

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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CHAPTER 319

FOREST FIRES

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§ 2501. Forest fire wardens; deputy; fee

The Forest Commissioner shall appoint a forest fire warden for a 3-year term in each organized municipality within the State outside the limits of the Maine Forestry District for the prevention, control and extinguishment of forest fires. Such forest fire warden appointment shall be made with the approval of the municipal officers. A municipal officer, fire chief, fire ward or any citizen is eligible for appointment. All appointed forest fire wardens shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of their duties and a certificate thereof shall be returned to the office of the Forest Commissioner. Whoever has been notified of this appointment shall file with the Forest Commissioner his acceptance or rejection within 10 days. The appointed forest fire warden may appoint one or more deputy forest fire wardens subject to approval of the municipal officers. The Forest Commissioner shall have the authority, with local municipal approval, to remove from office any town forest fire warden who fails to perform his official duties and to fill any vacancy caused by death, resignation or transfer.

The State shall pay the appointed forest fire warden an annual fee of \$50. This payment shall be made contingent upon attendance at forest fire training schools, preparation of an annual forest fire plan for his town and such reports as the Forest Commissioner may require. This fee in no way limits payment to the warden from his town. His services for work on actual forest fires, also deputy forest fire warden's, shall be paid by the town and at a rate determined by the town.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 59.

§ 2502. Right to call and employ assistance

State and town forest fire wardens shall be responsible for the control and extinguishment of forest fires in any municipality within the State, outside the limits of the Maine Forestry District. For this purpose they may have the authority to employ any person or persons deemed necessary to assist in fighting forest fires. Any person under the age of 16 should have parent approval. All called and employed assistance shall proceed to help control and extinguish forest fires as directed by the state or town forest fire warden in charge. Persons who refuse or willfully fail, when called upon by the proper forest fire warden in charge, to render assistance or leave a forest fire before being released by him without a just and fair excuse shall upon conviction pay a fine of \$10 and such fine shall be credited in the name and to the use of the town in which the forest fire occurred.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60.

§ 2503. Compensation for fighting forest fires

Town forest fire wardens shall receive compensation for forest fire fighting services at the prevailing rate in the town. Labor and equipment may be provided by individuals or groups on a forest fire without pay. All requested assistance, persons or equipment used in fighting forest fires shall upon application receive compensation fixed by the town in which the forest fire occurred, but labor coming from outside such town shall receive a rate of pay not less than that established annually by the State Highway Commission for state highway labor. Fire departments, organized crews or other groups used outside the town in which the forest fire occurred may receive pay at their usual rates. Forest fire fighters may be provided with subsistence while on the fire.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60.

§ 2504. Hindering state or town forest fire warden

Any person who shall prevent or obstruct, or attempt to prevent or obstruct, a state or town forest fire warden in the performance of his duties, or the exercise of the rights of entry, access or examination by any state or town forest fire warden, shall upon conviction pay a fine not exceeding \$100 or 30-day jail sentence, or both.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60.

§ 2505. Payment of costs; state reimbursement

Municipalities, within the State, outside the limits of the Maine Forestry District, shall be holden to pay for controlling and extinguishing forest fires up to 1% of their state valuation and the State shall reimburse them $\frac{1}{2}$ the above costs incurred by the forest fire warden in charge therein. Reimbursement will not be allowed for use or loss of municipally owned equipment within the town in which the fire occurred. A town going to the aid of another, even to protect itself, when requested by the state forest fire warden in charge, shall be paid by the town aided if the total suppression cost of the town is not over 1% of its state valuation.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60; 1963, c. 86.

§ 2506. Payment of costs beyond 1% of state valuation

All forest fire suppression costs in municipalities within the State, outside the limits of the Maine Forestry District, in an amount greater than 1% of the state valuation of the municipality in which the fire occurred shall be paid by the State. Any municipality in order to pay labor quickly may pay beyond 1% of its state valuation and submit for full state reimbursement or forward the unpaid bills, approved by the state forest fire warden in charge, for payment.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60; 1963, c. 86.

§ 2507. Reports and payrolls

Town and state forest fire wardens shall promptly prepare a report of their investigation as to the cause, extent and damage on all forest fires in their charge. They shall prepare an exact and detailed statement of expenses incurred therein immediately after total extinguishment on forms provided by the Forest Commissioner.

Statement of expenses shall have proper payroll receipts and vouchers. Forest fire suppression costs qualifying for town and state payment are labor, transportation, food, fire department equipment from outside the affected town, privately owned equipment and other costs approved by the forest fire warden in charge.

All requests for the State $\frac{1}{2}$ reimbursement shall be presented to the Forest Commissioner within 60 days after total extinguishment or become void. After major forest fires he may extend the time provided a preliminary report has been made.

The Forest Commissioner shall examine all forest fire suppression bills rendered by the town to the State for reimbursement or direct payment. After items not qualifying have been deducted the Forest Commissioner shall approve them for payment.

R.S.1954, c. 97, § 60.