

**BARBADOS FIRE SERVICE**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**STATISTICAL REPORT**

**RESEARCH AND PLANNING UNIT**



**13**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report gives a synopsis of the activities, undertakings and accomplishments made within the department during the recorded year. There were several training courses conducted by the Training and Development Unit, network upgrades by the Information Communication and Technology Unit, retirement of several officers and the continuation of the Junior Fire Cadet Program.

The officers of the Barbados Fire Service responded to a total of twenty-four hundred and three (2403) incidents in 2013. This escalation in incidents indicated an upsurge in total emergency calls by six percent (6%). There were twenty-one hundred and fifty-nine fires (2159) in 2013 as compared to nineteen hundred and ninety-six (1996) in 2012 which indicated an increase in fires by seven and a half percent (7.5%). The increase was of course a concern to the department as its main priority is to reduce the incidence of fires that occur across the island.

The department in fulfilling its mandate to the business community continues to ensure that companies are within the Fire Safety guidelines set out by the Health and Safety Act as it pertains to fire safety measures and practices. Companies are required by law to have their premises inspected annually to certify their compliance with regulations. These inspections which were initially carried out by gazetted officers are now shared among the rank and file of the service as requests for inspections have increased significantly as a result of this new Act.

## **STAFFING, SPECIAL PROJECTS and EVENTS**

### **AWARD**

*Fire Officer 289 Griffith received the Great Attitude, Initiative, Values and Excellence (G.I.V.E.) award for his stellar work in the department. Fire Officer Griffith was the first fire officer nominated for this award. He was also the recipient of the Spirit of Public Service Development Award.*

### **RETIREMENT**

*Leading Fire Officers 46 Jonathan Small and 64 Michael Lowe retired after serving thirty-two (32) years and one (1) month and thirty-two (32) years and two (2) months in the service respectively.*

### **NETWORKING**

*The Information Communication Technology Unit carried out upgrading to the department's network, specifically the Fire Station Manager component, due to the increase in requests for property inspections and the corresponding Fire Safety Certificates.*

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

*The Barbados Fire Service's HIV Committee carried out an outreach programme in association with the HIV/AIDS Commission during their barrel drive. The barrel drive is aimed at collecting non-perishable food items to be distributed to less fortunate persons affected by the disease. The barrels were placed at the Headquarter's Fire Station on Probyn Street and Jordan's Supermarket, on Fairchild Street.*



**Image 1**

## MAJOR FIRES

*The officers of the department responded to two major structural fires for 2013. A bond house fire at Oldbury, St. Philip, destroyed several buildings and burned for approximately forty-eight hours, and the Bridgetown Sewage Treatment Plant fire that posed a possible environmental threat.*



**Image 2**

## ESTABLISHMENT

| Officers                  |                 | Administrative Staff |                          |           | Vacancy   |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Rank                      | Number of Posts | Vacancy              | Post                     | No.       |           |
| Chief Fire Officer        | 1               | -                    | Senior Executive Officer | 1         | -         |
| Deputy Chief Fire Officer | 1               | -                    | Accountant               | 1         | 1         |
| Divisional Officer        | 3               | -                    | Executive Officer        | 1         | -         |
| Station Officer           | 7               | -                    | Assistant Accountant     | 1         | 1         |
| Sub Officer               | 16              | 10                   | Senior Clerk             | 1         | -         |
| Leading Fire Officer      | 32              | 9                    | Clerical Officer         | 4         | 2         |
| Fire Officer              | 179             | 6                    | Clerk Typist             | 1         | -         |
| Auxiliary Fire Officer    | 7               | 1                    | Stenographer Typist      | 1         | -         |
|                           |                 |                      | Executive Secretary      | 1         | -         |
|                           |                 |                      | Maid                     | 8         | 5         |
|                           |                 |                      | General Worker           | 4         | 2         |
|                           |                 |                      | Messenger                | 1         | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>246</b>      | <b>26</b>            |                          | <b>25</b> | <b>12</b> |

**Table 1**

## **FIRE STATISTICS**

### ***Emergency Fire Activity***

The Table below gives an indication of the number of fire calls responded to, by the department during 2013.

