

## 40.2 MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

- 40.2.1 The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) is governed by the MFRS Act No. 13 of 2013 which clearly spells out its mandate and responsibilities in the provision of safety, rescue services and emergency response across Mauritius. It envisions to have a Republic of Mauritius free from the dangers of fire and other emergency threats.
- 40.2.2 The core functions of the MFRS are carried out through various Fire Stations around the Island and one Fire Post at Agalega which are manned by Fire Officers, for the provision of fire and emergency cover. The Chief Fire Officer, being at the apex, has the responsibility for the overall functioning and administration of the Service. He is assisted by officers of the Firefighter Cadre as well as other supporting grades.
- 40.2.3 Common submissions of both Management and Unions focussed on the: review of salaries and allowances; provision of additional levels/allowances; payment of Sunday Allowance to all Fire Officers irrespective of their pattern of work; and enhancement of existing Conditions of Service. Specific requests from staff side related to: abolition of the planned roster of leave established exclusively and administratively by the MFRS; eligibility for travel grant; review of scheme of service; and refund of membership fee to Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) Graduates while Management, on its side, proposed the employment of retired Fire Officers on sessional basis.
- 40.2.4 All the stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to justify their proposals during consultative meetings held at the Bureau. Both Management and Unions were apprised of those requests which could not be acceded to and/or which should be addressed administratively or channelled to relevant authorities.
- 40.2.5 With a view to making optimum use of its human capital, Management also requested for a grade of Dispatcher to service the Control Room. This request has, however, not been taken on board as the information submitted was not in order.
- 40.2.6 We are making appropriate recommendations in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **Lead Firefighter (New Grade)**

- 40.2.7 As per existing provision, Firefighters are departmentally known as "Lead Firefighter" on completing 15 years of service in the grade on account of being favourably reported on his performance, conduct and attendance. As Lead Firefighters, incumbents are assigned additional responsibilities against payment of a monthly allowance equivalent to two increments at the point reached in the salary scale. Unions have expressed their appreciation on this

provision which has played a tremendous role in the smooth running of the MFRS.

- 40.2.8 For this review, they proposed the creation of a grade of Lead Firefighter in line with what exists internationally. After examining the request, the Bureau is recommending in that direction.

### Recommendation 1

- 40.2.9 We recommend the creation of a grade of Lead Firefighter. Appointment thereto should be made by promotion, on the basis of experience and merit, of officers in the grade of Firefighter who reckon at least 15 years' service in a substantive capacity in the grade.**

- 40.2.10 Depending on their posting, incumbents would be required, *inter alia*, to: assist the Sub Fire Officer in the performance of his duties; conduct fire investigation and advise accordingly; take charge of a crew of Firefighters during an emergency as well as for activities in connection with fire safety, community emergency preparedness and training in-house; act as Sector Officer/Command Post in major fire outbreak; perform administrative duties wherever posted; and attend as well as assist in the supervision of change of shift parade, familiarise with all relevant provisions of legislations, Fire Service Orders, Standard Operating Procedures, among others.

- 40.2.11 We also recommend that pending the filling of the post of Lead Firefighter, the existing provision governing the grant of a monthly allowance equivalent to two increments at the salary point reached to the Firefighters should continue to prevail.**

- 40.2.12 We further recommend that, with the creation of the grade of Lead Firefighter, consequential amendments need to be brought to the scheme of service of the grade of Sub Fire Officer.**

### Attending duty during emergencies

- 40.2.13 Firefighters up to the level of Assistant Chief Fire Officer not forming part of the Bank Scheme – Fire Officers but who are required to attend their site of work to cater for normal interventions and emergencies whilst being on leave or off duty, are granted equivalent time-off for the number of hours put in. In the event time-off cannot be granted within a period of four months, the officer is paid an allowance based on his normal hourly rate for every hour put in. As this arrangement is fit for its purpose, we are maintaining it.

### Recommendation 2

- 40.2.14 We recommend that officers of the Firefighter Cadre, from the rank of Firefighter to Assistant Chief Fire Officer, who do not form part of the Bank Scheme – Fire Officers and who are required to attend their site of work to cater for normal interventions and emergencies whilst being on**

leave or off duty, should be granted equivalent time-off for the number of hours put in. In the event time-off cannot be granted within a period of four months, the officer should be paid an allowance based on his normal hourly rate for every hour put in.

