

DEC 1 1955

CIRCULAR NO. 2. (1ST REVISION)

STATE OF WISCONSIN, GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

OFFICE OF THE STATE FORESTER,

JULY, 1906.

Instructions to Fire Wardens.

Gentlemen:

In order that you may serve intelligently as fire wardens, the following information is given to you regarding your duties and powers, with quotations from the state forestry laws in relation to the same.

DUTIES OF FIRE WARDENS.

The duties of fire wardens are few and simple, being in the main as follows:

- Posting warning notices.
- Attending to forest fires and reporting promptly when any occur.
- Making a brief annual report.
- Looking out for timber trespass on state lands.

POSTING WARNING NOTICES.

An ample supply of warning notices will be furnished at all times and these should be posted early in the spring before the woods become dangerously dry.

"Each town fire warden shall post or cause to be posted conspicuously in those parts of his town where fires are likely to occur, all notices furnished him for that purpose by the state forester, and he shall receive therefor compensation at the rate provided in section 9 of this act." (Section 16.)

ATTENDING TO FOREST FIRES.

After having posted warning notices, fire wardens should keep a sharp watch for forest fires, from early in the spring until snow falls, and act promptly to check and extinguish the same.

After a fire occurs, the town fire warden should, as soon as possible, mail his report of the same to the state forester at Madison, using

the printed form furnished him for that purpose. Before writing the report he should make a careful examination of the burned area, so that he may be able to state correctly the number of acres burned over, the extent of the damage, the amount and kind of timber destroyed and the loss in other kinds of property. Especial pains should be taken to ascertain the cause of the fire, and the person or persons who started it. Too many reports are received in which the printed question as to the cause of the fire is answered with the words "Cause unknown." If attended promptly, there should be little trouble in ascertaining the point at which the fire started and, in most cases, who started it. The facts should then be written out fully in the report, no matter whom it may concern. Each fire warden should discharge his duty in this respect without fear or favor. In addition to answering fully the printed questions in the report, the fire warden should furnish under the head of "Remarks" such further information as may not be conveyed in the preceding answers and should take pains to include also everything that might relate directly or indirectly to the matter.

Bills, also, for services as fire warden must be sent to the state forester for his approval, and will not be approved for work in extinguishing a fire until a report of the fire has been received.

"All town fire wardens shall take prompt and effective measures against the spread and illegal setting of forest, marsh or swamp fires within their own and adjoining towns. . . . The town fire wardens shall first submit to the state forester itemized accounts for their own services and the services of their assistants, and no accounts shall be paid out of the treasury of the town in which such services have been rendered without a written approval of the state forester." (Section 8.)

"Every fire warden, immediately after each fire in his territory, shall forward to the state forester a detailed report of said fire." (Section 11.)

MAKING AN ANNUAL REPORT.

A brief report must be made out at the end of the year by each fire warden, on a blank, that will be sent for that purpose. In order to make this report easily, fire wardens should keep a memorandum of the facts contained in their reports made from time to time during the year.

"Every fire warden . . . shall report annually on or before the first day of December a summary of all forest fires and such other matters as the state forester may direct." (Section 11.)

LOOKING OUT FOR TIMBER TRESPASS.

All fire wardens are expected to familiarize themselves with the location of the state lands in their town, and to report promptly to the state forester any trespass or timber cutting that may occur on such lands. It is not necessary that they inform on their neighbors, or mention any names, for, if the attention of the state forester is called to the place, the proper official will be sent there to ascertain the extent of the trespass and the names of the offenders. If, however, a fire warden is willing to take up the case, he should proceed as directed on page 7 of this pamphlet.

POWERS OF FIRE WARDENS.

The town fire wardens are appointed by the state forester, who is the state fire warden, and, after having taken the oath of office, they work under his direction.

"The state forester shall also be state fire warden, and the assistant state forester shall be assistant state fire warden. The state forester shall appoint one or more town fire wardens for those organized towns in which he deems it necessary, or for such portions of organized towns as he may define, and he may remove any fire warden from office. He shall give the necessary instructions to said fire wardens and supervise the execution of their work." (Section 7.)

Among the powers of town fire wardens are the following:

- To call upon citizens for aid in fighting fires.
- To act in another town when needed.
- To forbid the setting of fires during a dangerously dry time.
- To make arrests for violations of the forestry laws.
- To receive payment for their services.
- To receive a percentage of fines collected by means of information furnished by them.

TO CALL UPON CITIZENS FOR AID.

Fire wardens have the authority to summon all the help that is needed.

"They shall have authority to call upon any able bodied citizen, in territory in which they act, to assist in extinguishing forest, marsh or swamp fires in such manner as they may direct." (Section 8.)