

Article 78.

State Fire and Rescue Commission.

§ 58-78-1. State Fire and Rescue Commission created; membership.

(a) There is created the State Fire and Rescue Commission of the Department, which shall be composed of 15 voting members to be appointed as follows:

- (1) The State Fire Marshal shall appoint 12 members, two from nominations submitted by the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, one from nominations submitted by the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs, one from nominations submitted by the Professional Firefighters of North Carolina Association, one from nominations submitted by the North Carolina Society of Fire Service Instructors, one from nominations submitted by the North Carolina Fire Marshal's Association, two from nominations submitted by the North Carolina Association of Rescue and Emergency Medical Services, Inc., one from nominations submitted by the North Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators, one mayor or other elected city official nominated by the President of the League of Municipalities, one county commissioner nominated by the President of the Association of County Commissioners, and one from the public at-large.
- (2) The Governor shall appoint one member from the public at large.
- (3) The General Assembly shall appoint two members from the public at large, one upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to G.S. 120-121, and one upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate pursuant to G.S. 120-121.

Public members may not be employed in State government.

(b) Of the members initially appointed by the Commissioner, the nominees of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association and the nominees of the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs and the nominees of the Professional Firefighters of North Carolina Association and of the North Carolina Association of Rescue and Emergency Medical Services, Inc., shall serve three-year terms; the nominees from the North Carolina Society of Fire Service Instructors, the North Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators and the North Carolina Fire Marshal's Association shall serve two-year terms; and the mayor or other elected city official, the county commissioner, and the member from the public at large shall serve one-year terms. The Governor's initial appointee shall serve a three-year term. The General Assembly's initial appointees shall serve two-year terms. Thereafter all terms shall be for three years.

(c) Vacancies shall be filled by the original appointer in the same manner as the original appointment was made, except that vacancies in the appointments made by the General Assembly shall be filled in accordance with G.S. 120-122.

(d) Appointed members shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified.

(e) The following State officials, or their designees, shall serve by virtue of their offices as nonvoting members of the Commission: the State Fire Marshal, the Commissioner of Labor, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Public Safety, the Secretary of Environmental Quality, and the President of the Department of Community Colleges.

(f) Members of the Commission shall receive per diem and necessary travel and subsistence allowances in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 138-5 or G.S. 138-6, as appropriate. (1977, c. 1064, s. 1; 1981, c. 791, ss. 1, 2; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1191, ss. 21, 22; 1983, c. 840, ss. 1, 2; 1985, c. 757, s. 167(b), (d); 1989, c. 727, s. 218; c. 750, s. 1; 1991, c. 720, s.

47; 1993, c. 155, s. 1; 1995, c. 490, s. 20; 1997-116, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.123; 2011-145, s. 19.1(g); 2015-39, s. 1; 2015-241, s. 14.30(v); 2016-51, s. 6; 2023-151, s. 11.8(a).)

§ 58-78-5. State Fire and Rescue Commission – Powers and duties.

- (a) The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:
- (1) To formally adopt a State Fire Education and Training Plan, a State Master Plan for Fire Prevention and Control, a Rescue Training Plan, and a State Master Plan for Rescue Services;
 - (2) To assist and participate with State and local fire prevention and control agencies in the improvement of fire prevention and control in North Carolina and to work with State and local rescue agencies to improve rescue services in the State;
 - (3) To increase the professional skills of fire protection and fire-fighting personnel and rescue personnel;
 - (4) To encourage public support for fire prevention and control and rescue services;
 - (5) To accept gifts, devises, grants, matching funds, and other considerations from private or governmental sources for use in promoting its work;
 - (6) To make grants for use in pursuing its objectives, under such conditions as are deemed to be necessary and such other powers as may be necessary to carry out the State's duties with respect to all grants to the State by the United States Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy; and all support programs brought into the State by these two entities shall be coordinated and controlled by the Commission;
 - (7) To make studies and recommendations for the improvement of fire prevention and control and rescue services in the State and to make studies and recommendations for the coordination and implementation of effective fire prevention and control and rescue services and for effective fire prevention and control and rescue services education;
 - (8) To set objectives and priorities for the improvement of fire prevention and control and rescue services throughout the State;
 - (9) To advise State and local interests of opportunities for securing federal assistance for fire prevention and control and rescue services and for improving fire prevention and control and rescue services administration and planning within the State of North Carolina;
 - (10) To assist State agencies and institutions of local government and combinations thereof in the preparation and processing of applications for financial aid and to support fire prevention and control, rescue services, and planning and administration;
 - (11) To encourage and assist coordination at the federal, State and local government levels in the preparation and implementation of fire prevention and control and rescue services administrative improvements and crime reduction plans;
 - (12) To apply for, receive, disburse and audit the use of funds received from any public and private agencies and instrumentalities for fire prevention and control and rescue services, their administration and plans therefor;
 - (13) To enter into monitoring and evaluating the results of contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to the discharge of its assigned responsibilities;