### Work Related Allowances

40.2.15 Work Related Allowances are paid to officers of the Firefighter Cadre based on their posting, nature of work, and/or possession of additional training/qualifications/skills/competencies. Given their validity, we are maintaining the allowances whilst revising their quantum, wherever applicable.

### Recommendation 3

40.2.16 We recommend that the quantum of the Work Related Allowances should be as per the table below:

Allowance	Payable to	Amount (Rs)
Trainer's Allowance	Qualified officers possessing the necessary skills, as approved by the Chief Fire Officer and who are posted in the Training Unit to act as Trainer.	1700 per month
Special Duty Allowance	Firefighter Cadre posted in the Specialised Units for performing specific duties of a specialised nature.	A monthly allowance equivalent to two increments at the point reached in their respective salary scale.
Risk Allowance	Officers of the Firefighter Cadre up to Assistant Chief Fire Officer.	A monthly allowance equivalent to one and a half increments at the initial point of their respective salary scale, subject to a maximum of Rs 1045.

Allowance	Payable to	Amount (Rs)
Physical Training Instructors' Allowance	Officers of the MFRS who have successfully followed the Physical Training Instructors Certificate Course of the Mauritius Institute of Education and who act as Physical Training Instructor.	A monthly allowance equivalent to one increment at the point reached in their respective salary scale.
Maintenance and Repair Allowance	Officers of the Firefighter Cadre who perform maintenance and repair duties in respect of radio telephone equipment and breathing apparatus.	445 per month
Allowance to drive Heavy Specialised Vehicles	Officers possessing the Heavy Vehicle Driver's Licence and who are designated to drive heavy specialised vehicles.	A monthly allowance equivalent to one increment at the initial point of their respective salary scale.
Night Duty Allowance	<p>(i) Officers of the Firefighter Cadre who effectively perform night shift.</p> <p>(ii) Officers of the Firefighter Cadre up to Assistant Chief Fire Officer who perform day duty but are called upon to work at night.</p>	Night Duty Allowance equivalent to 25% of the normal rate per hour for hours between 2300 hours and 0500 hours

**Additional duties of Firefighter Cadre pursuant to amendment to the MFRS Act 2013**

40.2.17 In addition to attending to fire and other emergencies, officers of the Firefighter Cadre provide pre-hospital emergency care and life support to injured persons and equally rescue trapped people and animals, amongst others. This amendment was brought in the MFRS Act 2013. To compensate for the evolution in the work complexity, Management has requested for a review of the salary of the Firefighter Cadre. As mentioned in the previous PRB Report, the Bureau once again wishes to point out that **these elements have been taken into consideration in arriving at the salaries recommended for the grades.**

**Pregnant Officers of the Firefighter Cadre**

40.2.18 A specific provision exists to safeguard the health of pregnant officers of the Firefighter Cadre. We are, in this Report, enhancing this provision.

**Recommendation 4**

40.2.19 **We recommend that:**

- (i) **Management considers the advisability, to the extent possible, of relieving pregnant officers of the Firefighter Cadre from performing extra hours or night shift or duties that involve continuous standing for at least three months before their confinement; and**
- (ii) **Notwithstanding the above, where the health of the officers or that of their unborn child may be at risk, Management may, on a case-to-case basis, relieve the officers from such duties at any point in time during the pregnancy.**

**Bank Scheme – Fire Officers**

40.2.20 Under the Bank Scheme – Fire Officers, an allowance is granted to officers in the grades of Firefighter, Sub Fire Officer and Station Fire Officer who are recalled for duty whilst on leave or off duty. A request was made by Unions to extend this allowance up to the level of Divisional Fire Officer. Management views that the purpose of this Scheme is to palliate any shortage of staff at operational level. **The Bureau reiterates that Management should conduct an HRP exercise to assess the rightsizing of staff.** We are providing the revised quantum of the allowance.

