Township of Georgian Bay

Fire Master Plan

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Prepared by:

The Loomex Group
550-925 Airport Road
Peterborough, ON K9J 0E7
phone: 705-775-5022 | website: loomex.ca

Disclaimer

The Loomex Group acted in the role of a third-party consultant to develop this fire master plan. The company conducted impartial reviews and evaluated all findings against established legislation and industry best practices. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided in this fire master plan is accurate as of the date the document was finalized.

All findings and recommendations presented in this fire master plan are objective and are intended to represent the best interests of the Township of Georgian Bay and its fire protection needs. However, some of the recommendations may require additional study or consideration.

Although this fire master plan provides a long-term strategic vision for Township of Georgian Bay, the township must keep the plan current with the community's needs and circumstances. At a minimum, the township should review this document annually to ensure the information it contains remains up to date. In addition, the township should completely revise this fire master plan every five years.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

In December 2023, the Township of Georgian Bay contracted The Loomex Group to develop a fire master plan ("**FMP**").

The FMP project had the following goals:

- Identify and evaluate Georgian Bay's current and anticipated fire protection needs.
- Assess the fire protection services that Georgian Bay currently receives.
- Provide data that Georgian Bay can use to make informed decisions about the safety of its residents, businesses, visitors, and firefighters.
- Provide strategies and identify resources that Georgian Bay can use to manage its current and anticipated fire protection needs adequately and cost-effectively.

The Council of the Township of Georgian Bay ("**Council**") and Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services ("**the Department**") can reference this FMP when making policy, organizational, capital, and operational decisions for the immediate term (0 to 1 year), short-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5 to 10 years).

Process

The FMP development process included the following components:

- Evaluate the Department's structure, programs, and levels of service.
- Meet with stakeholders from Georgian Bay and the Department to gain first-hand insights about the community and the Department's operations.
- Analyze Georgian Bay's current fire safety risks, needs, and circumstances.
- Review Georgian Bay's fire loss statistics and compare them to current trends in order to estimate the township's future fire protection needs.

After completing all reviews and stakeholder meetings, The Loomex Group consolidated its findings and developed this FMP document.

Each section of this FMP focuses on a specific area of the Department's operations. The sections provide context for various legislative or operational topics and then present relevant findings (as applicable).

Findings

This FMP identifies the Department's strengths as well as areas for improvement.

One of the Department's strengths is its approach to asset management. By maintaining a commitment to prudent financial planning, the Department has steadily improved its equipment over the years in a way that is fiscally responsible. As a result, the Department's firefighters have the tools they need to deliver fire protection services safely and effectively.

Some of the challenges facing the Department are as follows:

- The Department has aging fire stations that lack important features and resources, and several repairs are needed.
- The Department's leadership team does not have enough time to make proactive changes to improve the organization, due to time spent conducting essential services such as training, public education, and fire inspections.
- The Department's firefighters find it difficult to devote the time needed to obtain the certifications, licences, and medical qualifications to perform their fire service duties while still fulfilling their work and personal commitments.

This FMP gives due consideration to both the Department's strengths and weaknesses in order to provide Georgian Bay with a realistic picture of the Department's current capabilities and limitations.

Recommendations

This FMP contains 33 recommendations for the Department and Council to consider. The recommendations in this FMP focus on several areas, including:

- Develop medium- to long-range plans aimed at modernizing the Department's fire stations.
- Hire additional staff to provide fire prevention services, compensating them as per an approved hourly rate.
- Continue to develop fire safety programs tailored to the needs of water-access-only properties.

The recommendations in this FMP are designed to prioritize the safety of Georgian Bay's residents and firefighters. The recommendations are all within Georgian Bay's means to implement, and they include ways the township can save money wherever possible.

In addition to the formal recommendations, this FMP includes a list of “Fire Chief Initiatives.” Each initiative suggests an action the Fire Chief can take to enhance an aspect of the Department’s operations. The initiatives do not involve the same approval or budgetary concerns as the formal recommendations.

Overall, this FMP outlines strategies and resources that will help the Department provide an appropriate level of service to the Georgian Bay community now and in the coming years.

Summary of Recommendations

Purpose of Recommendations

The recommendations in this FMP are designed to help the Department accomplish the following objectives:

- Meet legislative obligations.
- Adhere to best practices.
- Enhance operational effectiveness.
- Protect the safety of community residents, visitors, and businesses.
- Protect firefighter safety.

Additional Considerations

Each recommendation in this FMP involves the following considerations:

- Does the recommendation need to be implemented for compliance purposes?
- Does Council need to approve the recommendation before it is implemented?
- Does the recommendation need to be included in the Department's budget through the regular budgeting process?
- When should the recommendation be implemented?
    - Immediately: Implement the recommendation within one year.
    - Short-term: Implement the recommendation within one to five years.
    - Long-term: Implement the recommendation within five to ten years.
    - Ongoing: Implement the recommendation on an ongoing basis as needed.

The additional considerations give Georgian Bay a practical schedule that it can follow to implement the recommendations in this FMP.

List of Recommendations

Table 1 collects the recommendations found in this FMP.

In total, there are 33 recommendations for Georgian Bay and its stakeholders to consider.

Table 1. List of recommendations.

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
5-1	Bylaws	The Fire Chief should review the establishing and regulating bylaw for Georgian Bay on an annual basis, recommending updates and revisions to the bylaw as needed.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
5-2	Bylaws	The Fire Chief should review the establishing and regulating bylaw for Georgian Bay in order to identify which sections of the bylaw should be updated to include references to NFPA standards. The Fire Chief should also identify which sections of the bylaw should be updated to specify a level of service for the operations of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
6-1	Fire Service Agreements	Georgian Bay should continue working with Moose Deer Point First Nation to modernize the existing fire service agreement.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
7-1	Staffing Considerations and Social Dynamics	The Fire Chief should work with Council and applicable municipal staff members to develop ways of publicly acknowledging local employers that allow volunteer firefighters to leave work to perform emergency responses.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
8-1	Engagement Sessions	The Fire Chief should review the results of the SWOT analysis and the Council engagement sessions that were conducted during the development of the 2025 Georgian Bay Fire Master Plan. The Fire Chief should then consider finding ways to implement the suggestions made during those consultations (as applicable).	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
9-1	Emergency Management Requirements	The community emergency management coordinator should prepare a report that recommends implementing a program to encourage local businesses to develop business continuity plans that are tailored to their operations.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
10-1	Occupational Health and Safety	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should work with its joint health and safety committee to formalize a health and safety complaint procedure.	Mandatory: Yes Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate
10-2	Occupational Health and Safety	In order to gain information that can be used to enhance health and safety practices in Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services, the Fire Chief and the joint health and safety committee should review the firefighter guidance notes and the Occupational Health and Safety Act on a regular basis.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate
10-3	Occupational Health and Safety	The Fire Chief should work with the joint health and safety committee to review the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist and the firefighter guidance notes. The group should then work together to implement a formal firefighter cancer prevention plan for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.	Mandatory: Yes Council approval: No Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Immediate
11-1	Fire Prevention and Public Education	The Fire Chief should develop a fire prevention policy that includes an inspection schedule, a smoke alarm/carbon monoxide alarm program, and a list of public education initiatives for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services to complete. The Fire Chief should then submit the policy to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
11-2	Fire Prevention and Public Education	The Fire Chief should review the findings of the 2025 Georgian Bay Community Risk Assessment and analyze which emergencies the township has recently experienced. The Fire Chief should then develop a public education program that prioritizes addressing the threats that the township is most likely to face in the future.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
11-3	Fire Prevention and Public Education	Georgian Bay should consider adding staff members to support fire prevention initiatives, such as public education initiatives, fire inspections, a home fire safety program, the local portable fire pump program, and emergency responses.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
12-1	Levels of Service	The Fire Chief should prepare a report that recommends updating Georgian Bay's establishing and regulating bylaw to include the specialized services listed in table 20 in section 12.3.1 of the 2025 Georgian Bay Fire Master Plan. The Fire Chief should then submit the report to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
12-2	Levels of Service	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should explore opportunities to form automatic aid agreements with other fire departments that have the training and skills to deliver specialized services at the technician level. Ideally, Georgian Bay should form agreements with fire departments that can provide high-angle rope rescues, confined space rescues, trench rescues, and hazardous materials responses.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
13-1	Training	The Fire Chief should prepare a report that recommends establishing an officer training program for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. The report should identify an external agency that has the capacity to facilitate the program, as well as the potential budget impacts of associated costs.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
14-1	Performance Standards and Response Statistics	Every year, the Fire Chief should review the effective response force, deployment statistics, and response time objectives for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. If any of those areas require updates to remain current, the Fire Chief should submit applicable recommendations to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
14-2	Performance Standards and Response Statistics	The Fire Chief should develop a response standard for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. The standard should identify the minimum number of certified firefighters needed to form an effective response force for dollar loss fires. The Fire Chief should then submit the proposed response standard to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate
15-1	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider installing signs in front of its fire stations to deliver public education messages.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate
15-2	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay should set aside reserve funds and develop a long-term plan to replace Station 1 – Honey Harbour.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Long-term
15-3	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should replace the door separating the apparatus floor and the office space at Station 1 – Honey Harbour. The new door should have a large window that will allow the station’s firefighters to see when someone is going to enter or exit the space.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
15-4	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay should continue working with the Town of Muskoka Lakes to build and operate one fire station that provides fire services to the districts of MacTier and Foot's Bay.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Long-term
15-5	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay should replace Station 3 – Port Severn with a new fire station that has enough space to house a fire suppression division, an administrative division, a fire prevention division, and a training centre.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Long-term
15-6	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay should evaluate its fire stations to determine whether they comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.	Mandatory: Yes Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Immediate
15-7	Fire Station Assessments	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider improving the security and safety of its fire stations by installing additional lighting and equipment, such as security cameras.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Immediate
16-1	Water Supply	The Fire Chief should lobby the District of Muskoka to prepare and implement a fire hydrant upgrade program. Under this program, all fire hydrants would be equipped with steamer ports to accommodate the large-diameter supply hose used by Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Immediate

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
16-2	Water Supply	Georgian Bay should work with the District of Muskoka to investigate the condition of the township's water system infrastructure. Based on the results of that review, Georgian Bay should work with the District of Muskoka to develop a plan for upgrading the water distribution infrastructure as required.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
16-3	Water Supply	Georgian Bay should continue working with the District of Muskoka to explore ways of making the township's fire hydrants more visible from the main roadway, such as by adding reflective markings.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
16-4	Water Supply	The Fire Chief should conduct a study to identify locations where Georgian Bay can install dry hydrants. The Fire Chief should then write a report that explains why installing dry hydrants is beneficial for firefighting operations. (The report should also identify the potential costs associated with installing dry hydrants.) The Fire Chief should then submit the report to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
17-1	Asset Management	The Fire Chief should consider contacting a qualified third-party company to help develop a communications plan to improve the reliability and performance of the radio system used by Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
17-2	Asset Management	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should develop a rescue equipment program. The program should identify which equipment the fire department requires to perform its approved rescue services. The program should involve assessing the fire department's current rescue equipment and developing a schedule for purchasing new rescue equipment.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term

Rec. #	Section	Recommendation	Considerations
18-1	Marine Services	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should develop a long-term strategic plan to reduce the frequency and severity of fires and other incidents that affect the local water-access-only properties. The plan should outline a multi-year approach that the fire department can use to improve the public education messages, inspections, and fire suppression services that it provides to those properties. The Fire Chief should present the plan to Council for consideration and approval.	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term
18-2	Marine Services	The Fire Chief should complete a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis regarding the mandatory installation of residential sprinkler systems in new buildings constructed on water-access-only properties.	Mandatory: No Council approval: No Budget impact: No Timeframe: Short-term
18-3	Marine Services	Georgian Bay should seek legal counsel regarding the risks involved with endorsing and facilitating its “cottage portable pump program.”	Mandatory: No Council approval: Yes Budget impact: Yes Timeframe: Short-term

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context of a Fire Master Plan

A fire master plan is a strategic planning document that evaluates and discusses a fire department from administrative, legislative, and operational perspectives. In addition to evaluations, a fire master plan includes recommendations designed to enhance the fire department's operations.

The goal of a fire master plan is to provide information that a fire department can use to:

- Protect the safety of local firefighters, residents, and businesses.
- Adjust or enhance services to meet current and anticipated needs.
- Remain compliant with applicable legislation and training requirements.
- Explore opportunities to introduce shared services.
- Prepare budgets, implementation plans, and asset management plans.

Overall, a fire master plan is intended to guide a fire department's operations and allow it to meet the community's current and anticipated risks, needs, and circumstances for the foreseeable future.

1.2 Fire Master Plan for Georgian Bay

In December 2023, Georgian Bay contracted The Loomex Group to complete an FMP that the township and its fire department can use to make policy, capital, and organizational changes over a ten-year timeframe.

The scope of this FMP encompasses a review of the Department from legislative, administrative, and operational perspectives. The FMP also includes a review of the community's past, current, and anticipated fire protection needs. Based on the findings obtained from those reviews, The Loomex Group developed a list of recommendations designed to help Georgian Bay enhance community safety for its residents, visitors, and businesses.

The recommendations provided in this FMP include strategies related to governance, services, and personnel. All recommendations prioritize the safety of Georgian Bay's residents and firefighters while also ensuring the township can enhance its services in a cost-effective manner.

The following subsections describe the approach and methodology used to develop this FMP.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

1.3.1 Initial Stakeholder Engagement

Start-up Meeting

The Loomex Group began this FMP by meeting with Fire Chief Tony Van Dam ("**Fire Chief**") to review the project's work scope and framework.

Following the start-up meeting, The Loomex Group developed a finalized version of the project framework, which the Fire Chief reviewed and approved.

Stakeholder Engagement

After the Fire Chief approved the project framework, The Loomex Group held engagement sessions with the following stakeholders:

- Greg Mariotti (CAO)
- Steven Predko (Counsellor)
- Allan Hazelton (Counsellor)
- Chad Dowell (Deputy Chief)
- Kurt Woll (District Chief)
- officers and firefighters from all three stations of the Department

The Fire Chief also participated in the additional engagement sessions.

1.3.2 Data Collection and Review

Document Reviews

The Loomex Group reviewed various administrative, legislative, and operational documents about Georgian Bay and the Department, including:

- applicable legislation, bylaws, and agreements
- municipal mapping
- operating and capital budgets
- organizational charts
- current fire protection services, protocols, policies, and procedures, including standard operating guidelines ("**SOGs**")
- training program data
- fire prevention statistics

Site Visits

The data collection phase of the project also included site visits. During the site visits, representatives of The Loomex Group spent time in Georgian Bay to observe the community's demographics firsthand.

Engagement with Fire Service Personnel

The data collection phase of the project also included engagement with the local fire service personnel. The Loomex Group facilitated a SWOT analysis session with the Department's personnel to gather their opinions about the Department's operations, organizational structure, and current and anticipated needs.

1.3.3 Drafting the Fire Master Plan

Developing the Fire Master Plan

After consolidating the findings obtained from the data collection process, The Loomex Group began drafting the FMP document.

As it completed the draft FMP, The Loomex Group kept the following questions in mind:

- What actions can the Department take to better protect firefighter safety?
- What actions can the Department take to better protect the community's well-being?
- Are there opportunities for the Department to introduce shared services?
- Are there opportunities for the Department to save or avoid costs?

The Loomex Group also identified baselines and benchmarks that the Department can use to perform an ongoing self-assessment of its service delivery capabilities.

Ongoing Review Process

The FMP development process incorporated regular meetings with the Department's personnel. These meetings ensured that the FMP benefited from continual stakeholder contributions.

1.4 Finalizing the Fire Master Plan

The Loomex Group will issue the finalized FMP to the Fire Chief. The Loomex Group will then meet with Council to present highlights and recommendations from the finalized FMP document.

2.0 Community Demographics

2.1 Overview of the Township of Georgian Bay

The Township of Georgian Bay is a rural waterfront community in Central Ontario. The township has over 2,500 km of shoreline, and it is about 30 minutes northwest of Barrie. The community offers southern access to the UNESCO-designated Georgian Bay Biosphere, which is home to the world's largest freshwater archipelago. As part of Lake Huron, Georgian Bay is often called the "Sixth Great Lake." Roughly 35 per cent of the township's surface area is water.

Founded in 1971, Georgian Bay also became part of the District Municipality of Muskoka. Highway 400 runs through the township, with inland lakes to the east and the Biosphere to the west. The township made conservation history in 2024 by granting environmental protection to the Georgian Bay Land Trust, preserving much of the southern region from encroaching development. The southern boundary features the Trent-Severn Waterway and Lock 45, which is the final lock before Georgian Bay itself.

Georgian Bay has around 5,500 dwellings, with 3,500 permanent residents and 18,600 seasonal homeowners. About half of these seasonal homes are water-access-only, offering a distinct experience compared to road access inland lakes. The township's waters are serviced by Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services, which is a marine-capable and water-rescue trained fire department.

The township borders Moose Deer Point First Nation and Wahta Mohawk Territory and maintains strong relations with its neighbours by being committed towards real truth and reconciliation as part of its 2022–2026 Strategic Plan.

Historically, the area's economy was centred on lumber, commercial fishing, and the railway hub of MacTier. Tourism followed, but it was limited by poor road access, with steamer ships bringing early visitors from Midland, Penetanguishene, and Collingwood. Inland lakes were developed from 1950 to 1970 after Highway 169 (now Highway 400) was expanded. Large natural areas, including Beausoleil Island National Park and Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, remain preserved. Today, the economy centres around marinas and tourism, and Georgian Bay seeks year-round jobs to reduce youth outmigration. Growth is expected to remain low.

The township's main communities are MacTier, Port Severn, and Honey Harbour, with the latter serving as a major water access hub that houses 19 of the 23 local marinas. Waterfront communities along inland lakes and the coast, such as Go Home Lake, Six Mile Lake, Twelve Mile Bay, and Cognashene, account for 80 per cent of the population in the area.

Despite its size, Georgian Bay has three libraries, some district water/sewer services, many public boat launches, parks, and maintained green spaces. The township is also rich in natural resources. The diverse species and significant wetlands in the community are the largest in Canada. As such, ensuring environmental protection for current and future generations is a top priority for Georgian Bay.

According to its official website:

> "Georgian Bay reflects a variety of diverse perspectives and needs, from seasonal and permanent populations to local businesses and tourism industries. At the centre of this is the municipal administration and Township Council, who balance the needs of the municipality as a whole and ensure a sustainable and thriving future for residents, the economy and visitors."[1]

2.2 Population

2.2.1 Permanent Residents

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, Georgian Bay has a population of 3,441 year-round residents. This number is 36.9 per cent higher than the number of residents recorded in the 2016 census. Upon review, the population growth rate in Georgian Bay is significantly higher than the provincial average, which is 5.8 per cent.

2.2.2 Seasonal Residents and Tourists

According to Georgian Bay's website, an influx of seasonal residents causes Georgian Bay's population to increase by 15,958 people in the summer. This number is 363.7 per cent higher than the township's year-round population. A significant number of tourists also visit the township each summer. As the population grows, the demand for the Department's services also increases.

According to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, 47 per cent of all households in Muskoka in 2021 were seasonal dwellings or second homes. That number is approximately the same as the number recorded in 2016. Historically, the occupants of those properties have comprised over half of Muskoka's total population.

Second Home Study

In 2023, the District of Muskoka released a second home study, which analyzed seasonal and permanent population estimates for Georgian Bay and the overall district.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the second home study.

[1] Township of Georgian Bay, "About Georgian Bay."

Table 2. Results of District of Muskoka second home study.

Category	Georgian Bay	District of Muskoka
Number of seasonal dwellings[2]	4,357	22,377
Percentage of dwellings that are seasonal	84.19%	47.05%
Estimated seasonal population (2022)[3]	15,976	81,452
Permanent population (2021)	3,441	66,674[4]
Total population	19,417	148,126
Percentage of population that is seasonal	82.3%	55.0%

2.3 Age Distribution

Table 3 compares the age distribution in Georgian Bay to the Province of Ontario (based on the findings of the 2021 Statistics Canada census).

Table 3. Age distribution in Georgian Bay and the Province of Ontario.

Age Range	Georgian Bay	Ontario
0 to 14 years	8.9%	15.8%
15 to 64 years	58.1%	65.6%
65 years and over	33.1%	18.5%
85 years and over	3.2%	2.4%

According to the 2021 census, the average age in Georgian Bay is 52.4 (compared to the provincial average of 41.8). The census data also shows that the median age in Georgian Bay is 58.4 (compared to the provincial median of 41.6).

2.4 Language

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, Georgian Bay is a predominantly English-speaking community, with 92.4 per cent of residents identifying English as their first language.

Overall, 99.9 per cent of Georgian Bay's residents can hold a conversation in English, and 4.7 per cent are bilingual in English and French.

[2] Dwelling numbers for Q3 2022 were reported by MPAC.

[3] Values do not identify the area municipality in which a seasonal resident's second home is located.

[4] Permanent population data was derived from the District of Muskoka's Statistics Canada census profile.

2.5 Level of Education

Table 4 compares the highest level of education obtained by Georgian Bay's residents aged 15 years and over to the provincial average (based on the findings of the 2021 Statistics Canada census).

Table 4. Education levels in Georgian Bay and the Province of Ontario.

Education Level	Georgian Bay	Ontario
No certificate	18.2%	15.3%
High school diploma or equivalency	32.5%	27.2%
Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	49.3%	57.5%

2.6 Potential Fire Protection Concerns

Based on Georgian Bay's current and anticipated community demographics, the Department should take note of the potential fire protection concerns listed below.

Population Increase

Over the past few years, Georgian Bay's population has increased significantly, outpacing the provincial growth rate by a considerable margin.

Seasonal Residents and Tourists

Historically, Georgian Bay experiences a large influx of seasonal residents during the summer. Those influxes significantly increase the number of residents living in the township during certain times of the year.

As a result of additional residents in the community, the Department may see an increased number of calls for assistance, which has the potential to strain the Department's available resources. For instance, tourists often visit Georgian Bay to enjoy various outdoor activities. Some of those activities may heighten the risk of wildland fires. The Department may also need receive emergency calls regarding lost or injured people. Furthermore, some cottagers and tourists may require the Department's assistance in areas that are not accessible by publicly maintained roads.

In addition, the influx of residents will increase the demand for other municipal services in Georgian Bay.

Age of Population

Because Georgian Bay has an older population, the municipality may experience a higher-than-average number of calls for pre-hospital medical services.

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, 33.1 per cent of Georgian Bay's population is over the age of 65. The Department must keep this number in mind when developing fire prevention and public education programs, as different age groups may require targeted fire and life safety messages.

3.0 Structure of the Fire Department

3.1 History of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services

The development of fire protection services in Georgian Bay has a rich history. Before the Township of Georgian Bay was formed in 1971, the area comprised separate communities, including the townships of Freeman, Gibson, and Baxter, as well as several unincorporated settlements. Each community had its own initiatives towards establishing fire safety measures.

In 1950, Bylaw 372 was established, which authorized the inauguration of the MacTier Fire Department. The new fire department's first fire station was established on November 25, 1950. The new building marked a significant step forward in ensuring the community's safety against fires and related threats. The new fire station also set the groundwork for future expansions and improvements within the area's fire services.

In the mid-1960s, the Honey Harbour Fire Department came into existence as a result of the efforts of local businesses and community members. Their collective effort to raise funds led to the acquisition of the fire department's first fire truck, a used Buffalo Fire Truck, which the fire department purchased for $500. Initially, the truck was stationed in a garage owned by one of the firefighters.

In 1971, the Township of Georgian Bay was created, streamlining local government and paving the way for a unified approach to fire safety. One of the initial decisions by the council was to authorize the construction of fire stations in both Honey Harbour and MacTier in 1972, addressing the urgent need for proper emergency response facilities.

Acknowledging the vast geographic area of the municipality and the limitations in emergency response coverage, Jack Walsh, a local councillor and firefighter, spearheaded the drive to establish a fire station in the Port Severn area. His persistence led the township to convert an old public works garage on Violet Drive into a fire hall, which was eventually replaced by a new fire station.

From the onset, the Department has benefitted immensely from the unwavering support of its officers, firefighters, and their families. The early years of the Department and its predecessors were characterized by a strong sense of community and self-reliance, with numerous fundraising activities undertaken to equip the fire department with the necessary tools and machinery to protect lives and property. This collaborative spirit has been instrumental in the development of fire protection services in Georgian Bay to the present day.

3.2 Operating Structure

3.2.1 Mandate

The Department is a volunteer organization that provides various fire protection services for the residents, businesses, and visitors of Georgian Bay.

3.2.2 Fire Stations

The Department currently operates three fire stations.

