

**Chapter 31**

**Home Guards and Civil Defence**

***Overview of Home Guards Organization***

**31.01** Home Guards are a voluntary force, first raised in India in December 1946, to assist the Police in quelling civil disturbances and communal riots. According to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Home Affairs for 2006-07, the total strength of Home Guards in the country is 5,73,793 against which the raised strength is 4,87,239. The organization is spread over all States and Union territories except for Kerala.

**31.02** Home Guards are generally utilized for the maintenance of law and order, prevention of crime, adoption of anti-dacoity measures, conducting of border patrolling, for prohibition, flood relief, fire-fighting, election duties and social welfare activities. In the event of national emergency, some portion of Civil Defence work could also be entrusted to the Home Guards.

**31.03** Eighteen Border Wing Home Guards (BWHG) Battalions have been raised in the border States viz. Punjab (6 Battalions), Rajasthan (4 Battalions), Gujarat (4 Battalions) and one Battalion each in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and West Bengal to serve as an auxiliary to BSF for preventing infiltration through the international border/coastal areas, guarding of vulnerable areas, vulnerable points and lines of communication in vulnerable areas at the time of external aggression.

**31.04** Home Guards are raised under the Home Guards Act and Rules. Ministry of Home Affairs formulates the policy in respect of role, target, raising, training, equipping, establishment and other important matters of Home Guards organization. Expenditure on Home Guards is generally shared between the Centre and the States.

***Home Guards in Tamil Nadu***

**31.05** The sanctioned strength of Home Guards for the State is 11,605 (including 2750 women), comprising 80½ men companies and 25 women companies.

**31.06** The following are some of the States which have a larger Home Guard strength than Tamil Nadu:

**Table 31-1 Home Guards strength in different States**

Gujarat	43,630
Maharashtra	41,965
West Bengal	19,703
Karnataka	19,640
Madhya Pradesh	16,607
Punjab	16,529
Orissa	15,000

**31.07** The hierarchy of the Home Guards organization is as follows:

- DGP of the state as ex-officio Commandant General
- IGP Home Guards and Civil Defence as the ex-officio Deputy Commandant General
- District Superintendents of Police or COPs as ex-officio Commandants
- Assistant Commandant Generals (generally at Range level)
- Area Commanders (one for each district)
- Deputy Area Commanders (Women)
- Divisional Commanders
- Company Commanders
- Platoon Commanders
- Section Leaders
- Assistant Section Leaders and
- Home Guards

**31.08** All those from Assistant Commandant Generals downwards are civilians who are volunteers and may be employed in Government departments / Public Sector Undertakings or in the private sector or could even be unemployed.

**31.09** The age limit for appointment as Home Guard is 20-45 and the educational qualification is SSLC. Reappointment is to be done once in 3 years, till the Home Guard attains the age of 58.

**31.10** The Home Guard and Civil Defence Training Institute has been in existence since 1994 with a strength of 1 Vice Principal, 1 Chief Instructor, 3 Instructors and 9 other supporting staff. About 30–40 Home Guards are trained in every course. Ten different types of courses are offered by this institute.

**31.11** There are four regular call-outs in a month. On occasions, there may be special call-outs over and above this monthly ceiling.

**31.12** The following are the allowances payable to Home Guards:

**Table 31-2 Allowances paid to Home Guards**

Type of Allowance	Amount Rs	
Duty Allowance	45	Per call-out: generally limited to 4 call-outs per month.
Parade Allowance	14	Per 2 ½ hours parade or Rs 28 for 2 parades
Washing Allowance	1	Per day- subject to a maximum of Rs 4 per month
<b>TA</b>		
Home Guard	5	Per day
Asst Section Leader to Platoon Commander	7	Per day
Company Commander to Area Commander	11.50	Per day
<b>During training:</b>		
Training Allowance	12	Per day
Messing Allowance	16	Per day

**31.13** The duty allowance was as low as Rs 31 and was raised to Rs 45 only in June 2007.

**31.14** In Chennai City, Rs 75 is paid as duty allowance for performing night beat (vide G.O Ms No. 1044 Home (Pol 14) department dated 6 November 2002).

