

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3925

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR REORGANIZATION AND REFORM OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE
UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE AND PROTECTION, AMENDING
CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9263 AND
OTHER PURPOSE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill primarily seeks to transform the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) to become the main government agency responsible for the avoidance and elimination of all destructive fires, as well as the improved enforcement of the Fire Code of the Philippines and other related laws. The bill also suggests to grant the BFP the authority to investigate all causes of fires and the power to respond to all types of disasters and emergencies including rescue, medical, and other calamities.

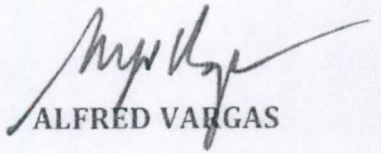
The BFP has developed from being an agency tasked to implement fire prevention laws, respond to and investigate fire emergencies to becoming an agency assigned to respond to medical emergencies and carry out rescue operations during disasters and other forms of tragedies.

The BFP has also been active on the aspects of disaster preparedness and response. Climate change has led to stronger and more destructive typhoons passing through the country. In response to this, the BFP has organized its units in the clearing of roads, emergency evacuation of families, and distribution of relief goods in areas which are massively damaged by the typhoons. The BFP is honored to affirm that it is the agency that had been at the forefront of the aftermath of the typhoon Yolanda tragedy, from its beginning to its conclusion, recovering cadavers and providing aid to the people through its inadequate resources.

There is an urgent need for a measure that will broaden the powers and functions of the BFP and increase its manpower. The said measure will boost the operational efficiency of the BFP and will address the evolving demand of the citizens for a fire and medical emergency and rescue services agency that can effectively and efficiently respond to dangers of destructive fires, accidents, and other natural and man-made tragedies and other catastrophes.

In view of all of the foregoing reasons and considering the BFP had proclaimed its responsibility of being dedicated in ensuring the avoidance and elimination of destructive fires, investigating its cause, enforcing the Fire Code of the Philippines and other related laws, and in responding to man-made and natural disasters and their emergencies despite the lack of legislative intervention, the necessity for additional manpower to conform to that growth of the mandate and the population of the other uniformed services have been clearly demonstrated.

Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3925**

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR REORGANIZATION AND REFORM OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE
UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE AND PROTECTION, AMENDING
CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9263 AND
OTHER PURPOSE

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the "Reorganization and Reform Act of the Bureau of Fire Protection of 2019."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to develop the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and ensure public safety through the prevention and suppression of all kinds of destructive fires, investigation of its causes, enforcement of the Fire Code of the Philippines and other related laws, response to man-made and natural disasters, whether man-made or natural, and respond to other emergencies, including rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials (hazmat), chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) materials, and other emergencies.

Toward this end, considering the expanded mandate and modernization of function and the increase in population, the State shall formulate plans and programs to enhance the BFP with expanded structure, capability and manpower particularly by upgrading the rank structure for it to be responsive to the demands of the times and to make agency at par with those of the PNP, the AFP, and the PCG.

SECTION 3. *Additional Powers and Functions of the BFP.* - Section 54, Chapter IV, or RA 6975 shall be amended as follows:

SECTION. 54 The BFP shall be responsible for the prevention and suppression of all destructive fires on buildings, houses and other structures, including those found in

economic zones including agro- industrial economic zones, free ports and special economic zones, it parks/centers, manufacturing economic zones, medical tourism parks/centers, tourism economic zone, and other similar entities, forest, land transportation vehicles and equipment, ships or vessels docked at piers or wharves or anchored in major seaports, petroleum industry installations, airports, plane crashes and other similar incidents, as well as the enforcement of the Fire Code of the Philippines and other related laws.

The BFP shall have the power to investigate all causes of fires and , if necessary, file the proper complaints with the city or provincial prosecutor who has jurisdiction over the case. The BFP shall have the power to establish and maintain regional arson laboratories and research and testing facilities with complete equipment for this purpose.

Further, the BFP shall have function of responding to disasters, whether man-made or natural, and respond to other emergencies, including rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials (hazmat), chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) materials, and other emergencies. In line with this, the BFP in shall establish and maintain state-of-the—art apparatus and equipment to be used by the BFP in its emergency rescue, emergency medical, hazmat, CBRNE, and other operations.

Furthermore, the BFP shall have the power to conduct trainings of its personnel and officers pertaining to fire prevention and suppression, investigation, disaster preparedness, rescue, emergency medical, hazmat, CBRNE, and other operations.

In consonance with the powers and functions of the BFP, the BFP may request the assistance of the Philippine National Police(PNP), armed forces of the Philippines (AFP), or any other agency of the government, including government-owned and/or-controlled corporations, in exercising its power and functions.

