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BOKOBUKA News



NFA CEO: John O'Connor

Ni sa bula vinaka and welcome to the first issue of our very own Electronic Newsletter (or E-Newsletter).

The purpose of producing this E-Newsletter is to communicate with our staff, stakeholders and members of the community.

This year alone NFA has achieved a lot in the enhancement of our human capital capacity and service delivery to our communities. Some of our notable achievements this year are:

- Decrease in the number of structural fire incidents as compared to last year.
- Enhancement of our individual human capital capacity building as many of our staff have undergone fire fighting and emergency rescue training with overseas fire services in the last ten months.
- In house training courses have been conducted on a monthly basis by the training department with the assistance of registered trainers and

institutions to continue up-skilling NFA's human resource capabilities. It is with these intentions that the need arose to publish our E-Newsletter on a quarterly basis to build a strong communication network with our staff and stakeholders and endeavour to keep everyone informed about our current developments.

As we commemorate the inauguration of our first E-Newsletter, I would like to thank you all: the staff of NFA, our stakeholders and members of the various communities for pursuing a proactive approach towards fire safety. To-date the number of structural fires stands at eighty-one as compared to ninety-nine for the same period last year from January to November. This is a huge reduction in comparison to previous years fire statistics.

We are able to achieve this reduction as a result of our proactive approach and enforcement of compliance with fire safety. NFA has also started fire safety inspections in all the municipalities to ensure businesses comply with fire safety standards in order to minimize the impact of fires on our community and national economy.

With Christmas and New Year festivities now upon us, let us all be more proactive and I would like to remind you all of the importance of fire safety. It is imperative that we take extra care and pay more attention to fire safety and help minimize fire incidents from happening at our homes, businesses and communities.

Until the next issue of our E-Newsletter, I wish you all a Fire Safe Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Historical Milestone for NFA

The National Fire Authority (NFA) signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the Department for Fire and Disaster Handling of the Jakarta Provincial Government of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta on 16th October 2012.

NFA Chairman – Commander Kean said: “this is a historical milestone achievement for the Government of Fiji and the NFA in its efforts to bring about appropriate reforms into the NFA for the improvement and enhancement of fire and rescue service delivery to the people of Fiji”.

He said “the Framework for Development Cooperation Agreement signed by our two Governments in Bali on 27th May 2011, paved the way for such partnership cooperation as part of Government's ‘Look North’ strategy for the development and enhancement of Fiji's essential services”.

“This LOI means the start of a new journey for NFA in fostering their partnership with the Jakarta Fire Service. The establishment of this technical cooperation and assistance arrangement between our two organizations will not only enhance Fiji's Fire Service but foster partnership relations with Indonesia in the exchange of technical knowledge and skills, training and capacity building opportunities”.

Commander Kean acknowledged the great support and assistance by the Government of Indonesia, the Indonesian

Embassy in Fiji and the Fiji Embassy in Jakarta which led up to the historical signing of this LOI.

Head of Department for Fire and Disaster Handling Jakarta, Capital City Government - DR. Paimin Napitupulu highlighted that the event is also a historical achievement for the Jakarta Fire Service as this is its first bilateral engagement with a Fire Service from the Pacific Region.



NFA Chairman, Commander Francis Kean receives LOI from DR. Paimin Napitupulu. Looking on are Fiji's Ambassador to Indonesia, Ratu Seremaia Tui Cavuati and Indonesian Ambassador to Fiji, Mr Aidil Chandra Salim.

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Business fire safety checklist

The building inspections in Cities/Towns has started earlier this month in order to ensure that all commercial, industrial and public premises comply with the fire safety requirements of the National Building Code of Fiji and the Health and Safety at Work Act General Workplace Conditions Regulations.

NFA Chief Executive Officer John O'Connor said: "the main purpose for conducting the fire safety inspections in all building premises is to ensure commercial, industrial and public premises in the cities/towns comply with the fire safety standards and to establish a reasonable level of fire safety and property protection from the hazards created by fire".

"The scope of building inspections cover the construction, maintenance, general house-keeping, storage of combustibles and flammable materials, electrical safety and access and egress facilities".