**31.15** Uniform and Shoes are supplied to the Home Guards. Shirts and trousers are issued once in 4 years while other items are supplied at a periodicity ranging from 1 year to 3 years.

**31.16** In terms of G.O Ms No. 1635 Home (Pol.H) Dept., dated 11 July 1990, every Home Guard contributes Rs 1 per month towards Tamil Nadu Home Guards Welfare and Benevolent Fund to provide financial assistance for education and marriage of children and in the event of death. This amount varies from Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Strength**

**31.17** Compared to some other States, the strength of Home Guards in Tamil Nadu (11,065) is low. Home Guards can be usefully employed for traffic duties and beat duties and during festival bandobust or other occasions involving crowd regulation. They supplement the Police strength at a lower cost and can take up many non-core Police functions, especially during crises when the Police resources are stretched. *The strength of Home Guards may, therefore, be raised to 20,000.* Since the Centre meets 25% of the cost, the State's commitment will be

correspondingly less – we should also factor in the cost saving in utilizing Home Guards as compared to regular Police force.

#### **Assistant Commandant General in Chief**

**31.18** Assistant Commandant Generals are being appointed at Range level now. A number of such Assistant Commandant Generals have been appointed. It is felt that a civilian post of Assistant Commandant General in Chief will help to co-ordinate the functioning of the Area Commanders and Assistant Commandant Generals. The Commission recommends that *a post of Assistant Commandant General in Chief may be created for the entire State* and appointment may be made from Assistant Commandant Generals taking into account seniority and merit.

#### **Border Wing Home Guards**

**31.19** On the analogy of Border Wing Home Guards raised in States like Punjab and other border States which have land borders with other countries, *a Border Wing Home Guard Battalion may be raised in Tamil Nadu* which is considered a border State because of the coast line which is susceptible to infiltration.

#### **Allowances**

**31.20** The allowances paid to Home Guards need to be raised to reasonable levels. Although it is a volunteer service, it is only fair that the volunteers be paid at least out-of-pocket expenses. The daily allowance, which was a meagre Rs 31 has been increased to Rs 45 only recently but even this amount is low as when compared to the actual expenditure and the payment made in other States. Most other States pay Rs 60 or more. The rate of Travelling Allowance (TA) is also very low. Since it is paid generally only when the members are deputed for training, enhancement of the rate will not result in undue increase in the expenditure under this head. The Commission recommends *revision of payment* on the following scale:

**Table 31-3 Proposed revision of allowances for Home Guards**

Type of allowance	Present Rate	Suggested rate
Daily Allowance	Rs 45 per call-out	Rs 100 per call-out
Washing Allowance	Re 1 per call-out, limited to Rs 4 p.m.	Rs 5 per call-out
Parade Allowance	Rs 14	Rs 25 per parade
TA: for Home Guards to Company Commanders	Rs 5 to Rs 7 depending on rank	Rs 40 per day
Area Commanders	Rs 11.50	Rs 100 per day
Training Allowance per day	Rs 12	Rs 25
Mess Allowance during training	Rs 16	Rs 25

## Utilization

**31.21** Although the number of regular call-outs per month is restricted to four, Home Guards are often used on special call-outs. There is a great deal of delay in payments towards these special call-outs. At present budget allocation is done to the concerned Superintendents of Police or Commissioners of Police for regular call-outs. Whenever there are special call-outs, proposal has to be sent to the Government and sanction obtained. The Commission recommends that *additional funds equal to 4 call-outs per month for all districts may be placed at the disposal of the IG Home Guards and he may authorize special call-outs and also make the funds available to the districts which need them.* This will cut down delay and also ensure that resources are optimally utilized under the control of IG Home Guards. The IG may ensure that special call-outs do not exceed ten per month for any district.