| Classification of Fire Calls | Yearly Total |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Motor Vessel                 | 5            |
| Utility Pole                 | 10           |
| Tree                         | 17           |
| Trash                        | 9            |
| Sugar Canes                  | 89           |
| Rubbish                      | 309          |
| Ratoon                       | 6            |
| Private Dwelling House       | 80           |
| Other Fire                   | 12           |
| Motor Vehicle                | 35           |
| Grass                        | 1136         |
| False Alarm – Malicious      | 101          |
| False Alarm – Good Intent    | 230          |
| Electrical                   | 47           |
| Derelect Vehicle             | 1            |
| Derelect House               | 10           |
| Commercial Building          | 22           |
| Bagasse                      | 1            |
| Other Structural             | 39           |
| <b>TOTAL FIRE</b>            | <b>2159</b>  |
|                              |              |

**Table 2**

### ***High Frequency Incidents by Station***

There were several categories of incidents which had high frequency volumes, these results are shown in the Table below which also gives a breakdown of the incidents as they occurred within the respective station areas.

| <b>Arch Hall</b>                  | <b>Headquarters</b>                | <b>St John</b>                     | <b>St James</b>                   | <b>Worthing</b>                   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Grass - 156                       | Grass – 231                        | Grass - 327                        | Grass - 132                       | Grass - 288                       |
| False Alarm<br>Malicious- 22      | Rubbish - 114                      | Rubbish - 50                       | Rubbish -25                       | Rubbish- 78                       |
| False Alarm<br>Good Intent-<br>28 | False Alarm<br>Malicious -37       | Sugar Canes -<br>27                | Sugar Canes -<br>15               | Motor<br>Vehicle - 23             |
| Rubbish - 37                      | False Alarm<br>Good Intent-<br>125 | False Alarm<br>Malicious- 22       | False Alarm<br>Good Intent-<br>18 | Sugar Canes-<br>14                |
|                                   | Private<br>Dwelling<br>House-48    | False Alarm<br>Good Intent -<br>19 | False Alarm –<br>Malicious-6      | False Alarm-<br>Malicious -16     |
|                                   | Motor Vehicle<br>- 20              |                                    |                                   | False Alarm<br>Good Intent-<br>51 |

**Table 3**



## EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

### *Non Fire Incidents - Emergency*

The incidents included in the non-fire category are: bomb threats, chemical spills, gas leaks, motor vehicle accidents and weather standbys. It should be noted that the weather standby generally occurs at the Airport Fire Station. Below is a table which shows the amounts in the categories listed above.

|                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Non Fire Incidents | Gas leaks - 16              |
|                    | Motor Vehicle Accident - 74 |
|                    | Bomb Threat - 1             |
|                    | Weather Standby - 8         |
|                    | Chemical Spill - 1          |