Station 1 – Honey Harbour

Address: 2507 Honey Harbour Road
Honey Harbour, ON
P0E 1E0

No. of Staff: 9

No. of Apparatus: 2

Station 2 – MacTier

Address: 16 Muskoka Road
MacTier, ON
P0C 1H0

No. of Staff: 12

No. of Apparatus: 2

Station 3 – Port Severn

Address: 14 Bressette Road
Port Severn, ON
L0K 1S0

No. of Staff: 22

No. of Apparatus: 3

The map shown in Figure 1 illustrates where the Department's fire stations are located.

Figure 1. Locations of fire stations in Georgian Bay.

3.2.3 Organizational Structure

Figure 2 illustrates the Department's organizational structure.[5]

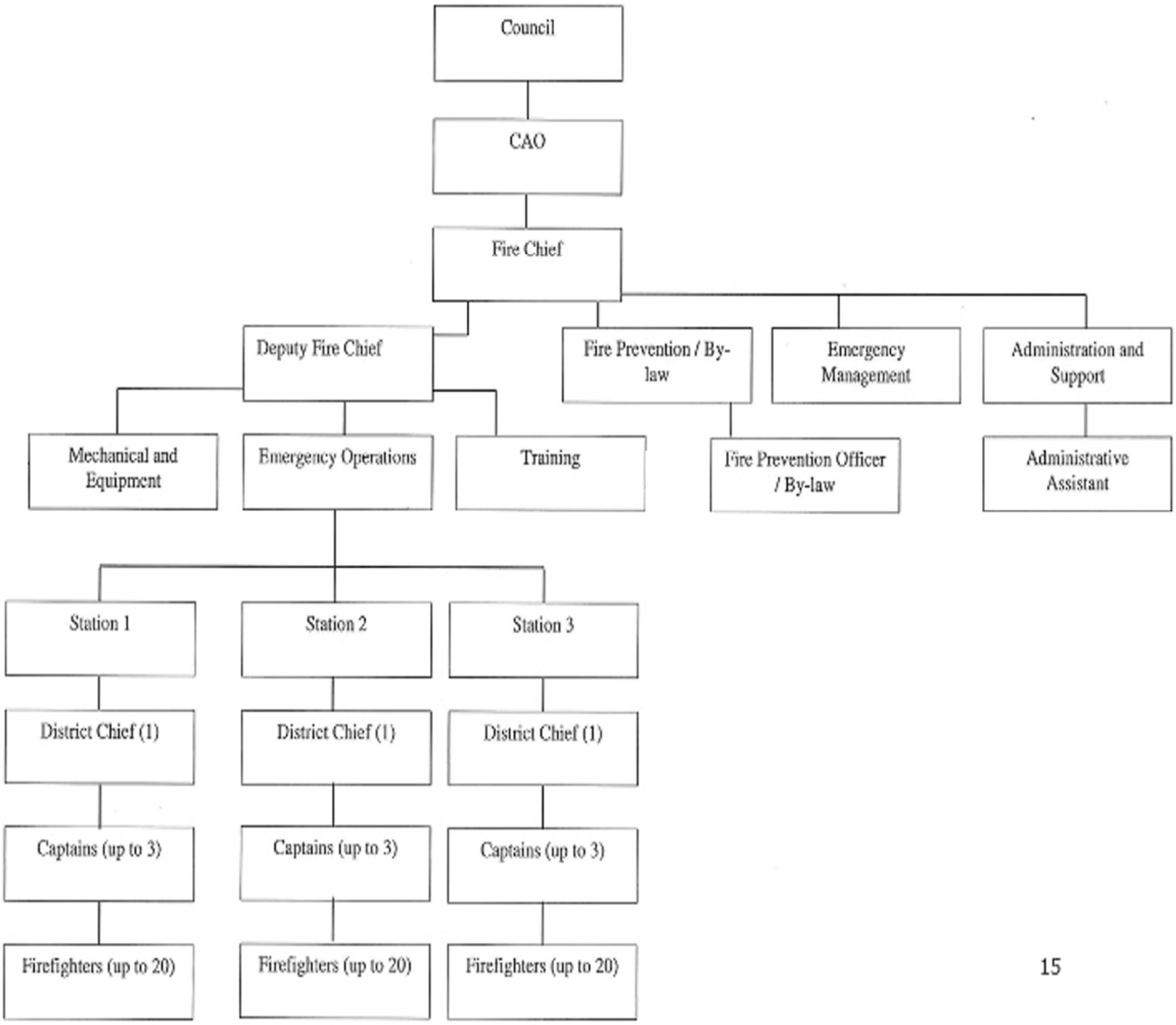

Figure 2. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services organizational structure.

[5] This chart is an amended excerpt from Appendix "B" of Bylaw 2019-67.

3.2.4 Years of Service

Tables 5, 6, and 7 summarize how long the Department's personnel have served as a member of the organization. The tables are organized by fire station.

Table 5. Years of service among personnel at Station 1 – Honey Harbour.

Personnel	0 to 1.9 years	2 to 3.9 years	4 to 9.9 years	10 to 14.9 years	15 to 19.9 years	20 and over
Firefighters	1	1	3	0	1	1
Captains	0	0	0	0	0	1
District chiefs	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**1**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**3**

Table 6. Years of service among personnel at Station 2 – MacTier.

Personnel	0 to 1.9 years	2 to 3.9 years	4 to 9.9 years	10 to 14.9 years	15 to 19.9 years	20 and over
Firefighters	4	1	2	3	1	0
Captains	0	0	0	0	1	0
District chiefs	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Table 7. Years of service among personnel at Station 3 – Port Severn.

Personnel	0 to 1.9 years	2 to 3.9 years	4 to 9.9 years	10 to 14.9 years	15 to 19.9 years	20 to 24.9 years
Firefighters	7	5	2	0	0	0
Captains	0	0	3	0	0	0
District chiefs	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**7**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**1**

Based on the information in the preceding tables, Figure 3 compares the overall years of experience in the Department as a whole.

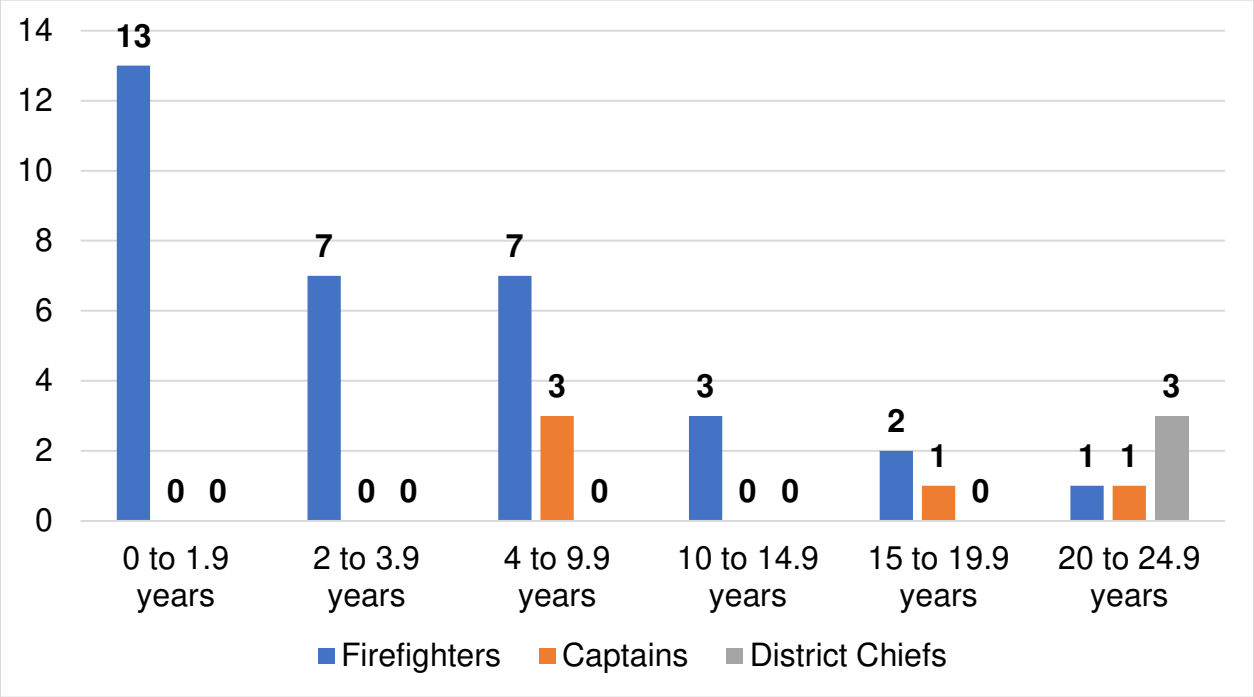

Figure 3. Years of service, Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services personnel.

3.3 Primary Roles and Duties

3.3.1 Fire Chief

The main duties of the Fire Chief are as follows:

- Develop and implement annual departmental goals and objectives.
- Provide Council, the CAO, and township staff with advice and recommendations.
- Attend Council and committee meetings when required.
- Act as CEMC
- Review and provide suggestions regarding planning matters.
- Ensure health and safety policies, procedures, acts, codes, and regulations are enforced.
- Recruit firefighters.
- Help the Department retain accurate maintenance records for its apparatus, equipment, and buildings.
- Respond to emergencies on a 24-hour basis (as required).

- Supervise and manage personnel.
- Conduct after-hour staff meetings with firefighters and officers.
- Perform the roles and responsibilities of a member of the senior management team.
- Monitor the Department's services to ensure they remain aligned with Georgian Bay's corporate customer service values and standards.

3.3.2 Deputy Fire Chief

The main duties of the Deputy Fire Chief are as follows:

- Lead the Department when the Fire Chief is absent.
- Maintain a complete inventory of all vehicles and major apparatus.
- Coordinate repairs and track service records.
- Support the Fire Chief.
- Develop and deliver programs related to public fire safety and emergency planning education.
- Coordinate and participate in the delivery of applicable training programs.
- Assist with the maintenance of accurate training records.
- Assist the Fire Chief with mapping, 911 address issues, dispatch systems, and road blockages.
- Provide direction, training, and motivation to the Department's firefighters.
- Help the Department retain accurate maintenance records for its apparatus, equipment, and buildings.
- Respond to emergencies on a 24-hour basis (as required).
- Help coordinate emergency response operations.
- Evaluate fire safety plans and conduct fire inspections.

3.3.3 District Chiefs

The main duties of the district chiefs are as follows:

- Deliver all fire suppression duties necessary to save life and property.
- Provide service assistance to police, paramedics, and the public.
- Assume incident command and direct operations at emergency scenes.
- Wear all required PPE.

- Perform overhaul operations to ensure that fires are completely extinguished.
- Provide emergency medical responses and aid as required.
- Perform rescue and extrication operations (as necessary) to prevent loss of life or further injury from any cause.
- Perform a variety of rescue-related duties to protect the public and lessen the severity of injuries related to motor vehicle accidents.
- Participate and assist in departmental training programs.
- Oversee the implementation of established policies and procedures at the station level.

3.3.4 Captains

The main duties of the captains are as follows:

- Complete fire suppression duties necessary to save life and property.
- Assist police, paramedics, and the public.
- Drive and operate any vehicle or equipment as assigned, including water vessels.
- Operate firefighting equipment associated with controlling and extinguishing fires.
- Wear all required PPE.
- Ventilate buildings or other affected areas to release heat, smoke, or fumes.
- Provide emergency medical responses.
- Complete all documentation and reports that are required by governing bodies and local bylaws, polices, and procedures.
- Help train other firefighters in the Department.
- Upgrade and maintain skills, knowledge, and physical requirements to current standards.

3.3.5 Firefighters

The main duties of the firefighters are as follows:

- Complete fire suppression duties necessary to save life and property.
- Assist police, paramedics, and the public.
- Drive and operate any vehicle or equipment as assigned, including water vessels.
- Operate firefighting equipment associated with controlling and extinguishing fires.

- Wear all required PPE.
- Provide emergency medical responses.
- Perform a variety of rescue-related duties to protect the public and lessen the severity of injuries.
- Conduct station maintenance and general upkeep on the Department's firefighting equipment and property.
- Upgrade and maintain skills, knowledge, and physical requirements to current standards.
- Participate in public relation projects.

3.3.6 Technical Assistant

The technical assistant performs various administrative duties in the Department, such as:

- Maintain complete and accurate departmental files and records.
- Serve as the alternate community emergency management coordinator ("**CEMC**").
- Maintain the Department's software program (by performing data entry and records entry).
- Track call data and produce reports as required.
- Prepare, proofread, and edit correspondence, reports, and presentations for accuracy.
- Prepare statistical information.
- Invoice all departmental responses.
- Facilitate prompt attention to telephone, visitor, and email inquiries and complaints, including bylaw inquiries.
- Process burn permits, answer related inquiries, and number permits.
- Prepare the agendas and minutes for officer meetings.
- Assist in the recruitment process for firefighters, including arranging interviews and maintaining personnel files.

3.3.7 Findings

Deputy Fire Chief

The Deputy Fire Chief is responsible for overseeing several important areas, including fire suppression, fire prevention, and training. However, the wide range of duties, combined with the time required to manage each of these divisions, makes it challenging to give any one area the full attention it needs.

As a result, it becomes difficult to provide the level of leadership and direction that would allow each division to thrive. Given these challenges, it may be worth considering ways to restructure or redistribute certain responsibilities in order to better support each division, striving to ensure they each receive the focused leadership they require.

District Chiefs, Captains, and Firefighters

Upon review, the job descriptions for the district chiefs, captains, and firefighters all list similar accountability duties. Although all district chiefs and captains should maintain their core firefighting skills, the roles should focus on different accountability duties.

Going forward, the accountability duties of the district chiefs should focus on the following topics:

- leadership
- incident command
- assessing training and development
- administrative duties
- conflict resolution
- developing a healthy and productive culture within the Department

Going forward, the accountability duties of the captains should focus on the following topics:

- supervising staff
- leading incident responses, training initiatives, and station activities

3.4 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of “Fire Chief Initiatives” related to the structure of the Department, see Appendix E.

3.5 Recommendations

There are no recommendations regarding the structure of the Department.

4.0 Legislation and Standards

4.1 Overview of Legislation and Standards

Legislation

In Ontario, fire departments must operate in accordance with numerous acts and other types of legislation, including the following:

- Fire Protection and Prevention Act, S.O. 1997 ("**FPPA**")
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990 ("**OHSA**")
- Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990 (**"EMCPA")**
- O. Reg. 332/12: Building Code ("**OBC**")
- O. Reg. 213/07: Fire Code ("**OFC**")
- applicable municipal bylaws

For brief definitions of these documents—as well definitions of other applicable types of legislation—see Appendix C of this FMP.

Industry Standards

The following industry standards and guidelines also influence how fire departments operate:

- National Fire Protection Association ("**NFPA**") standards
- Ontario Fire Marshal ("**OFM**") Public Fire Safety Guidelines
- Ontario Fire Service Health and Safety Committee firefighter guidance notes

The information and recommendations outlined in the standards and guidelines listed above provide benchmarks that fire departments should use to gauge the effectiveness of their operations and safety initiatives.

4.2 Legislative Compliance in Georgian Bay

Context

The FPPA outlines the minimum standards that municipalities and fire departments must meet. Various FPPA requirements also relate to other regulations and codes, such as the OFC and OBC (which deal with life safety systems).

As per section 6 (3) of the FPPA, each fire chief is responsible for ensuring that their fire department is compliant with applicable legislation and standards.

Findings

Table 8 lists some of the legislative requirements that all fire departments and municipalities must meet. The table indicates if Georgian Bay and the Department are compliant with the stated requirements.

Table 8. Selected requirements of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

Reference	Requirement	Compliant?
FPPA, 2 (2) (b)	“Establish a fire department.”	Yes
FPPA, 2 (1) (a)	“Establish a program in the municipality which must include public education.”	Yes
FPPA, 6 (1)	“Appoint a fire chief for the fire department.”	Yes
OFC, Div. B, 1.1	Implement a smoke/CO alarm program.	Yes
O. Reg. 364/13	Implement a vulnerable occupancy program.	Yes
O. Reg. 365/13	Complete inspections upon complaint.	Yes
O. Reg. 365/13	Complete inspections upon request.	Yes
O. Reg. 378/18	Complete a community risk assessment.	Yes

As indicated in the table above, Georgian Bay and the Department are currently compliant with applicable legislative requirements.

Going forward, Georgian Bay and the Department should strive to continue allocating the time and resources needed to meet their legislative obligations.

4.3 Recommendations

There are no recommendations regarding legislation and standards in Georgian Bay.

5.0 Bylaws

5.1 Overview of Bylaws

In Ontario, a bylaw is a municipal law passed under the authority of the Municipal Act.

Municipalities can use bylaws to formalize their municipal services, day-to-day operating protocols, and bylaw enforcement procedures.

5.1.1 Importance of Bylaws

In 1989, the Supreme Court of Canada ("**SCC**") made a landmark decision about municipal liability.

Prior to the 1980s, municipalities and fire departments were largely considered free from civil liability for firefighting efforts. However, the SCC revised this position due to the case of Laurentide Motel Ltd. v. Beauport. A summary of the Supreme Court Judgments reads as follows:

> A client's negligence led to a fire that damaged the appellants' hotel complex in the city of Beauport. As soon as they arrived, the firefighters sprayed water from the fire truck onto the fire, but the water soon ran out owing to the impossibility of connecting with the hydrants. The latter, which were difficult to reach and covered with snow, were unusable because they were frozen or broken. It was not until some forty minutes later that water was finally obtained from the hydrants. The appellants brought an action for damages against the person who had set the fire and the respondent, alleging fault by the latter in fighting the fire, namely that its equipment had not been maintained and did not function properly, as well as fault by its employees in the performance of their duties.[6]

As the excerpt shows, the case summary identified water supply and negligent firefighting as crucial issues. Although a guest in the Beauport motel caused the fire, the city's failure to maintain and operate effective fire protection services meant that Beauport was partially responsible—and therefore liable—for most of the ensuing costs. The SCC ruled that Beauport had to pay over $500,000 in damages (plus interest).

An important aspect of the case was the distinction between policy decisions and operational decisions. As an elected body, a municipal council should communicate its decisions using methods that citizens can access (such as bylaws or news reports). Because municipal councillors make their decisions readily available, the SCC determined that those decisions are mostly free from liability.

[6] Laurentide Motels Ltd. v. Beauport (City), 1 SCR 705 (1989).

Moreover, if the majority of citizens are unhappy with the decisions of their councillors, they have the chance to elect new councillors when it is time for council re-election.

Unlike municipal councils, fire departments do not necessarily relay their decisions to the public in formats that are easily accessible. As a result, citizens may not have a chance to question decisions that could adversely affect them.

Following the Laurentide Motel Ltd. v. Beauport ruling, many municipalities have updated their fire protection bylaws. The revisions give municipal councils the authority to make decisions about their local fire protection services (rather than leaving those matters exclusively to the fire departments). As a result, residents can familiarize themselves with the specific fire protection services they can expect their fire departments to provide.

5.2 Establishing and Regulating Bylaw

Context

An establishing and regulating bylaw ("**E&R bylaw**") is used to specify which services a fire department must deliver to its community, as well as the level of service the local firefighters must provide.

In order to develop an E&R bylaw, a municipal council must assess the risks, needs, and circumstances of its community. The councillors should then use the results of their assessment to develop the bylaw. (The local fire chief should also offer suggestions regarding the content of the bylaw.)

Once a municipal council formalizes its E&R bylaw, the councillors and the local fire chief must review and update the document on a regular basis to make sure it remains current with the community's needs. The councillors must also approve updates to the E&R bylaw each time there is a change to the local fire department's structure, services, or operations (for both emergency and non-emergency services).

Findings

The current E&R bylaw for Georgian Bay is Bylaw No. 2019-67. This bylaw outlines all emergency and non-emergency services that Council has set for the Department. A summary of those services is provided below.

Emergency Response

- basic firefighting services
- structural firefighting services
- interior and exterior fire suppression
- rural firefighting operations

- marine firefighting services
- vehicle firefighting services
- grass, brush, and forestry firefighting services
- automatic aid response services
- mutual aid response services
- tiered medical response services
- ambulance assistance services
- police assistance services
- public assistance services
- public hazard assistance services
- vehicle extrication services
- responses to transportation incidents involving vehicles, trains, aircraft, and watercraft
- highway and roadway incident responses
- hazardous materials response services (at the awareness level)
- water and ice rescue services
- urban search and rescue services
- rope rescue services
- confined space rescue services
- trench rescue services
- community emergency plan response services
- assistant to the Fire Marshal services

Fire Prevention and Public Education

- fire inspection services
- public education services
- fire investigation services
- plans examination services
- risk assessment services
- consultation services
- assistant to the Fire Marshal services

Emergency Planning

- emergency planning services

Fire Department Administration

- planning and development services
- financial services
- records management services
- human resources services
- customer relations services
- health and safety services
- legal services

Communications

- dispatch services

Training and Education

- training program standards
- providing access to training facilities
- providing station training

Upon review, the terms of Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw reflect the Department's current services. However, the E&R bylaw does not reference applicable NFPA standards for the Department's services. Also, the bylaw does not specify which level of service the Department is expected to provide for each of its approved services. (According to the NFPA, there are three different levels of service that fire departments can obtain for specific operations. Those levels of service are awareness, operations, and technician.)

Going forward, the Fire Chief should meet with Council to discuss updating the E&R bylaw to include references to NFPA standards, including relevant chapter numbers, as well as specified levels of service for each of the Department's approved services. The Department can reference the relevant NFPA standards for information on training, equipment, procedures, certification requirements, and service limits.

Table 9 identifies specific emergency response services that should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Table 9. Suggested bylaw revisions regarding emergency response services.

Service	Issue/Concern	Recommendation
Firefighting services	• The E&R bylaw references NFPA 1720, but it does not specify a demand zone.	• Update the E&R bylaw to specify the demand zone (urban, suburban, rural, or remote) applicable to the Department.
Rope rescue (low-angle)	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard. • The E&R bylaw does not specify a level of service (awareness, operations, or technician).	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1006, chapter 5. • Update the E&R bylaw to specify a level of service for the Department's operations.
Structural collapse	• The E&R bylaw references NFPA 1670.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1006, chapter 6.
Confined space rescue	• The E&R bylaw references NFPA 1670.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1006, chapter 7.
Vehicle accident and vehicle extrication services	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard. • The E&R bylaw does not specify a level of service (awareness, operations, or technician).	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1006, chapter 8. • Update the E&R bylaw to specify a level of service for the Department's operations.
Trench rescue	• The E&R bylaw references NFPA 1670.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA, chapter 12.
Water and ice rescue services	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard. • The E&R bylaw does not specify a level of service (awareness, operations, or technician). • The E&R bylaw lists water and ice rescue under the same heading.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1006, chapters 17 and 20. • Update the E&R bylaw to list "surface water rescue" and "ice rescue" separately. • Update the E&R bylaw to specify a level of service for the Department's operations.

In addition to revising the emergency response portion of the E&R bylaw, the Fire Chief should work with Council to update the fire prevention portion of the bylaw.

Table 10 identifies specific fire prevention services that should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Table 10. Suggested bylaw revisions regarding fire prevention services.

Service	Issue/Concern	Recommendation
Fire inspection	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1031.
Fire plans examiner	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1031.
Fire investigation	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1033.
Public education	• The E&R bylaw does not reference the applicable NFPA standard.	• Update the E&R bylaw to reference NFPA 1035.

If Georgian Bay updates its E&R bylaw as per the suggestions above, it may help the Department's firefighters—as well as the township's residents—gain a better understanding of the specific fire protection services available in the community, as well as the level of services that is expected. In addition, identifying specific levels of service would allow the Department to research which minimum job performance requirements its training program must incorporate. By aligning its training program to the required levels of service, the Department can better equip its firefighters to deliver their Council-approved fire protection services.

Finally, the Fire Chief should ensure that the E&R bylaw is reviewed on an annual basis. An annual review will help identify any portions of the bylaw that require updates in order to remain current with Georgian Bay's risks, needs, and circumstances. The bylaw should also be reviewed (and updated, as needed) each time there is a change to the Department's structure or services. For instance, if the Department implements any of the recommendations included in this FMP, the E&R bylaw should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

5.3 Other Fire Protection Bylaws

Context

In addition to an E&R bylaw, a municipal council may pass other fire protection bylaws, such as:

- open-air burning bylaws
- false alarm bylaws
- firework bylaws
- parking bylaws

Some municipalities formalize their fire protection bylaws as service agreements, such as mutual aid and automatic aid agreements.

For more information about specific types of fire service agreements, see section 6 of this FMP.

Findings

The following fire protection bylaws are currently in effect in Georgian Bay:

- Bylaw 2018-06 regulates and controls parking within the township, including prohibiting parking near fire hydrants and in designated fire routes.
- Bylaw 2019-18 regulates the setting of fires, outlines protocols to prevent the spreading of fires, and establishes a fire permit system for the township.
- Bylaw 2022-009 prohibits the use of fireworks in the township.

Upon review, the fire protection bylaws listed above are current and applicable to the Department's approved services.

Georgian Bay also has bylaws in place that outline its agreements with other agencies. See section 6 for more information about the Department's fire service agreements.

5.4 Recommendations

After assessing the bylaws in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

5-1. The Fire Chief should review the establishing and regulating bylaw for Georgian Bay on an annual basis, recommending updates and revisions to the bylaw as needed.

5-2. The Fire Chief should review the establishing and regulating bylaw for Georgian Bay in order to identify which sections of the bylaw should be updated to include references to NFPA standards. The Fire Chief should also identify which sections of the bylaw should be updated to specify a level of service for the operations of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.

6.0 Fire Service Agreements

6.1 Overview of Fire Service Agreements

Under the authority of the Municipal Act and the FPPA, a municipality can enter into an agreement with another municipality to provide or receive a service. The most common types of agreements are mutual aid plans, automatic aid agreements, and fire protection agreements.

Each type of fire service agreement has different requirements that must be met. These requirements are outlined in the public fire safety guidelines developed by the OFM.

6.2 Mutual Aid Plans

Context

The OFM legislation regarding mutual aid is Public Fire Safety Guideline 04-05-12.

According to the OFM, a mutual aid plan allows a participating fire department to request assistance from a neighbouring fire department (as long as the other fire department is authorized to participate in a plan approved by the Fire Marshal).

Section 7 of the FPPA states that the Fire Marshal may appoint fire coordinators to "establish and maintain a mutual aid plan under which the fire departments that serve [a] designated area agree to assist each other in the event of an emergency."

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department participates in the District of Muskoka Mutual Aid Plan. Under this plan, the Department can receive fire protective services from other fire departments.

Upon review, the current version of the District of Muskoka Mutual Aid Plan is from 2018. The mutual aid plan is scheduled to be revised in the fall of 2025.

6.3 Automatic Aid Agreements

Context

The OFM legislation regarding automatic aid is Public Fire Safety Guideline 04-04-12.

According to the OFM, an automatic aid agreement allows the closest available fire department to respond to an incident regardless of municipal boundaries. The purpose of an automatic aid agreement is to reduce the time it takes for firefighters to arrive at the scene of a fire and begin suppression duties.

Findings

Current Automatic Aid Agreements

As of this FMP, the Department participates in the following automatic aid agreements:

- As per Bylaw no. 2019-50 and Bylaw no.2019-53, the Township of Muskoka Lakes provides fire suppression services and responds to motor vehicle collisions in the MacTier and Foot's Bay areas of Georgian Bay.
- As per Bylaw no. 2019-48 and Bylaw no. 2019-54, Georgian Bay provides ice and water rescue, fire suppression, and medical response services in the Trent-Severn Waterway area of Muskoka Lakes.
- As per Bylaw no. 2019-49 and Bylaw no. 2019-54, the Township of Muskoka Lakes provides ice and water rescue, fire suppression, and medical response services in the East Shore Road area of Georgian Bay.
- As per an agreement with the Township of Severn, Georgian Bay provides ice rescue, water rescue, fire suppression, and medical response services in Severn, but only along the Trent-Severn waterway.
- As per Bylaw no. 2020-09, the Township of Tay is permitted to access and use Georgian Bay's marine units for fire and water rescue purposes.
- As per Bylaw no. 84-775, Georgian Bay provides fire suppression services for Moose Deer Point First Nation.
    - This bylaw was established in 1984. As of this FMP, this bylaw is under revision.
    - Once the new agreement is finalized, Georgian Bay should revise the terms of the existing fire services agreement to ensure the bylaw is current.

Future Automatic Aid Agreements

As the demographics of Georgian Bay change, the Fire Chief should continue conducting regular needs analyses to examine community needs and the Department's level of service, deployment models, and response statistics. These analyses may identify a service that the township needs but the Department cannot provide, such as specialized services covered by NFPA 1006. If so, it may be beneficial to develop a cost effective automatic aid agreement with a fire department that currently delivers those services.

6.4 Fire Protection Agreements

Context

The OFM legislation regarding fire protection agreements is Public Fire Safety Guideline 04-09-12.

According to the OFM, a municipality may enter into a fire protection agreement if it does not have an existing fire department or does not have the means to establish one. A municipality may also enter into a fire protection agreement to have multiple departments operating a joint fire department.

A fire protection agreement can provide a municipality with access to resources such as additional staffing and specialized equipment. The agreements can also help a municipality obtain assistance with its public education and code enforcement initiatives.

Findings

Table 11 lists the Department's current fire protection agreements.

Table 11. Current fire protection agreements in Georgian Bay.

Partner Agency	Type of Agreement	Year Established
District of Muskoka	First aid assistance agreement	2014
Ministry of Natural Resources	Wildland fire agreement	2021
Canadian Red Cross	Training partner agreement	2023
Barrie Fire and Emergency Service	Dispatch services	2024

6.5 Recommendations

After assessing fire service agreements in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

6-1. Georgian Bay should continue working with Moose Deer Point First Nation to modernize the existing fire service agreement.

7.0 Staffing Considerations and Social Dynamics

7.1 Overview of Staffing Considerations and Social Dynamics

Fire departments need to have good communication with their firefighters, external partners, and the public in order to operate effectively. The success of a fire department in recruiting and retaining staff—as well as its success in maintaining a good relationship with the community—can be significantly affected by how well it communicates and interacts socially.

Maintaining effective communication and staffing levels can be challenging for volunteer fire departments. For instance, it can be difficult for volunteer fire departments to keep staffing levels consistent, especially during regular business hours. In order to overcome these challenges, volunteer fire departments often need to look into different ways of operating and solving staffing problems.

Communication and social dynamics are also reciprocal considerations, and it is important for municipalities to make sure their firefighters are treated with respect and receive the benefits they deserve for their hard work and commitment.

7.2 Transparency, Trust, and Communication

Context

A community consists of many groups, each with its own history, culture, and behaviours:

- Internal groups include residents, municipal staff, and fire service personnel
- External groups include agencies and organizations that share services with the fire department.

It is important for fire departments to communicate openly with all internal and external groups. Doing so can help build trust and increase collaboration.

There are many outlets that fire departments can use to communicate with internal and external stakeholders. Common communication tools include online surveys, social media messages, and in-person discussion groups.

Practising effective communication is especially important when a fire department wants to introduce changes to its services or structure. For example, if a fire department does not communicate its plans, some staff members and residents may be resistant to changes that will affect existing services or staffing models. However, when staff members and residents contribute to the planning process and understand the specifics of proposed decisions, they usually feel a sense of involvement.

As a best practice, municipal councils and fire departments should avoid making significant operational changes until they understand which groups those changes will affect. It is also important to anticipate how the affected groups will react to any proposed changes. Without due consideration of social dynamics, the potential benefits of changes at the operational level may be offset by consequences at the social level.

Findings

The Department continuously investigates ways to improve the overall level of morale among its personnel in order to improve the organization's safety and performance levels. This initiative is performed on an ongoing basis, and it includes both formal and informal strategies.

Examples of formal strategies include awards ceremonies to acknowledge promotions, contributions to the Department, years of service, and acts of exemplary service. The informal strategies include finding ways to improve collaboration and camaraderie between members of the Department.

Together, the combination of formal and informal strategies has the potential to help the Department's firefighters gain a positive experience working in the fire service.

7.3 Recruitment

Context

Many fire departments across Ontario struggle to recruit a consistent number of volunteer firefighters. Although the factors affecting recruitment vary from region to region, there are some common themes that most fire departments face, such as aging populations, competing interests, and a cultural shift away from community service. Often, the issues that impact recruitment levels can also affect retention.

In addition to the issues that impact recruitment levels, the time it takes to identify, develop, and implement strategies to resolve those issues can cause a significant drain on a fire department's time and resources.

Findings

Upon review, the Department's recruitment campaigns have attracted new recruits. At time of writing, the Department's complement sits at approximately forty-three members. However, the Department is authorized to be staffed with sixty members.

By taking the time to analyze the factors that affect its recruitment numbers, the Department gains valuable information that it can use to improve its volunteer firefighter recruitment process and ensure long-term success. During its most recent recruitment initiative, the Department managed to recruit qualified candidates without any major challenges.

The Department's current recruitment process involves several key actions:

- Identify the need to recruit/replace firefighters in the Department well in advance.
- Attempt to accommodate individual needs and schedules.
- Provide and deliver supervision and leadership during the recruitment process.
- Communicate the time commitments that recruits will need to dedicate to learning their duties.
- Identify and provide recognition and adequate compensation.

A summary[7] of the Department's recruitment process is as follows:

1. The Department posts a position on relevant job boards and online platforms.
2. The Department holds recruitment sessions.
3. Candidates submit applications.
4. Qualified candidates are selected to complete applicable physical tests.
5. The Department conducts interviews with qualified candidates.
6. The Department selects qualified candidates (pending the results of required medical tests).
7. Chosen candidates attend multiple weekend training sessions.
8. Chosen candidates complete the recruit training program.
9. Chosen candidates continue to attend ongoing and in-station training sessions and complete NFPA 1001, Level I and II training.

As part of its recruitment process, the Department clearly explains its goals related to the provision of fire protection services to Georgian Bay's residents and visitors.

One issue with the Department's current recruitment program is that it places significant demands on the organization's staff. During every recruitment campaign, several officers must remain available to manage the program from start to finish, and the officers must fulfill this responsibility in addition to completing their regular duties. In addition, the recruitment program is a lengthy process for all candidates who have been selected for the Department. Still, despite the time commitments required to facilitate a comprehensive recruitment process, it is necessary to ensure that all incoming firefighters gain the knowledge and skills needed to help the Department maintain its expected level of service. (It is worth also noting that the Department recognizes the demands of its recruitment program, and it tries to accommodate new and existing staff members as much as possible.)

[7] The Department has numerous internal documents that explain the recruitment process in detail.

Going forward, the Department should continue trying to find innovative ways to attract applicants who may want to become volunteer firefighters. One option to consider is the introduction of work experience programs. These types of programs are used to help inexperienced firefighters gain valuable on-the-job experience. The Department can also leverage these types of programs to increase the number of available personnel it can dispatch for emergency responses.

7.4 Retention Rates

Context

In the context of the fire service, retention rates refer to the number of firefighters who remain with their fire department for an extended period.

When a fire department loses one or more firefighters, it may face the following challenges:

- The fire department may not have enough personnel to meet the community's fire protection needs.
- Recruiting, onboarding, and training new firefighters each require significant time and monetary commitments.
- New personnel may lack the experience and skills needed to complete critical tasks safely and effectively.
    - For example, if a fire crew attempts to perform interior firefighting duties but does not have enough qualified personnel, the risk to the fire crew's safety increases exponentially.
- The fire department may not have enough experienced personnel to help mentor and train recruits.

There are many reasons that a volunteer fire department may struggle to retain its personnel. Some of the most common reasons include:

- Some firefighters find it difficult to obtain their NFPA certifications due to the time commitments needed to attend and complete training courses.
- Some firefighters find it difficult to balance their fire service duties and their personnel commitments (such as their work and family commitments).
- Some firefighters struggle to find meaningful employment within proximity of their fire station.

In response to retention challenges, some municipalities classify their volunteer firefighters as casual municipal employees. Doing so can provide the firefighters with access to benefits, such as pensions and the eligibility to apply for internal job postings within their municipality.

Incentives like these may help fire departments maintain consistent retention levels, which can help reduce the significant time and monetary commitments that are needed to recruit, onboard, and train new firefighters. Retention incentives may also improve a fire department's recruitment levels.

Findings

As of this FMP, 47 per cent of the Department's current firefighters have served with the organization for four years or more, and 31 per cent have served with the Department for ten years or more.

Going forward, the Department should strive to continue encouraging social interaction within its ranks by facilitating and supporting social events. These events may help improve retention levels in the Department, as regular social interaction with colleagues has the potential to motivate some firefighters to remain with the organization.

Georgian Bay should also consider providing its firefighters with opportunities to apply for internal job postings in other municipal departments.

7.5 Volunteer Availability

Context

One of the most common challenges that volunteer fire departments face is firefighter availability.

Many volunteer firefighters have work commitments outside of their fire departments. Due to those commitments, it is often difficult for volunteer firefighters to complete their fire service duties during regular business hours. Moreover, the firefighters may need to travel a significant distance before they arrive at their fire station. In some cases, this means that a volunteer fire department may not have enough firefighters to respond to large-scale emergencies in a timely manner.

Volunteer firefighters also require an adequate amount of time to rest after completing their fire service duties, especially after completing an emergency response. As such, fire departments that rely on volunteer personnel must ensure they create schedules that provide all staff members with a sustainable work-life balance.

In order to measure staffing availability, fire departments should monitor their attendance levels during emergency responses. Keeping track of attendance levels during training courses and maintenance sessions is also recommended. Doing so can help a fire department ensure that it is dispatching an adequate number of personnel who have the knowledge and skills to deliver fire protection services to the community.

In addition to tracking attendance numbers, some fire departments set a minimum attendance threshold that volunteers must surpass in order to be considered active firefighters. However, this practice is not a viable option for every fire department, especially if a fire department has a low call volume. Moreover, a minimum attendance standard must be used appropriately. The goal of this kind of standard should be to ensure a community is receiving the best fire protection services possible. The requirement is not meant to assign blame or place unrealistic expectations on fire service personnel.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department has a program that sets attendance expectations for its personnel. This program outlines minimum attendance levels for each duty in the Department. Enforcement of the attendance program is supported by SOG 1.10.

Going forward, the Department's leadership team should monitor attendance levels on an ongoing basis to ensure the Department's personnel are meeting the minimum attendance standard. However, if the Department pursues this option, the Fire Chief must ensure that the minimum attendance requirements are not so restrictive that they harm the Department's recruitment and retention rates.

7.6 Pay Steps for Fire Service Personnel

Context

A pay scale (also known as a salary scale or wage scale) is a structured system that determines how much employees are compensated. At its most basic, a pay scale should outline the progression of pay rates, from the minimum to the maximum, based on factors such as job classification, experience, education, and tenure. Pay scales are often expressed in bands or grades, with each band having a low, midpoint, and high pay rate.

Pay scales are a critical component of an organization's compensation strategy. The use of a pay scale provides a structured and transparent way to manage how employees are paid, which supports both operational and strategic objectives.

Findings

The Department has implemented a graduated pay-step system to promote the development of its firefighters. The system rewards personnel with pay increases upon the completion of designated courses and competencies. These courses and competencies are clearly outlined for all members of the Department, including firefighters, captains, and district chiefs. Each of these positions has four steps that personnel can progress through by meeting specified requirements.

Upon review, the main challenge with the pay-step system is maintaining regular access to the necessary courses and competencies. The sporadic availability of these courses, often provided by external entities, can hinder progression through the pay steps. In addition, courses may be held in different locations across Ontario, which means additional expenses for lodging, transportation, and meals may be required. These financial implications might deter the Department's leadership team from approving course attendance.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should review the pay-step system on a regular basis in order to ensure that it serves its intended purpose of facilitating skill development and progression. If the Fire Chief identifies a component of the program that is problematic, steps should be taken to address the noted deficiencies. Overall, the ongoing reviews will help the Department keep the pay system aligned with its goals while also providing its personnel with realistic expectations regarding the ability to progress through the pay steps in a timely manner. Balancing these objectives is crucial for the sustained development of the Department's personnel.

7.7 Business Relationships

Context

Many fire departments have reduced staffing levels and a low number of personnel who are available to respond to emergencies during regular business hours. One of the main reasons for this trend is that many volunteer firefighters have employment outside their fire department, and some business owners do not allow volunteer firefighters to leave the job site to respond to emergencies during regular business hours.

In some communities, there are business owners who hesitate to hire volunteer firefighters altogether. The perception is that business operations will suffer when volunteer firefighters abruptly leave the job site to respond to emergencies.

Some municipalities have taken steps to improve volunteer firefighter availability by publicly acknowledging businesses that hire volunteer firefighters and allow them to respond to emergencies during business hours.

Findings

Georgian Bay should consider finding a way to publicly acknowledge local businesses that hire volunteer firefighters and allow them to respond to emergencies during business hours. Doing so may help promote a sense of community and encourage businesses to support the fire service.

7.8 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of "Fire Chief Initiatives" related to staffing considerations and social dynamics, see Appendix E.

7.9 Recommendations

After assessing staffing considerations and social dynamics in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

7-1. The Fire Chief should work with Council and applicable municipal staff members to develop ways of publicly acknowledging local employers that allow volunteer firefighters to leave work to perform emergency responses.

8.0 Stakeholder Engagement

8.1 Overview of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement sessions are usually conducted in order to:

- Collect background information about an organization and its services.
- Collect information about the way clients or customers interact with an organization and its services.
- Provide stakeholders with a chance to help shape how their project develops.

There are several common forms of stakeholder engagement, including meetings, discussion groups, and surveys.

8.2 Community Survey

Context

It is common for operational reviews, service reviews, and similar projects to include community surveys as part of the project's data collection phase.

Conducting a community survey is a proven way of gathering the opinions and experiences of the public, which can provide a unique perspective about an organization and its services.

Findings

During the development of this FMP, a community survey was prepared and made available to the residents of Georgian Bay. The survey included questions about previous interactions with the Department's personnel, as well as how important the Department and its services are to the community.

According to the results of the community survey, Georgian Bay's residents view the Department as an essential organization. In the opinion of the survey respondents, the most important services provided by the Department are as follows:

1. Fire responses.
2. Responses to natural disasters in the community.
3. Vehicle collision responses.
4. Fire code enforcement.
5. Fire prevention provided through public education.

Going forward, the Department should review the results of the community survey and then consider whether any service updates or new initiatives are required.

8.3 Engagement Sessions with Council Members and CAO

Context

It is common for operational reviews to include focus group discussions in order to engage with stakeholders and gather their opinions and suggestions in real-time.

An engagement session can take place in person or using a virtual platform. In both cases, one of the main goals is to encourage open discussion about a range of important topics.

Findings

The development of this FMP included an engagement session with Georgian Bay's councillors and CAO. During the engagement session, participants were asked to share their thoughts about the following:

- the Department's current level of service
- the Department's service delivery capabilities
- current challenges facing the Department
- current challenges facing the fire service as a whole

One of the main takeaways from the engagement session is that Georgian Bay has a unique set of geographic characteristics that require the Department to provide specific services. However, delivering those services may present some challenges. For example, the township has many properties that are only accessible by water. If an incident occurs in these parts of the community, the Department may struggle to reach the emergency scene in a timely manner to deliver the required services.

Overall, participants provided valuable insight into the Department's operations and informed the content of this FMP.

8.4 SWOT Analysis with Firefighters

Context

A SWOT analysis is a planning method that organizations use to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats that affect their operations.

Findings

During the development of this FMP, The Loomex Group held three separate SWOT analysis sessions with the Department's officers and firefighters. The sessions took place at the Department's fire stations between February 5 and 7, 2024.

The discussions that took place during the SWOT analysis sessions covered topics such as the Department's structure, facilities, and resources. Each session had high levels of participation, which indicates that the volunteer officers and firefighters are committed to helping the Department enhance its operations.

Overall, the Department's personnel are dedicated to their work and have expressed enthusiasm and a genuine desire to improve the Department's performance and ability to deliver services in a cost-effective manner. Each group provided many insightful comments throughout the sessions, many of which are incorporated throughout this FMP document.

8.5 Recommendations

After assessing the results of the various engagement sessions conducted as part of this FMP, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

8-1. The Fire Chief should review the results of the SWOT analysis and the Council engagement sessions that were conducted during the development of the 2025 Georgian Bay Fire Master Plan. The Fire Chief should then consider finding ways to implement the suggestions made during those consultations (as applicable).

9.0 Emergency Management Requirements

9.1 Overview of Emergency Management Requirements

In order to receive their annual compliance recognition, municipalities must meet specific requirements of the EMCPA.

Under the EMCPA, each municipality has the following obligations:

- Establish an emergency management program ("**EMP**").
- Establish a community emergency management program committee ("**CEMPC**").
- Establish an emergency operations centre ("**EOC**").
- Provide annual emergency management training to all members of the local emergency control group ("**ECG**").
- Conduct an annual exercise that uses the EMP and involves all members of the ECG.
- Designate a primary CEMC and an alternate CEMC.
- Review the community's critical infrastructure annually (making updates as required).
- Review the community's hazard identification and risk analysis annually (making updates as required).

The EMCPA states that municipalities, not fire departments, are responsible for fulfilling these obligations. However, many municipalities appoint a member of their fire department's senior management team to serve as their CEMC or alternate CEMC.

Additional emergency management requirements are governed by O. Reg. 380/04.

9.2 Emergency Management Program

Context

According to the EMCPA, all municipalities must establish an EMP.

An EMP is a comprehensive program that a community develops in response to the threats identified by its hazard identification and risk assessment. All EMPs should consist of four core components: mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The Province of Ontario recommends that emergency management programs should be based on the concept of the Incident Management System ("**IMS**").

Findings

Georgian Bay has established an EMP that is based on the IMS.

Table 12 indicates whether Georgian Bay's EMP is compliant with the various requirements outlined in the EMCPA.

Table 12. Compliance requirements of an emergency management program.

Requirement	Finding	Compliant?
Appoint a primary and alternate CEMC.	The Fire Chief is the primary CEMC. The Department's technical assistant is the alternate CEMC.	Yes
Establish an EOC.	Georgian Bay has established both a primary EOC and alternate EOC.	Yes
Establish an EMP committee.	Georgian Bay has a dedicated CEMPC, which meets on a quarterly basis.	Yes
Review the community's hazard identification and risk analysis annually (making updates as required).	The CEMPC completes annual reviews and updates as required.	Yes
Review the community's list of critical infrastructure annually (making updates as required).	The CEMPC completes annual reviews and updates as required.	Yes

As shown in the table above, the EMP in Georgian Bay meets the compliance requirements set forth in the EMCPA.

Upon review, Georgian Bay hires a third-party company to help the township maintain compliance and improve the effectiveness of its EMP. As part of this arrangement, the third-party company conducts annual training and exercises for applicable personnel in the township. During the training and exercises, the third-party company provides assessments of the overall EMP.

In the future, Georgian Bay intends to have the third-party company work with its CEMC to revise the township's hazard identification risk assessment and list of critical infrastructure.

9.3 Community Emergency Management Program Committee

Context

According to the EMCPA, all municipalities must establish a CEMPC.

A CEMPC oversees the development, implementation, and maintenance of its community's EMP. Most CEMPCs work in conjunction with a CEMC.

Findings

The CEMPC in Georgian Bay consists of the following roles:

- EOC commander
- safety officer
- liaison officer
- emergency information officer
- head of operations division
- head of planning division
- head of logistics division
- head of finance division

Each member of the CEMPC is a municipal employee of Georgian Bay.

The members of the CEMPC were assigned their current roles based on their existing knowledge and skills. Going forward, the township may want to cross-train the members to perform the duties of other roles and divisions. Doing so would allow the township's EOC to be staffed by a variety of people who can quickly adapt the facility to accommodate different needs and circumstances.

9.4 Emergency Operations Centre

Context

An EOC is a facility where a community's ECG meets to coordinate response and recovery operations during an incident or potential incident.

Findings

Georgian Bay has established a primary EOC and an alternate EOC.

The primary EOC contains one large room that can accommodate the personnel who are assigned to the facility. The building also contains a breakout room, a kitchen, and a backup generator.

Going forward, the CEMC may want to explore the option of partnering with a neighbouring municipality. For example, Georgian Bay can investigate opportunities to partner with a neighbouring community to see if the two municipalities can use each other's EOC as an alternate EOC site. This option would yield a mutually beneficial arrangement, and it would only require Georgian Bay to maintain one EOC facility.

It is also worth noting that Georgian Bay plans to conduct an evaluation of its emergency management program in 2025.

9.5 Emergency Preparedness

Context

As per O. Reg. 380/04 and the EMCPA, an EMP must include a public education component that addresses emergency preparedness. According to the Government of Canada's website, emergency preparedness "includes all activities, such as plans, procedures, contact lists and exercises, undertaken in anticipation of a likely emergency."[8]

Many communities have recognized the need to improve their emergency preparedness planning. For instance, in recent years, numerous municipalities across Canada have experienced an increased number of severe weather events. These kinds of incidents can cause power outages, disrupt services, and leave residents without access to supplies like food and water.

