer Fire Brigades must undergo at least one (1) week orientation on the protocol in responding to the fire scene, such as:
 - a. Notifying the BFP Fire Control Operations Section (FCOS) or local Fire Station of the details of a progressing fire, whenever a VFB receives and responds to a fire call;
 - b. Reporting to the Fire Ground Commander before entering the fire scene and attacking the fire;
 - c. Proper approaches in attacking the fire (Basic Firefighting Techniques).

2. All team leaders/chiefs of responding units shall abide by the orders of the BFP Fire Ground Commander. However, the Fire Ground Commander shall establish a command post and activate a fire scene management committee or incident command system which shall include the senior officers of the responding VFBs. Specific guidelines for the activation of the committee or system shall be issued by the BFP in consultation with the VFBs.
3. Identification Card issued by the BFP must be carried by the member at all times;
4. Responding units must not leave the fire scene unless acknowledged by the Fire Ground commander. Where it is necessary, all units shall submit themselves for check-up or inspection before they leave the scene;
5. All members of the BFP and VFB must wear proper fire fighting suit at the fire scene;
6. Any Volunteer Fire Brigade that arrives earlier at the fire scene shall, upon arrival of the BFP responding unit, automatically give way for the latter to assume command over the entire fire fighting operation.

IX. RESPONSIBILITY:

The Deputy Chief for Operations, BFP, shall be responsible for the effective implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures contained in this Memorandum Circular. The Chief, BFP, shall issue such implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this Memorandum Circular.

X. SANCTION:

Any volunteer Fire Brigade who is found violating the provisions of this Memorandum Circular shall be subject to the cancellation of its BFP accreditation. A VFB that is not properly accredited shall be barred from fire fighting operations.

XI. RESCISSION:

All SOPs, directives and other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby rescinded or modified accordingly.

XII. EFFECTIVITY:

This memorandum Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation by the BFP. A copy of this Memorandum Circular shall be given to all VFBs and posted at the DILG website at www.dilg.gov.ph and at the BFP website.

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY:

SGD: ATTY. MARIUS P CORPUS
Undersecretary of Public Safety