

**MINISTRY FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**602 Mr T R Majola (DA) to ask the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs**

With regard to fire fighters at the Primrose Fire Station situated in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, what (a) is the (i) optimal and (ii) actual number of full-time fire fighters, (b) number of the full-time fire fighters have passed the (i) final examinations of the SA Emergency Services Institute, (ii) written examination and (c) full set of practical evaluations and (c) total number of reservists does the fire station currently have? **NW725E**

**REPLY:**

1. The information requested by the Honourable Member was obtained by the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) from the City of Ekurhuleni (CoE). Table 1 below outlines the relevant details:

**Optimal and actual number of firefighters at the Primrose Fire Station**

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| **Name of the Fire Station** | 1. **(i) optimal**
 | 1. **(ii) Actual number of full-time Fire Fighters**
 | 1. **(i) & (ii)**

**Number of fulltime Firefighters who passed final written examination of the Southern African Emergency Services Institute (SAESI)**  | 1. **Number of fulltime Firefighters who completed practical evaluations**
 | 1. **Total Number of Reservists**
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| **Primrose**  | 37 | 37 | All completed Fire Fighter 1 & 2  | All completed practical components for firefighting and Hazmat Awareness & Operational | 5 |

The fire station has thirty-seven firefighters placed in four different shift systems. Each shift consists of a Shift Manager who reports to the Station Manager from the Operations Section. The station also has five reservists and two learnership students placed accordingly within different shifts. It is important to note that across all fire stations within the CoE, each operational and fully functional firefighter must be in possession of the basic qualifications required for one to be a Firefighter i.e. (a) Firefighter I and II, (b) Hazardous Material Awareness and Operations and the (c) Basic Ambulance Assistant (BAA) course. Firefighter I and II, Hazardous Material Awareness and Operations are International Fire Services Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) accreditation courses under the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Service Standard 1001 and 472 respectively. Locally, these courses are conducted at Boksburg Fire Station Training Academy under the CoE which is accredited by IFSAC. These courses include both theoretical and practical aspects of fire fighting. Individual firefighters are at liberty to study through a block course system with Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria to obtain a National Diploma in Fire Technology, B-Tech in Fire Technology and upgrade through to a Masters qualification.

Firefighting is a profession which is one of the most stressful, physically demanding and hazardous occupation. Thus, Firefighters must master a complex mix of three core competencies namely: foundational knowledge, physical skill and work experience to be successful in their occupation. The nature of work carried out by firefighters requires not only adequate training when entering the profession but also continuous professional development to ensure that firefighters stay abreast with the constant technological changes in their working environment.

It is important to note that training of firefighters must be benchmarked against globally accepted standards. Within the South African context, the Southern African Emergency Services Institute (SAESI) is accredited to provide occupational training for firefighters by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), which is based in the United States of America (USA). IFSAC is a non-profit, peer-driven, self-governing system of both fire service certifying entities and higher education fire-related degree programs. IFSAC's mission is to plan and administer a high-quality, uniformly delivered accreditation system with an international scope.

Thus, IFSAC courses which are provided by SAESI such as Firefighter I and II, Hazmat Awareness and Operational are utilised by fire services in South Africa to recruit entry-level firefighters. These courses are based on the American National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards and are utilised both in the USA and several other countries for the basic training of firefighters. The Local Government Sector Education and Training (LGSETA), has also developed a qualification known as the Fire and Rescue Operations, Level 4 in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on the same NFPA Standards. Firefighters must obtain formal qualifications in order to progress in their careers within the fire services.

Qualifications in Fire Technology are currently provided by the Tshwane University of Technology (TuT) and includes a National Diploma, BTECH Degree and Masters Degree. These are the qualifications that are also utilised by fire services to recruit Senior Fire Officers in the country. The NDMC is finalising the review of the Fire Brigade Services Act, 1987 and as part of the revised legislation and policy framework, a national fire services education and training strategy will be developed to guide the provision of training in the fire service.

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