Findings

The Department should consider implementing a public education program designed to teach residents about emergency preparedness. The program should focus on topics such as knowing what to do before, during, and after an emergency occurs. The program should also emphasize the importance of 72-hour emergency kits.

If the Department develops a public education program about emergency preparedness, it can deliver fire safety messages through a variety of mediums.

[8] Health Canada, "Emergency Preparedness."

9.6 Business Continuity

Context

Disasters and large-scale emergencies can severely impact businesses. For example, some incidents may cause a business to reduce its services temporarily (or permanently). If an incident requires a business to remain closed for an extended period, the loss of revenue may prove so great that the business is unable to reopen. Business closures can lead to job loss and service reduction in a community, which can lead to a loss of revenue for a municipality.

A business continuity plan outlines protocols that a business can follow to continue operating during an emergency.

The goals of a business continuity plan are:

- Help a business remain operational during an emergency.
- Help a business recover quickly following the resolution of an emergency.
- Improve the likelihood that a business will survive an emergency.
- Help limit community job loss.

Findings

The CEMC should encourage local businesses to develop contingency plans, business recovery plans, and vital records programs. Because the tourism industry is a significant contributor to Georgian Bay's economy, the CEMC should focus on encouraging the local marinas, trailer parks, stores, and accommodation businesses to create business continuity plans that are tailored to their specific needs and circumstances.

9.7 Recommendations

After assessing emergency management requirements in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

9-1. The community emergency management coordinator should prepare a report that recommends implementing a program to encourage local businesses to develop business continuity plans that are tailored to their operations.

10.0 Occupational Health and Safety

10.1 Overview of Occupational Health and Safety

Fire departments must take occupational health and safety seriously. Firefighting is a challenging profession, and it is impossible to know what dangers a firefighter will face on any given day. Emergencies may escalate unexpectedly, involve harmful chemicals, or cause serious mental trauma to first responders.

Due to the dangers that firefighters encounter, fire departments should ensure that they implement health and safety practices that are proactive rather than reactive. For instance, firefighters often need to access their gear at a moment's notice, which is why fire departments should strive to always keep their equipment clean and ready for service.

From a compliance standpoint, there is specific health and safety legislation that all fire departments must follow, such as the OHSA. There are also many examples of industry best practices that fire departments can follow to safeguard their firefighters.

10.2 Legislation and Best Practices

Context

Fire departments must comply with the OHSA and all associated regulations.

As a best practice, fire departments should also adhere to the firefighter guidance notes developed by the Ontario Fire Service Health and Safety Advisory Committee. The committee was formed under section 21 of the OHSA and comprises stakeholders from across Ontario. All guidance notes developed by the committee are subsequently reviewed and approved by the Minister of Labour.

Findings

The Department's leadership team strives to improve the Department's health and safety policies and equipment on an ongoing basis. For example, the Department is working to comply with the OHSA and all associated regulations by creating and revising its SOGs and safety-related training.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should work with Georgian Bay's joint health and safety committee ("**JHSC**") to review the firefighter guidance notes and applicable OHSA requirements on an annual basis.

For more information about the township's JHSC, see section 10.3 of this FMP.

10.3 Joint Health and Safety Committee

Context

Each fire department should have a joint health and safety committee that includes representation from its senior management team and its firefighters.

In some municipalities, the local fire department and municipal staff share a single health and safety committee.

Findings

Table 13 shows JHSC questionnaire that formed part of the FMP development process.

Table 13. Health and safety committee questionnaire.

Question	Answer
Does the Department have a JHSC?	Yes
Does the JHSC have terms of reference?	Yes
Does the JHSC consist of both fire service personnel and municipal staff members?	Yes
Is the JHSC compliant with all applicable regulations and bylaws?	Yes
Is the JHSC conducting monthly inspections?	Yes
Is the JHSC holding quarterly meetings?	Yes
Does the JHSC post its health and safety minutes on a bulletin board?	Yes
Is the JHSC bulletin board up to date?	Yes
Is the JHSC documenting its actions?	Yes
Has the JHSC formalized a complaint process?	No

As of this FMP, the Department's personnel report complaints to their supervisors, as per the OHSA, but there is no formalized health and safety complaint procedure. The JHSC should formalize a complaint procedure. The Department should then provide training to ensure that all personnel know how to follow the new procedure.

10.4 Firefighter Cancer Prevention

Context

The firefighter guidance notes currently include the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist.[9] This checklist was developed by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. It is intended as a reference tool that fire departments can use to understand potential health and safety issues and identify hazards associated with firefighting and other emergency responses.

The checklist states that its purpose is to "help Ontario's fire service employers and workers increase their knowledge about measures to prevent exposure to contaminants, including those that cause cancers and other occupational illnesses."

Findings

In recent years, the Department has taken steps to improve the health and safety of its firefighters. For example, the Department provides its firefighters with equipment to reduce exposure to contaminants during emergency responses.

Going forward, the JHSC should work with the Fire Chief to review the information included in the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist, as well as other applicable firefighter guidance notes. The group should then develop a plan to improve the health and safety of the Department's personnel.

10.5 Personal Protective Equipment

10.5.1 Primary Types of Personal Protective Equipment

Context

Firefighters use a variety of personal protective equipment ("**PPE**") to protect themselves from injury and death.

The equipment that comprises a firefighter's protective ensemble (or bunker gear) includes the following types of PPE:

- firefighter pants and jackets
- helmets
- firefighting boots
- gloves
- flash hoods

[9] This checklist is available at https://www.ontario.ca/page/firefighters-cancer-prevention-checklist.

Every piece of gear that comprises a protective ensemble is crucial to safeguarding a firefighter's well-being.

In addition to the gear listed above, a self-contained breathing apparatus ("**SCBA**") is also a vital piece of PPE. Firefighters must wear an SCBA whenever a toxic atmosphere is present or suspected, such as during fires, carbon monoxide calls, and hazardous material spills.

Findings

Upon review, the Department is making annual investments in its PPE. Currently, the Department is purchasing seven new firefighter protective ensembles annually. The Department has also established a program to ensure that all its firefighters have a protective ensemble that is less than ten years old.

The Department is also in the process of purchasing personal SCBA facepieces, as this type of equipment comes in different sizes.[10]

10.5.2 Protective Ensemble Fit

Context

When a firefighter wears a protective ensemble that is too long or bulky, it may impede their movement and stability.

In some fire departments, it is common for firefighters to wear a protective ensemble that is a "close fit." However, this practice raises health and safety concerns. For example, when female firefighters wear gear designed for male firefighters, they are at a higher risk of injury or death. The NFPA and other organizations have gathered sizing data that identifies the need for female firefighters to have uniforms designed specifically for them. The sizing data also indicates that female firefighters cannot simply "size down" with their gear, as this option is ineffective and inappropriate.

Ideally, all fire departments should arrange for their firefighters to have a protective ensemble that is properly sized by a manufacturer representative. Although there is a cost to acquiring properly sized protective ensembles, it is a necessary cost, as it helps protect firefighter safety.

Findings

When the Department's firefighters receive new bunker gear, they are sized by a manufacturer representative.

[10] For more information on the importance of fit testing, see section 10.6.4.

10.5.3 Cleaning and Maintaining Protective Ensemble

Context

Over the last few decades, health and safety agencies have conducted studies to find ways of reducing firefighter injuries and deaths. For example, WSIB Ontario has recognized that certain cancers are directly attributable to the toxic by-products of fires and hazardous materials, which can attach to the fabric of a firefighter's protective ensemble. As a result of these studies, the fire service has revised many of the regulations it has for protective ensembles.

There are now several legislative requirements that fire departments must follow in order to ensure their firefighters have protective ensembles that meet compliance standards. For instance, according to O. Reg. 714/94, fire departments must provide their firefighters with garments that meet or exceed the requirements of the following standards:

- NFPA 1971, *Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, 2007 edition (for garments manufactured on or after March 1, 2007)
- CAN/CGSB-155.1-M88, *Firefighters' Protective Clothing for Protection Against Heat and Flame* (for garments manufactured before March 1, 2007)

NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, recommends that fire departments retire ensemble elements "no more than 10 years from the date the ensembles or ensemble elements were manufactured." This replacement schedule is also recommended by Section 4-8 of the firefighter guidance notes.

In some cases, a fire department will need to replace its PPE sooner than every ten years. For instance, if a fire department conducts a post-emergency inspection and discovers that one or more firefighters have damaged PPE, the fire department should repair or replace the compromised gear immediately.

NFPA 1851 also addresses the need to complete routine and advanced inspections of firefighter ensembles. Routine inspections are often completed by firefighters, and a qualified third-party company is often used to complete the advanced inspections on an annual basis.

Remaining compliant with protective ensemble regulations and standards is vitally important, given how frequently firefighters use their gear. As part of their obligation to meet protective ensemble standards, fire departments must strive to implement robust cleaning measures that limit the chances of their firefighters and fire apparatus becoming exposed to contaminants. Doing so will also help fire departments maintain clean environments in their fire stations.

In order to help fire departments understand the necessary steps to reduce the risk of cancer and other illnesses, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development worked with the Ontario Fire Service Health and Safety Advisory Committee to develop the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist. This checklist is available on the Province of Ontario's official website.[11]

Findings

The Department has taken several steps to ensure that its PPE is clean and ready for service on an as-needed basis:

- The Department's leadership team has established an SOG that addresses the procedure that firefighters should follow to clean and maintain their PPE.[12]
- Firefighters perform routine inspections of their assigned firefighter ensembles.
- A qualified third party is used to conduct advanced firefighter ensemble inspections, as well as repairs to firefighter ensembles. The third-party inspections are conducted for firefighter ensembles that have passed three years of service.
- The Department uses a fire department extractor to wash contaminated PPE. This extractor is located at Station 3.
- The Department has a process in place that its firefighters follow to bag, transport, wash, dry, and return PPE to the proper station.
- The Department recently purchased PPE drying racks to aid in the drying process.
- The Department has purchased a new decontamination machine to clean helmets, gloves, boots, and SCBA cylinders.

As of this FMP, the Department is in the process of developing a program and SOG to provide its firefighters with more guidance regarding PPE decontamination.

Going forward, the Department should continue following its established PPE cleaning and maintenance procedures. The Department should also ensure that it references the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist (as needed) to help improve its ability to protect its firefighters from exposure to contaminants that can cause cancer or other illnesses.

[11] This checklist is available at https://www.ontario.ca/page/firefighters-cancer-prevention-checklist.

[12] For reference purposes, this document is SOG #2.10.

10.6 Respiratory Protection Program

Context

Fire departments must ensure that their respiratory protection programs adhere to legislation, including the most current version of O. Reg. 490/09: Designated Substances.

Fire departments should also follow the advice of relevant industry standards, such as Guidance Note 4-9, which addresses respiratory protection programs.

Findings

The following subsections discuss the Department's respiratory protection program.

10.6.1 Employer Duties

Context

As per section 26.1 of O. Reg. 490/09, fire departments must ensure their firefighters wear the proper respiratory protection when responding to emergencies.

A fire department must also ensure that it provides its firefighters with procedures to follow regarding the selection, care, and use of respirators.

Findings

The Department is taking steps to improve its respiratory equipment on an incremental basis. For example, the Department has replaced its SCBA harnesses and cylinders over a multi-year initiative.

This approach has allowed Georgian Bay to support the Department's respiratory protection program in a way that is financially prudent.

10.6.2 Respirator Requirements

Context

Section 26.2 of O. Reg. 490/09 lists the technical and regulatory requirements that respirators must meet. Fire departments must develop an internal system to ensure that respirators meet these requirements.

Findings

The Department has been working to understand and comply with its obligations under O. Reg. 490/09 as it maintains and replaces its SCBA equipment. The Department should continue its ongoing efforts.

The Department may wish to train select personnel to regularly assess its respiratory protection program in order to ensure that the program is compliant with O. Reg. 490/09. The Department may also consider hiring a third party to complete this assessment.

10.6.3 Use of Respirators

Context

As per section 26.3 of O. Reg. 490/09, a respirator must be used according to manufacturer instructions, and anyone assigned to work that requires a respirator must be physically capable of completing the work while wearing the respirator.

To ensure compliance with this regulation, fire departments should provide their firefighters with written documentation that explains how to use respirators properly. All documentation should provide clear and detailed instructions regarding the care, use, and limitations of respirators.

Firefighters must also receive training on topics such as:

- How to care for a respirator.
- How to use a respirator.
- How to clean, inspect, and maintain respirators.
- How to ensure a respirator is fitted correctly.

Findings

The Department has created an SOG to provide its firefighters with guidance regarding the proper use and maintenance of PPE. There is a section of that SOG that specifically addresses respiratory protection.

10.6.4 Tight-fitting Respirators

Context

Section 26.4 of O. Reg. 490/09 mandates that all respirators designed to be tight-fitting must be fit tested. As such, all firefighters must be fit-tested and wear a properly sealed mask whenever they use an SCBA during an emergency response. A proper seal can eliminate the chance that a firefighter will inhale a toxic atmosphere.

Every firefighter should also have a fit-tested N95 mask for protection against airborne contaminants.

CAN/CSA Z94.4-18, *Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators*, outlines specific fit-testing requirements that all fire departments should follow. Guidance Note 4-9 also addresses fit-testing requirements for respirators.

Findings

The Department currently shares the fit-testing equipment that is available to other fire departments in the District of Muskoka.

In the Department, the Deputy Fire Chief is trained to conduct the fit testing. This procedure involves testing the Department's personnel regarding N95 masks and SCBA facepieces. The testing occurs once every two years. When a recruit joins the Department, they are tested prior to live fire training.

As of this FMP, the Department places different-sized SCBA facepieces on its fire truck, rather than issuing SCBA facepieces to each firefighter. Although this arrangement ensures that facepieces of various sizes are available, there is the risk that the firefighters may choose the wrong size facepiece when they are putting on their PPE.

Going forward, the Department should consider issuing personal SCBA facepieces to each of its firefighters. Doing so will ensure that each firefighter is wearing a properly sized facepiece when entering a toxic environment. In addition, issuing personal SCBA facepieces can help reduce the risk of pathogens or other hazardous substances cross-contaminating the Department's gear after an emergency response is completed.

10.6.5 Care and Maintenance of Respirators

Context

Section 26.5 of O. Reg. 490/09 mandates that respirators must be maintained in accordance with manufacturer instructions. It is critically important to keep respirators in good working order because it reduces the risk of the gear malfunctioning during an emergency response. Having well-maintained respirators also helps a fire department maintain operational readiness and prolong the lifespan of its equipment.

When a firefighter performs routine maintenance on their SCBA gear, they become more familiar and competent with using the equipment. This familiarity is crucial, as firefighters often need to use their SCBA gear at a moment's notice when responding to structure fires or incidents in other hostile environments.

During these types of responses, firefighters need to have the ability to work under stress, as well as the dexterity to operate SCBA gear and rapid intervention equipment.

Findings

As part of its respirator program, the Department has established an SOG regarding the use of SCBA equipment. The SOG contains information about caring for, maintaining, and repairing the SCBA equipment.

10.7 Rapid Intervention Packs

Context

A rapid intervention team ("**RIT**") consists of fire service personnel who are responsible for finding, caring for, and rescuing firefighters who are distressed, trapped, or lost.

RITs usually enter a structure when the building is smoke-filled and may contain hazards associated with interior structural firefighting.

In order to perform their assigned duties, RITs are often equipped with a special rapid intervention pack that contains the following gear:

- additional air supply
- SCBA equipment
- lighting
- search and rescue equipment
- rope
- light extrication tools

The gear that is kept in a rapid intervention pack is intended to help RITs provide assistance to distressed firefighters.

Findings

The Department purchased three rapid intervention packs when it purchased its current SCBA equipment.

The Department stores a rapid intervention pack at each of its fire stations. The packs are kept on the pumper apparatus.

10.8 Diesel Exhaust Systems

Context

According to Section 3-1 of the firefighter guidance notes:

> Exhaust produced by diesel engines is a complex mixture of gases, vapours, and particulates. The gas portion of diesel exhaust is mostly carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulfur oxides.
>
> Vapours include hydrocarbons, such as Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). The particulate portion of diesel exhaust is made up of particles such as carbon, organic materials (including PAHs), and traces of metallic compounds. […]
>
> The International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organization, has classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans. It found that diesel exhaust is a cause of lung cancer and noted a positive association with an increased risk of bladder cancer.

Section 3-1 also provides the following information:

> Employers must:
>
> - make sure the fire station is adequately ventilated by either natural or mechanical means so that the atmosphere does not endanger the health and safety of workers
> - take all measures reasonably necessary in the circumstances to protect workers from exposure to diesel exhaust components, including:
> - substitution of the hazardous biological or chemical agent
> - engineering controls
> - administrative controls, including work practices
> - hygiene facilities and practices
> - where applicable, personal protective equipment

In order to reduce diesel exhaust exposure, the guidance notes recommend using a series of control measures related to:

- ventilation
- buildings
- trucks
- equipment

- written operating procedures
- choice of fuel
- air monitoring
- maintenance
- housekeeping
- firefighter education

Findings

The Department has implemented SOG 2.06 for the purpose of reducing diesel fumes in its fire stations. Going forward, the Department should continue to investigate systems for controlling exposure to diesel exhaust.

10.9 Firefighter Health and Wellness

Context

It is crucial for employers to support the well-being of their employees in order to maintain a healthy workplace environment.

Fire departments can support their firefighters through health and wellness programs that address topics such as:

- cancer prevention
- nutrition and physical activity
- critical incident management
- post-traumatic stress disorder

There are several standards that provide guidance about health and wellness for fire departments, such as NFPA 1550, *Standard for Emergency Responder Health and Safety*.

The following three sections of NFPA 1550 are particularly important:

- Chapter 13 addresses the topics of health, fitness, and infection control.
- Chapter 14 states that fire departments must provide their members and their immediate families with access to a behavioural health program.
- Chapter 15 provides guidance regarding occupational exposure to potentially traumatic events.

There are also standards that address mental health in the workplace, such as CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013: *Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*.

CAN/CSA-Z1003 identifies 13 organizational factors that affect psychological health at work:

1. Organizational Culture
2. Psychological and Social Support
3. Clear Leadership and Expectations
4. Civility and Respect
5. Psychological Demands
6. Growth and Development
7. Recognition and Rewards
8. Involvement and Influence
9. Workload Management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological Protection
13. Protection of Physical Safety

Fire departments can use various health and wellness guidelines to develop programs to support all personnel in their organizations.

Findings

The following subsections examine various health and wellness topics as they relate to the Department.

10.9.1 Firefighter Mental Health Programs

Context

Mental health support programs are usually led by a dedicated mental health committee.

Firefighters who serve on a mental health committee become peer support members and have the following responsibilities:

- Deliver onboarding training.

- Deliver regular mental health training.
- Provide critical incident stress defusing and debriefing support.
- Provide peer support.

It is common for a mental health committee to focus its efforts by splitting its mental health program into subcategories, such as pre-incident planning education, peer support, and critical incident stress management ("**CISM**").

Peer support is the emotional and practical support exchanged between two people who have undergone a shared experience, such as a mental health challenge or illness. A peer supporter is an individual who has lived through a distressing event and is trained to support others who have undergone similar experiences.

A critical incident is any situation that can cause a firefighter to experience strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function. A CISM team is responsible for recognizing the signs of exposure to critical incident stress and taking steps to help affected personnel recover.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department's personnel have access to an employee assistance program.

The Department has also developed a PTSD prevention plan, and the organization is in the progress of developing a wellness program for its personnel. However, as of this FMP, the Department does not have a formalized SOG, written policy, or program in place. In the future, the Department's leadership team aims to facilitate specific services (such as peer support and assistance with CISM) through peer support team members.

As a best practice, peer support team members should not support incident debriefings if they took part in the same incident that the debriefing will discuss. Although this is a best practice, it may mean that certain debriefings will not have any available peer support team members. In addition, peer support team members may not be available to lead an incident debriefing if they have other commitments.

The Department is currently working with neighbouring fire departments in order to find efficiencies and improve mental health services for the fire service personnel. This arrangement also allows the Department's peer support team members to learn different support techniques from non-Department personnel. Although the Department may currently have a limited ability to develop a multi-departmental peer support team, the organization can continue looking for ways to form partnerships with a neighbouring fire department, with the goal of gradually establishing a cost-effective, multi-department peer support team over time.

10.9.2 Mental Health Training

Context

Many fire departments offer mental health training to help their staff members learn strategies to deal with the stresses involved with completing emergency responses.

Findings

The Department is currently working to enhance its wellness program. This process includes finding a way to provide the Department's personnel with a better understanding of mental health.

As it works to enhance the mental health portion of its wellness program, the Department should ensure that it provides training that covers a wide range of topics, including:

- stress management and personal resiliency
- family relations
- crisis intervention
- trauma
- suicide prevention
- addictions and substance abuse
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- stigma reduction

10.9.3 Physical Fitness

Context

Physical fitness programs can teach firefighters ways to reduce injuries at work and improve their overall quality of life. Engaging in physical exercise can also help firefighters maintain good mental health.

Findings

The Department does not currently have enough space to house fitness equipment at its fire stations. When the time comes to build new fire stations, the Department should ensure that the design of the new buildings includes space for fitness equipment.

In order to promote physical fitness in the Department, the Department's leadership team should look for opportunities to:

- Improve firefighter access to fitness equipment and training.
- Educate firefighters about proper nutrition, injury prevention, the benefits of exercise, and general wellness strategies.
- Provide firefighters with voluntary, confidential fitness assessments.
- Develop collaborative personal firefighter wellness and fitness goals.

If the Department can provide the resources listed above, it will help the organization's firefighters maintain their physical and mental health. In addition, it will help the Department remain compliant with specific aspects of the OHSA and other health and safety legislation.

10.10 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of "Fire Chief Initiatives" related to occupational health and safety, see Appendix E.

10.11 Recommendations

After assessing occupational health and safety in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

10-1. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should work with its joint health and safety committee to formalize a health and safety complaint procedure.

10-2. In order to gain information that can be used to enhance health and safety practices in Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services, the Fire Chief and the joint health and safety committee should review the firefighter guidance notes and the Occupational Health and Safety Act on a regular basis.

10-3. The Fire Chief should work with the joint health and safety committee to review the firefighter's cancer prevention checklist and the firefighter guidance notes. The group should then work together to implement a formal firefighter cancer prevention plan for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.

11.0 Fire Prevention and Public Education

11.1 Overview of Fire Prevention and Public Education

Fires are extremely dangerous incidents that can lead to fatalities and severe property damage. Due to the risks posed by fires, fire departments have traditionally viewed fire suppression as their primary focus. However, many fire departments now recognize the importance of developing proactive fire prevention initiatives to increase community safety.

Statistics show that most fires—as well as injuries, deaths, and costs resulting from fires—are preventable. For instance, structure fires often occur due to a lack of fire safety knowledge or a disregard for fire safety regulations. To address these issues, the OFM endorses the use of a fire safety model known as the three lines of defence, which was first introduced by the Honourable John B. Webber in the Report of the Public Inquiry into Fire Safety in Highrise Buildings (published in 1983).

The three lines of defence are:

1. Public Education
2. Code Enforcement
3. Fire Suppression

The goal of the three lines of defence is to encourage fire departments to use fire prevention initiatives to reduce the need for fire suppression. Although fire suppression must remain a critical focus for fire departments, it is important for fire departments to take steps to reduce the need for this kind of response.

Fire prevention programs should include public education initiatives that bring fire safety issues to the forefront. In order to remain effective, the programs require continued monitoring and revision to ensure they stay relevant to the community's current and anticipated needs.

Statistics show that some municipalities do not provide enough resources for public education and code enforcement initiatives. Often, municipalities believe they cannot fund a comprehensive fire prevention program because they must reallocate available resources to offset the costs of fighting fires. The reality is that fire suppression has a more significant financial impact on a community than public education and code enforcement initiatives. Although municipalities should not reduce fire suppression funding, they must find ways of allocating funds to support proactive fire prevention initiatives. Moreover, the FPPA requires every municipality to establish a fire prevention program in the community. By prioritizing public education and code enforcement, a municipality is more likely to protect lives and property, as well as benefit from cost savings over the long term.

11.2 Community Risk Assessment

Context

On July 1, 2019, the Province of Ontario passed O. Reg. 378/18. This regulation (which falls under the authority of the FPPA) required every municipality in the province to complete a community risk assessment ("**CRA**") by July 1, 2024. All municipalities are also required to complete a new CRA every five years.

As a best practice, every municipality should also consider reviewing its CRA annually or when there are any significant changes in the community.