**Recommendation 5**

40.2.21 **We recommend that the allowance payable to officers in the grades of Firefighter, Sub Fire Officer and Station Fire Officer who form part of the Bank Scheme – Fire Officers and who are recalled for duty whilst on leave or off duty to perform in emergencies or at private premises regarding fire prevention or to palliate any shortage of staff, should be as stipulated in the Table below for the first three hours put in and thereafter on a *pro rata* basis for any additional hour put in:**

Grade	Amount (First 3 hours) (Rs)
Firefighter	745
Sub Fire Officer	805
Station Fire Officer	870

### Recruitment of Retired Fire Officers on sessional basis

40.2.22 To cope with the increasing workload, Management has proposed the recruitment of retired Fire Officers on a sessional basis. According to them, the retired Fire Officers have acquired relevant knowledge and experience and can effectively contribute in: conducting fire safety awareness campaigns in schools, workplaces and communities; delivering training sessions on fire safety and emergency preparedness schemes; and providing expertise in fire prevention and safety measures. They reported that this practice would enable the MFRS to make effective use of the Fire Officers in post for operational duties. To encourage the sharing of knowledge, we are making a provision for the employment of retired Fire Officers.

### Recommendation 6

40.2.23 We recommend that retired officers of the Firefighter Cadre who are employed on a sessional basis for: conducting fire safety awareness campaigns in schools, workplaces and communities; delivering training sessions on fire safety and emergency preparedness schemes; and providing expertise in fire prevention and safety measures, should be paid an allowance of Rs 870 per session of three hours and thereafter be paid on a *pro rata* basis for any additional hour put in.

### Rent Allowance

### Recommendation 7

40.2.24 We recommend that officers of the MFRS who do not occupy government quarters, should be eligible for the ensuing monthly Rent Allowance:

Grade	Amount (Rs)
Firefighter	770
Sub Fire Officer	830
Station Fire Officer	855

Grade	Amount (Rs)
Senior Station Fire Officer	960
Divisional Fire Officer	1060
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Deputy Chief Fire Officer	1240
Chief Fire Officer	2025

### Early Retirement Scheme

40.2.25 In view of the nature of duties performed by officers of the Disciplined Forces, a specific provision exists for their early retirement. As this provision remains valid, we are replicating same.

### Recommendation 8

40.2.26 We recommend that officers of the Firefighter Cadre who have been appointed as from 01 July 2008 should be:

- (c) allowed to retire on a proportionate pension after completing 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> years of service; and
- (d) eligible to earn pension at an enhanced rate of 1/414<sup>th</sup> of pensionable emoluments for each additional month of service to enable them to qualify for full pension after completing 34<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years of service.

40.2.27 We also recommend that officers in post as at 30 June 2008 should continue to benefit from the Early Retirement Scheme applicable as at that date.

### Medical Examination

40.2.28 To ensure the fitness of officers of the Firefighter Cadre, Management is required to make necessary arrangements for them to undergo a medical examination on a yearly basis. However, in view of their regular exposure to fire which may adversely impact their health, Management has, as a preventive measure for early detection of any disease, requested to review the time frame for the medical examination. We are recommending in this direction.

### Recommendation 9

40.2.29 We recommend that Management should make necessary arrangements for officers of the Firefighter Cadre to undergo a medical examination, at such frequency deemed necessary, to ensure their fitness for the job.

### Posting of Officers on a rotational basis

40.2.30 With a view to enabling the Fire Officers to be polyvalent and enhance their knowledge and competencies, the Bureau, in its successive Reports recommended the posting of these officers on a rotational basis to different operational units in the MFRS. It has been reported that some officers, by way of their posting, are deprived of certain benefits that accrue to the grade. For equity and fairness, **the Bureau reiterates that Management should ensure that the posting of Fire Officers in specific units is carried out on a rotational basis to enable them to enhance their knowledge and skills.**

### Officers posted to Agalega on a Tour of Service

40.2.31 A Fire and Rescue Service has been set up in Agalega to ensure fire prevention measures relating to the project of the construction of an airstrip and other amenities therein. Consequently, officers of the Firefighter Cadre posted in Agalega are eligible for a monthly allowance for providing a 24-hour coverage. We are revising this allowance.

