

# History of Latvian Civil protection

Published: 29.06.2021.

Civil protection as a constituent part of state defence system has developed from passive anti-aircraft defence system introduced in Latvia in 1934 till nowadays. Its beginnings are connected with World War I (1914-1918) when aircrafts appeared and local anti-aircraft defence was organized in many countries.

Already at the beginning of 1930ies in Latvia several laws on passive anti-aircraft defence were adopted and instructions issued on defence against air attacks, supply of people with gas-masks, building of shelters. Local anti-aircraft defence was subordinated to Ministry of Interior.

On 2 July 1941 Council of peoples' commissars of the Soviet Union carried a decision that all the people (women from 18 to 55, men from 16 to 60) are involved in local anti-aircraft defence units.

In 1961 local anti-aircraft defence was transformed into civil protection, and its functions as part of state defence system were - planning and realizing measures to protect inhabitants and provide functioning of economical objects in war time, to do rescue works after use of weapons of mass destruction.

In the Soviet Union, and also in Latvia, special attention to civil protection was paid during the times of cold war when its main task was protection of inhabitants in case of war with use of nuclear and chemical weapons.

Responsible for civil protection in Latvia was Chairman of Council of Ministers, work was planned, organized and controlled by Latvia SSR Civil protection headquarters, subordinate to Baltic military region.

By the order of Minister of defence of the USSR Chief of the Headquarters of Civil protection, Deputy Chief of Council of Ministers was appointed: major general A.Smirnov – 1965, major general H.Abols – 1976, major general I.Brunenieks – 1985.

Under the command of Civil protection headquarters were regiment of civil protection, radiation and chemical reconnaissance platoon dislocated at Suzi and mobile liaison center in Sigulda.

In Riga and its regions, in Daugavpils, Liepaja, Ventspils, Rezekne Jelgava and Jurmala, in regions of the republic there were headquarters of civil protection under the command of militarists.

To educate people on actions in emergency 15 civil protection courses were organized including republican civil protection courses in Riga Petersalas Street No 10. Each year approx. 10-12 thousand people were educated including specialists and officials of various levels.

Latvian Each year civil protection trainings were organized in 5 – 6 regions and one town of the republic. Republican trainings were organized once in three years. Scenarios and programmes of trainings were prepared by Civil protection headquarters, coordinating it with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers who was responsible for civil protection of Republic.

After accident at Chernobyl nuclear power station, earthquake in Armenia and other large catastrophies civil protection was reorganized in order to deal with consequences of accidents and catastrophies.

After renewal of independence of Latvia system of civil protection was reorganized in accordance with local conditions and the potential threats.

On 1991 reorganization of system of civil protection started. On the bases of Civil Protection Headquarters Civil Protection Strategic Center was formed. With the Decision of Supreme Council of Republic of Latvia from 15 December 1992 it was renamed Civil Protection Center. On

15 December 1992 Law „About civil protection of Republic of Latvia” was passed. From 1993 Civil Protection Center worked under the guidance of Ministry of Defence, but from September 1996 it passed over to Ministry of Interior.

With the Amendment to the Law „About civil protection of Republic of Latvia” from 21 May 1998 civil protection system was integrated in State Fire and Rescue Service. On 31 July 1998 Emergency Preparedness Planning Department was formed. On 1 February 2006 it was renamed Civil Protection Department. On 1 January 2007 new wording of Civil Protection Law was passed (expired on October 1, 2016). The new Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law entered into force on 1 October 2016.

<https://www.muzejs.vugd.gov.lv/en/history-latvian-civil-protection>