Each fire department should review the risks identified in its municipality's CRA. The document will contain information the fire department can use to develop public education activities and fire prevention initiatives aimed at addressing the threats the community is most likely to face.

Findings

The Loomex Group completed a CRA for Georgian Bay in 2024. The document was developed in conjunction with this FMP. Table 14 presents the list of public safety risks that were identified by the CRA. The table indicates the total risk score and overall severity of each threat.

Table 14. Risks identified by Georgian Bay's community risk assessment.

Risk	Total Risk Score	Risk Level
Fire in residential occupancy	102	**High**
Fire in industrial occupancy	95	**High**
Severe weather event	84	**Moderate**
Emergency on island property	80	**Moderate**
Wildland fire in remote area	78	**Moderate**
Fire in commercial occupancy	72	**Moderate**
Road/highway emergency	70	**Moderate**
Fire at seasonal residence or summer camp	68	**Moderate**
Fire in assembly occupancy	80	**Moderate**
Critical infrastructure failure	48	**Low**
Rail emergency	56	**Low**

As seen in the table above, the CRA for Georgian Bay identified “fire in residential occupancy” as the most significant risk in the township. Table 15 shows the number of dollar loss fires that occurred in residential occupancies in Georgian Bay between 2018 and 2023, compared to other types of fires.

Table 15. Types of fires and frequency, 2018 to 2023.

Type of Fire	# of Fires	% of Fires
Fires in residential occupancies	39	47%
Fires in other occupancies and structures	6	8%
Outdoor fires and vehicle fires	27	38%
Total	**72**	**-**

Going forward, the Department should review all threats identified by the Department’s CRA and then develop public education programs to reduce the frequency of those incidents. As a best practice, the Department should begin this process by focusing on the risks that are identified as the most significant threats to the township.

The Department should also consider partnering with local businesses to develop messages that address specific public safety concerns (as applicable).

11.3 Public Education Activities

Context

Public education initiatives raise a community’s awareness about the importance of fire safety. For example, public education can help residents understand codes and regulations. Other initiatives can teach residents how to install and maintain smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and other fire safety technology. By delivering proactive public education initiatives, fire departments can help people of all ages understand ways to stay safe and reduce the number of fires in their community.

Common ways of providing public education include:

- Complete door-to-door campaigns.
- Deliver public service announcements.
- Participate in community events.

Many fire departments also deliver public education virtually through various online platforms. For instance, social media channels provide fire departments with a practical way of relaying information to a wide audience in real-time, especially if a large-scale incident is pending or has just occurred.

A fire department should ensure that it records information about its public education activities in its records management system ("**RMS**"). Information that is worth retaining includes the types of programs being delivered, attendance rates, and the ages of program participants.

Findings

Previous Public Education Initiatives

Over the years, the Department has participated in traditional and contemporary fire service public education practices.

In 2022 and 2023, the Department worked diligently to complete the following public education initiatives:

- Attend the Go Home Lake Cottage Owners' Association annual general meeting.
- Attend Water Day in MacTier.
- Work with the Honey Harbour Cottage Association to deliver fire safety messages about 911 signage and marine emergency response cottage pumps.
- Deliver a cottage pump demonstration with the Severn Falls Cottage Association.
- Attend the Honey Harbour Canada Day Festival to deliver public education.
- Deliver fire prevention information to the Madawaska Club.
- Deliver public education at the local libraries on a regular basis.
- Deliver fire prevention information to the Severn Falls Marina.

Future Public Education Initiatives

The Department has advised that has set the following public education objectives:

- Continue to deliver public education at the local libraries on a regular basis.
- Attend Boat Club Safety Day in Honey Harbour.
- Deliver public education about emergency preparedness related to wildland fires.
- Deliver fire extinguisher demonstrations at various fire stations in Georgian Bay.

Residential Fire Sprinklers

In addition to attending events and delivering in-person public education, the Department played a pivotal role in regard to the installation of residential fire sprinklers in new buildings constructed in Georgian Bay.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should continue to advocate for public safety and the installation of residential fire sprinklers.

Considerations

Based on available evidence, the Department's personnel understand the value of having a robust public education program.

Table 16 outlines various strategies the Department can use to enhance its current public education program.

Table 16. Proposed public education strategies.

Topic	Strategy
Community risk assessment	The Fire Chief should review the findings of the CRA completed for Georgian Bay in 2024. As part of that review, the Fire Chief should take note of the emergencies the township has experienced over the past few years. The Fire Chief should then develop a public education program that prioritizes addressing the threats that the township is most likely to face.
Technology and social media	As technology and social media platforms continue to evolve, the Department should look for new ways to deliver public education about smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in homes and businesses. The ability to communicate with Georgian Bay's permanent residents, seasonal residents, and tourists through social media may be especially important during large-scale incidents, such as a natural disaster.
Public interaction	The Department can consider organizing more frequent fire station open houses and related activities.
New programs and messages	The Department should consider implementing an "after the fire" program. Residents may be more inclined to follow public education guidance when they understand the impacts that fires have caused in their community.

Topic	Strategy
Online public education materials	The Fire Chief should continue to enhance the public education materials that are available on the Department's official website, as well as the official website for Georgian Bay. For example, the Department can aim to provide fire safety information about the following topics: • barbeque safety • burn awareness • candle safety • carbon monoxide alarm requirements • carbon monoxide and the Ontario Fire Code • cooking safety • dryer safety • emergency preparedness • fire safety home inspection checklists • fire safety plans • furnace safety • Halloween safety • holiday fire safety • home escape planning • poison prevention • seniors' fire safety • winter fire safety tips • wood stoves and chimneys
Records management	The Department recently replaced its RMS. It can use its new RMS to maintain information about its public education activities. For instance, the Department should use its RMS to keep track of which programs it has facilitated, the age of the residents who participate in the programs, and the number of community members who receive the public education messages. The Department can also use its RMS to keep track of the types of fires or other incidents that happen in the community. The Department can then analyze that information to identify trends that it can address through a targeted public education program.

11.4 Inspection and Compliance Requirements

11.4.1 Complaint Inspections

Context

A fire department conducts a complaint inspection when it receives a complaint regarding a possible fire code violation.

As per O. Reg. 365/13, fire departments must conduct complaint inspections. Fire departments must also complete follow-up actions for all complaint inspections. The most common follow-up actions are correspondence (in the form of a letter) and the addition of a note to the complaint's file.

Findings

The Department completes inspections upon complaint as required.

11.4.2 Request and Sale Request Inspections

Context

A fire department conducts a request or sale request inspection when it receives a notification related to any of the following:

- new occupancies
- licensing
- property sales
- fire code compliance

As per O. Reg. 365/13, fire departments must complete request and sale request inspections.

Fire departments must also complete follow-up actions for all request and sale request inspections. The most common follow-up actions are correspondence (in the form of a letter) and the addition of a note to the complaint's file.

Findings

The Department completes inspections upon request as required.

11.4.3 Vulnerable Occupancy Inspections

Context

A vulnerable occupancy is a building or organization that functions as a retirement home, a care facility, or a care and treatment facility.

As per O. Reg. 364/13, fire departments must inspect vulnerable occupancies on a regular basis and verify that all vulnerable occupancies in their community have conducted the required fire drills.

Findings

As of this FMP, there are no designated vulnerable occupancies in Georgian Bay.

11.4.4 Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarm Program

Context

The FPPA requires each municipality to establish a smoke/CO alarm program.

All smoke/CO alarm programs should include the following components:

- Each time firefighters interact with local residents (such as during emergency responses), they should verify that the residents have working alarms.
- Fire departments should proactively check residential smoke/CO alarms.
- Fire departments should have a method for tracking and keeping statistics on the number of working and non-working smoke alarms in the community.

Fire departments can satisfy most of the requirements associated with a smoke/CO alarm program by conducting home inspections and home fire escape reviews for community residents, including residents living in seasonal dwellings and trailer parks.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the FPPA, most municipalities adopt an official smoke/CO alarm bylaw.

Findings

Section 11.2 of this FMP summarizes the results of the CRA that was completed for Georgian Bay in 2024. As discussed in that section, the CRA identified a fire in a residential occupancy as the most significant public safety risk in the township.

Going forward, the Department must take action to prevent fires, encourage early detection, and prevent deaths, injuries, and property damage. In order to accomplish these objectives, the Department should consider implementing the strategies discussed below.

Develop a Fire Prevention Policy

The current version of Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw states that the Department should facilitate initiatives related to smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. However, the bylaw does not specify a scope or frequency for those initiatives.

To ensure that the Department has clear guidelines for its fire prevention efforts, Georgian Bay should consider formalizing a fire prevention policy. The scope of the fire prevention policy could encompass a range of topics, including the exact parameters of a smoke/carbon monoxide alarm program. The policy could also be used to formalize other fire prevention initiatives, such as fire inspections.

Improved Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarm Campaign

The Department can strive to improve its smoke/carbon monoxide alarm campaign by ensuring it gives due consideration to the following factors:

- current community demographics
- emergency response times
- historical response data
- historical incident data
- accessibility to water supplies
- legislation

The Department can also deliver a smoke/carbon monoxide alarm campaign for the local recreational trailer parks.

Partner with Local Businesses

The Department can consider partnering with local businesses to develop public education messages that address specific public safety concerns. For example, the Department could ensure that campgrounds receive public education messages about the importance of having working smoke alarms in recreational trailers and mobile homes.

Increase Public Education During the Summer Months

The Department can consider using its firefighters or local summer students to conduct fire prevention activities during the summer. For example, the Department could aim to deliver public education messages to campgrounds during peak summer periods when the campgrounds have high occupancy rates.

Work with Government Agencies and Private Organizations

The Department can consider working with relevant government agencies and private organizations for the purpose of identifying vulnerable people that may benefit from voluntary home fire safety inspections. Those inspections may help residents reduce the risk of fire from common and preventable causes. As part of the inspections, the Department can check all on-site smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are installed correctly and in good working order.

11.4.5 Fire Inspections Statistics

Context

There are several reasons why fire departments must track their inspections:

- Tracking inspections is a requirement of the FPPA.
- The information may help a fire department develop strategic plans to address operational needs (such as staffing).
- The information may identify occupancies that require additional inspections.
- The information can help a fire department develop a fire prevention campaign that focuses on areas that have a number of complaints and violations.
- The tracking of inspections creates a paper trail, which can help protect building owners, municipalities, and fire departments from potential liability issues.

There are several types of OFC violations that a fire department may identify when conducting an inspection. Depending on the nature of the violation, the applicable authority having jurisdiction may issue one of the following notices:

- Verbal: The inspector notes an issue verbally. The issue is corrected immediately, and the officer acknowledges the correction.
- Letter of compliance: The inspector sends a formal letter to the building owner. The letter states that the inspection is complete, as well as whether the occupancy is compliant.
- Order: According to section 5.21.(1) of the FPPA, an inspector “may order the owner or occupant of the land or premises to take any measure necessary to ensure fire safety on the land.”
- Notice of violation: The inspector notes violations in a letter to the building owner. This letter includes the date by which the owner must resolve the noted issues.
- Charges: If a building owner does not comply with an order, they may be charged under the FPPA

Findings

Table 17 lists the types of occupancies the Department inspected from 2019 to 2023.

Table 17. Inspections by occupancy type, 2019 to 2023.

Type of Occupancy Inspected	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Group A: assembly	11	6	2	4	3	26
Group B: care, treatment, and detention	0	0	0	0	0	0
Group C: residential	6	4	2	6	2	20
Group D/E: mercantile/commercial	11	5	1	3	1	21
Group F: industrial	0	0	0	0	0	0
N/A: other inspections, smoke alarms, safety concerns	19	22	22	15	11	89
Total	**47**	**37**	**27**	**28**	**17**	**156**

Table 18 lists the reasons for the inspections the Department conducted from 2019 to 2023.

Table 18. Inspection reasons, 2019 to 2023.

Type of Inspection	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Complaint	1	0	0	1	2	4
Owner request	46	37	27	27	15	152
Sale request	0	0	0	0	0	0
Routine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Licensing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other inspections	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**47**	**37**	**27**	**28**	**17**	**156**

Table 19 lists the outcomes of the Department's inspections from 2019 to 2023.

Table 19. Inspection outcomes, 2019 to 2023.

Type of Violations and Notices	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Verbal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Letter	23	14	5	5	6	53
Electrical safety authority	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intermediate threat to life	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire service inspection report	28	15	5	5	6	59
Order	23	14	5	5	6	53
Total	**74**	**43**	**15**	**15**	**20**	**165**
Resolved violations and notices	**132**	**25**	**30**	**16**	**32**	**235**
Outstanding violations and notices	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**6**
Compliance letters issued	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**5**

11.4.6 Proposed Fire Inspection Frequency

Context

As discussed above, the three lines of defence recommend using proactive fire prevention activities in order to reduce the need for fire suppression services.

Fire inspections are a crucial component of all fire prevention programs. When a fire department inspects the different occupancies in the community on a frequent basis, it is likely to remain aware of factors that have the potential to cause a fire or other emergency. Those factors can include changes to a building's use, layout, or on-site materials.

Findings

Fire inspections and fire plan examinations in Georgian Bay are conducted by the Department's leadership team.

The current version of Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw contains a list of fire inspection services that the Department must provide. However, the bylaw does not specify how frequently the Department should provide those services. In addition, the township does not have a fire prevention policy to clarify the information that is missing in the E&R bylaw.

Due to the importance of fire inspections, the Department should consider developing a fire prevention policy that specifies how frequently it should inspect the different occupancies in Georgian Bay.

If it pursues this option, the Department should conduct a needs assessment that examines information about community risks, historical fire losses, projected community growth, projected increases in number of occupancies, and other local needs and circumstances. The Fire Chief should then calculate how much time will be needed to conduct inspections and manage violations for the foreseeable future, as well as the amount of time currently dedicated to inspection duties.

After completing the needs assessment, the Department should consider whether its fire prevention policy should include the delivery of fire inspection services to schools, low-income housing, and trailer parks. Hiring additional staff to provide fire prevention services would allow the leadership team to focus on strategic departmental initiatives.

Once the fire prevention policy is drafted, it should be submitted to Council for consideration and approval. Depending on the results of the needs assessment, the Department may also recommend hiring additional staff members dedicated to completing fire prevention duties.

11.5 Fire Investigations

Context

As per the FPPA, fire departments must investigate all fires that occur within their jurisdiction. In order to gain the skills needed to conduct accurate investigations, firefighters should complete advanced training to the standards of NFPA 1033.

After a fire occurs, a fire department conducts a preliminary investigation to identify the cause, origin, and circumstances of the fire. If the cause of a fire is accidental, information from the inquiry reinforces the need to increase fire prevention and public education initiatives. However, if the cause of a fire is suspicious, further investigations and actions are required. Fire departments must notify the OFM and the local police about all fires that appear suspicious.

The FPPA states that assistants to the Fire Marshal must notify the OFM of all incidents that meet—or that appear to meet—any of the following criteria:

- The investigating firefighters suspect the fire or explosion is incendiary (criminal). Incendiary fires may include dumpster fires, car fires, and wildland fires. Firefighters must report all incendiary fires and explosions to the applicable police authority.
- An explosion is the primary event.
- A fire results in an unusual spread of fire or smoke.

- A fire or explosion results in either a fatality or serious injury that requires a person to be hospitalized as an in-patient. In such instances, the fire department must make every reasonable effort to confirm the status of injured persons transported to the nearest hospital before releasing the fire scene.
- A fire or explosion results in significant loss for the community.[13]
- A fire or explosion involves circumstances that may result in widespread public concern (such as an environmental hazard).
- A fire or explosion involves clandestine drug operations or marijuana growing operations.
- A fire or explosion occurs in a multi-unit residential occupancy, and the impact of the fire's spread or the explosion extends beyond the unit of origin.
- A fire or explosion occurred in a multi-unit residential occupancy, and the fire department suspects that OFC violations have impacted the event.
- A fire or explosion occurs in a vulnerable occupancy.

Under the FPPA, a fire department must follow all regulated steps when conducting a fire investigation. This obligation includes notifying and working with OFM investigators (as required).

Findings

The Department's officers complete all applicable fire investigations.

The Department's management team is aware that FPPA requires fire departments to notify the OFM after an incident occurs. Records show that members of the Department members have worked closely with the OFM in the past.

11.6 Pre-Incident Planning

Context

Completing the pre-incident planning process is one of the most important steps a fire department can take to protect the safety of its firefighters.

When firefighters respond to an emergency in a building with an unfamiliar layout, the risk to their safety increases significantly. The risk increases even more in large commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings. Firefighters are also at risk when they respond to an emergency in a building where visibility is limited.

[13] A significant loss refers to a dollar loss of one million dollars or more or a loss that is twice the amount of the average sale price of a residential occupancy in the community.

However, completing the pre-incident planning process allows firefighters to familiarize themselves with site layouts and prepare themselves for the risks inherent to a building's construction, such as the likelihood of collapse. The fire department can then use that information when developing its response protocols in order to enhance the safety of building occupants and fire crews during emergencies.

Fire departments should prioritize the pre-incident planning process for all buildings that are at high risk, have vulnerable occupants, or have high value to the community. Fire departments should also revisit those buildings on a regular basis to reassess the results of their previous pre-incident planning. All pre-incident planning should remain current with any changes to the building uses, layouts, or on-site materials.

Employers also have responsibilities as part of the pre-incident planning process. According to Section 6-45 of the firefighter guidance notes, employers should take the following actions:

- Develop a pre-incident planning program that compiles building information.
- Keep building data updated with information gained during fire prevention activities or from other allied agencies.
- Provide known building information to responding firefighters, including building configurations and functions.
- Coordinate building tours for firefighters.
- Train firefighters on how to conduct pre-incident planning for the employer's specific occupancy, as this will provide the firefighters with information that they can use to protect their health and safety.

By working together, local businesses and fire departments can take steps to help protect the safety of firefighters and community members.

Findings

The Department currently inputs applicable pre-incident planning data into an in-house application.

During the development of this FMP, the Department purchased a new software system and was in the process of recording important pre-planning data on various documents. Once those documents are complete, the Department will input the information into the new software system. The Department's goal is to use the software system to create a new pre-incident planning program.

Going forward, the Department should ensure that the pre-incident planning program it develops is based on statistics related to the community's identified level of risk and vulnerability, as well as the amount of potential dollar loss it may incur if an incident occurs.

11.7 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of “Fire Chief Initiatives” related to fire prevention and public education, see Appendix E.

11.8 Recommendations

After assessing the Department’s fire prevention program, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

11-1. The Fire Chief should develop a fire prevention policy that includes an inspection schedule, a smoke alarm/carbon monoxide alarm program, and a list of public education initiatives for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services to complete. The Fire Chief should then submit the policy to Council for consideration and approval.

11-2. The Fire Chief should review the findings of the 2024 Georgian Bay Community Risk Assessment and analyze which emergencies the township has recently experienced. The Fire Chief should then develop a public education program that prioritizes addressing the threats that the township is most likely to face in the future.

11-3. Georgian Bay should consider adding staff members to support fire prevention initiatives, such as public education initiatives, fire inspections, a home fire safety program, the local portable fire pump program, and emergency responses.

12.0 Levels of Service

12.1 Overview of Levels of Services

Each municipality has different risks, needs, and circumstances. Those variables should determine which fire protection services the local fire department provides.

Some services, such as auto extrication, are a common need in many municipalities. Conversely, some services, such as heavy urban rescue, are specialized services that are applicable to some communities but not others.

Once a municipality decides which fire protection services it requires, the municipality must determine which level of service its fire department should provide.

As a best practice, municipalities should work with their local fire department to reassess the types and levels of their fire protection services on an annual basis. Doing so can help municipalities determine whether they are meeting the needs of their permanent residents, seasonal residents, visitors, and businesses.

12.2 Core Services

Context

Core services are the main services that most fire departments offer. Two common examples of core services are interior fire suppression and exterior fire suppression.

A fire department can determine its core services based on the following considerations:

- How many calls does the fire department receive for a specific type of service?
- What risk does the threat pose to the community?
- Is it affordable to provide a specific service?
- Does the local municipal council need to approve the service before it is offered?

After the local municipal council approves a list of core services for the community's fire department, the fire department must strive to become proficient at delivering those services.

It is vital for the fire department to become proficient at delivering its core services before it attempts to develop specialized services. In order to have an acceptable level of proficiency, a fire department should have appropriate documentation, training, and equipment in place across the organization. A fire department should only consider delivering specialized services after verifying that it has met those criteria, as it is unlikely that a fire department will provide specialized services effectively if it does not attain proficiency in its core services.

Findings

Bylaw No. 2019-67 contains a list of the core services the Department is approved to provide. Although the Department's core services include interior and exterior firefighting, the Department may not be able to provide interior firefighting services safely and in a timely manner if it does not have enough available personnel to respond to an emergency call.

For more information about the Department's response times and challenges related to delivering firefighting services, see section 14 of this FMP.

The Department's core services also include fire prevention services, such as public education and code enforcement. For more information about the Department's fire prevention services, see section 11 of this FMP.

12.3 Specialized Services

Context

At a minimum, a municipality should consider the following questions to determine which specialized services its fire department should deliver:

- Does the fire department have enough firefighters to deliver specialized services?
- How will offering specialized services impact firefighter safety?
- Does the fire department have the equipment needed to deliver specific specialized services? If so, what is the condition of that equipment?
- What initial level of training will the firefighters need to complete before they can provide specific services safely and effectively? Can the fire department provide that training to its firefighters?
- What level of ongoing training will the firefighters need to complete to maintain the necessary knowledge and skill levels that specialized services require?
- Is there any current documentation that supports the need for specific specialized services in the community?
- How frequently do incidents requiring the provision of specialized services occur in the community?
- Does the municipality have the resources needed to fund the cost of having the fire department provide specialized services?

Even if a municipality determines there is a need for its fire department to provide specialized services, it must make sure that the local firefighters are proficient at delivering their core services before they attempt to deliver specialized services. In addition, the municipality will need to decide which level of service is required.

As per the NFPA, most specialized services can be provided at one of three levels of competency:

- **Awareness:** This is the lowest level of certification required to respond to a scene requiring specialized services. Personnel who are certified at the awareness level are not trained to perform specific tasks. Rather, they are trained to recognize and understand an incident and its inherent risks.
- **Operations:** This is the lowest level of certification required to perform specialized services.
- **Technician:** This is the highest level of certification that fire service personnel who perform specialized services can attain.

Although emergencies that require the provision of specialized services are infrequent, they often place firefighter safety at a significantly higher risk than calls requiring the provision of core services. Most specialized services are also costly to deliver, and many require firefighters to complete ongoing training to obtain various certifications.

Findings

Bylaw No. 2019-67 contains a list of the specialized services the Department is approved to provide. Those services include several technical rescue services, as well as hazardous materials response services.

As noted in section 5 of this FMP, Georgian Bay's current E&R bylaw does not specify which level of service the Department is expected to provide when delivering its approved specialized services. Going forward, the township should consider updating its E&R bylaw so that expectations regarding service delivery are clear and unambiguous for all concerned parties, including the Department, Council, and the public. The Fire Chief should then ensure that the E&R bylaw is reviewed on an annual basis, undergoing updates to remain current (as needed).

In order to help Georgian Bay ensure that its E&R bylaw is current and applicable to the Department's capabilities—as well as the community's risks, needs, and circumstances—Table 20 presents a list of specialized services that the Department should consider offering. The table also recommends an appropriate level of service for each item. (Some of the services listed in the table are already included in Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw. In those cases, the Department's approved level of service is indicated, as applicable.)

Table 20. Recommended specialized services.

Relevant Standard	Type of Service	Level Listed in Bylaw No. 2019-67	Suggested Level	Notes
NFPA 1006, Chapter 4	Tower rescue	Not specified	Awareness	N/A
NFPA 1006, Chapter 6	Structural collapse	Awareness	Awareness	Bylaw No. 2019-67 mentions NFPA 1670, but it does not reference NFPA 1006.
NFPA 1006, Chapter 7	Confined space rescue	Awareness	Awareness	Bylaw No. 2019-67 mentions NFPA 1670, but it does not reference NFPA 1006.
NFPA 1006, Chapter 12	Trench rescue	Awareness	Awareness	Bylaw No. 2019-67 mentions NFPA 1670, but it does not reference NFPA 1006.
NFPA 1006, Chapter 18	Swiftwater rescue	Service not currently provided	Awareness	N/A
NFPA 1006, Chapter 5	Rope rescue (low-angle)	Not specified	Operations	Low-angle rescue is performed to remove casualties from areas with an angle between 30 to 60 degrees.
NFPA 1006, Chapter 20	Ice rescue	Not specified	Technician	Ice rescue training at the technician level provides firefighters with advanced rescue techniques and equipment competency (in comparison to the basic techniques and knowledge gained in operations-level training).
NFPA 1072	Hazardous materials responses (mission-specific)	Awareness	Operations	Many members of the Department are already trained at the operations level for this service.
NFPA 1006, Chapter 8	Common passenger vehicle rescue	Not specified	Technician	The Department responds to incidents that may involve casualties that require extrication from passenger vehicles. Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw lists "vehicle extrication" as one of the Department's approved services but not "common passenger vehicle rescue."

