



BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

• Phone: 822-0094 or 0092

• Fax: 822-2671

• website: www.belize.gov.bz

PRESS RELEASE

Amendments to the Defence Force Pension Regulations

Belmopan. October 29, 2020. 9:00 a.m.

On October 13, 2020, Cabinet gave its full approval for the financial provisions of amendments to certain sections of the Defence (Pensions and Other Grants) Regulations. These amendments bring the Pensions Regulations in alignment with the newly revised Defence Act and to provide for equitable pension benefits to be received by the Belize Defence Force enlisted personnel as well as its officers.

The amendments are necessary to rectify several disparities by providing for the rights and privileges given to officers to also be given to soldiers and vice versa, and to provide for an *ex gratia* payment to be made for family members of the Force who died in service.

At its sitting on September 25, 2020, the National Assembly approved the newly revised Defence Act as recommended by the Defence Board. The revised Act provides for the Security Services Commission, after consultation with the Defence Board, to make regulations for better compliance to the Defence Act.

With the new amendments, soldiers are now required to serve for a minimum period of 15 years (previously 18 years) for the purpose of qualifying for a pension. It also provides for all members of the Force that are invalided and having served 10 years be eligible for a pension.

Other amendments include a mandatory *ex gratia* payment for the beneficiaries of members that lose their life while performing a duty and payment of Death in Harness for regularly employed Volunteers.

These and other amendments to the Defence Force Regulations make available similar payments of pensions and grants that are offered to the Belize Police Department and the Belize Coast Guard.

Ends