

TWELFTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2000

*Public Law 12-74*

**H. B. NO. 12-254**

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AN ACT

To control the usage of fire protection equipment and fire hydrants; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWELFTH NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

**Section 1. Findings.** The unauthorized usage of fire hydrants by the public to obtain water has caused damage to hydrants and other fire suppression devices. The wear and tear on the tread and bolt can cause undue delay during disasters requiring the use of water.

**Section 2. Permits.** For anyone other than Department of Public Safety personnel in the course of their official duties, a permit is required to use or operate fire hydrants or valves intended for fire suppression purposes which are installed on water systems and accessible to public highways, alleys or private ways open to or generally used by the public.

**Section 3. Fire Apparatus Access.** Plans for fire apparatus access roads shall be submitted to the Department of Public Safety and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for review and approval prior to construction.

**Section 4. Fire Hydrant Systems.** Plans and specifications for fire hydrant systems shall be submitted to the Department of Public Safety and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for review and approval prior to construction.

**Section 5. Fire Protection Equipment and Fire Hydrants.** Fire protection equipment and fire hydrants shall be clearly identified in an approved manner to prevent obstruction by parking and other obstruction.

**Section 6. Testing and Maintenance.** Fire hydrants systems shall be subject to such periodic tests as required by the chief. Fire hydrant systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and shall be repaired where defective. Addition, repairs, alterations and servicing shall be in accordance with approved standards.

**Section 7. Systems in High-rise Buildings.** The owner of a high-rise building shall be responsible for assuring that the fire and life-safety systems required by the Building Code are maintained in an operable condition at all times.

**Section 8. Fire Hydrants and Fire Appliances.** Fire hydrants and fire appliances required by this code to be installed or maintained shall not be removed, tampered with or otherwise disturbed except for the purpose of extinguishing fire, training, recharging or making necessary repairs, or when allowed by the Department of Public Safety or the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.

**Section 9. Barriers, Security Devices, Signs and Seals.** Locks, gates, doors, barricades, chains, enclosures, signs, tags or seals which have been installed by the fire division or by its order or under its control shall not be removed, unlocked, destroyed, tampered with or otherwise molested in any manner.

**Section 10. Obstruction and Impairment of Fire Hydrants and Fire-protection Equipment.** Posts, fences, vehicles, growth, trash, storage and other materials or things shall not be placed or kept near fire hydrants, fire division inlet connections or fire-protection system control valves in a manner that would prevent such equipment or fire hydrant from being immediately discernable. The fire division shall not be deterred or hindered from gaining immediate access to fire-protection equipment or hydrants.

**Section 11. Clear Space Around Hydrants.** A 3-foot clear space shall be maintained around the circumference of fire hydrants except as otherwise required or approved.

**Section 12. Use of Fire Hydrants.** Any use of fire hydrants or tampering therewith or the taking of water for purposes other than fire suppression by persons other than authorized employees of the Department of Public Safety and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation in the performance of their official duties is prohibited.

**Section 13. Penalties.** Any person violating Section 12 of this Act shall be fined not less than two hundred fifty dollars, (\$250.00) nor more than one thousand dollars, (\$1,000.00), imprisonment for not more than six months or both.

**Section 14. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

**Section 15. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

**Section 16. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or its becoming law without such approval.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

**ATTESTED TO BY:**

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
**BENIGNO R. FITIAL**  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
**EVELYN C. FLEMING**  
HOUSE CLERK

Approved this 19th day of November, 2001

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
**PEDRO P. TENORIO**  
GOVERNOR  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS