



Ministerial Statement

By

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Minister of National Security

Commissioning of New Airport Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles

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Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this Honourable House, and the people of Bermuda, of an important investment in our national emergency response capability. The Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service has now commissioned four new Rosenbauer Panther Airport Rescue and Firefighting crash tenders for deployment at the L.F. Wade International Airport. These vehicles have been received, the required training and familiarisation have been completed, and the new fleet is now in operational service.

Mr. Speaker, this is a significant milestone for the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, for airport operations, and for public safety more broadly. The L.F. Wade International Airport is Bermuda's principal air gateway. It connects our people to the world, supports our tourism and business sectors, and plays a vital role in the movement of residents, visitors, goods, medical travel, and emergency support.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that the airport is supported by a strong, reliable, and properly equipped Airport Rescue and Firefighting capability is therefore not optional. It is essential. The commissioning of these four new crash tenders renews a critical frontline asset and replaces ageing specialist vehicles with modern appliances designed specifically for the airport emergency response environment. The previous vehicles had reached the end of their useful service life and were becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. Replacing them was therefore necessary to reduce operational risk, improve reliability, and ensure that the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service can continue to deliver the specialist response capability required at the airport.

Mr. Speaker, the Rosenbauer Panther is a highly specialised Airport Rescue and Firefighting vehicle. It is designed to support rapid response, effective firefighting performance, and operational reliability in circumstances where seconds matter.

In an airport emergency, speed, coordination, and capability are essential. These vehicles are built to deliver high extinguishing performance, support safe incident management, and enable firefighters to respond quickly and effectively to aircraft-related incidents.

This new fleet strengthens the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service's ability to meet the response demands associated with airport rescue and

firefighting operations. It also supports the continuity of airport operations, which is a matter of national importance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that acquiring specialist vehicles of this nature is only one part of the work. The successful commissioning of this fleet also required training, familiarisation, operational preparation, and coordination among the relevant personnel. Firefighters and technical staff have completed the required training in the operation and maintenance of the vehicles, allowing them to be fully integrated into frontline response arrangements at the airport. That preparation ensures that the investment is not simply sitting on the apron as new equipment, but is actively supporting operational readiness.

Mr. Speaker, this investment reflects the Government's continued commitment to strengthening emergency response infrastructure and supporting the men and women who serve on the front lines. Our firefighters are asked to respond in some of the most challenging and time-sensitive circumstances. They deserve equipment that is fit for purpose, reliable, and capable of supporting the level of service expected of a modern airport rescue and firefighting operation.

The commissioning of these four crash tenders will improve reliability, reduce the operational risks associated with ageing specialist vehicles, and strengthen Bermuda's ability to respond to emergencies at our principal air gateway. Of course, the sustained benefit of this investment will

depend on routine maintenance, recurrent training, and sound asset management. Those responsibilities will remain central to ensuring that this fleet continues to serve Bermuda effectively over the medium term.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to acknowledge the leadership and professionalism of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service throughout this process. The Service continues to play a vital role in national safety, not only through structural firefighting and emergency response across the Island, but also through its specialist airport rescue and firefighting responsibilities. I extend my appreciation to the Chief Fire Officer, the officers and firefighters assigned to airport operations, the technical and support personnel involved in the commissioning process, and all those who contributed to bringing this new fleet into service. Their work ensures that Bermuda remains prepared, responsive, and ready to meet the demands placed on its emergency services.

Mr. Speaker, the commissioning of these four Rosenbauer Panther Airport Rescue and Firefighting crash tenders represents a practical investment in public safety, strengthening emergency preparedness at the L.F. Wade International Airport and ensuring that our firefighters have the specialist equipment required to protect life and support safe airport operations.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**