- (14) To provide technical assistance to State and local fire prevention and control and rescue agencies in developing programs for improvement;
- (14a) To serve as a central office for the collection and dissemination of information relative to fire service and rescue service activities and programs in State government. All State government agencies conducting fire service and rescue service related programs and activities shall report the status of these programs and activities to the Commission on a quarterly basis and they shall also report to the Commission any new programs or changes to existing programs as they are implemented;
- (14b) To establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire service and rescue service personnel, and to issue, deny, suspend, revoke or take similar actions with respect to certifications issued by the Commission of minimum professional qualifications established under this subdivision.
- (14c) To prepare an annual report to the Governor on its fire prevention and control activities and plans, rescue activities and plans, and to recommend legislation concerning fire prevention and control and rescue services;
- (14d) To reimburse the members of the Commission's certification board, in accordance with G.S. 138-5, for travel and subsistence expenses incurred by them in their duties as certification board officers; and
- (15) To take such other actions as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to carry out its assigned duties and responsibilities.
- (16) To provide oversight for the workers' compensation benefits administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal under G.S. 58-87-10, to create a Volunteer Safety Workers' Compensation Board to assist it in performing this duty, and to reimburse the members of the Commission's Volunteer Safety Workers' Compensation Board in accordance with G.S. 138-5 for travel and subsistence expenses incurred by them.
- (17) To adopt, modify, or repeal any rules and regulations necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Article.

(b) Each State agency involved in fire prevention and control or rescue related activities shall furnish the executive director of the Commission such information as may be required to carry out the intent of this section. (1977, c. 1064, s. 1; 1981, c. 791, ss. 3, 4; 1985, c. 757, s. 167(b); 1989, c. 750, s. 1; 1993, c. 321, s. 41; 1995, c. 507, s. 7.21A(c); 2011-284, s. 58; 2015-39, s. 2; 2019-179, s. 8; 2023-134, s. 30.3(c); 2023-151, s. 11.9.)

§ 58-78-10. State Fire and Rescue Commission – Organization; rules and regulations; meetings.

(a) Organization. – The Commission shall elect from its voting members a chair and vice-chair to serve as provided by the rules adopted by the Commission.

(b) Rules and Regulations. – The Commission shall adopt such rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the laws of this State as may be required by the federal government for programs and grants-in-aid for fire protection, firefighting, and rescue purposes which may be made available to the State by the federal government. The Commission shall be the single State agency responsible for establishing policy, planning and carrying out the State's duties with respect to all programs of and grants to the State by the United States Fire Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency. In respect to such programs and grants, the Commission shall have authority

to review, approve and maintain general oversight to the State plan and its implementation, including subgrants and allocations to local units of government and local fire prevention and control and rescue agencies.

All actions taken by the Commission in the performance of its duties shall be implemented and administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

(c) Meetings. – The Commission shall meet quarterly. Seven members shall constitute a quorum. All meetings shall be open to the public. (1977, c. 1064, s. 1; 1981, c. 791, s. 5; 1983, c. 840, s. 3; 1985, c. 757, s. 167(b), (c), (e), (f); 1989, c. 750, s. 1; 2015-39, s. 3; 2023-151, s. 11.10.)

§ 58-78-15. State Fire and Rescue Commission; staff.

(a) The State Fire Marshal shall serve as the executive director of the Commission with direct responsibilities to the Commission.

(b) Upon request by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, personnel of the Department shall serve as staff to the Commission; provided, however, the Office of the State Fire Marshal may also serve as staff to the Commission in the discretion of the State Fire Marshal. The Department or Office shall provide the clerical and professional services required by the Commission and, at the direction of the Commission, shall develop and administer the State Master Plan for Fire Prevention and Control, the State Fire Education and Training Plan, the Rescue Training Plan, the State Master Plan for Rescue Services, and any additional related programs as may be established by, or assigned to, the Commission.

(c) In addition to the other duties prescribed under this section, the State Fire Marshal shall also serve as the State Fire Training Director. (1977, c. 1064, s. 1; 1985, c. 757, s. 167(b), (i); 1989, c. 750, s. 1; 2023-151, s. 11.11.)

§ 58-78-20. State Fire and Rescue Commission – Fiscal affairs.

All funds for the operation of the Commission and its staff shall be appropriated to the Office of the State Fire Marshal in the Department. All such funds shall be held in a separate or special account on the books of the Department with a separate financial designation or code number to be assigned by the Department of Administration or its agent. Expenditures for staff salaries and operating expenses shall be made in the same manner as expenditures of any other Department funds. The Office of the State Fire Marshal may hire such additional personnel as may be necessary to handle the work of the Commission, within the limits of funds appropriated to it by the State and made available to it by the federal government. (1957, c. 269, s. 1; 1977, c. 1064, s. 1; 1985, c. 757, s. 167(b), (c); 1989, c. 750, s. 1; 2023-151, s. 11.12.)