**Table 4**

## Non Emergency Activity

### *Special Services – Non Emergency*

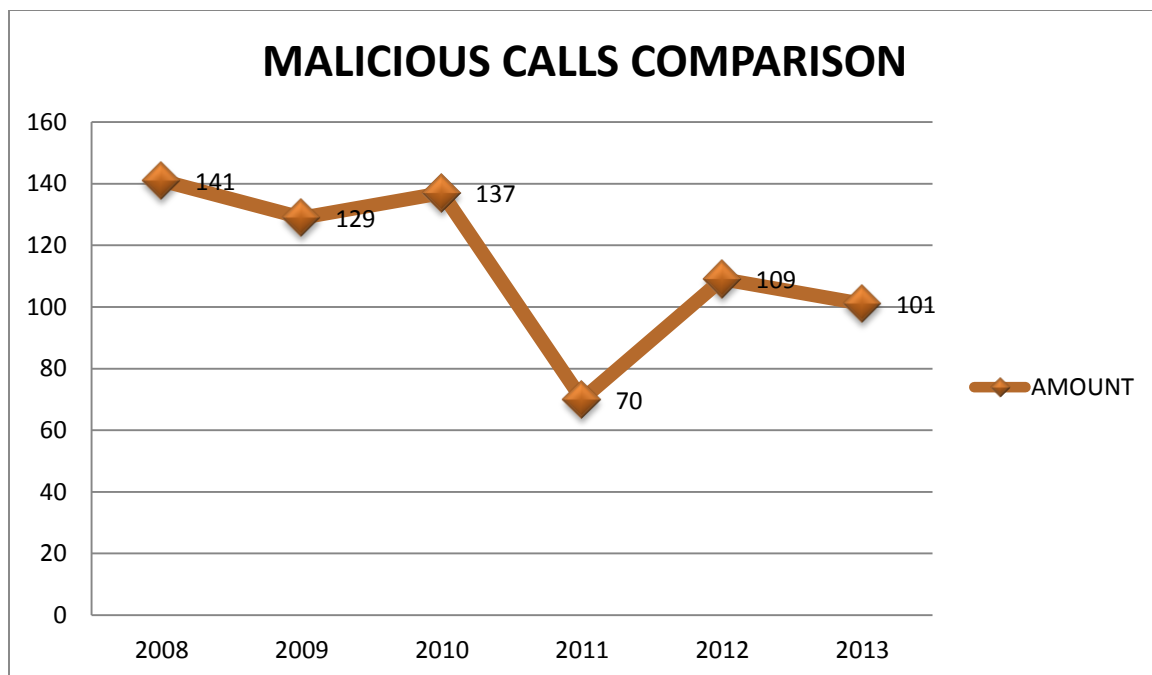
The Fire Service carried out a number of non-emergency duties. These included: Animal Rescues, Filling of Pools, Controlled Burning, Flushing Areas, Gaining Access, Providing Elevation and Rescues. The Table below shows the amounts for the corresponding categories.

| Non Emergency Incidents      |                      |                       |                               |            |                                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Animal Rescue -<br>15        |                      | Filling Pools - 2     |                               |            |                                      |
| Controlled<br>Burning -<br>9 | Flushing<br>Area - 9 | Gaining<br>Access - 5 | Providing<br>Elevation -<br>2 | Rescue - 4 | False<br>Alarm<br>Good<br>Intent - 7 |

**Table 5**

## Malicious Fire Calls

The department is concerned with the number of malicious or prank calls that are received on a yearly basis. These calls placed unnecessary stress on the staff and an ageing fleet of vehicles. The department believes that through education, the public will realise the importance of not only the Fire Service and the role it plays in responding to various emergencies on a daily basis, but other emergency services such as the Emergency Ambulance Service and the Royal Barbados Police Force and the disruption they can cause by carrying out these acts. The Chart below shows the number of False Alarm Malicious (FAM) calls the Fire Service has responded to, over a six-year period.



**Chart 1**

## **SUPPORT UNITS**

### ***Fire Prevention***

The Fire Prevention and Community Relations Unit (FPCRUC) has a pivotal role to play in the disbursement of fire safety and fire prevention material to the public. The Unit which was officially opened in July of 2007 is responsible for ensuring that programmes such as the Student Awareness of Fire Safety Education (SAFE), Smoke Alarm and Operation Escape Bridgetown are constantly reviewed, and if needed, updated to ensure viability. The Unit also conducts fire safety lectures for community-based groups and after school organisations such as the scouts and brownies.

### ***Students involved in S.A.F.E. Programme***



**Image 3**

### ***Research and Planning Unit***

The Research and Planning Unit carries out research of current fire fighting training trends, fire fighting related issues, prepares reports and statistical documents for both internal and external use and also manages the library and other learning resources.

The Unit works closely with the Information Communication and Technology Unit in disseminating pertinent information via the intranet for all officers to view. The research officer also has the duties of preparing the annual report, assisting with records maintenance, managing the department's library and its resources and extracting data from Fire Station Manager for the purposes of updating departmental statistics.

### ***Information Communication and Technology Unit***

The Information Communication and Technology Unit is responsible for the installation, maintenance, availability and security of the Fire Service's network, inclusive of its hardware and software. These officers who work in this Unit are called upon daily to mitigate any issues that may occur whether it be a complaint about the Fire Service Manager Database System which holds all the fire statistics or a defective printer at a station.

These officers are also responsible for the department's communications system. They must ensure that all base radios and portable radio telephone sets are working effectively to guarantee that station to station and fire ground operations are executed with minimal disruptions.