Relevant Standard	Type of Service	Level Listed in Bylaw No. 2019-67	Suggested Level	Notes
NFPA 1006, Chapter 9	Heavy vehicle rescue	Not specified	Operations	The Department responds to incidents that may involve casualties that require extrication from passenger vehicles. Georgian Bay's E&R bylaw lists "vehicle extrication" as one of the Department's approved services but not "heavy vehicle rescue."
NFPA 1006, Chapter 17	Surface water rescue	Not specified	Technician	If the Department performs rescues from its marine vessels, the organization's firefighters will need to complete applicable training at the technician level.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should review the information in the table above and then prepare a report that recommends developing an updated E&R bylaw. The report should recommend updating the services based on the suggestions in the preceding table. The Fire Chief should then submit the report to Council for consideration and approval. When the Fire Chief makes recommendations to Council, it is important to recognize the potential limitations and challenges the Department may face as it strives to deliver these services. For example, Ontario is continuing to develop requirements for certification programs, and it may be difficult to keep pace with the delivery of applicable training.

If Council approves the services listed in the table above, the Department must ensure that its personnel complete training for all applicable services at the appropriate level. (For more information about the Department's training program, see section 13 of this FMP.)

In addition, the Department's leadership team should review applicable historical data, the current level of community risk, and the cost of providing a specific specialized service before it recommends any changes to the Department's current level of service. Doing so will ensure that there is evidence to support any service changes.

12.3.1 Automatic Aid Agreements to Strengthen Services

Context

There are several reasons why a fire department may be unable to deliver every specialized service that its community requires. For instance, the historical demand for a specific service may not be high enough to justify the cost of the training and equipment needed to deliver the service. In such cases, it is in the best interest of a municipality to form an automatic aid agreement with another fire department that has the necessary training and equipment to perform the required specialized services safely and effectively.

A fire department may also form an automatic aid agreement regarding the specialized services it provides in order to ensure additional personnel are available when an emergency occurs.

Findings

Based on a review of Georgian Bay's historical data, as well as the community's current risks, needs, and circumstances, there may not be enough evidence to support having the Department offer all technical rescue services (such as high-angle rope rescues, confined space rescues, trench rescues, and hazardous materials responses).

Going forward, Georgian Bay and the Department should consider developing automatic aid agreements with other fire departments that currently offer technician-level services in their own communities.

In addition, the Department should ensure that its firefighters receive awareness-level training for all services performed by other fire departments in Georgian Bay.

For more information about automatic aid agreements, see section 6.3 of this FMP.

12.4 Recommendations

After assessing the Department's levels of service, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

12-1. The Fire Chief should prepare a report that recommends updating Georgian Bay's establishing and regulating bylaw to include the specialized services listed in table 20 in section 12.3.1 of the 2025 Georgian Bay Fire Master Plan. The Fire Chief should then submit the report to Council for consideration and approval.

12-2. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should explore opportunities to form automatic aid agreements with other fire departments that have the training and skills to deliver specialized services at the technician level. Ideally, Georgian Bay should form agreements with fire departments that can provide high-angle rope rescues, confined space rescues, trench rescues, and hazardous materials responses.

13.0 Training and Certifications

13.1 Overview of Training and Certifications

As per O. Reg. 297/13, subsections 4 (1) and (2), employers must keep a record of the awareness training their employees and supervisors receive. Employers must also keep a record of any worker or supervisor who is exempt from the training. Furthermore, employers must update employee training records each time an employee completes a training program. Doing so provides evidence that the employer took steps to prevent hazards, accidents, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace.

In the context of the fire service, there are specific training requirements that fire departments must observe. For instance, in order to perform response duties safely, firefighters must receive training that teaches them the skills they need to carry out their assigned tasks. The training must also help the firefighters develop an aptitude for recognizing the appropriate actions to take during an emergency response. A well-trained firefighter is a firefighter who is properly equipped to make decisions that will mitigate risks and save lives.

The Province of Ontario requires fire departments to provide their employees with training on the following topics:

- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (“**WHMIS**”)
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (“**AODA**”)
- Incident Management System
- workplace harassment
- other training (as required)

Fire departments must also offer basic training to comply with legislation. According to the OHSA, all employers must “provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker.” As such, fire departments should complete ongoing training to ensure that their operations remain safe and effective. Firefighters should also complete ongoing training to maintain their skill levels.

Lastly, firefighters must complete specific training in order to obtain certifications that are now mandatory for fire service personnel (as per O. Reg. 343/22).

13.2 NFPA Certification

Context

O. Reg. 343/22: Firefighter Certification came into effect on July 1, 2022. The regulation falls under the authority of the FPPA and establishes the mandatory minimum certification standards for specific fire protection services.

In general, O. Reg. 343/22 outlines certification requirements, as well as the types of exemptions that experienced firefighters may be able to obtain for some types of services.

As per O. Reg. 343/22:

- All firefighters must receive the minimum level of certification for all services they perform. This stipulation is designed to ensure that all firefighters receive consistent, ongoing training that matches the level of service set by their municipal council. The stipulation is also in place to help protect firefighter safety.
- Municipal councils must set the types of service and the levels of service that their fire departments will provide. Once the types and levels of service are chosen, the council must arrange for its fire department to receive the appropriate training (based on the applicable NFPA standards) for those services.
- Firefighters must meet the NFPA standards applicable to their roles. All firefighters must also have the ability to perform the services associated with their roles. For example, a fire prevention officer must have certification at the level of inspections they provide, and captains must have certification at the level of supervision they conduct.
- Fire departments must ensure all personnel meet the level of training required under O. Reg. 343/22 by the compliance deadline.
    - NFPA 1006 certifications have a compliance deadline of July 1, 2028.
    - All other certifications have a compliance deadline of July 1, 2026.

Many fire departments in Ontario have found it difficult to deliver the training necessary to comply with O. Reg. 343/22 due to the time commitment required.

Findings

Like many fire departments, the Department has struggled to comply with the recent certification requirements before the legislated deadlines. However, the Department has overcome its challenges and is on track to become fully compliant with O. Reg. 343/22 by the required deadline. For a summary of the Department’s completed NFPA training, see Appendix D.

13.2.1 NFPA 1001: Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications

Context

NFPA 1001 identifies the minimum job performance requirements for career and volunteer firefighters. NFPA 1001 is included in the consolidated standard NFPA 1010, *Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighters*.

NFPA 1001 courses can be completed at two levels: Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II. Certification to the NFPA 1001 standard becomes mandatory as of July 1, 2026 (with some exceptions).

Findings

As of this FMP, 91 per cent of the Department's firefighters are certified to the standard of NFPA 1001 (or are otherwise compliant with the requirements of O. Reg. 343/22).

13.2.2 NFPA 1002: Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications

Context

Driving and operating a fire apparatus requires specific knowledge and skills. The standard relating to fire apparatus driver/operator certification is NFPA 1002.

NFPA 1002 outlines requirements for the regular maintenance and repair that a fire apparatus must undergo. Certification to the NFPA 1002 standard becomes mandatory for all personnel who drive or operate a pumper apparatus as of July 1, 2026.

NFPA 1002 is included in the consolidated standard NFPA 1010, *Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighters*.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department is in the process of certifying its personnel to the standard of NFPA 1002 (or otherwise having them become compliant with the certification requirements).

Overall, 32 per cent of the Department's staff members have completed pump operator certification training (or are grandfathered accordingly). The Department expects that all of its personnel will have the required certifications by the end of 2025.

13.2.3 NFPA 472 and 1072: Hazardous Materials Response

Context

NFPA 472 and NFPA 1072 are standards that identify the minimum job performance requirements for personnel operating at the scene of an incident that involves hazardous materials or weapons of mass destruction.

NFPA 472 and NFPA 1072 are included in the standard NFPA 470, *Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Standard for Responders*.

Findings

The Department conducts hazardous materials training for all its recruits and firefighters who do not have the applicable certifications.

As of this FMP, 83 per cent of the Department's firefighters are certified to the standard of NFPA 1001 (or are otherwise compliant with the requirements of O. Reg. 343/22).

13.2.4 NFPA 1006: Technical Rescue

Context

NFPA 1006, *Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications*, covers several technical rescue skills used by firefighters who deliver specialized services. Certification to the standards of NFPA 1006 is further divided into three competency levels: awareness, operations, and technician.

As of July 1, 2028, all firefighters performing the following skills (at the operations or technician level) must become certified to the NFPA 1006 standard:

- rope rescue
- structural collapse
- confined space
- trench rescue
- surface water rescue
- swiftwater rescue
- ice water rescue

Findings

As per Bylaw 2019-67, the Department provides the following rescue services that are covered by NFPA 1006:

- tower rescue (chapter 4)
- rope rescue (chapter 5)
- structural collapse (chapter 6)
- confined space rescue (chapter 7)
- common passenger vehicle rescue (chapter 8)
- heavy vehicle rescue (chapter 9)
- trench rescue (chapter 12)
- ice rescue (chapter 17)
- surface water rescue (chapter 20)

As noted in section 5 of this FMP, Bylaw 2019-67 does not specify a level of service for several of the Department's technical rescue services.

Section 12.3 of this FMP suggests a level of service for each specialized service offered by the Department, as well as swiftwater rescue (NFPA 1006, chapter 18), which the Department does not currently offer. If the Department adopts the levels of service listed in this FMP, it must ensure that its personnel are trained to the appropriate level before providing technical rescue services.

In addition, the Department has only offered awareness-level training on the technical rescue services covered by NFPA 1006. The certification process for higher levels is ongoing.

The Department must also ensure that it provides all additional training needed to perform specialized services safely. For instance, the Department provides ice rescue and surface water rescue services from its marine vessels. All personnel who operate the marine vessels must have the applicable certifications.[14]

Going forward, the Department should review the applicable OFM guidelines and the most recent version of NFPA 1006 prior to the compliance deadline for O. Reg. 343/22 in order to ensure that its services align with all standards and legislation.

[14] For more information on marine vessel certifications, see section 13.3.3 of this FMP.

13.2.5 NFPA 1035: Fire and Life Safety Educator

Context

NFPA 1035 is a standard that contains guidelines that govern fire and life safety educators. NFPA 1035 is included in the consolidated standard NFPA 1030, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Prevention Program Positions*.

NFPA 1035 examines the following topics:

- fire behaviour
- human behaviour during fires
- educational methodology
- basic fire protection systems and devices
- scheduling fire and life safety activities
- identifying opportunities for shared efforts with common fire and life safety goals
- recognizing and mitigating potential hazards
- adapting lesson plans to the needs of the audience

NFPA 1035 relates to delivering and coordinating fire and life safety education at various levels of competency within a community.

Findings

As of this FMP, three members of the Department are certified to the standard of NFPA 1035. However, all members of the Department are trained to deliver public education.

It is important for the Department to continue offering opportunities for its officers and firefighters to receive training about NFPA 1035 from external training organizations. Doing so can help the Department ensure that it has members who can complete fire prevention and education duties in a way that aligns with NFPA standards.

13.2.6 NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector and Additional Training

Context

NFPA 1031 identifies the job requirements, knowledge levels, and skill levels that fire inspectors must meet in order to perform their roles effectively. NFPA 1031 is included in the consolidated standard NFPA 1030, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Prevention Program Positions.*

The Ontario Fire College requires firefighters to complete the following courses to receive NFPA 1031, Level I certification:

- Legislation
- NFPA 472, Awareness Level
- NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector I
- Fire Code Division B, Part 2 & 6: Safety & Fire Protection Equipment
- Fire Code Division B, Part 9: Retrofit
- Courtroom Procedures

The Ontario Fire College requires firefighters to complete the following courses in order to receive NFPA 1031, Level II certification:

- NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector II
- Fire Code Division B, Part 3 & 5
- Fire Code Division B, Part 4: Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Findings

As of this FMP, one member of the Department has is either certified to the standard of NFPA 1031, Level I or in the process of becoming certified. One member of the Department holds grandfathered or legacy status for NFPA 1031, Level I.

Upon review, many members of the Department have completed the prerequisite courses for Level I certification, including the required legislation course and NFPA 472 awareness-level training. Due to the nature and importance of fire inspections, the Department should consider ways to ensure that as many staff members as possible have the certification. It is imperative for the Department to have enough resources to conduct fire investigations and inspections.

Going forward, Georgian Bay should implement a protocol regarding fire inspections. The protocol should include a program—which has support from the Fire Chief, as well as approval from Council—that will ensure the Department can inspect local residential occupancies on a consistent basis. The scope of the program should also address the resources needed to track the results of the inspections.

13.2.7 NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator

Context

NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*, specifies the job performance requirements necessary for someone to operate as a fire investigator in the private and public sectors.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department has three members who are (a) certified to the standard of NFPA 1033, (b) in the process of completing their certification, or (c) otherwise compliant with the requirements of O. Reg. 343/22.

13.2.8 NFPA 1021: Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

Context

NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, is the standard that outlines the minimum job performance requirements that fire officers should meet. The standard was created to serve as a nationally applicable performance benchmark for uniformed fire service personnel.[15]

At the time of this FMP's development, the NFPA 1021 standard includes the following four primary training levels:

- NFPA 1021, Fire Officer I: The fire officer at the supervisory level
  - As of July 1, 2026, this level of certification becomes mandatory for all team leads.
- NFPA 1021, Fire Officer II: The fire officer at the supervisory/managerial level
- NFPA 1021, Fire Officer III: The fire officer at the managerial/administrative level
- NFPA 1021, Fire Officer IV: The fire officer at the administrative level

Findings

Upon review, the Department has made progress regarding the certification of its leadership personnel to the appropriate level of NFPA 1021. Currently, the Department has 13 members who have (a) completed some level of NFPA 1021 training, (b) are in the process of completing training, or (c) are otherwise compliant with O. Reg. 343/22.

Because the Department has a core group of firefighters who have obtained Fire Officer I certification, the organization is more likely to fill officer roles with firefighters who meet certification requirements, as well as the definition of a "competent supervisor" provided in the OHSA.

For more information about officer development in the Department, see section 13.4 of this FMP.

[15] Note: NFPA 1021 is scheduled to be consolidated into NFPA 1020 by 2025.

13.2.9 NFPA 1041: Fire Services Instructor Professional Qualifications

Context

NFPA 1041, *Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications*, identifies the job requirements that fire service instructors should meet.[16]

NFPA 1041 addresses several levels of instruction. At Level I, the standard equips fire service instructors with the knowledge and skills needed to teach subjects pertaining to the fire service.

All individuals who deliver training should obtain NFPA 1041, Level I certification.

Findings

In recent years, the Department has worked hard to improve its training program. Currently, the Department trains a select group of firefighters to serve as para-trainers, which increases the organization's number of available instructors.

In order to ensure that its training program meets applicable NFPA standards, the Department offers NFPA 1041 training to all its firefighters that serve as instructors.

As of this FMP, 15 members of the Department are certified to the standard of NFPA 1041, Level I or are otherwise compliant with the requirements of O. Reg. 343/22. Two members of the Department hold grandfathered or legacy status for NFPA 1031, Level II.

The Department intends to continue offering NFPA 1041 training as needed.

13.3 Other Training and Certification

13.3.1 Legislation 101

Context

Legislation 101 is a course that is offered by community colleges, regional training centres, and individual fire departments. Legislation 101 covers various laws, regulations, and standards that impact the delivery of fire protection services in Ontario.

Legislation 101 covers topics related to the following legislation and industry guidelines for the fire service:

- NFPA
- FPPA

[16] Note: NFPA 1041 is scheduled to be consolidated into NFPA 1020 by 2025.

- OHSA
- firefighter guidance notes
- other legislation that affects day-to-day fire service operations

Since firefighters encounter hazardous and unsafe situations while performing their duties, it is vital that fire service personnel familiarize themselves with the OHSA components and other industry guidelines covered in Legislation 101.

Findings

The Department has prioritized the delivery of Legislation 101. The course is currently a component of the training program that all recruits must complete. As of this FMP, 64 per cent of the Department's personnel have completed Legislation 101.

13.3.2 DZ Licensing and Driver Training

Context

An individual should only operate a large vehicle (such as a fire apparatus) after completing specialized training and attaining either a DZ or AZ licence.

If a fire department allows an unqualified firefighter to operate a fire apparatus, it puts the safety of the driver and others at risk. The risk exists from the time the apparatus leaves the station to the time it returns.

Although a DZ or AZ licence is a requirement for operating large vehicles, the Highway Traffic Act outlines a limited exception for the fire service in Ontario. According to O. Reg. 340/94: Drivers Licences s.22:

> Any class of driver's licence, except a Class G1, G2, M, M1 or M2 driver's licence, is authority for:
>
> (a) a police officer or an officer appointed for carrying out the provisions of the Act to drive a motor vehicle of any class including a vehicle equipped with air brakes, other than a motorcycle, on a highway in an emergency and in the performance of his or her duties under the Act.
>
> (a.1) a firefighter, as defined in subsection 1 (1) of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, to drive a motor vehicle of any class including a vehicle equipped with air brakes, other than a motorcycle, on a highway in an emergency and in the performance of his or her duties under that Act; and
>
> (b) a motor vehicle mechanic to drive a motor vehicle of any class including a vehicle equipped with air brakes, other than a motorcycle, on a highway while carrying out a road test of the vehicle in the course of servicing it. O. Reg. 340/94, s. 22; O. Reg. 115/03, s. 1; O. Reg. 83/05, s. 14; O. Reg. 254/21, s. 2.

Under O. Reg. 340/94, firefighters holding a Class G driver's licence can operate a fire apparatus when responding to an emergency scene. However, a firefighter holding a Class G driver's licence cannot operate an apparatus when it is time to return from an emergency scene or if the apparatus is needed to complete any other duties. Although O. Reg. 340/90 allows exceptions around licence certifications while responding to an emergency scene, the OHSA does not:

- Section 25 (2)(a) of the OHSA states that an employer must "provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker."
- Section 25 (2)(h) states that an employer must "take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker."

The firefighter guidance notes also address licence certifications. Section 6.7 of the guidance notes recommends having firefighters complete theoretical and practical training if their role involves operating a fire apparatus.

It is critically important for fire departments to understand all licence certifications and regulations. For example, suppose a fire apparatus is involved in a traffic accident that results in an injury or fatality while it is travelling to an emergency site. If the driver of that apparatus does not have a valid DZ or AZ licence—and the fire department doesn't have a recognized driver training program in place—the municipality in question is liable for damages under the OHSA.

The example given in the previous paragraph is more than just a hypothetical scenario. Such an incident has occurred in Ontario before, and the MOL charged the municipality in question under sections 25 (2)(a) and 25 (2)(h) of the OHSA. The municipality eventually pled guilty to one of the charges and was required to develop a recognized driver training program. In addition to those penalties, the municipality lost a considerable sum of money while attempting to defend itself against the charges.

Findings

Many fire departments struggle to meet certification requirements, particularly licensing requirements. Despite the challenges involved with meeting those requirements, the Department worked to maintain a high level of certification amongst its personnel. Currently, the Department aims to ensure that it has an adequate number of staff members who have the training and licensing required to drive a fire apparatus. For instance, when a DZ licence holder leaves the Department, the organization ensures that another staff member is available to complete the required training. This practice helps the Department maintain an appropriate number of licenced personnel.

As of this FMP, 53 per cent of the Department's personnel hold a DZ licence. The staff members attain competency through the completion of an informal training program.

The Department's DZ licence program involves the following steps:

1. A firefighter obtains a DZ licence.
2. A captain provides the newly licensed firefighter with applicable driver training.
3. When the captain believes the firefighter has demonstrated appropriate proficiency, the firefighter can drive to and from emergencies as required.

Going forward, the Department should consider ways to strengthen its driver training program. For instance, the Department could develop an SOG listing requirements a firefighter must meet in order to operate an apparatus. Requirements may include:

- Obtain a DZ licence.
- Demonstrate competency in completing pre-trip inspections on a fire apparatus.
- Complete written driver evaluations (as applicable).
- Obtain certification to the standards of NFPA 1002, chapter 5.

By strengthening its driver training program, the Department can show that it practises due diligence in regard to health and safety, reducing potential liability concerns.

13.3.3 Marine Vessel Certifications

Context

Fire departments that provide services from a marine vessel must ensure that all personnel who operate the vessel have the proper certifications.

Typically, a firefighter will need Small Vessel Operator Proficiency ("**SVOP**") and Small Domestic Vessel – Basic Safety ("**SDV-BS**")[17] certifications in order to perform firefighting duties that involve the use of a marine vessel. These certifications ensure that firefighters are trained to practise safe navigation, collision avoidance, onboard safety, emergency procedures, search and rescue, and GPS positioning.

Findings

The Department uses four marine vessels to provide surface water and ice rescue services.[18]

Currently, 49 per cent of the Department's firefighters have an SVOP certification, and 68 per cent of the Department's firefighters have an SDV-BS certification.

[17] This certification was formerly known as MED-A3.

[18] For more information about the Department's marine services, see section 18 of this FMP.

In addition to ensuring its firefighters are properly certified, the Department offers boat training and review sessions every spring and fall. These sessions include marine drills and operations. By conducting regular training, the Department is taking steps to verify that its firefighters have the knowledge and skills needed to operate the organization's marine vessels safely.

Both the Department and Georgian Bay are committed to certification and training. As a result of this commitment, the Department has delivered training programs in regard to surface water and ice rescue services.

13.4 Officer Training

Context

According to the OHSA, employers should ensure that each worker they appoint to a supervisory role has the prerequisites to qualify as a competent supervisor.

The following excerpt from the Province of Ontario's website paraphrases the OHSA's definition of a competent supervisor:

> The OHSA gives employers and workers duties that help support the role of the supervisor. When appointing a supervisor, the employer must ensure the person is competent. To be competent, a supervisor must have enough knowledge, training, and experience to organize the work and how it is to be performed. He or she must also be familiar with the OHSA and any regulations under it that apply to the workplace and know about any actual or potential health and safety hazards in the workplace.[19]

The legislation about competent supervisors applies across different employment sectors, including the fire service.

All fire departments must make sure their supervisory personnel are competent to perform their duties. As such, many fire departments establish officer development programs as a way to make sure their leadership personnel have the necessary training, knowledge, skills, and certifications. (Fire departments also give consideration to the merit and qualifications of a firefighter—including their track record of following departmental guidelines—when assessing whether a candidate is qualified for a promotion to a supervisory role.)

Officer development programs are also crucial because fire departments need a way to ensure that candidates are available to replace departing leadership personnel.

[19] Ontario.ca, "Supervisors under the Occupational Health and Safety Act."

However, in recent years, volunteer departments have found it difficult to provide the training needed to prepare firefighters for greater responsibilities, largely due to the time commitments required. The time commitments that volunteer firefighters must make have grown significantly due to an increase in certification requirements, call volumes, and services expected by residents.

Findings

Upon review, the Department has an effective officer development program. As noted above, the Department has worked to ensure that all its firefighters obtain the necessary certifications. The Department also takes steps to provide training designed to build up the skills of their firefighters in a way that goes beyond legislated requirements. Several firefighters have completed the officer development program, ensuring that the Department will have personnel ready to take on leadership positions when needed.

The Department currently trains its firefighters and officers to NFPA standards, but further training opportunities are limited. Although the Department is successful at keeping its officers engaged with the available training, it must offer higher levels of officer training to comply with NFPA standards and impending deadlines for certification. It is also important for the Department to ensure that its officers can complete training and obtain certifications beyond what the Department can currently deliver. Going forward, the Department can consider reaching out to a third-party training organization to facilitate more advanced levels of training than the Department is currently providing.

The Department should also consider establishing a mentorship program. This program would involve assigning experienced captains to serve as mentors for the firefighters who are interested in leadership positions. As it develops the mentorship program, the Department can look for opportunities to connect its future leaders with established captains from other fire stations, which can give them a chance to learn different leadership styles and approaches.

13.4.1 Acting Officer Program

Context

Some fire departments help support the development of their future leadership personnel by creating an acting officer program.

An acting officer program allows firefighters to take on acting officer roles. For instance, a firefighter might take on the role of acting captain. Acting captains continue to work under the direction of captains, but they may assume command in some cases if a captain or higher-ranked officer is not available. In addition, an acting captain may lead a sector during large or complex incidents, or they may lead incidents under the direct supervision of more experienced captains. By serving in an acting role, fire service personnel can gain valuable experience that helps them become qualified to fill more senior roles in the future.

