

**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



**FESTIVE/SUMMER SEASON
CONTINGENCY PLAN**

2020 – 2021 Summer period

Preamble: Festive and summer season contingency plans.

The City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Service is gearing up and preparing for the Festive/Summer season period to provide fire-fighting, rescue and fire prevention activities to the communities of Cape Town on a continuous basis.

The past 6 months COVID lockdown levels were successfully navigated and the service continued unabated throughout the pandemic period. Safety protocols have been put in place to ensure continued delivery over the festive/summer period.

A total of approximately 900 professional firefighters could be called upon for major incidents, working on a 3 shift rotational shift system, where between 200 and 240 firefighters are on duty every 24-hour period, 365 days of the year. They are based at our 32 fire stations spread across the City.

The past good winter rains have assisted in the rapid re-generation and growth of the indigenous (as well as alien) vegetation, which could project into a busier than normal summer period. Elevated temperatures during summer give rise to more rapidly spreading wildfires, and wind conditions during the Cape Summer season are generally more intense.

Therefore, the Service will strive to increase its awareness and manage its response capabilities over this period based on revised fire management practices, to provide the continued service to the community of Cape Town through the utilization of on-duty operational firefighting staff as well as the existing Fire Safety Awareness contingent of staff.

In order to achieve the goal of protecting the City of Cape Town and its residents, and besides the regular provision of service, the following is planned to address the added risks during the Festive and summer period:

1. Personnel availability

- a. The City's professional firefighters will be on duty and/or standby on a 24 hour basis at the 32 fire stations across the city.
- b. Leave over the festive period will be managed and minimized as far as possible to ensure that the service is able to operate as optimally as possible.
- c. 29 Learner Firefighter recruits are due to be deployed towards November to a number of designated fire stations to bolster the current available firefighting staff on duty per shift.
- d. 120 Seasonal firefighters (in essence specially trained wildland firefighting crews) are due to be assessed and will be ready for

deployment on or before 1st December 2020 through to April 2021. Their main function will be to assist professional fire-fighters with fighting veld fires, and veld-fire management and prevention methods.

- e. Rescue Diving units with four rescue rubber ducks and jet ski's with diving crews are available at Milnerton, Roeland Street, Fish Hoek and Strand fire stations to attend to and assist with diving or sea rescue related incidents.
- f. All dayshift uniformed staff are on a standby roster for after-hours responses and support functions where they are divided into IMT's (Incident Management Teams) to provide Incident Management functions at incidents which escalate beyond the control of first, second or third arriving fire service units.
- g. Workshop personnel are placed on a standby roster to provide immediate back-up service in the event of unforeseen vehicle breakdowns

2. Fire Safety and Fire Safety Education

- a. The Fire and Life Safety inspectorate and Education awareness personnel will continue (within the necessary Covid related regulations) to increase their inspections and campaigns at permitted and organized festive season events and venues to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.
- b. Concentrated efforts to inspect at risk buildings will be undertaken before the summer closure of industry and commerce to minimize the threat of fire at these establishments, utilizing on-duty operational fire-fighters where possible.
- c. Strict control and response to reports of fire hazards and the proactive identification and serving of notices for the clearing of fire hazards and or fire-breaks between at-risk properties.
- d. The annual circum-peninsula firebreak system (a joint initiative between the City and Table Mountain National Park), which has been a long-standing operation, will be implemented and the firebreak will undergo maintenance and clearing once again prior to the anticipated high summer period.
- e. Landowners (particularly those on the urban edge), will also be advised to maintain their properties, prevent them from becoming overgrown, and ensure they maintain firebreaks on their properties as well, to minimize any potential spread of fire.

3. Assistance from other services

- a. The City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Service, Table Mountain National Parks [(and their affiliated support agencies such as Volunteer Wildfire Services, Working on Fire, NCC (Nature Conservation Corporation)] and the qualified Disaster Management volunteers will be on standby and available to work closely together during the summer period.
 - b. The City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Service contracted helicopter services for aerial firefighting operations is available from 1st December through to April next year. The two Bell Huey helicopters will operate from the Newlands Forest Base accompanied by a Spotter aircraft based at Stellenbosch airfield.
 - c. Table Mountain National Park's contract helicopter will also operate from Newlands Base, and mutual assistance between the City and Parks helicopters will prevail during the summer period.
 - d. Should the aircraft be grounded for any reason, the services of other providers (SANDF) will have to be sourced, and normal ground operations will have to be employed for fighting of vegetation fires.
 - e. Signed Mutual Aid agreements are in place between the City and some neighboring District Municipalities i.e. West Coast District Municipality, Cape Winelands District Municipality, Overberg District Municipality and Eden District Municipality and other designated services in the event of major incidents requiring assistance.
 - f. Increased pre-determined responses of vehicles and resources to identified at-risk areas such as Informal settlements, the surrounding mountains and their urban fringe, and other identified risks will be implemented.
4. Pro-active servicing and checking of all radio and telecommunication equipment prior to the season is undertaken to ensure minimal effective communications maintenance.
5. All firefighting vehicles and equipment are checked, tested and maintained on a regular basis to ensure continuous and effective fire-fighting capabilities.
6. The EPIC System will be used to ensure all incidents responded to are logged, recorded and available for scrutiny at any point post fire or emergency situations.

The above measures are in place on a regular basis during the year as a norm, except for the availability of aerial firefighting support and the seasonal firefighting crews, which is stepped up over the festive and summer period.

Although the water shortage crisis has largely been negated by the good rains during the winter period, our service remains water conscious, and as a result, the following will continue to be observed in the service to ensure the impact on water usage is minimized:-

1. Vegetation fires which pose no threat to any life or property, will be managed with the use of minimum water usage and other alternate methods of fire management.
2. Water storage tanks (which have been installed in all our fire stations) will be utilized as far as possible for refilling our fire engines before potable water is used. However, if an extreme emergency is unfolding, potable water will be used.
3. CAFS Units (Compressed Air Foam Systems) which reduces water usage by as much as 80%, will be used more regularly to combat specific types of fires which occur across the City.
4. The use of alternate water sources, such as sea water and other open water sources, will also be utilized to minimize the impact on water usage. Once again, this will only be used in extreme emergencies to minimize the impact on equipment and personnel.