### ***Fleet Maintenance Unit***

The Fleet Maintenance Unit's responsibilities comprise the management and preservation of the department's vehicle fleet. The officers attached to this Unit play an extremely important role in the efficient movement of emergency vehicles.

The Unit is manned by a Subordinate Officer, Leading Fire Officer, Fire Officer and two civilian mechanics. The staff performs other duties such as the removal of engines and transmissions, conducts routine maintenance such as monitoring oil levels in engines and transmissions, changing oil and filters, plugs, condensers and injectors in keeping with manufacturers' specifications.



**Image 4**



**Image 5**

### ***Training and Development Unit***

The Training and Development Unit within the Barbados Fire Service was designed to be responsible for internal and external training within the department. The Unit which was officially opened in 2006 with two officers has now grown with a number of persons being qualified instructors. The Unit develops fire officers both at the professional and personal level. It comprises a group of proficient, qualified and skilled persons whose tasks it is to impart invaluable knowledge and skills to fire fighters, who then in turn use their new found concepts and abilities to provide the public of Barbados with above par service.

The Unit also carries out fire safety lectures, fire safety training and evacuation drills to both private and public sector organisations as these entities continue to ensure that they stay current with safety and health regulations.



**Image 6**



**Image 7**

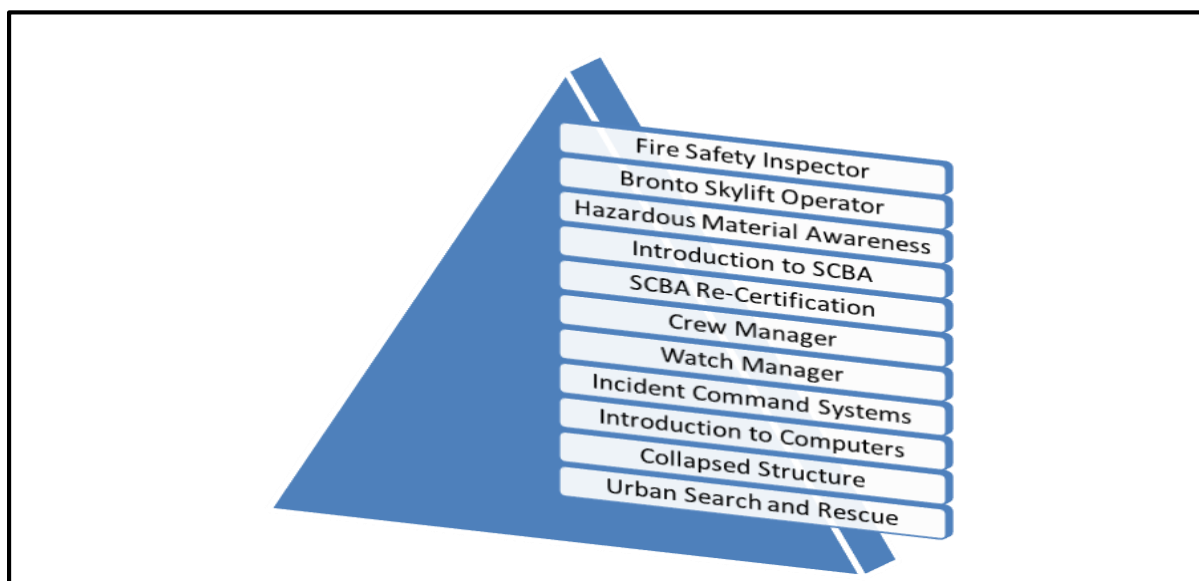
## Training

The Training and Development Unit has the primary role in training both fire officers and members of the public in various courses. The Unit ensures that a high standard of training is conducted with the instructors themselves being exposed to training so they can maintain a high level of professionalism.

The introduction of the safety and health legislation not only requires businesses to have adequate fire coverage, emergency signage and adequate exits, it also requires those companies that store hazardous chemicals to have them stored appropriately, have the correct material safety data sheets and ensure that staff are aware of the dangers and the required emergency guidelines in the event an incident occurs.

The Fire Service, being cognisant of the number of persons now storing hazardous chemicals, has embarked on several hazardous material awareness courses up to technician status so that its officers can adequately handle a hazardous material incident. The department also had officers trained in the CBRN – Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear course hosted by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM).