### Recommendation 10

40.2.32 **We recommend the payment of a monthly allowance of Rs 5775 to officers of the Firefighter Cadre posted to Agalega on a Tour of Service for providing 24-hour coverage and effectively working over and above their normal working hours.**

### Special Provision for officers of the Disciplined Forces working on shift

40.2.33 Officers of the MFRS operating on shift often forego their casual leave to ensure the operational efficiency of the organisation. With a view to compensating them for the untaken casual leaves, the Bureau in the last review, introduced a specific provision for officers in the grades of Firefighter up to Station Fire Officer who effectively work on shift to be refunded annually their unutilised casual leave up to a maximum of six days at the rate of 1/66 of their last monthly salary per day in the corresponding year. As this provision is still relevant, we are replicating it.

### Recommendation 11

40.2.34 **We recommend that officers in the grades of Firefighter up to Station Fire Officer who effectively work on shift, should, up to the next Overall Review of Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Service in the Public Sector, be refunded annually their unutilised casual leave up to a maximum of six days at the rate of 1/66 of their last monthly salary per day in the corresponding year.**

40.2.35 **We further recommend that unutilised casual leave in respect of those officers who proceed on retirement or pass away while in service should be refunded on a *pro rata* basis in that particular year.**

**Once-in-a-Career Performance Bonus****Recommendation 12**

**40.2.36** We recommend that officers in the grades of Firefighter up to Senior Station Fire Officer, who have never benefitted from the payment of the Performance Bonus in their career, should be paid a 'Once-in-a-Career Performance Bonus' equivalent to 12 times the value of one increment at the point reached in their respective salary scale provided that they have:

- (iv) served for a period of at least 10 years in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service;
- (v) been consistently efficient and effective in their performance as evidenced by their Performance Appraisal Report during the preceding two years; and
- (vi) not been adversely reported upon on ground of conduct.

**MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE****SALARY SCHEDULE**

<b>Salary Code</b>	<b>Salary Scale and Grade</b>
07 000 110	<b>Rs 142000</b> Chief Fire Officer
07 087 103	<b>Rs 71700 x 1900 - 75500 x 2250 - 86750 x 2500 - 94250 x 2750 - 102500 x 3750 - 110000 x 4000 - 114000</b> Deputy Chief Fire Officer
07 072 090	<b>Rs 49000 x 1100 - 54500 x 1450 - 58850 x 1750 - 62350 x 1850 - 67900 x 1900 - 75500 x 2250 - 77750</b> Assistant Chief Fire Officer
07 064 083	<b>Rs 41080 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000 x 1100 - 54500 x 1450 - 58850 x 1750 - 62350 x 1850 - 64200</b> Divisional Fire Officer
07 060 080	<b>Rs 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000 x 1100 - 54500 x 1450 - 58850</b> Senior Station Fire Officer

Salary Code	Salary Scale and Grade
07 053 077	<b>Rs 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000 x 1100 - 54500</b> Station Fire Officer
07 051 074	<b>Rs 32190 x 425 - 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000 x 1100 - 51200</b> Sub Fire Officer
07 050 073	<b>Rs 31765 x 425 - 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000 x 1100 - 50100</b> Lead Firefighter (New Grade)
07 039 071	<b>Rs 27905 x 320 - 28865 x 350 - 30965 x 400 - 31765 x 425 - 33040 QB 33600 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 47950</b> Firefighter
25 054 072	<b>Rs 33600 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 46900 x 1050 - 49000</b> Workshop Supervisor
25 046 069	<b>Rs 30265 x 350 - 30965 x 400 - 31765 x 425 - 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 39140 x 970 - 45930</b> Foreman
25 028 061	<b>Rs 24545 x 300 - 26945 x 320 - 28865 x 350 - 30965 x 400 - 31765 x 425 - 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290 x 925 - 38215</b> Automobile Electrician General Assistant Mason Motor Mechanic Panel Beater Plumber and Pipe Fitter Welder
24 027 060	<b>Rs 24245 x 300 - 26945 x 320 - 28865 x 350 - 30965 x 400 - 31765 x 425 - 33040 x 560 - 35840 x 725 - 37290</b> Driver

Salary Code	Salary Scale and Grade
24 020 050	<b>Rs 22175 x 270 - 22445 x 300 - 26945 x 320 - 28865 x 350 - 30965 x 400 - 31765</b> Handy Worker
24 001 047	<b>Rs 17975 x 175 - 18500 x 200 - 18900 x 225 - 20925 x 250 - 22175 x 270 - 22445 x 300 - 26945 x 320 - 28865 x 350 - 30615</b> General Worker

