

4 out of 10 towns nationwide have no fire stations; in Mindanao, 5 out of 10

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Four out of 10 towns nationwide have no fire station, despite a 21-year old law mandating at least one fire station per town, party-list Rep. Arnel Ty said, as he urged two committees of the House of Representatives to look into government's failure to implement the law.

Ty of the party-list group LPG/MA in filing Resolution 1228, said "four out of every 10 towns in the country have absolutely no firefighting capability whatsoever."

In Mindanao, 232 of its 422 towns or five out of 10 are without fire stations. Of all six regions in Mindanao, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has the most number of towns without fire stations: seven out of 10.

Ty wants the House committee on appropriations and committee on local government to jointly look into the implementation of RA 6975, "to ascertain the conditions, financial or otherwise, that have prevented the DILG from establishing at least one fire station in every municipality, as required by law."

RA 6795 established "the Philippine National Police under a reorganized Department of the Interior and Local Government."

In a press statement, Ty, a Filipino-Chinese fire brigade volunteer, cited Bureau of Fire Protection statistics that "at least 613 of the country's 1,502 municipalities still do not have a single fire station."

"In the absence of immediate and adequate firefighting capabilities, human lives as well as properties in the affected municipalities are at grave risk of being lost and instantly destroyed in an accidental blaze," he warned.

Section 56 of RA 6975 provides that there shall be established "at least one fire station with adequate personnel, firefighting facilities and equipment in every provincial capital, city and municipality subject to the standards, rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the Department. The local government unit shall, however, provide the necessary and or site of the station."

Ty's resolution provided a breakdown of the number of towns per province lacking a single fire station nationwide.

Based on Ty's listing and the statistics provided by the National Statistical Coordination Board, MindaNews counted 232 of its 422 towns (54.9%) without a fire station: 84 of 116 towns (72.4%) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; 43 out of 67 (64.17%) towns in Region 9 or Zamboanga Peninsula; 39 out of 84 (46.42%) towns in Region 10 or Northern Mindanao; 15 out of 43 towns (34.8%) in Region 11 or Davao/Southeastern Mindanao; 16 out of 45 towns (35.5%) in Region 12 or Southwestern Mindanao; and 35 of 67 towns (52.2%) in Region 13 or Caraga.

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Based on Ty's listing and the NSCB statistics, here is MindaNews' breakdown of Mindanao towns with no fire stations:

In the ARMM, Lanao del Sur's 37 of 39 towns; in Maguindanao, 25 out of 36; in Tawi-tawi, three of 11; and in Sulu, 10 of 19.

In the Zamboanga Peninsula, Zamboanga del Norte's 14 out of 25 towns; in Zamboanga del Sur, 22 out of 26; and in Zamboanga Sibugay, seven out of 16.

In Northern Mindanao, Bukidnon's six out of 20 towns; in Camiguin, one of five; in Lanao del Norte, 14 of 22; in Misamis Occidental, eight of 14; and in Misamis Oriental, 10 of 23.

In the Davao region, Compostela Valley's three of 11 towns; in Davao del Norte, three out of eight; in Davao del Sur, six of 14 ; and in Davao Oriental, three of 10 towns.

In Southwestern Mindanao, North Cotabato's six out of 17; Sarangani's three out of seven; South Cotabato's one out of 10; and Sultan Kudarat's six of 11.

In the Caraga region, Agusan del Norte's five out of 10; in Agusan del Sur, eight of 13; in Dinagat Island, five of seven; in Surigao del Norte, 12 of 20; and in Surigao del Sur, five of 17.

South Cotabato and Camiguin stand out for having only one town each without a fire station.

Lanao del Sur on the other hand also stands out for having only two towns with fire stations. Thirty seven of its 39 towns are without fire stations. In the ARMM, Tawi-tawi has only three towns without a fire station.

In the Davao region, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental have only three towns each without a fire station. Davao del Sur, on the other hand, has six towns without a fire station. (MindaNews)