

Circular of Information.

To the Fire Wardens of Wisconsin:

GENTLEMEN: In reply to many questions that have been asked, this Circular of Information has been issued, in order that more adequate and detailed information could be given than would be possible in the ordinary letter.

PRINTED MATTER.

1. What Printed Matter is Supplied.

This department has no means of knowing when a fire warden is in need of one or more kinds of printed matter; therefore, a fire warden should write and ask for all printed matter that is needed except the annual report blank, one of which will be mailed to each fire warden in November.

The department issues:

Warning Notices, Form I.

Warning Notices, Form II.

Special Warning Notices, Form III (forbidding the setting of fires).

Instructions to Fire Wardens (Circular No. 2).

Circular of Information (Circular No. 3).

Annual Report Blanks (Blank A).

Special Report Blanks (Blank B).

Trespass Report Blanks (Blank C; sent out only when a case of trespass is reported).

Blank Bills (Blank D, for fire warden service).

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II. How to Use Printed Matter.

WARNING NOTICES.

Warning notices are of two kinds:

Form I contains a warning to hunters, trappers, fishermen, campers, surveyors, land locators, travelers, or other persons, to extinguish all fires built by them.

Form II contains extracts from the Statutes of 1898, regarding the setting of fires and the failure to extinguish same.

Form III, a special warning notice, forbids the setting of fires and should be posted only when a dangerously dry time exists, and should be taken down as soon as the danger is over.

Do not wait for a dry time before posting warning notices; be sure that they are posted before a dry time comes, so that the public will have had plenty of time to become well acquainted with the law. Always post notices where they will attract attention and, if possible, be protected from the weather. They should be posted along railroads, wagon roads, trails, at landing places on lakes and rivers, and upon public buildings, such as railway stations, postoffices, school houses, stores, camps, etc. Occasionally a fire warden has reported at the end of the season that he has not posted any notices, because none had been sent. The department does not send them unless requested to do so, because fire wardens sometimes have enough to last more than one season, but expects fire wardens to ask for them when they are needed. Posting warning notices is of the utmost importance and it should be done early and carefully.

INSTRUCTIONS TO FIRE WARDENS.

Copies of the "Instructions to Fire Wardens" contain a large amount of information, and they should be kept for constant use, as in some portion of them will be found an answer to almost every question that arises.

ANNUAL REPORTS.

The annual reports of the fire wardens should be made out and sent in promptly the first day of December. Only forest fires should be reported, that is, no loss of buildings by fire should be reported if the fire originated in the building, or was caused by lightning, or, in fact, in any way except through a forest fire. Question 5 of the annual re-

port.—“All other loss of property”—should be answered by reporting the loss of buildings, fences, hay or any property that is not timber, if the loss resulted from a forest fire.

SPECIAL REPORTS.

Special reports, Blank B, that is, reports on single fires, should be made out immediately after each fire, and sent to the state forester.

When a special report is sent in, a memorandum should be kept of the facts therein stated, so that it can be referred to in making out the annual report.

Question 4 should be answered similarly to Question 5 in the annual report, but, of course, only the property lost by the one fire should be included.

Question 9 should be answered by giving the total expense to the town for fighting the one fire, nothing else being included. One blank should be used for each fire.

BILLS FOR FIRE WARDEN SERVICE.

All bills for fire warden service must have the written approval of the state forester before they can be allowed by the town boards.

Printed forms for fire wardens' bills will be issued by this department. Bills need not necessarily be made out on these blank forms, but must contain everything called for in the blank form, which follows:

_____, Wis., _____, 190-.

Town of _____,
_____ County.

To _____, Fire Warden, Dr.

Date of service.	Names of men employed.	No. of hours service.	Kind of service performed.	Rate charged per hour.	Amount.
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
Total

County of _____, }
Town of _____, } ss.

_____, being duly sworn, says that the items mentioned and set forth in the within account are correct, that the services charged therein have

been in fact performed, and disbursements therein mentioned have been fully paid, and that no part of said account has been paid or satisfied, that the items are specifically set forth therein and the nature of each item is distinctly stated.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 190-.

Approved for payment for the sum of \$_____.

State Forester.

WHAT MAY AND MAY NOT PROPERLY BE CHARGED FOR.

The position of fire warden is not one to be sought on account of any compensation that is attached thereto. It is primarily a position that should be held by men who take an intelligent interest in the public welfare. It is intended, however, that fire wardens shall be at no loss on account of the time spent at their duties; hence, the law provides that they shall receive such compensation as the town board shall allow, not to exceed 25 cents per hour for the time actually employed.

It has been asked whether a fire warden may charge for time spent in watching fires to see that they do no harm. All time intelligently spent in conscientious effort to prevent, as well as to extinguish, fires may be charged for, but very little time need be spent in watching fires if the fire warden has posted printed warning notices and also special warning notices forbidding the setting of fires, if it is a dangerously time, and if he holds the individuals who have set the fires responsible under the law for any damage that may result. They, not the fire warden, should do the watching.

SPECIAL WARNING NOTICES FORBIDDING FIRES.

Printed special warning notices will be issued by the department for the use of fire wardens when forbidding the setting of fires during a dangerously dry time, as provided for in section 4405a, Statutes of 1898.

In case fire wardens at any time find themselves without printed special warning notices, they can write one as follows:

I, _____, having been duly appointed Fire Warden for the town of _____, County of _____, and being convinced that a dangerously dry time exists in its vicinity, do herewith this _____ day of _____, 190-, in accordance with the following provisions of section 4405a, Statutes of 1898, forbid the setting of any fires on any land in this town except for warming the person or cooking food.

Section 4405a, Statutes of 1898, provides as follows: Whenever the fire,

warden of any town becomes convinced that a dangerously dry time exists in its vicinity, and that it is imprudent to set fire on any land, he shall post or cause to be posted a notice in three public places in such town forbidding the setting of any such fire therein, and after the posting of such notices no person shall set any fire upon any land in said town, except for warming the person or cooking food, until written permission has been received from one of the fire wardens of said town. All persons who start camp fires shall exercise all reasonable precautions to prevent damage therefrom, and shall extinguish the same before leaving them. Every person violating any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$50 or by imprisonment in the county jail not more than six months for each offense.

Any person who shall destroy, deface, remove or disfigure this notice is liable to a fine, imprisonment, or both.

Fire wardens should be very careful not to post special warning notices unnecessarily, for, according to Section 4405a, after such notices are posted, "no person shall set any fire on any land in said town, except for warming the person or cooking food, until written permission has been received from one of the fire wardens of said town." As soon as the dangerous season is over, special warning notices should be taken down, but persons should, nevertheless, be warned that under Section 4406, they are liable for all damages caused by fires set by them.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

PLACE OF TAKING OATH OF OFFICE.

An oath of office may be taken anywhere, outside of the town in which a fire warden is to hold office as well as within it, and may be taken before either a notary public or justice of the peace.

RESIGNATIONS.

If for any reason a fire warden feels that he must resign, he would do a favor to the department by recommending a man for the position who is thoroughly competent and trustworthy, would accept the position, and at the same time be acceptable to the town board.

When sending in a resignation, a fire warden should state what printed matter he has left that he could turn over to his successor, so that the department will be able to supplement it intelligently with what is lacking.