"This is a proactive approach to fire safety in an effort to minimize the impact of fires and enhance fire safety and preparedness in industrial, commercial and public premises", Mr O'Connor said.

NFA's fire safety building inspections in municipalities starts every year in the month of October and all businesses need to comply with the fire safety requirements of the National Building Code of Fiji and the Health and Safety at Work Act General Workplace Conditions Regulations as a prerequisite for renewal of the annual business licenses.

The NFA Structural Fire Safety Department has developed a self-inspection checklist which business owners can use to ensure fire safety compliance before inspection by NFA officers. This self-inspection checklist will enable business owners to identify and address any possible fire hazards that can lead to fires.



Firefighters inspecting a property in Suva.



A house on fire



Firefighters extinguishing a house fire in Suva.

Fire Safety Self-Inspection Checklist:

Life Safety

- Ability to use exit doors is not hampered by security measures during occupancy.
- Stairway and hallway fire doors are kept in the closed position.
- Stairways and evacuation routes are free and clear of obstructions.
- Fire escape stairs to be in good condition.

Fire Safety Self-Inspection Checklist

- Emergency lighting units operate when tested.
- Exterior emergency exit routes are clear.
- Illuminated exit signs are all lit, not blocked, and can be easily seen.

Fire Protection Equipment

- Portable fire extinguishers are in their proper location and fully charged and tagged.
- Fire hose cabinets are in good order, easily visible and accessible.
- Staff training is conducted regularly and documented.
- Fire detectors are free from obstructions.
- Alarm systems function and are tested regularly.

Housekeeping and Storage

- Rubbish is not left to accumulate in excessive quantities.
- Trash bins are emptied regularly.
- Storage areas are kept clean and orderly.
- Cleaning materials are safely stored.
- Combustible materials are not kept in unprotected areas, such as a crawl space.

Hazardous Liquids

- Flammable/combustible liquids are kept in approved safety containers.
- Flammable/combustible liquids are stored in an approved cabinet.
- Safety storage cabinet vents are clear of obstructions.
- Soiled rags are kept in an approved self-closing waste container.
- Portable fire extinguishers are in their place and of the proper type.

Kindly contact your nearest Fire Station for any assistance or clarification.



Firefighters extinguishing a house fire in Nadi.



Hawaii stint for a Senior Fire Officer

Mr Gopal Reddy attended the Advanced Security Cooperation for Emergency Service course at the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii from the 28th September to the 2nd of November 2012.

Mr Reddy is the first NFA representative chosen to attend this course. He is the Station Officer for the Nadi Fire Station having being appointed in 2009. Last year he was appointed as Acting Divisional Fire Officer Western. NFA CEO John O'Connor acknowledged the valuable assistance by the United States Government in providing such training opportunities for the up-skilling of Fiji's Fire Officers which will enhance NFA's capacity building initiatives. Mr Reddy hails from Uciwai, Nadi.



Mr. Gopal Reddy.

Inferior products, sub-standard foils — a grave concern

The National Fire Authority (NFA) is very concerned that some sub-standard building, electrical and firefighting equipment are being sold at various retail outlets.

NFA raised its concern after it was determined that sub-standard foil was declared dangerous by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce in October 2008 under Section 32 of the Trade Standards and Quality Control Decree 1992.

The sub-standard foils are cheaper but do not comply with the requirement of building code of Fiji for "flammability index of less than 5". These sub-standard foils contribute to the rapid spread of fire in the roofs and ceiling as observed by fire officers.

NFA CEO John O'Connor said sub-standard foils are specified as dangerous goods.

"Building foils consist of two layers of aluminium foil bonded to a high density kraft paper using special adhesives. The type of adhesive determines the flammability of the laminate. The majority of building foils imported into Fiji are not made using fire retardant adhesives.

The most common adhesive used is bitumen, a derivative of petroleum, and therefore highly flammable. Any ignition source would result in the rapid spread of fire", Mr O'Connor said.

He advises those planning to replace existing ceiling foils and/or to build new buildings to buy foils that comply with Fiji's Building Code even though they are more expensive than non-compliant sub-standard foils. Consumers can request Hardware Suppliers to provide labeling or a certificate (MSDS) to confirm the properties and the quality compliance of the foil.