The pyramid below shows the courses conducted by the Unit in 2013.



**Pyramid 1**



In recent years a number of high-rise buildings have been constructed in Barbados for housing and commercial use. These buildings are concentrated in heavily populated areas which add extra difficulty with respect to response time and manoeuvrability for fire fighters in the event of an emergency. The Training and Development Unit in staying abreast of a changing building culture in Barbados has ensured that the officers of the Barbados Fire Service are versed in not only high-rise fire fighting and high angle rescue but that they are also competent in the use of the Combined Ladder Platform (CLP) vehicle.

The vehicle carries hydraulic arms which can be used at varying heights and angles to help it reach its target efficiently. The ladder attached to the vehicle can extend to thirty two metres or one hundred and four feet.

A course was held during the recorded year for driver/operators to enhance their skills on the vehicle.



Image 8



Image 9

## **JUNIOR FIRE CADET PROGRAMME**

The Junior Fire Cadet Programme ran from July 15 to August 23. The programme, which is in high demand, continues to grow with a high number of applicants received every year. The Junior Cadet Course gives young people the opportunity to participate in a meaningful and well-structured programme that teaches them fire safety, firefighting and rescue techniques and squad drill. Three Senior Cadets and thirty - (30) Junior Cadets were scheduled to participate in the Cadet Programme, however, the Senior Cadets were unable to attend and only twenty-eight(28) Junior Cadets completed the Programme. Roberts Manufacturing Limited and SOL Barbados sponsored the programme.



**Image 10**

## **FIRE SERVICE WEEK**

The Barbados Fire Service celebrated its fifty-eighth year with a week of activities which commenced on September 29 and ended on October 5. On Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, officers, families and friends of the Fire Service took part in a thanksgiving service at the Hawthorn Memorial Church at Worthing, Christ Church. The church service was followed by a march-past by the officers on parade and the salute was taken by Attorney General, The Honourable Adriel Brathwaite.



**Image 11**

The week continued with a healthy lifestyle extravaganza on Monday at the Headquarters Station. Several organisations promoting healthy lifestyles were on hand to convey information about their companies, their products and the several services they can offer. Representatives were from Jenn's Health and Beauty Supplies, Earth Mother Botanicals, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Diabetes Association of Barbados, HIV/AIDS Commission and students from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic's Aesthetics Programme. Student nurses from the Barbados Community College's nursing programme were also in attendance to carry out blood pressure checks and offer other medical advice.



**Image 12**

The other activities that occurred during the week were drill displays staged by the officers of the Southern Division. These drills included fire fighting displays encompassing the use of the crash tenders and a speed fire kit drill where officers competed against each other to see who could get into their fire fighting gear under a minute. Fire Officers Professional Day saw fire officers come together to share ideas and experiences on how to view themselves as professionals and how to move the department forward in a positive direction. The Chief Fire Officer's Parade and Awards Ceremony was held at the Arch Hall Fire Station. This year's parade saw several members of the service being presented with their Barbados Service Medal and also medals for the Queen's Jubilee Award. The week culminated with a family fun day at the Headquarters Station.



**Image 13**

## **FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**

The Fire Department followed up its week of activities with Fire Prevention Week which took place from October 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The theme “Preventing Kitchen Fires” was used as a reminder to home owners to be ever cognisant of the value of sound fire safety practices especially within the kitchen area. A stove left unattended or not having a fire extinguisher or fire blanket in the kitchen could easily lead to a person losing his/her home, and it is with this reality, that the Fire Prevention and Community Relations Unit (FPCRUC) continues in its efforts to reduce all categories of fires but special interest and effort is apportioned to the prevention of private dwelling house fires within the country.



**Image 14**

## **CONCLUSION**

The key to any organisation excelling, is its human resources. A department cannot function if its people do not carry the mental and physical aptitude for the tasks assigned to them. The administration of the Barbados Fire Service is tasked with ensuring that its human resources are implanted with the requisite skills that will allow them to function with purpose and professionalism as they carry out their duties daily. The Administrative and Operational staff will remain dedicated to fulfilling departmental goals and maintaining personal and professional standards as they continue to serve the public of Barbados with pride and continue to provide all who come into contact with the department, with service excellence.