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CHAPTER 33.

 SOUTH CAROLINA FOREST FIRE PROTECTION ACT

**SECTION 48‑33‑10.** Short title.

This chapter shall be cited as the “South Carolina Forest Fire Protection Act.”

**SECTION 48‑33‑20.** “Forest land” defined.

For the purpose of this chapter all lands shall be construed as “forest land” which have enough forest growth, standing or down, or have sufficient inflammable debris or grass, outside of corporate limits, to constitute, in the judgment of the State Commission of Forestry, a fire menace to itself or adjoining lands.

**SECTION 48‑33‑30.** “Forest fire” defined.

The term “forest fire,” as used in this chapter, means any fire burning uncontrolled on any land covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass or other inflammable vegetation.

**SECTION 48‑33‑40.** State Commission of Forestry to direct forest fire protection work.

All forest fire protection work shall be under the direction and supervision of the State Commission of Forestry, through the State Forester, subject to the provisions of this chapter and the laws of the State enacted relative to forestry and forest fire prevention and suppression.

**SECTION 48‑33‑50.** Creation of county forestry boards.

There shall be set up in each county a board, to be known as the county forestry board, consisting of five members, who shall be appointed by the State Commission of Forestry on the recommendation of a majority of the county legislative delegation in the House of Representatives and the Senator of such county. The members shall be residents of the county from which they are appointed. Change of residence from the county shall terminate the appointment. The initial term of all the members of the county forestry boards having been one for one year, one for two years, one for three years, one for four years and one for five years, the terms of the members of each board since appointed have been and shall hereafter be for five years, each member holding office until his successor is appointed, so that one member shall be appointed annually.

In case of a vacancy or termination of appointment on a county forestry board, such vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as provided for the appointment of members thereof, except that if a vacancy shall exist in the office of member of a county forestry board for more than two months the then existing members of the county forestry board may recommend for appointment some suitable person to fill such vacancy and the State Commission of Forestry shall make the appointment on such recommendation.

In Berkeley County, appointments made pursuant to this section are governed by the provisions of Act 159 of 1995.

In Dorchester County, appointments made pursuant to this section are governed by the provisions of Act 512 of 1996.

In Georgetown County, appointments made pursuant to this section are governed by the provisions of Act 515 of 1996.

**SECTION 48‑33‑60.** Duties and powers of county forestry boards; employees.

The county boards shall assist in the efficient performance of the requirements of this chapter and the general conduct of the forestry program in the county. They shall review, revise and adopt the annual forest fire protection plan and the county ranger, fire wardens, towermen and all other county forest fire protection officers shall be employed, retained or dismissed only with the consent of the county forestry board. The county ranger, fire wardens and towermen and all other county officers of the county board shall be residents of the county in which they are so employed.

**SECTION 48‑33‑70.** Plans for forest fire protection; rules and regulations for administration of plans.

The State Commission of Forestry shall prepare for each county forestry board a plan for forest fire protection for the fiscal year and present such plan at the July meeting of the board. It shall have power to make and enforce all rules and regulations necessary for the administration of forest fire protection.

**SECTION 48‑33‑80.** Access to property.

The State Commission of Forestry, any of its authorized agents and any member of a county forestry board may, at any or all times, go upon any land for the purpose of preventing or controlling forest fires, as defined herein, without making themselves liable for trespassing.

**SECTION 48‑33‑90.** Title to property acquired vested in State Commission of Forestry.

The title to all property acquired incident to carrying out the provisions of this chapter shall be vested in the State Commission of Forestry.