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## *Appointing a Company for quenching of Fire, and Rules to be observed by the Inhabitants thereanent.*

*Edinburgh, 21 April 1703.*

**T**HE which day the Lord Provost, Baillies, Council, Deacons of Crafts, Ordinar and Extraordinary, being convened in Council, considering the sad Desolations made in this City within these few years, by the Terrible and Dreadful Fires which broke out in the Meal-mercat and Land-mercat, and made so sudden and great a Progress, that a great part of the City was in Danger of being consumed (if God in his great Mercy had not put a stop thereto) and the Council judging it their Duty, to lay down Methods, and provide Means, that through the blessing of God may prove effectual for preventing the like, or greater Conflagrations; Have therefore concluded the following Rules to be observed in time coming, *viz.*

*Impr.* That the Council do name out of the Burgeses and Freemen of this City Twelve Men, to be called by the name of *Fire-Masters*, and each Fire-master be impowred to name six Assistants to himself, to be ready at all times upon the occasion of Fire, the Fire-masters to receive their Orders from the Magistrats, and the Assistants from their respective Fire-masters, who are all to present themselves to the Magistrats each first Munday of February and August yearly in the New grayfriars.

*Item,* That each Fire-master have in his Hand an Batton, and each Assistant an Leather Cap on his Head, with an Cross-Iron-Bar on it, and an Badge of Pewther on the Front of the Cap, bearing the Number from 1 to 72, to be made by such Persons as the Council shall appoint, and by none other.

*Item,* That each Fire-master and his Assistant have an large Hand-Ax, made with Luggs nailed to the Shaft, and an Sledge-Hammer, with an Hand-Saw, all marked with the Towns Mark, and twelve Links alwise lodged in each of the Fire-masters Houses:

*Item,* That each Fire-master have his Name above the Door of his House or Cross-head where he Dwells, bearing them to be such, and an

List of the whole lodged in the Town-guard.

*Item,* The Council appoints to be made twenty four Saws and thirty six Stings with Knogs, whereof six standing full of Water with the Stings hanging by them, and some Buckers, with six Shovels, and six Mattocks with the Good Towns Mark upon them, to be lodged on the North side of the Weigh-house under a Shade made for that end, and the like at the East end of the Court of Guard, and the like at the Back-clofs of the laigh Council-house, and the like at the New Well at the foot of the Horse Wynd in the Cowgate, and that each of the said Fire-masters have an Key to open the several Shades above mentioned, and another Key to be lodged in the Town-guard.

*Item,* The Council appoints 300 Leather Buckets or more to be made, and that there be lodged thereof in the Town-guard as many as can Foot, 3 of them 20 Foot, and 3 of them 15 Foot long, all to be hung up in the Old Kirk; As also twelve Leathers, whereof three of them 46 Foot, three of them 30 Foot, 3 of them 20 Foot, and 3 of them 15 Foot long, all to be hung up in the Old Kirk.

*Item,* The Council appoints the whole Muck-men to have each of them an Creel, and to repair to the Fire with their Creels full of Horse-dung or Muck, upon the first Alarm.

*Item,* The Council appoints the Wells to be put in good Condition, and the Fire-cocks in good order, that the whole Fire masters may know how to put on the Water to the Fire cock, and make the Water run to any side of the Street by the help of a Timber Spout, which the Council appoints to be made for that effect, and one to ly in each of the said places with the Saws and Stings.

*Item,* The Council appoints one Key to open the Wells the Shades and the old Kirk.

*Item,* The Council appoints the Captain of the Guard upon the first Alarm of Fire, to send to the Magistrats and haill Fire-masters, and the Keeper of the Good-Towns Stores, and advertise them thereof; and to call the haill Tron-men and Water-carriers, and injoyne them to carry Water to the several places, where the Fire-masters shall judge most convenient.

*Item,* The Council appoints the Captain of the Guard for the time, to cause two men of the best qualified of their Squad to walk Nightly through the Streets, with a large Batton in their Hand, five or six Foot long, who are hereby appointed to give notice immediately to the Fire-masters and the Guard in case of Fire, and the said Captain is to take an account of their Diligence each Morning.

*Item,* The Council Ordains each House in a Tenement within this City, to keep two or three Ropes in their Houses that may reach from their Houses to the Ground, and four Fathome more, with a sufficient quantity of Water in their Houses or Cellars ready on all occasions, under Certification.

*Item,* The Council recommends to the present and succeeding Town Captains, the present and succeeding Deacons of Crafts, the present and succeeding Constables, to attend the Magistrats on all occasions of Fire.

*Item,* The Council recommends to, and appoints the present Dean of Gild, and his Successors in office, to see the Wells and Fire-cocks put and kept in good Order and Condition in all time coming, and recommends to, and appoints the present Thesaurer and his Successors in office, to cause make all the foresaid Materials; And being made, to see them lodged in manner above-prescribed, and to supplie them from time to time as occasion shall require.

And lastly, the Council discharges the Selling, Pledging, or Resetting, or any ways Imbazling of the said Materials; Certifying the Transgressors, they shall be Fined and Imprisoned, and otherways punished at the will of the Magistrats.

*Extracted by George Home.*