Findings

The Department does not currently have a formal acting officer program. Going forward, the Department may consider establishing this kind of program in order to give its firefighters a chance to serve as acting captains and acting district chiefs. If it pursues this option, the Department must ensure that the acting officer program provides participants with the education, training, mentoring, and experience needed to succeed as leaders in the organization.

Overall, an acting officer program will help the Department ensure it has strong candidates to fill vacant district chief and captain positions.

13.5 In-Service Training

Context

A successful training program provides firefighters with ongoing technical and in-service training to help them maintain the knowledge and skill levels they need to perform their duties safely, efficiently, and effectively. Ongoing training should also help firefighters remain current with applicable certification requirements.

In addition to maintaining core competencies, ongoing training should provide firefighters with instruction about legislation and hazards that past training did not cover. For example, modern homes are constructed with different materials and in a different manner than older homes. Due to the change in construction practices, a fire in a modern home has a much higher heat-release rate than a comparable fire in an older home. As a result, responding to a fire in a modern home places firefighters at a higher level of risk than responses to residential fires in years past.

Like the construction of buildings, firefighting tactics and practices have also evolved. Recent research into fire behaviour has led to new firefighting techniques designed to improve the safety of firefighters and the public. By providing training about new firefighting techniques, fire departments can enhance the services they provide to their communities.

Although the FPPA does not mandate a minimum standard for ongoing training, firefighters must keep their knowledge and skill levels up to date with the NFPA standards applicable to their roles. In order to remain current with NFPA standards, firefighters should receive ongoing training that addresses the job performance requirements for each role they perform. The ongoing training should cover a variety of topics, such as contemporary suppression and ventilation techniques, building construction, fire dynamics, health and safety, and PPE.

Table 21 shows how frequently fire service personnel must complete various NFPA requirements.

Table 21. Frequency of NFPA education requirements.

Standard	Topic	Edition	Ref.	Requirement
NFPA 1001	Firefighter	2019	1.2.6	Remain current with the general knowledge, skills, and job performance requirements.
NFPA 1002	Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator	2017	1.2.6	Demonstrate competency annually.
NFPA 1006	Technical Rescue	2021	1.2.7	Remain current with technical rescue practices and applicable standards and must demonstrate their competency on an annual basis.
NFPA 1021	Fire Officer	2020	1.3.4	Remain current with the general requirements for the following areas: • fire officers • human resource management • community relations and government relations • administration • inspections and investigations • emergency service delivery • health and safety
NFPA 1031	Fire Inspector	2014	1.3.10	Remain current with the following topics: • authority • fire protection technology • fire prevention practices and inspection methods • applicable codes and standards
1035	Fire and Life Safety Educator	2015	1.2.6	Remain current with the general knowledge, skills, and job performance requirements.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department provides ongoing in-service training that covers the services it delivers, as well as the ongoing training requirements of the relevant NFPA standards. The Department's in-service training sessions are generally three hours long and held twice a month. The Department also completes some training on weekends to cover topics that require more than three hours to address adequately.

Currently, the Deputy Fire Chief organizes the Department's training program. This duty involves developing extensive training schedules, which include a roll-out plan for all training topics. The training schedules also summarize the resources that the firefighters should reference (such as *Essentials of Fire Fighting*, other International Fire Service Training Association resources, and OFM job performance reviews).

Another duty performed by the Deputy Fire Chief is the tracking of training attendance and certifications using the Department's master certification chart. Each member of the Department can reference this chart to remain aware of training requirements and track their own progress.

The Department's volunteer officers are responsible for developing a training outline for their fire station and ensuring that applicable training is completed. An officer must be committed to ensuring that the training is applicable and completed to the necessary standards. During the SWOT analysis conducted for this FMP, some of the Department's firefighters advised that the current system presents some issues. However, if the Department designated a single volunteer officer as the officer in charge of the training program, it may be able to improve the overall consistency of the program.

As noted above, the Department also trains a select group of firefighters to serve as para-trainers. A dedicated group of para-trainers can help the Deputy Fire Chief ensure that the Department delivers consistent training that aligns with NFPA standards and other applicable legislation.

The Department's training schedule covers a wide variety of topics, including:

- fire protection equipment
- firefighter survival
- wildland firefighting
- ladder operations
- ventilation
- ice and water rescue (including the "Go" method and shore-based rescues)
- advancing hose lines

- low angle rescue
- practical boating procedures and GPS
- safety plans
- radio communications
- hazmat awareness
- marine drills
- mental health (including Road to Mental Readiness and Resilient Minds training)

The extensive scope of this training allows the Department's firefighters to maintain their knowledge and skill levels while also learning new skills and information.

As of this FMP, the Department has been successful in working toward its overall certification goals. Upon review, the success of the Department's in-house training program is largely the result of the commitments made by the Deputy Fire Chief.

Although the Department's training program has high completion rates, many firefighters have indicated that they would like to receive more hands-on training. While the firefighters appreciate the value of the knowledge-based training they currently receive, they advised that hands-on training would allow them to practise the skills they are taught.

13.6 Common Training Challenges

Context

Due to the time and monetary commitments needed to facilitate a comprehensive training program, many fire departments (especially volunteer fire departments) struggle to deliver their training programs on a consistent basis.

In addition, volunteer firefighters must balance their work and personal commitments with their fire service commitments. The difficulty is that most fire service training requires significant time to complete, and it is possible that some volunteer firefighters will need to take time away from their families or jobs for several weeks or more. Such a scenario can create an unsustainable work-life balance, especially as firefighter certification standards become more demanding.

Another challenge is that some volunteer fire departments have limited personnel or resources, which makes it difficult to run an effective ongoing training program. However, fire departments must still find ways to deliver a training program that meets legislative requirements. All fire departments must adhere to the same training and certification regulations, regardless of their size.

Findings

As noted above, the Department trains select firefighters to serve as para-trainers. As a result, the Department is able to deliver consistent recruit training and in-service training.

Although using external training agencies is more expensive than offering courses in-house—and it may require a greater time commitment from the firefighters—it is an option that can allow the Department to meet its legislative requirements more easily. External training can also provide the Department's current and future officers with the leadership skills they will need in the long term.

13.7 Recommendations

After assessing training in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

13-1. The Fire Chief should prepare a report that recommends establishing an officer training program for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. The report should identify an external agency that has the capacity to facilitate the program, as well as the potential budget impacts of associated costs.

14.0 Performance Standards and Response Statistics

14.1 Overview of Performance Standards

After a municipal council decides which types and levels of service the local fire department should provide, the councillors should determine the fire department's performance standards.

There are several reasons why setting performance standards is beneficial:

- **Response times**: It is important to have low, consistent response times in order to maximize the protection of residents and minimize property damage and dollar loss.
- **Leadership**: It is important to have a leadership team that can recognize potential threats quickly and give direction to act accordingly.
- **Crew size**: It is important to have the ability to dispatch a fire crew that comprises enough personnel to complete all initial response duties.

In general, performance standards establish how many firefighters should respond to an emergency and how long it should take for them to arrive at the incident site. A fire department can assign response duties based on those considerations.

Maintaining consistent performance standards is essential. All fire departments need to respond to emergencies with an adequate number of personnel and resources in order to deliver effective fire protection and suppression services.

14.2 Response Times

Context

Fire departments must respond promptly to all emergency calls in order to maximize the protection of residents and minimize potential property damage and dollar loss.

Fast response times are especially critical when an emergency involves a structure fire. A fire's growth is heat-generated and is dependent upon fuel and air supply. Once the temperature in a room ablaze reaches approximately 1,000 °F (590 °C), a flashover will occur in the entire room within six to ten minutes (or less). A flashover is an instance of a fire spreading very rapidly across a gap because of intense heat. When a flashover occurs, it significantly increases the risk of fatalities and property damage. However, if firefighters can arrive at the scene of a fire quickly, they have a better chance of saving lives and limiting property damage.

It is also vital to have a quick response time when a medical emergency has occurred. Recent research has shown that response times and mortality are correlated.[20] For example, when a patient is experiencing a heart attack, their survivability decreases at a rate of 10 per cent/minute (without intervention).[21] The outcomes of many other medical emergencies also depend on fast response times.[22]

Although not all fire departments respond to the same incidents (such as medical calls), they should still understand the importance of response times in order to determine which services, staffing levels, and performance standards are applicable to them.

Findings

The following subsections examine the Department's response statistics. The subsections also describe a method that the Department can use to determine an appropriate benchmark for its emergency responses.

14.2.1 Effective Response Force

Context

When fire departments determine their effective response force ("**ERF**"), they consider the following factors:

- How many firefighters are needed to respond to an emergency safely and effectively?
- Which resources and equipment do the firefighters need to respond to an emergency safely and effectively?
- How long should it take the firefighters and their resources to arrive at an emergency scene?

A fire department can determine its optimal ERF by completing a critical tasks analysis for each type of emergency response it is required to provide.

Completing a critical tasks analysis allows a fire department to standardize its emergency response protocols and ensure it dispatches the appropriate number of personnel for each type of incident.

[20] Pons et al., "Paramedic Response Time: Does It Affect Patient Survival?"

[21] Medical Advisory Secretariat, "Use of Automated External Defibrillators in Cardiac Arrest: An Evidence-Based Analysis."

[22] Blackwell and Kaufman, "Response Time Effectiveness: Comparison of Response Time and Survival in an Urban Emergency Medical Services System"; Wilde, "Do Emergency Medical System Response Times Matter for Health Outcomes?"

A fire department can use the following steps to conduct a critical tasks analysis:

1. Examine the type of risks that exist at an emergency scene.
2. Identify the tasks needed to eliminate the risks that exist at an emergency scene.
3. Determine the number of personnel needed to carry out the tasks that will mitigate and eliminate the risks that exist at an emergency scene.

When it comes to performing critical tasks, fire departments can either assign the tasks to multiple personnel or carry out the tasks sequentially.

Often, fire departments use an assignment chart to assign critical tasks on the fireground during an emergency response. (The assignment chart is based on information received at the time of an emergency call.) If an incident safety officer is available, they can assess the overall safety of the incident and provide critical information to the incident commander.

The location of an emergency will also impact the assignment and performance of critical tasks. For instance, when a fire occurs in an area that does not have municipal fire hydrants, it is essential for the responding fire department to have enough firefighters on the scene to ensure there is an adequate level of support and water supply to perform the required suppression duties.

Various fire service authorities have developed general guidelines about resource deployment. Table 22 presents a critical tasks analysis for a fire in a single-family home. (based on best practices and findings from the NIST, NFPA, and OFM).

Table 22. Minimum firefighters required for critical tasks at single-family home fires.

Personnel	Critical Tasks	Firefighters Required
Crew #1	• Perform search and rescue duties. • Conduct fire control and suppression duties on the fire floor. • Serve as the pump operator.	4
Chief Officer	• Serve as incident commander.	1
Crew #2	• Provide backup support for crew #1. • Perform search and rescue duties. • Locate the fire extension beyond the immediate fire area.	4

Personnel	Critical Tasks	Firefighters Required
Crew #3	• Assume the duties of a rapid intervention team. • Conduct firefighting operations after another crew has exited the structure and is ready to take over the rapid intervention team duties.	4
Accountability/Scribe	• Help the incident commander organize the tasks needed on the fireground.	1
Incident Safety Officer (if required)	• Assess the overall safety of the incident for large, complex, or high-risk incidents.	1
Total		**14 to 15**

Findings

There are several actions the Department can take to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its emergency responses.

First, the Department should keep track of how many firefighters it dispatches to emergencies. This data is crucial for evaluation and improvement purposes. Next, the Fire Chief should conduct yearly analyses of the Department's response capabilities, deployment strategies, and response times. If there is any need to update or improve the Department's current protocols, the Fire Chief should recommend the necessary changes to Council for consideration and approval.

It is also in the Department's best interest to establish a formal protocol regarding the minimum number of certified firefighters required for an effective response, especially concerning fires with significant financial losses. If the Department develops this proposed standard, the Fire Chief should ensure that it is sent to Council for consideration and review.

Each of the options discussed above emphasizes the importance of data collection and analysis in assessing the Department's performance. In addition to these options, the Department can attempt to enhance its response performance through the use of external partnerships and resources.

For example, Georgian Bay and the Department can consider assigning duties to the township's bylaw officers during large-scale emergencies. Although the bylaw officers may not be qualified to deliver fire services, they could potentially support activities at emergency scenes, such as documentation and logistical tasks.

However, if Georgian Bay pursues this option, the township must ensure that the involvement of the bylaw officers does not cause any breaches of existing labour agreements.

The Department can also look for ways to continue working with fire departments in neighbouring communities, expanding the scope of current collaborative efforts. Ideally, the Department should explore ways to share resources to deliver specialized services, such as water rescues and wildland firefighting.

The Department should also focus on making sure that all partnerships with external agencies are mutually beneficial and compatible with current bylaws, agreements, and operating procedures.

In addition, the Department should evaluate the compatibility of the equipment and systems used in collaboration with the neighbouring fire departments in order to optimize interoperability and response efficiency.

14.2.2 Response Benchmarks

Context

For many years, fire departments analyzed their performance by comparing their initial response times to a standard metric. Many agencies now agree that fire departments should set their own benchmarks to measure their performance levels.

After determining the ERF that it should provide, a fire department should examine its past performance, fire station locations, and minimum dispatch time. Examining those factors will help a fire department identify its strengths and weaknesses and determine how often it has dispatched its intended ERF. The fire department can then use that information to establish response benchmarks that it can use to measure its performance.

If a fire department can meet its self-determined benchmarks, it means that the fire department is operating at optimal capacity during emergency responses. For example, suppose a fire department sets its total response time at 12 minutes and aims to achieve that time during 90 per cent of its responses. If so, the fire department assumes that 10 per cent of its responses will involve a total response time that exceeds 12 minutes. By analyzing responses that fall short of its benchmarks, a fire department can determine the issues that hinder its ability to meet its goals. This form of self-assessment can provide information that impacts decisions about station locations, staffing, apparatus deployment, and future standard development.

A fire department can submit its response benchmarks to its municipal council for approval to ensure that the community understands the fire protection services it can expect to receive.

Each community has unique hazards, expectations, and needs, and it is important to make sure the fire department's response benchmarks consider those factors. (The response benchmarks should also take into consideration the expectations of local stakeholders.)

Finally, when setting a level of service for a fire department, it is important to make sure that all decisions adhere to applicable legislation and guidelines, such as:

- FPPA
- OHSA
- NFPA standards
- OFM general guidance and the Public Fire Safety Guidelines
- FUS recommendations

For example, under the OHSA, employers are responsible for protecting employees from workplace injuries or death. As such, employers must ensure they provide their employees with training and competent supervision. Therefore, fire departments and municipal councils must ensure that their firefighters receive adequate training and supervision for all services they provide.

Findings

As of this FMP, the Department does not measure its performance or response times against any benchmarks.

Going forward, the Department should consider using the following process to determine a performance standard benchmark:

1. Analyze each component of the Department's past dollar-loss fire response data.
2. Compare the Department's services and statistics to similar municipalities.
3. Review relevant legislation, guidelines, and standards (including the NFPA standards listed in section 14.2.3).
4. Review where the Department's fire stations are located, as well as where the fire stations are located in neighbouring municipalities.
5. Determine how long it should take the Department to complete each step of an emergency response.
6. Determine how many of the Department's responses achieve the organization's target emergency response benchmark.

After completing this process, the Department should use its performance standard benchmark to evaluate the results of its future responses.

The Department should also analyze all responses that take longer than the intended response time in order to identify issues that it can address to reduce future response times. The Department should then implement fire protection and prevention strategies accordingly.

14.2.3 NFPA Standards

Context

Fire departments should review the following NFPA standards when determining their emergency response benchmarks:

- NFPA 1225, *Standard for Emergency Services Communications*
- NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*
- NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*[23]

Table 23 shows the staffing levels and response time standards that NFPA 1720 provides for urban, suburban, rural, and remote areas.[24] The table defines each type of demand zone by its demographics and lists the minimum number of staff needed for responses in each area, as well as the expected response time. (For reference purposes, the NFPA uses the letters AHJ to abbreviate the term Authority Having Jurisdiction, which refers to the agency that is responsible for an emergency scene.)

Table 23 also includes a metric for measuring fire department effectiveness. (The metric lists how many personnel should respond to an incident within an expected time). For example, if an incident occurs in an urban area, a fire department should dispatch at least 15 personnel to the emergency site. If the fire department can dispatch those 15 personnel within nine minutes at least 90 per cent of the time, that fire department is considered effective.

[23] NFPA 1710 and 1720 are scheduled to be consolidated into NFPA 1750 by 2025.

[24] Table 23 is adapted directly from NFPA 1720.

Table 23. Staffing and response time standards as per NFPA 1720.

Demand Zone[25]	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond[26]	Response Time[27]	Meets Objective
Urban area	> 1,000 people/mi^2 (2.6 km^2)	15	9 minutes	90%
Suburban area	500 to 1,000 people/mi^2 (2.6 km^2)	10	10 minutes	80%
Rural area	< 500 people/mi^2 (2.6 km^2)	6	14 minutes	80%
Remote area	Travel distance ≥ 8 mi (12.87 km)	4	Dependent on travel distance	90%
Special risks	Determined by AHJ	Determined by AHJ based on risk	Determined by AHJ	90%

Findings

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, Georgian Bay has an overall population density of 6.6 people per km^2 (or approximately 17 people per mi^2). Based on the information in NFPA 1720, some areas of the township may be best suited for a rural demand zone. However, due to the size of the township and the significant number of properties that are water-access only, large areas of Georgian Bay may be better suited as a remote area demand zone. Moreover, in the spring and fall months, the Department's ability to use boats, snowmobiles, and other vehicles is limited, and this scenario makes it more challenging to reach the properties that are water-access only.

Going forward, the Department should strive to defines which areas are best suited for rural and remote area demand zones (as defined by NFPA 1720). In order to do so, the Department will need to maintain the appropriate staffing levels and response times.

14.2.4 Response Types

Context

A fire department should review its historical performance (especially as it relates to distribution and concentration) to help identify its service delivery capabilities.

[25] A jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone.

[26] Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJ's department and automatic aid.

[27] Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch notification and ends at the time interval shown in the table.

Fire departments should also use modelling and the results of statistical analyses to determine whether they are using their resources efficiently and effectively.

Findings

Table 24 lists the number and type of fire responses the Department conducted from 2019 to 2023.

Table 24. Fire responses, 2019 to 2023.

Type of Response	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Loss fires: structures	4	6	7	13	6
Loss fires: other	0	0	1	0	5
Loss fires: vehicles	3	8	5	5	2
Total	**7**	**14**	**13**	**18**	**13**

Table 25 lists the amount of dollar loss per occupancy group in Georgian Bay from 2019 to 2023.

Table 25. Dollar loss by occupancy type, 2019 to 2023.

Occupancy Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Group A: assembly	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Group B: care, treatment, and detention	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Group C: residential	$35,000	$1,676,600	$466,000	$1,240,050	$395,860
Group D & E: mercantile and commercial	$0	$0	$61,000	$0	$0
Group F: industrial	$0	$0	$100,000	$195,000	$0
Vehicles	$26,000	$112,500	$118,000	$75,300	$18,000
Total	**$61,000**	**$1,789,100**	**$745,000**	**$1,510,350**	**$413,860**

14.2.5 Response Time Statistics

Context

All fire departments should retain accurate records of their historical response times. The information is essential to have when measuring performance levels, making strategic decisions, and determining service alternatives. Every emergency response comprises the four steps described below.

Step 1: Public Safety Answer Point Call Processing Time

- Step 1 begins when the public safety answer point or 911 call centre receives an emergency call and transfers the call to the fire department.
- This step ends when the fire department's dispatch centre answers the transferred call.

Step 2: Secondary Public Safety Answer Point Alarm Processing Time

- Step 2 begins when the fire department's dispatch centre receives an alarm (referred to as the "incident beginning").
- This step ends when the communication technician/dispatcher activates the paging devices at the fire station (referred to as "dispatch time").

Step 3: Assembly Time

- Step 3 begins when the fire station activates its pagers (and the responding apparatus begins its response).
- This step ends when the apparatus's response is noted by (or to) the dispatcher via the fire department's radio system (referred to as "en route time" or "drive time").

Step 4: Travel Time (First Unit)

- Step 4 begins when the responding apparatus initially acknowledges its response.
- This step ends when the responding apparatus uses its radio to notify the dispatcher that it has arrived at the emergency scene (referred to as "on-scene time").

By timing how long it takes to complete each of the four steps listed above, a fire department can determine the average response time of its first due unit (which is the first vehicle to arrive at the emergency scene).

In order for historical data to be useful, fire departments must ensure they track their response times consistently across all types of responses.

Findings

Table 26 shows the Department's average response times to dollar-loss fires from 2019 to 2023. The numbers in the table are based on the Department's historical response data.

Table 26. Average response times for dollar loss fires, 2019 to 2023

Year	Assembly Time	Drive Time	Response Time	Avg. On-Scene Personnel
2019	10:36	3:25	14:01	10
2020	6:16	6:43	12:59	20
2021	6:33	7:42	14:15	17
2022	6:19	5:30	11:49	13
2023	4:58	6:01	11:59	14
5-year average	**6:56**	**5:52**	**12:48**	**15**

14.3 Deployment Models

Context

In recent years, the fire service has reconsidered which method fire departments should use to deploy their assets.

As a best practice, many fire departments now base their deployment models on local needs and circumstances. This approach puts the risks specific to an individual community at the centre of a deployment model's considerations. The OFM, the Metro Fire Chiefs Association, and the Commission on Fire Accreditation International have each endorsed the use of a risk-based deployment model.

A CRA is an example of a document that provides information a fire department can use to help develop an appropriate deployment model for its community. By understanding which risks it is most likely to face, a fire department can determine effective resource allocation and service provision for its community.

Findings

The Department should review the results of the CRA that was completed for Georgian Bay in 2024 and then determine whether its deployment model addresses the risks identified in the township.

14.3.1 Leadership at Emergency Scenes

Context

A fire department's leadership team must have the ability to identify threats and take appropriate actions at emergency scenes, ensuring that all decisions align with the fire department's approved level of service.

Several factors influence effective leadership, such as:

- the ability to deliver training
- the ability to communicate effectively
- the ability to build team cohesiveness
- the ability to exercise critical thinking and make decisions

It is also crucial for firefighters to receive proper supervision. Studies conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the U.S. Fire Administration concluded that direct supervision improves firefighter safety.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration's Firefighter Fatality Retrospective Study, many firefighter deaths occurred when firefighters became lost or disoriented and died before a fire officer or incident commander was aware that the firefighter in question required assistance. Because fire captains and other senior personnel usually have more experience and training than junior firefighters, they are better equipped to give direction during an emergency response.

Findings

The Department has assigned district chiefs and captains to each of its fire stations. These personnel lead and supervise the Department's firefighters.

14.3.2 Incident Command Structure

Context

In recent years, many fire departments and other emergency responders across North America have incorporated the incident command structure ("**ICS**") into their operations. The ICS defines the roles needed during an emergency response and the organizational structure of all personnel involved with response efforts. By using the ICS, emergency responders can ensure they have the personnel needed to accomplish all necessary operational tasks.

The firefighter guidance notes cover several topics related to the ICS, such as:

- incident command

- crew integrity
- radio communications
- incident safety officer
- reporting exposures

This section of the FMP discusses several other key roles and concepts of the ICS.

Incident Commander

Under the ICS, the incident commander is the individual who is in charge of an emergency response. Typically, the on-site officer with the most seniority fills the role of incident commander. The incident commander is responsible for responder safety.

When a fire department uses a crew-based response structure, a captain is usually the first officer to arrive at an emergency scene. The captain is often expected to take overall command of the scene and supervise other fire crew personnel directly.

A senior officer should take over the role of incident commander upon arrival at an emergency scene, stationing themself inside a vehicle rather than inside the hazard zone. This arrangement allows the senior officer to monitor the safety and overall direction of the incident more effectively.

Section 2-1 of the firefighter guidance notes addresses topics related to the incident commander.

Scribe

Under the ICS, a scribe is used to help maintain accountability. The scribe position assists the incident commander by performing the following tasks:

- Document events occurring at the incident.
- Monitor communication devices.
- Track the location and actions of firefighters.
    - It is especially important for an incident commander and all responding units to know the location and status of firefighters during a mayday situation.

Section 5-1 of the firefighter guidance notes addresses topics related to firefighter accountability.

Incident Safety Officer

Under the ICS, the incident commander assigns an incident safety officer to perform the following tasks:

- Assess the hazards associated with the incident.
- Assess firefighter operations.
- Help the incident commander manage personnel and resources at the incident.
- Improve the safety of the incident.

