



**BELIZE**

**PROPERTY PROTECTION (FIRE) ACT  
CHAPTER 140**

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**CHAPTER 140**

**PROPERTY PROTECTION (FIRE)**

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CHAPTER 140

PROPERTY PROTECTION (FIRE)

Ch. 161,  
R.L., 1958.  
CAP. 111,  
R.E. 1980-1990.  
40 of 1963.  
S.I. 44 of 1966.

*[31st, January, 1894]*

Short title. **1.** This Act may be cited as the Property Protection (Fire) Act.

Application of Act. **2.** This Act shall apply to all places and areas of Belize to which the Fire Brigades Act, Cap. 137 does not apply.

Interpretation. **3.** In this Act,  
  
“Superintendent” means the senior police officer present in the place at the time of the fire or, if there is no such officer then present, the magistrate of the district in which the place lies or, in the absence of both such senior officer and magistrate, the senior public officer present at the time of the fire;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for National Emergency Management.

Duty of police to assist in case of fire. 42 of 1999. **4.** Immediately upon the breaking out of a fire in any place, all available members of the Police Department upon alarm thereof shall immediately go to the scene of the fire and assist in extinguishing it, and give their utmost assistance to the inhabitants in removing their goods.

Duty of Superintendent to assume direction of all measures. **5.**—(1) The Superintendent shall, upon the occurrence of a fire, assume the absolute direction and control of all measures necessary for extinguishing the fire.

(2) Any person who, during any fire, resists or interferes with any order given by the Superintendent shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

6.-(1) Any superior police officer present, or if there is no superior police officer present, the senior non-commissioned police officer or police constable present, may call upon any onlooker present at the fire to afford his assistance in extinguishing it in any way in which the services of such person can be made available.

Onlookers may be called upon to assist.

(2) Every onlooker who when so called upon refuses to afford his assistance in extinguishing the fire shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

7.-(1) The Superintendent on each occurrence of fire shall assign certain known, open and secure places conveniently near to the building on fire or in danger of taking fire, wherein he shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all goods and other property removed from any building on fire or in danger of taking fire, and he shall make it publicly known.

Disposal of property saved.

(2) Every person who removes any goods or other property to any place other than a place assigned for the purpose may be at once arrested by any police officer, and if he does not give a satisfactory reason for not removing the goods to one of the assigned places, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

8.-(1) The Superintendent may order the destruction of any house, building or any part thereof which is on fire or which in his opinion cannot be saved from fire.

Power to order building on fire to be destroyed.

(2) Every such order shall be communicated as soon as is reasonably possible to the owner of such house or building, or in the absence of such owner, to the person, if any, in charge thereof.

(3) No claim shall be made and no action or other proceeding shall be brought either against the Crown or any Superintendent in respect of his acting under this section, or against any other persons for anything done by them in pursuance of an order given under this section.

Destruction of houses, etc., to prevent spread of fire.

**9.**—(1) If it appears that the destruction of any house, building or other property, which is not itself on fire but is in imminent danger of taking fire, is necessary for preventing the further spread of such fire, the Superintendent may order the destruction of such house, building or other property, or any part thereof.

(2) Previous to such order being made, verbal notice shall be given to the owner, or in his absence to the person in charge, if any, of the house, building or property about to be destroyed, which shall indicate what house, building or property is to be destroyed.

(3) When the order for destruction has been given, the Superintendent shall allow as much time as may be practicable to elapse between the notice and the actual order for destruction, and he shall do all in his power to diminish, by removal of goods or otherwise, the damage about to be done by such destruction.

Report of such destruction to be furnished to Minister and payment of compensation. 40 of 1963. S.I. 44 of 1966.

**10.**—(1) If any property is destroyed in the manner provided in section 9, the Superintendent shall forward within fourteen days of such destruction to the Permanent Secretary for the information of the Minister, a report of the circumstances under which the house, building or property was destroyed, and describing with all possible detail the damage done by such destruction, and the report shall conclude by naming the sum, if any, which the owner demands as and for full compensation for the loss suffered.

(2) The Minister may, if he sees fit, pay such sum or any lesser sum to the owner of the property destroyed upon the terms that he accepts it in full satisfaction of his claim in respect of any damage or injury done to him by such destruction,

Provided that if the sum claimed in any one case exceeds the sum of five hundred dollars, the same shall not be paid until a vote for the amount is obtained from the National Assembly.

(3) If the amount of the compensation cannot be agreed upon between the owner and the Minister, it shall be determined in civil proceedings brought by the owner against the Crown under the Crown Proceedings Act, Cap. 167.

(4) In assessing such compensation the court shall take into account,

- (a) the amount which the owner may be entitled to receive under any policy of insurance covering the said house, building or other property; and
- (b) the risk of the house, building or other property being burnt or damaged by reason of the fire or by the water necessarily used to extinguish the fire.

(5) Except as provided in this section, no person shall have any claim, right or remedy in respect of anything lawfully done in pursuance of this section.

**11.** Every person who orders and directs the destruction of any house, building or other property, or wilfully destroys or assists in destroying it, without the order or sanction of the Superintendent, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

Penalty for destroying buildings without authority.

**12.** The Minister may make regulations for the discipline, equipment and guidance of those upon whom duties are imposed by this Act.

Regulations. 40 of 1963.