The NFA CEO also highlighted that NFA is working with

FEA and the Ministry of Trade to ensure only quality electrical products which meets the required standards are imported into the country.

"Three commercial fires this year resulted from the tube light melting and causing the fire to spread.

"We also have concerns on the standard of firefighting equipment being imported into the country", Mr O'Connor said.

"NFA is working with Fire Agents to ensure that only quality firefighting equipment which meet the required standards are imported and sold to consumers.

"NFA would like to advise members of the community to contact NFA's Structural Fire Safety Department if they are suspicious that these sub-standard equipment are sold at the various outlets.

Meanwhile Mr O'Connor advises residential owners and in particular the landlords who rent out their residential houses to ensure the safety of their tenants by complying to the minimum fire safety standard.

NFA is also urging property owners who are planning to build new residential flats for tenancy to have their building plans checked by NFA to ensure compliance to fire safety. This can be followed by an inspection when the building is completed.

In recent fire cases, the NFA has found that most of these residential properties did not comply with fire safety standards.

There are inadequate exits available and properties are protected with burglar grills which places tenants in these residential houses and the occupants of the house at a risk of becoming trapped in their residences during the fire", the NFA CEO said.

This is a proactive approach to fire safety in an effort to enhance fire safety and preparedness of our communities", Mr O'Connor said.

Mr O'Connor is urging business and property owners to view cost in relation to compliance to fire safety as an investment, considering the risks associated with fire damage.



Acting Divisional Fire Officer Fire Safety Mr. Pauliasi Tuiwai shows the foil which is dangerous to use.



Fire spreads faster through sub-standard foil.

Firefighter promotion

A total of forty-five officers will be promoted to the senior firefighter ranks following the completion of the senior firefighter training course in July this year.

NFA CEO John O'Connor said the main objective of this training is to instill leadership skills and enhance the fire fighting skills and competency levels of our senior firefighters.

"Firefighters and senior firefighters are in the front-line when fighting fires and likewise attending to emergencies and it is vital that they are properly trained and equipped to be able to effectively and efficiently carry out their duties.

"The NFA is in the process of developing Individual Employee Training and Development Plans which will include training to enhance the skills and competency levels of all our employees as NFA builds its human capital capacity to be able to exceed the expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

Mr O'Connor added that NFA is in the process of transforming itself into a more professional, financially sustainable and efficient organization and NFA can only achieve this goal with a competent, skilled and motivated work force who are passionate, loyal and committed to their individual jobs and to the NFA.

Emergency Medical Training

Central and Eastern Division staff completed the Emergency Medical Activity Instructor Level Training at the Suva Fire Station on November 23.

The training is part of NFA's Human Capital Development to improve the skills and competency of all firefighters and to improve efficiency and the effectiveness of the services delivered by NFA. This is also aligned to Government and NFA's long term plans of providing Ambulance Service at all our fire stations.

As NFA is transforming itself into a more professional, financially sustainable and efficient organization, staff development and training is important to deliver the expected outcomes to the communities.

The two Japanese firefighters:



Firefighters performing the Emergency Medical Activity Instructor Level Training Drill during the final day of the one week course at the Suva Fire Station.

New Fire Tunics for Firefighters

NFA CEO John O'Connor highlighted that the issuance of new fire tunics to all fire firefighters was a milestone in the history of NFA.

"In the past NFA had difficulty in replacing damaged fire tunics because of the high costs. As a result, the firefighters in each station were sharing fire tunics which was unhygienic and a health risk. NFA was able to negotiate and purchase the fire tunics for all the firefighters from Alleasing Company in Australia at a total cost of \$177,000 (Fijian Dollars) which resulted in a savings to NFA considering that the cost of a new fire tunic is more than \$3,000.00 in the market.

NFA CEO highlighted that the association with the supplier, Alleasing Company was a blessing for NFA and allowed NFA to buy more than 2000 pieces of fire tunics at a very reasonable price. The fire tunics comply with international safety standards.