The BFP, in pursuance of all the functions mentioned, shall have the power to enter into any contract or transaction for acquisition, ownership, possession, use, administration, lease, disposition, or acceptance or real or personal property in its name.

Lastly , the BFL shall perform such other functions as the president or the secretary assign.

SECTION 4. *Organization.* – *Section 55, Chapter IV of RA 6975 shall be amended as follows:*

Section 555. The BFP shall have a National Headquarters, Regional Headquarters, Provincial Headquarters, District Headquarters, City and Municipal Fire Stations.

At the National Headquarters, there shall be an Office of the Chief, BFP assisted by other key offices which shall formulate the policies, plans and programs of the BFP; and monitor, evaluate and coordinate the operations and activities of the fire service operating units at the regional levels.

At the regional level, there shall be an office of the Regional Director which shall implement the policies, plans and programs of the BFP; and monitor, evaluate and coordinate the operations and activities of the fire service operating units at the provincial levels.

At the provincial level, there shall be an office of the Provincial Director which shall also implement the policies, plans and programs of the BFP; and monitor, evaluate and coordinate the operations and activities of the fire service operating units, at the city and municipal levels. In the case of large provinces, District Headquarters may be established, to be headed by a District Director.

At the city or municipal level, there shall be a fire station, each headed by a city or municipal fire marshal: Provided that, in the case of large cities, a District Headquarters with subordinate fire stations headed by a District Director may be organized as necessary.

SECTION 5. – Established of Fire Station. – Section 56, Chapter IV, of RA 6975 shall be amended as follows:

Section 56. Establishment of Fire Station. There shall be established at least one (1) fire station with adequate personnel, fire-fighting facilities and equipment in every provincial capital, city and municipality subject to the standards, rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the Department. The BFP shall have the authority to acquire or purchase real property in all cities or municipalities for the establishment of fire central and sub-stations.

SECTION 6. Rank Classification. – Section 58, Chapter IV, RA 6975 shall be amended as follows:

Section 58. For purposes of efficient administration, supervision, and control, the new rank classification of the members of the BFP shall be follows:

RANK	SALARY GRADE
Fire General	30
Fire Lieutenant General	29
Fire Major General	28
Fire Brigadier General	27
Fire Colonel	26
Fire lieutenant Colonel	25
Fire Major	24
Fire Captain	23
Fire lieutenant	22
Fire Master Sergeant	19
Fire Technical Sergeant	18
Fire Staff Sergeant	17
Fire Sergeant	16

Fire Corporal	14
Fire First Class	12
Fireman	10

SECTION 7. *Organization and Key Positions.* - Section 3, of RA 9263 shall be amended as follows:

Section 3. The head of the BFP shall have the position title of Chief, BFP. The second officer in command of the BFP shall have the position title of Deputy Chief for Administration of the BFP. The third officer in command of the BFP shall have the position title of Deputy Chief for Operations of Directorial Staff of the BFP, who shall be assisted by the directors of the directorates in the National Headquarters.

The BFP shall establish, operate, and maintain Regional Headquarters in each of the administrative regions of the country which shall be headed by a Regional Director, He/She shall be assisted by the following officers: Deputy Regional Director for Administration, Deputy Regional Director For Operations, and Regional Chief of Staff.

SECTION 8. *Appointment of Uniformed Personnel to the BFP.* - Section 4 of R.A. 9263 is hereby amended as follows:

Section 4. The appointment of the Uniformed Personnel to the BFP shall be effected in the following manners:

- a. Fireman to Fire Master Sergeant – Appointed by the respective Regional Director for the Regional Headquarters or by the Chief, BFP for the national headquarters, and attested by the Civil Service Commission (CSC);
- b. Fire lieutenant to Fire lieutenant Colonel – Appointed by the Chief, BFP and attested by the CSC;
- c. Fire Colonel – Appointed by the Secretary upon recommendation of the Chief, BFP with the proper attestation of the CSC; and
- d. Fire Brigadier General to Fire General – Appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Secretary.

SECTION 9. *Mandatory Training Program.* - All newly appointed uniformed personnel of the BFP shall undergo a Mandatory Training Program.

SECTION 10. *Qualification Standards in the Designation of Uniformed Personnel of BFP to Key Positions.* - Section 7 of R.A. 9263 is hereby amended as follows.

