

Article 80.

State Volunteer Fire Department.

§ 58-80-1. Purpose of Article.

The purpose of this Article shall be the creation of a State Volunteer Fire Department to provide protection for property lying outside the boundaries of municipalities, and to render assistance anywhere within the State of North Carolina, in municipalities or counties, in emergencies caused by fire, floods, tornadoes, or otherwise, in the manner and subject to the conditions provided in this Article. (1939, c. 364, s. 1; 1985, c. 666, s. 66; 2023-134, s. 30.8(b).)

§ 58-80-5. Personnel.

The personnel of the North Carolina State Volunteer Fire Department shall consist of all active members of the organized fire departments, who are members of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, of municipalities whereof the governing bodies shall subscribe to and endorse this Article. (1939, c. 364, s. 2; 2016-51, s. 6.)

§ 58-80-10. Organization.

The North Carolina State Fire Marshal shall be chief of the State Volunteer Fire Department; regular municipal fire chiefs shall be assistant chiefs; assistant chiefs shall be deputy chiefs; battalion chiefs, captains; lieutenants and privates shall hold the same position that they occupy in their municipal companies. When engaged in rendering assistance at the scene of any emergency, the ranking officer of the first department arriving at the scene of the emergency shall have complete charge of all operations until the arrival of a superior officer. All subordinate officers and men shall act under the direction of such ranking officer. Whenever present at the scene of an emergency, the chief shall have full and complete control and authority over operations of all members of the Department. (1939, c. 364, s. 3.)

§ 58-80-15. Acceptance by municipalities.

Any municipality having an organized fire department and desiring to participate in the establishment of the State Volunteer Fire Department, may do so by a resolution of the governing body accepting and endorsing the provisions of this Article: Provided, that acceptance shall not be compulsory. (1939, c. 364, s. 4.)

§ 58-80-20. Withdrawal.

Any municipality which has accepted the provisions of this Article may withdraw its fire departments from membership in the State Volunteer Fire Department by resolution of the governing body thereof. Notice of such withdrawal shall be given to the State Fire Marshal and withdrawal shall not become effective until 60 days after his receipt thereof. (1939, c. 364, s. 5.)

§ 58-80-25. Dispatching firemen and apparatus from municipalities.

Municipalities endorsing this Article shall retain full and complete control and authority in sending or permitting firemen and apparatus to go beyond the limits of the municipality. The governing bodies of such municipalities shall designate and authorize a person, and at least two alternates, who shall have authority to grant or deny permission to firemen and apparatus to leave the municipality in all cases where request is made for assistance beyond its corporate limits, and the municipality shall, through the office of its municipal fire chief, furnish to the Office of the State Fire Marshal and to the secretary of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, a list

of the persons so authorized by the municipality. The secretary of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association shall furnish to all municipalities and counties accepting this Article a list of all such persons so designated in all municipalities within the State. (1939, c. 364, s. 6; 1943, c. 170; 2016-51, s. 6; 2023-151, s. 11.17.)

§ 58-80-30. No authority in State Volunteer Fire Department to render assistance to nonaccepting counties.

The State Volunteer Fire Department shall not have authority to render assistance in any emergency occurring within a county which has not accepted the terms and conditions of this Article by resolution of the board of county commissioners: Provided, that nothing in this Article shall be construed to prevent any municipality from voluntarily permitting its fire department to render assistance in any emergency, notwithstanding that it may arise in a county which has failed to accept this Article. (1939, c. 364, s. 7.)

§ 58-80-35. Acceptance by counties.

Any county desiring to accept the benefits of this Article may do so by resolution of the board of county commissioners. Any such county may thereupon make agreements and enter into contracts with respect to payment for services rendered by the State Volunteer Fire Department within its boundaries in the following manner:

The county may contract with any municipality which has accepted the terms of this Article, whether within or without said county, to pay to such municipality an annual fee as a consideration for the municipality providing equipment and carrying compensation insurance which will enable it to respond to calls from within the county so contracting, and to pay an additional sum per truck for each mile traveled from the station house to the scene of the emergency, and to pay an additional sum per truck per hour or fraction thereof for the use of its water or chemical pumping equipment. Said sums shall be paid to the city within 30 days after such services have been performed: Provided, that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the county and municipality from adopting a different schedule of fees in cases where those provided above shall be considered excessive or inadequate: Provided, that if the emergency shall occur within the limits of another city or town, such city or town and not the county wherein it lies shall be responsible for the payments and shall assume all liabilities as provided in this section. (1939, c. 364, s. 8; 1973, c. 803, s. 5.)

§ 58-80-40. Municipalities not to be left unprotected.

At no time shall the entire personnel or equipment of any municipal fire department be absent from the municipality in response to a call to another municipality, or other place lying at a distance exceeding two miles from the corporate limits, but there shall remain within the municipal limits such personnel and equipment as in the judgment of the local fire chief might provide sufficient protection during the absence of the remainder. (1939, c. 364, s. 9.)

§ 58-80-45. Rights and privileges of firemen; liability of municipality.

When responding to a call and while working at a fire or other emergency outside the limits of the municipality by which they are regularly employed or in volunteer fire service, all members of the State Volunteer Fire Department shall have the same authority, rights, privileges and immunities which are afforded them while responding to calls within their home municipality. In permitting its fire department or equipment to attend an emergency or answer a call beyond the

municipal limits, whether under the terms of this Article or otherwise, a municipality shall be deemed in exercise of a governmental function, and shall hold the privileges and immunities attendant upon the exercise of such functions within its corporate limits. (1939, c. 364, s. 10.)

§ 58-80-50. Relief in case of injury or death.

In case of injury or death of any member of the State Volunteer Fire Department arising out of and in the course of the performance of his duties, while such member is assisting at any emergency arising beyond the limits of the municipality with which he is connected, or while going to or returning from the scene of such emergency, such fireman shall be entitled to compensation under the terms of the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act, and the municipality with which he is connected shall be liable for the compensation provided under that Act. (1939, c. 364, s. 11; 1991, c. 636, s. 3.)

§ 58-80-55. Local appropriations.

Each county and municipality is authorized to make appropriations for the purposes of this Article and to fund them by levy of property taxes pursuant to G.S. 153A-149 and 160A-209 and by the allocation of other revenues whose use is not otherwise restricted by law. Sanitary districts are authorized to make appropriations for the purposes of this Article and to fund them by annual levy of a tax on property having a situs in the district under the rules and according to the procedures prescribed in the Machinery Act (Chapter 105, Subchapter II) and by the allocation of other revenues whose use is not otherwise restricted by law. (1973, c. 803, s. 4.)

§ 58-80-60. Sums from contingent fund of State made available for administration of Article.

In order to assist in carrying out the purposes of the Article the Governor may, from time to time, make provisions for assistance to the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association in a sum not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), in any one year, out of the contingent fund appropriated in the General Appropriation Act. One half of the amount so provided shall, in each instance, go to the State Firefighters' Relief Fund, and one half to the expenses of the said Association incurred in carrying out the provisions of this Article. (1939, c. 364, s. 12; 2007-246, s. 2; 2016-51, s. 6.)