"This is the first step in the transformation of NFA. We are working at purchasing other important firefighting equipment

"NFA will commence more skill and competency training for all categories of employees in NFA which will also include financial management, managerial and leadership training.



Senior firefighters with their certificates following the completion of the senior firefighter training course.

Chief Instructor Mr. Masafumi Okayama and Mr. Hiroki Maeda are in the country for four weeks to conduct this training.

Similar training is also being provided for the Northern Division and Western Division firefighters.

NFA is grateful to the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Matsusaka Fire Department for facilitating this training.

NFA also wishes to acknowledge and thank the Prime Minister and the Government for the announcement in the 2013 National Budget that Government will assist in the funding of Emergency Ambulance Service with an operation grant of \$400,000.

"The challenge now is for NFA to uplift its Emergency Ambulance Service and deliver services which are comparable to International Standard.

to boost the capacity and capability of NFA to allow our fire fighters to respond effectively and efficiently to any emergencies", Mr O'Connor said.



New fire tunics have been issued to all firefighters.

Meet the staff



Acting Chief Fire Officer: Mr. Qionilau Moceitai

Mr Moceitai is NFA's Deputy Chief Fire Officer. He was appointed to the post of Acting Chief Fire Officer in 2011 following the demise of the late Mr Saubulinayau. Mr Moceitai held the post of Divisional Fire Officer Central/

Eastern from 2006 to 2010 when he took up the post of Deputy CFO. Mr Moceitai hails from Vanua Balavu, Lau and is married to Elina,. They have 3 children and 3 grandchildren.



Divisional Fire Officer Northern: Mr. John Pillay

Mr Pillay is the Divisional Fire Officer (DFO) Northern. He was appointed to the Post of Divisional Fire Officer Northern in 2009. Mr Pillay joined the Fire Service in 1979 as a Fire-fighter. Mr Pillay was promoted to the Senior Firefighter rank, Officer in Charge, Station Officer and Divisional Fire Officer Western before his posting to the Labasa Fire Station as DFO North. Mr Pillay is from Namoli, Ba.



Station Officer Taveuni: Mr. Peleki Leweniqila

Mr Leweniqila is the Station Officer Taveuni. Mr Leweniqila joined the Fire Service in 1978 as the Volunteer Firefighter at the Labasa Fire Station. In 1995, Mr Leweniqila was promoted to the Firefighter Position at the Labasa Fire

Sattion. In 2003, Mr Leweniqila was promoted to the Sub-Officer rank at the Levuka Fire Station. In 2009, Mr Leweniqila set up the NFA's Taveuni Fire Station and was appointed to the position of Station Officer Taveuni.



Officer in Charge Tavua: Mr. Mohammed Imran

Mr Imtan is the Officer in Charge Tavua Fire Station. He joined the NFA in 1996 as the Recruit Firefighter at the Ba Fire Station. In 2002, Mr Imram was promoted to the Senior Firefighter rank. In 2009, Mr Imran was pro-

moted as the Officer in Charge of the Tavua Fire Station. Mr Imran is married and has one daughter. Mr Imran is from Narara Village, Rakiraki.



Officer in Charge Rakiraki :Mr. Simione Qiolevu.

Mr Qiolevu joined the Fire Service in 1996. Mr Qiolevu was based at the Savusavu Fire Station for fourteen years. In 2010, Mr Qiolevu was appointed as the Officer in Charge of the Rakiraki Fire Station. Mr Qiolevu is married and

he has two children. Mr Qiolevu is from Vunikoka, Savusavu.



Acting Divisional Fire Officer:Central/ Eastern: Mr. Timoci Nakaruru

Mr Nakaruru joined the NFA in 2000 as the Recruit Firefighter. In 2008, Mr Nakaruru took up the post of Station Officer Fire Safety. Mr Nakaruru is currently NFA's Acting Divisional Fire Officer for the Central/Eastern Division.

Mr Nakaruru is from Dravuvalu, Naceva, Kadavu.

Staff Appointments—Corporate Services



Name: Mr. Anish Prasad
Position: Accountant

Mr Prasad joined the fire service in 2011 as an accountant. Mr Prasad holds Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree in Accounting & Financial Management and Banking & Finance. He brings with him extensive accounting experience after working in a Chartered accounting firm. Prior to joining NFA, Mr Prasad was an accountant for the Price Waterhouse Coopers in Suva. Mr Prasad is from Koronivia, Nausori.