Section 7. No person shall be designated to the following key positions of the BFP unless he/she has met the required ranks herein provided:

- 1) Chief, BFP – Should have the rank of Fire General;
- 2) Deputy Chief for Administration of the BFP, Deputy Chief for Operations of the BFP and Chief Directorial Staff of the BFP – should have the rank of Fire Lieutenant General;
- 3) Director of the Directorate of the National Headquarters – Should have the rank of Fire Major General;
- 4) Regional Director (NCR) – Should have the rank of Fire Major General;
- 5) Regional Director (Other Regions) – Should have the rank of Fire Brigadier General;
- 6) Deputy Regional Director for Administration (NCR), Deputy Regional Director for Operations (NCR), and Chief of Staff (NCR) – Should have the rank of Fire Brigadier General;
- 7) Deputy Regional Director For Administration, Deputy Regional Director For Operations and Regional Chief Of Staff (Other Regions) – Should have the rank of Fire Colonel;
- 8) District Director (NCR) – Should have the rank of Fire Brigadier General;
- 9) Provincial Director – Should have the rank of Fire Colonel;
- 10) Highly Urbanized Cities outside NCR – Should have the rank of Fire Colonel;
- 11) City Fire Marshal (NCR) – Should have the rank of Fire Colonel;
- 12) City Fire Marshal (Other Regions) – Should have the rank of Fire lieutenant Colonel;
- 13) Municipal Fire Marshall – Should have the rank of Fire Major.

SECTION 11. *Qualifications Upgrading Program.* – The BFP shall design and establish qualifications upgrading program for the BFP officers and personnel in accordance with the Civil Service Commission rules and regulations.

SECTION 12. *Maximum Tenure in Position.* – The aggregate maximum tenure per position of BFP officers and personnel holding key positions is hereby prescribed as follows:

POSITION	MAXIMUM TENURE
Chief	four (4) years
Deputy Chief	four (4) years
Director of the Staff Services	four (4) years
Regional Directors	six (6) years
Provincial/City Directors	nine (9) years

Other positions lower than Provincial Director shall have aggregate maximum tenure of six (6) years. Unless earlier separated, retired or promoted to a higher position in accordance with the BFP Staffing Pattern, officers and personnel holding the above-mentioned positions shall be compulsorily retired at the maximum tenure in position herein prescribed, or at age fifty-six (56), whichever is earlier: Provided, that in times of war or other national emergency declared by Congress, the President may extend the Chief, BFP's tour of duty: Provided further, that BFP officers and personnel who have already reached their maximum tenure upon the effectivity of this Act may be allowed one (1) more year of tenure in their positions before the maximum tenure provided in this Section shall be applied to them, unless they shall have already reached the compulsory retirement age of fifty-six (56), in which case the compulsory retirement age shall prevail.

Except for the Chief, BFP, no BFP member who has less than six (6) months of services before reaching the compulsory retirement age shall be promoted to a higher rank or appointed to any other position.

SECTION 13. *Rationalized Promotion System.* – Within six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act, the BFP shall establish a system of promotion for uniformed and non-uniformed personnel of the BFP which shall be based on merits and on the availability of vacant positions in the BFP staffing pattern. Such system shall be gender fair.

SECTION 14. *Promotion by Virtue of Position.* – Any BFP personnel designated to any key position whose rank is lower than that which is required for such position but is qualified for promotion shall, after six (6) months of occupying the same, be entitled to a rank adjustment corresponding to the position: Provided, That the personnel shall not be reassigned to a position calling for a higher rank until after two (2) years from the date of such rank adjustment: Provided, further, that any personnel designated to the position who does not possess the established minimum qualifications therefor shall occupy the same temporarily for not more than six (6) months without reappointment or extension.

SECTION 15. *Establishment of Search and Rescue Force (SRF), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and HAZMAT Units.* – In addition to the existing Fire Fighting Units, there shall be established a Search and Rescue Force (SRF) in each region and city, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in every 1st to 3rd class municipalities and cities, and HAZMAT Units each region.

SECTION 16. *Establishment of BFP Hospital or Burn Center.* – The BFP shall establish and maintain Central Hospital or Burn Center for the benefit of the BFP officers and personnel and their dependents.

SECTION 17. *Revised organizational structure and staffing pattern of the BFP.*

The Chief, BFP, within ninety (90) days from the promulgation of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act, shall recommend and submit to the Secretary the revised organizational structure and staffing pattern for officers and personnel of the BFP, in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein and as provided in the IRR.

SECTION 18. *Transition.* – The provisions herein shall be effected within three (3) years after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 19. *Rules and Regulations.* – Unless otherwise provided in this Act, the Department in coordination with the BFP, shall promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall take effect upon their publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 20. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and issuance, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 21. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 22. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,