

---

## Fire Claims Five In Ebonyi

Five persons lost their lives while property worth over N372 million were destroyed in 35 fire incidents recorded in Ebonyi State from January 2007 to date.

The Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Bernard Ugwu, disclosed this on Wednesday in Abakaliki.

Ugwu said that property valued at over N405 million was, however, saved by his men during the period.

According to him, a greater percentage of fire outbreaks in the area were caused by power surge.

The officer also blamed some fire outbreaks on carelessness of some people in handling naked fire.

He said storage of inflammable substances near residential buildings and bush burning were also other causes of fire disasters.

Ugwu, who enumerated constraints facing his office, said the command required at least 250 persons on its staff list.

"Presently, Ebonyi Fire Service has

34 workers, majority of who are billed to retire from service in less than five years and this is grossly inadequate," he said.

He said the lack of functional fire hydrants, staff training and staff quarters, were other problems facing the command.

Ugwu, however, praised the state government for its recent purchase of some equipment for the command.

He advised residents of the state to avoid acts capable of causing fires, warning that culprits would from now on be punished.