**31.22** In Orissa, the volunteers of the Home Guards organization are deputed on requisition of various public and private sector undertakings for watch and ward duties. The concerned organizations pay Rs.20/- per head towards capitation fee which goes to State exchequer, thereby the State Government earns about one crore rupees as capitation charges in a year. In Puducherry, Home Guards are also utilized for service of summons, manning the Police PBX exchange in the Central Control Room and for unarmed duties in the Central Jail and A.I.R. They also work as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, wireless operators and mechanics, etc. *Expansion of the services of Home Guards on similar lines in the State is necessary to reduce the strain on the Police. Encouraging Home Guards in many non-core Police functions enhances citizens' participation in involvement in the Police department, which should be definitely very useful in the long term. SPs and Commissioners too should be educated about the usefulness of Home Guards in order to reduce the strain on the Police. But all this will be possible only if allowances recommended by the Commission are conceded and they are revised from time to time.*

## Civil Defence

**31.23** Although IG Home Guards is also designated as the Director of Civil Defence, a formal Civil Defence structure does not exist in the State.

**31.24** Civil defence consists of measures to be adopted by the Governments, local bodies, voluntary agencies and the civilian population during a war to minimize the effects of enemy action. It is essentially defence of the citizen by the citizen. During times of war and emergencies, the Civil Defence Organization

has the vital role of guarding the hinterland, supporting the Armed forces, mobilising the citizens and helping civil administration for:

- Saving life and property
- Minimizing damage
- Maintaining continuity in production centres.
- Raising public morale

**31.25** The concept of CD has, over the years, shifted from management of damage against conventional weapons to also include threat perceptions against Nuclear weapons, Biological and Chemical Warfare and Environmental disasters.

**31.26** It has been increasingly felt that Civil Defence has an important role to play in disaster relief, preparedness, etc., as communities are often the first responders in any disaster situation.

**31.27** The Civil Defence Organization is raised only in such areas and zones which are considered vulnerable to enemy attacks. At present, CD activities are confined to 225 categorised towns in the country.

**31.28** Civil Defence is primarily organized on a voluntary basis except for a small nucleus of permanent staff and establishment, which is augmented during emergencies. The present target of CD volunteers for the country is 12.98 lakh, out of which 6.6 lakh volunteers have already been raised and 5.1 lakh have been trained.

**31.29** *Civil Defence Organization will be very useful in handling disasters, natural or man-made.* Our State has already witnessed the ravages of the Tsunami and in situations like these, a well-trained volunteer force will be of enormous help. Rescue, evacuation, distribution of relief, rehabilitation, medical attention, helping the public with information on casualties, locating missing persons, identification of dead bodies and their disposal are among the areas where the efforts of the Police and other Government agencies could be supplemented by trained volunteers.

**31.30** IGP Home Guards has visited Mumbai and studied the functioning of Mobile Column which is a self-contained civil defence force to provide mobile support to any area within the State or even outside the State in emergencies. It is reported that the Mobile Column Unit of Mumbai has carried out outstanding work in building collapses, flooding of hydro-electric project, landslides, cyclones and Tsunami in the State and outside.

**31.31** The Delhi Civil Defence Corps operates on the following lines:

Well-educated citizens, social workers, professionals like doctors, nurses, lawyers, businessmen, engineers, teachers, etc., who are willing to do voluntary social service, are enlisted in Civil Defence Corps.

A member of the Corps shall ordinarily serve in a voluntary capacity for a period of three years. The tenure can be extended till such a period the member is willing to serve and fit to continue.

A person when enrolled is issued a membership certificate. He/She shall have to undergo Civil Defence Basic Training for a period of seven days. On successful completion of the Basic Training, a member is issued Identity Card duly signed by the Competent Authority. The members are entitled to get out-of-pocket allowances for attending training and call-outs on emergency duties.

There are 13 depots located in various parts of Delhi from where necessary equipment are issued to Civil Defence parties, as per need.

**31.32** While Home Guards can help the Police in routine duties, Civil Defence Corps will be of use during emergencies and disasters. Not much effort has so far been taken regarding Civil Defence. *The Civil Defence plan already prepared by the Director Civil Defence and ADGP Home Guards and got approved by the Government of India must be got implemented expeditiously.*