Name: Ms. Lakalaka Vola
Position:Admin Assistant

Ms Vola was appointed to the post of Admin Assistant in September this year. Ms Vola hold Diploma in Business (Office Administration). Ms Vola is from Lakeba, Lau.

Staff Appointments— Operations



Mr. Nacanieli Bakeidaku
Position: Station Officer
Station: Valelevu

Mr Bakeidaku joined the fire service in 1997 at the Suva Fire Station. In 1999, Mr Bakeidaku was posted to the Nausori Fire Station. Mr Bakeidaku was promoted to the Sub-Officer position in 2006 at the Lautoka Fire Station. Mr Bakeidaku is from Daliconi village, Vanuabalavu.



Mr. Navitalai Naivedru
Position: Sub-Officer
Station: Valelevu

Mr Naivedru was promoted to the Sub-Officer position this year. Mr Naivedru joined the NFA in 2000 as a recruit firefighter at the Suva Fire Station. Mr Naivedru is from Vuninidrovu village, Naitasiri.

NFA Supports World Maritime Day

World Maritime Day Celebrations

National Fire Authority (NFA) participated in the World Maritime Day celebrations at the Suva Foreshore on Friday September 28th.

CEO John O'Connor said the Authority plays a vital role in the Maritime Industry and NFA's participation in the World Maritime Day was to raise awareness on fire safety and other emergency services which also included swift water rescue operations.

The World Maritime Day celebrations in Fiji was launched by the Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama.

The theme for this year's World Maritime Day was "IMO 100 Years after the Titanic".

World Maritime Day Celebrations Pictures



Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama at the NFA booth which was set up at the Suva Foreshore during the World Maritime Day Celebrations.



Firefighters performing the rescue drill.



NFA Social

Suva Fire Station staff hosted a morning tea for firefighter Leone Tabuarua who represented the Digicel National sevens side for the first leg of the HSBC Sevens World Series in Australia.



Firefighting course in Labasa.



Diwali celebrations.



FICAC workshop for Central Division.



Smokehouse school visit to the Suva Fire Station.



Skill assessments in Levuka.



Volunteer firefighters during a training.



Leone Tabuarua attacks for Fiji against Tonga in the Gold Coast sevens in Australia last month.

New kid in the block, firefighter Leone Tabuarua was a star for the Digicel national sevens side in their impressive 32-14 win against New Zealand in the final of the Gold Coast Sevens in Australia last month.

The twenty-six year old Tailevu native played an instrumental game for the national side in their comfortable win against New Zealand.

The prolific rover who played for the Fiji Warriors during the International Rugby Board Pacific Cup, Suva Provincial side and the NFA Fire team was one of the five new faces in the national sevens side that played in the first leg of the HSBC Sevens World Series at the Gold Coast, Australia

Profile

Name: Leone Tabuarua

Age: 26

Village: Qelekuro, Namena, Tailevu

Job Position: Firefighter

Favorite drink: Water

Favorite Food: Fish with lolo

Favorite Movie: Lord of the Ring

Favorite Actor/Actress: Leonardo Di Caprio



Fire Central side plays Prison Wardens during the Services 7's tournament pool match at Ratu Cakobau Park.

Successful season for Fire Rugby

Fire rugby team put up a sterling performance in the inaugural Services 7's tournament at Nausori's Ratu Cakobau Park in November. Fire Teams from the Central, Eastern, Western and Northern Divisions participated against Army, Police and Fiji Correctional Services in the two day sevens tourney.

Fire had a successful season this year, the side finished in the top eight in the Suva Rugby Union Escott Shield competition as they went down firing against Navy in the Escott Shield quarter finals.

Fire Team in the Central Division is currently sponsored by Flour Mills of Fiji Limited. FMF sponsored new jerseys for the Suva based Fire Team for the Escott Shield competition and also assisted the team with their kind sponsorship for the Services 7's tournament.



Have a Fire Safe Christmas and New Year