Section 2-4 of the firefighter guidance notes addresses topics related to the incident safety officer.

Findings

The Department should consider facilitating incident safety officer training for its senior officers. Doing so could help the senior officers gain an improved situational awareness regarding structure fires. The training could also help improve firefighter safety in the Department.

14.3.3 Low Attendance Numbers

Context

Many volunteer fire departments find it difficult to consistently provide an ERF at emergency scenes, especially during daytime hours. If a fire crew does not have enough personnel, it may be unable to safely conduct interior firefighting duties.

Findings

As with many volunteer fire departments, the Department faces challenges when it comes to assembling an ERF at dollar loss fires, especially during daytime hours. To address this issue, the Department should develop guidelines for firefighters and fire officers that outline safe practices at emergency scenes. The guidelines should outline the measures that fire crews should take when a limited number of personnel are present at an incident.

14.4 Post-Incident Analysis and Review

Context

In addition to setting performance standards, a fire department can help improve the effectiveness of its operations by conducting a post-incident analysis and review ("**PIAR**") after an emergency concludes.

During a PIAR, a fire department evaluates its performance and safety practices. This process allows fire departments to identify gaps in their practices and develop measures to improve their effectiveness and safety during future responses.

A fire department should not conduct PIARs to uncover blame but to reinforce practices that lead to optimal service delivery for community residents and businesses. A fire department that prioritizes safety practices is more likely to develop an internal culture that values safety.

It is beneficial for health and safety committees to participate in and review the results of PIARs. The committee members can use the PIAR process to determine if there are any safety practices their fire department can incorporate into its operations.

Findings

The Department currently conducts PIARs, but they are conducted informally, and the results of the PIARs are not recorded. Furthermore, the Department does not have any written directive regarding PIARs.

Going forward, the Department should consider establishing a process to conduct formal PIARs. If it pursues this option, the Department should ensure that the purpose of the PIARs is to help identify ways of improving firefighter safety and incident responses. The focus of the PIARs should not be punitive.

The Fire Chief should also consider creating an SOG that provides the Department's firefighters with instructions for conducting PIARs after dollar loss fires and other significant incidents.

14.5 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of "Fire Chief Initiatives" related to performance standards and response statistics, see Appendix E.

14.6 Recommendations

After assessing performance standards and response statistics in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

14-1. Every year, the Fire Chief should review the effective response force, deployment statistics, and response time objectives for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. If any of those areas require updates to remain current, the Fire Chief should submit applicable recommendations to Council for consideration and approval.

14-2. The Fire Chief should develop a response standard for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. The standard should identify the minimum number of certified firefighters needed to form an effective response force for dollar loss fires. The Fire Chief should then submit the proposed response standard to Council for consideration and approval.

15.0 Fire Station Assessment

15.1 Overview of Fire Station Assessments

A fire station assessment evaluates a fire station to determine whether the building is likely to support its fire department's current and anticipated operations. There are several key factors that all fire station assessments should consider, including building size, features, age, and condition.

The size of a fire station is of primary importance. In order to provide effective fire protection services to the community, a fire department requires a fire station with appropriate space, functionality, and accessibility features. Modern fire stations should have the capacity and resources to furnish a variety of spaces, including:

- administrative areas
- training rooms
- storage areas
- exercise rooms (to support the physical aspects of firefighter wellness)
- kitchen facilities
- washrooms that support gender equality

Fire departments also need fire stations that are easy to renovate or furnish with new technology or equipment. Having a fire station that is easily adaptable will help support a fire department as it grows or begins offering new services.

The age of a fire station is another important consideration. Often, older fire stations are unable to undergo significant renovations or accommodate new equipment, such as updated health and safety systems. Older fire stations are also prone to issues that do not exist in newer buildings. For example, older buildings often have higher utility costs than newer buildings due to a lower quality of insulation. Many older fire stations also have aging or inefficient HVAC systems that cost more to maintain than the HVAC systems in contemporary facilities.

Overall, the results of a fire station assessment can help a fire department decide whether its fire station is likely to support its needs or whether it is time to renovate or replace an existing facility.

15.1.1 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The AODA came into effect on June 13, 2005. The legislation aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. One of the primary intentions of the AODA is to improve accessibility features in all public establishments in Ontario by 2025.

Many fire departments in Ontario are operating from fire stations that were constructed before the introduction of the AODA. Consequently, numerous fire departments do not have facilities that meet accessibility requirements.

If a fire department has a fire station that does not meet AODA requirements, there are two options the fire department can pursue. The first option involves evaluating the fire station to determine whether updating the facility will bring it into compliance with accessibility standards. The second option is the construction of a new fire station to replace the outdated facility. Both options require significant planning and capital investments.

Due to the resources needed to update a fire station, some fire departments have challenged the need to comply with the AODA. For instance, some fire departments have stated that fire stations are not public buildings, which should exempt them from the requirements of the AODA. However, the AODA regards fire stations as public facilities, which means they should be accessible and inclusive spaces for all members of the public.

15.2 Scope of Fire Station Assessment for Georgian Bay

The following subsections list the factors that were assessed at each of the Department's three fire stations.

15.2.1 Location

Fire departments should have stations that are located in optimal areas within the community. When assessing the location of a fire station, a fire department should consider how the location affects its travel times, as well as the station's proximity to areas with large populations, high call volumes, or high-risk occupancies.

15.2.2 General Condition

Each fire department must keep its fire station in operational condition. If an area of the station is damaged or otherwise non-functional, the fire department must repair it before the issue worsens and causes a greater burden on taxpayers.

15.2.3 Parking Area

Fire stations should have a parking lot that is big enough to allow firefighters to park their vehicles in an area that is a safe distance from a moving fire apparatus.

When designing a parking area, a fire department should also consider legislation which mandates accessible parking, as well as the need for extra parking space during public education events.

15.2.4 Washrooms and Shower Facilities

Fire stations must have clean and functional washrooms and shower facilities.

Showering after an emergency incident is an important cancer prevention protocol. Firefighters may be exposed to toxic atmospheres during emergency responses, and they should decontaminate themselves as soon as possible after completing a response.

Fire departments must also ensure that their fire stations include designated men's and women's washrooms and shower facilities.

15.2.5 Storage Area

As the fire service has evolved, the need for storage space has increased. For instance, fire stations now house a significant amount of technology and equipment, such as the appliances used to clean, decontaminate, and dry PPE. Fire stations must also have space to store public education materials.

In general, firefighters need enough space to store all technology and equipment in a way that does not obstruct safe movement and does not create tripping hazards.

15.2.6 Common Area

As a best practice, fire stations should include a common area where firefighters can interact with each other. By incorporating a common area, a fire department can improve camaraderie between its firefighters, which can help lead to higher levels of morale and increased retention rates.

15.2.7 Office Space

Fire stations should contain designated offices that applicable personnel can use to complete all necessary paperwork and manage the fire department's records management system. Having a dedicated office space is essential, as proper record-keeping is required by legislation. In addition, comprehensive records are a vital resource that a fire department can use when it is determining its response statistics.

15.2.8 Training Area

Firefighters must complete ongoing training in order to maintain the skills needed to perform firefighting operations safely and effectively. A proper training area that is equipped with up-to-date resources and props can help firefighters learn and practise their duties.

In addition, a proper training area can help a fire department keep pace with provincial legislation that is associated with training requirements and certifications.

A fire department can also use its training area to hold debriefing sessions and conduct a PIAR after completing an emergency response.

15.2.9 Apparatus Bay

Over the last 50 years, the average size of a fire apparatus has increased significantly. As a result, fire departments need more apparatus floor space than ever before. Apparatus bay doors must also be wide and high enough to accommodate the height of a modern fire apparatus.

Many fire departments also use their apparatus bays as storage spaces for PPE, decontamination appliances, work benches, and fire hoses.

15.2.10 Public Education Signage

Many fire departments use the signage at the front of a fire station to deliver public education messages. For instance, a fire station's sign could communicate information about burning restrictions, basic fire safety practices, fire department social media accounts, upcoming public events, and other public safety concerns.

15.2.11 Security and Lighting Systems

It is important to protect the municipal assets that are stored at a fire station (such as fire apparatus and specialty equipment). These assets are critical for protecting community safety, and they are costly to repair or replace. As such, a fire department should implement security measures to prevent the theft, vandalism, or unauthorized use of municipal assets. For example, video surveillance systems can be added to the exterior area of a fire station. Fire departments can also install motion-sensitive lights in parking areas to improve visibility and firefighter safety.

15.3 Station 1 – Honey Harbour

Figure 4 shows the exterior of Station 1 – Honey Harbour.

Figure 4. Exterior of Station 1 – Honey Harbour.

Overall, the Department's firefighters have maintained Station 1 over the years. However, the station is a cramped facility that does not have the functionality or features needed to support the Department's current operations.

15.3.1 Location

Station 1 is located at 2507 Honey Harbour Road, just outside the core of Honey Harbour.

This location is advantageous for several reasons:

- Many volunteer firefighters live nearby, allowing them to respond to emergencies quickly.
- The roads in the core of Honey Harbour can become congested in the summer. However, the location of Station 1 ensures the Department can respond to emergencies in other areas of Georgian Bay promptly.
- The Honey Harbour marina is located nearby. One of the Department's marine vessels (Marine Unit 1) is docked at the marina for most of the year.

15.3.2 General Condition

Station 1 was built circa 1972.

A recent study indicated that Station 1 is structurally sound. However, the station appears to have a sinking floor in the office space.[28] There is also a gap near the top of the interior wall in the facility's office space (see Figure 5), which may be caused by the sinking floor.

Figure 5. Gap in interior wall at Station 1.

The water supply at Station 1 is available from a large container located on the apparatus floor (see Figure 6).

[28] The Department did not disclose the cause of the sinking floor to The Loomex Group.

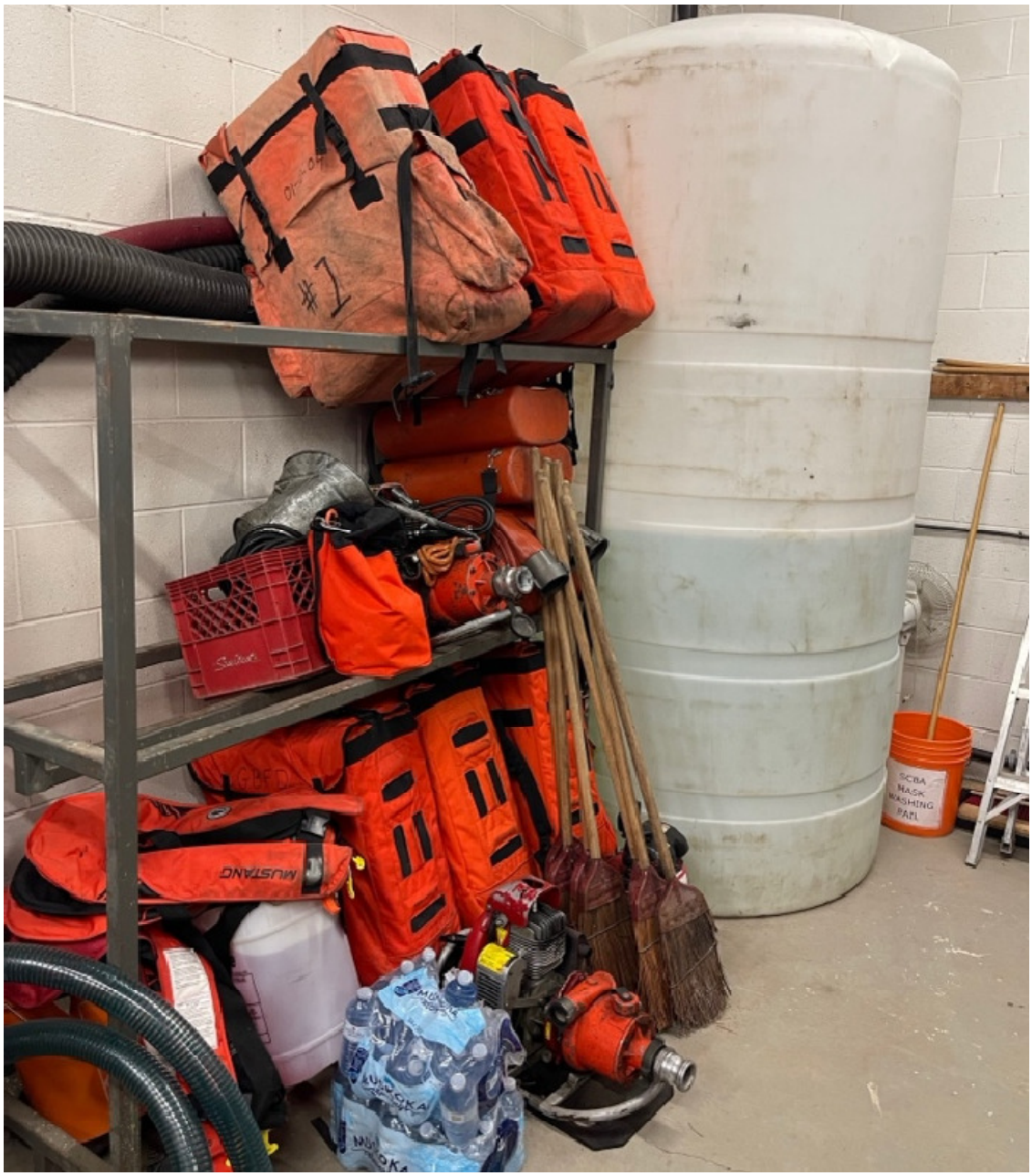

Figure 6. Water container used to supply water at Station 1.

There is a cost involved with transporting water to the station, which could be eliminated if the Department installed a continuous water supply system. The Department's personnel could use this water to cook, shower, wash equipment, decontaminate PPE, and refill the fire apparatus.

15.3.3 Parking Area

The parking lot at Station 1 does not have enough space for all of the Department's firefighters to park their vehicles.

The parking lot also lacks the parking space that members of the public require when visiting the fire station during events.

15.3.4 Washroom Facilities and Shower Facilities

Station 1 has one washroom (see Figure 7), but the space does not contain shower facilities. There is a pump located in front of the toilet, which is a tripping hazard.

Figure 7. Washroom at Station 1.

15.3.5 Storage Area

Station 1 has a small storage area in the kitchen area. As shown in Figure 8, this area is cramped, and it is inadequate for the station's needs.

Figure 8. Storage area at Station 1.

15.3.6 Common Area

Station 1 lacks a dedicated common area.

The Department uses the training area as a common area (when training is not in session).

15.3.7 Office Space

Station 1 has one office (see Figure 9), which is used by the station's captains and district chief.

Figure 9. Office area in Station 1.

15.3.8 Training Area

Station 1 contains one designated training area (see Figure 10). This space has limited seating capacity, and it may be difficult to accommodate specific training topics.

Figure 10. Training area at Station 1.

As mentioned above, the Department also uses the training room as a common area for the station's firefighters.

15.3.9 Apparatus Bay

Upon review, the apparatus floor at Station 1 is not big enough to house the Department's apparatus and equipment in a way that is safe for the Department's firefighters.

As shown in Figure 11, the apparatus floor at Station 1 lacks adequate clearance for firefighters to maneuver around vehicles when an apparatus is parked in the bay.

Figure 11. Apparatus bay at Station 1.

In addition to a lack of space, the door that separates the apparatus bay from the office area is solid and does not have a window (see Figure 12).

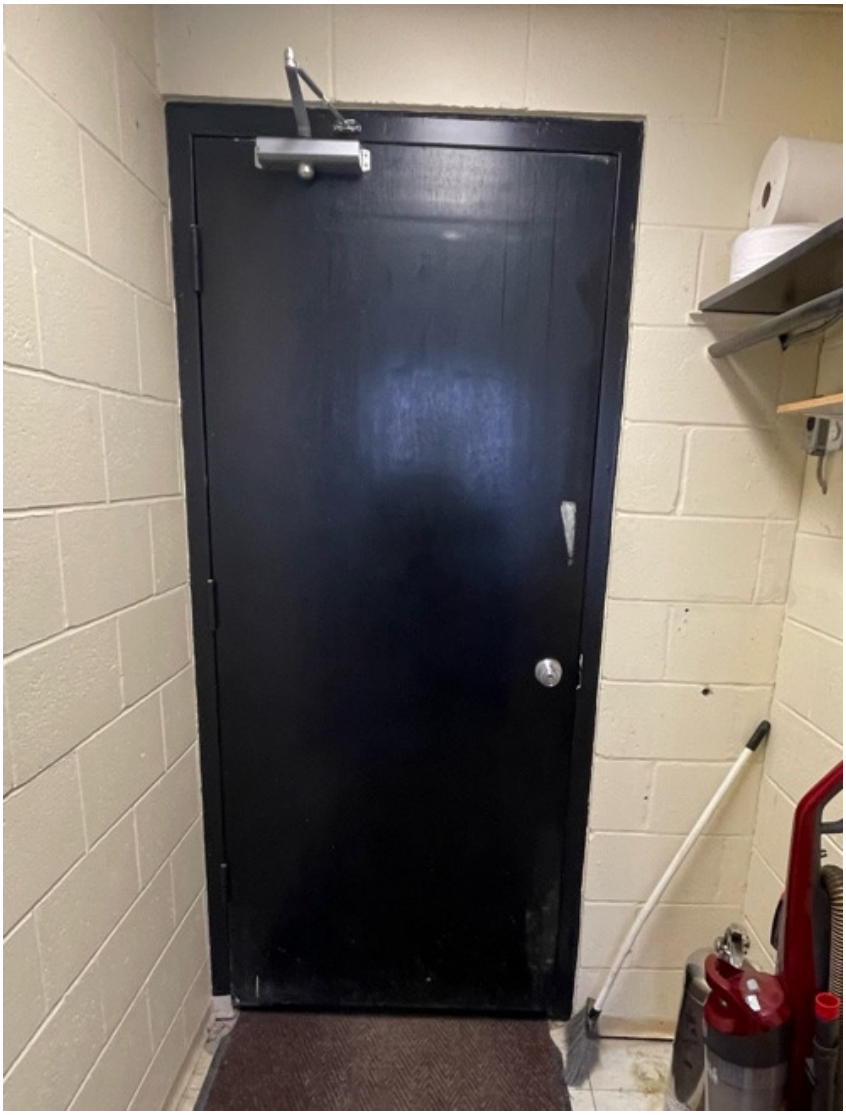

Figure 12. Door separating the apparatus floor and office space at Station 1.

If the door is opened unexpectedly, personnel on the other side may be injured. In order to reduce the chance of a firefighter getting struck by the door opening unexpectedly, the Department should consider installing a new door with a large window.

15.3.10 Public Education Signage

As of this FMP, the Department does not use any signs at Station 1 to display public education information.

15.3.11 Security and Lighting Systems

Georgian Bay should consider improving security and safety at Station 1 by installing additional lighting and security systems.

15.3.12 Station 1 Improvement Options

In order to remediate the issues with Station 1, Georgian Bay and the Department should consider implementing one of the options below.

Option 1: Build a New Fire Station

Due to the age, size, and damage at Station 1, Georgian Bay could consider replacing the building with a new facility. If a new facility is constructed, it should be designed to accommodate modern technology. It must also be large enough to accommodate the number of firefighters that will be required to protect Georgian Bay as the population grows.

Georgian Bay should consider the following benefits of constructing a new station:

- Georgian Bay can design a new fire station with a layout that suits the needs of the Department (rather than developing additions that adhere to the layout of the existing facility).
- A new fire station is more likely to support the Department's needs than a renovated station.
- It is easier to incorporate new technologies (such as vehicle exhaust removal systems, training aids, and decontamination equipment) into the design of a new fire station rather than installing new technologies during a renovation.
- By default, a new fire station should comply with the most up-to-date building codes (such as fire protection system requirements).
- A new fire station can be designed to accommodate future additions or expansions (such as a larger training centre, additional apparatus bay, or more offices).
- A new fire station can be built to be more aesthetically pleasing than the current station.

Option 2: Renovate and Expand the Existing Fire Station

Georgian Bay can consider repairing and renovating the existing Station 1 facility. However, it should be noted that the cost of repairs and renovations may be comparable to the costs associated with constructing a new building. In addition, because the current Station 1 facility is an older building, it will likely need ongoing repairs in the future.

Repairs and renovations would include the following tasks:

- Complete an AODA assessment and remediate any identified accessibility issues.

- Determine and remediate the cause of the sinking floor.
- Repair the floor.
- Build a common room for the station's firefighters.
- Build additional office space.
- Build additional apparatus bay space.
- Install a diesel exhaust extraction system.[29]
- Install a reliable water supply.
- Install additional storage space.
- Install showers.
- Install a small exercise area.

Recommended Option

The Loomex Group recommends that Georgian Bay choose Option #1 and construct a new fire station due to the benefits listed above.

For more information about replacing Station 1 with a new facility, see section 15.6 of this FMP.

15.4 Station 2 – MacTier

Figure 13 shows the exterior of Station 2 – MacTier.

Figure 13. Exterior of Station 2 – MacTier.

[29] For more information on diesel exhaust systems, see section 10.8 of this FMP.

15.4.1 Location

Station 2 is located at 16 Muskoka Road in the core of MacTier. This location is advantageous because many volunteer firefighters live nearby, allowing them to respond to emergencies quickly.

15.4.2 General Condition

Station 2 is believed to have been built in the 1970s, and it has the same approximate layout as Station 1. Overall, Station 2 appears to be in good condition. However, because it is an older building, the Department may need to complete ongoing maintenance or repairs in the future.

15.4.3 Parking Area

The parking lot at Station 2 does not have enough space for all fire personnel to park their vehicles. The lot also lacks the parking space that members of the public require when using the public washroom attached to the fire station.

15.4.4 Washroom Facilities and Shower Facilities

Station 2 has two washrooms. One of the washrooms contains a shower (see Figure 14), which is used for post-emergency decontamination purposes. There is also a public washroom attached to the fire station.

Figure 14. Washroom and shower area at Station 2.

15.4.5 Storage Area

Station 2 has very little storage space.

15.4.6 Common Area

Station 2 lacks a dedicated common area.

The Department uses the training area as a common area (when training is not in session).

15.4.7 Office Area

Station 2 has one office (see Figure 15), which is used by the station's officers and district chief.

Figure 15. Office area at Station 2.

15.4.8 Training Area

Station 2 contains a training area (see Figure 16). The training area is sufficient for the number of fire personnel currently assigned to Station 2. However, this area will not provide enough training space if staffing numbers increase.

Figure 16. Training area at Station 2.

15.4.9 Apparatus Bay

The apparatus floor at Station 2 (see Figure 17) is not big enough to house the Department's apparatus and equipment in a way that provides adequate clearance for firefighters to maneuver around vehicles parked in the bay.

Figure 17. Apparatus floor at Station 2.

15.4.10 Public Education Signage

As of this FMP, the Department does not use any signs at Station 2 to display public education information.

15.4.11 Security and Lighting Systems

Georgian Bay should consider improving the security and safety at Station 2 by installing additional lighting and security systems.

15.4.12 Station 2 Improvement Options

Because Station 2 was built around the same time as Station 1. The facilities have very similar configurations. However, Station 2's floor does not appear to be sinking, and the facility has a reliable water source. Based on the current condition of Station 2, Georgian Bay should make a long-term plan regarding the replacement of the facility.

For more information about replacing Station 2 with a new facility, see section 15.6 of this FMP.

15.5 Station 3 – Port Severn and Administrative Office

Figure 18 shows the exterior of Station 3 – Port Severn.

Figure 18. Exterior of Station 3 – Port Severn.

15.5.1 Location

Station 3 is located at 14 Bressette Road (behind the Port Severn Community Services building) in the core of Port Severn.

This location is advantageous because it has easy access to Highway 400. The access to the highway means that firefighters can reach a large portion of Georgian Bay in a timely manner.

15.5.2 General Condition

Station 3 has the largest apparatus floor of the Department's stations, and the Department's firefighters have maintained the facility well over the years. However, the station lacks a dedicated office, training area, kitchen, and common area, as well as proper shower facilities. As a result, the station does not meet the training and organizational needs of the Department.

15.5.3 Parking Area

Station 3 has ample parking for the Department's firefighters.

15.5.4 Washroom and Shower Facilities

Station 3 has two washrooms and two shower facilities.

15.5.5 Storage Area

Station 3 has a storage area, but this space does not meet the needs of the Department.

There is also a storage bin outside Station 3. This bin contains equipment that is used to facilitate the Georgian Bay Cottage Portable Pump Training Program. (For more information about the portable pump program, see section 18.3.2 of this FMP.)

15.5.6 Common Area

Station 3 does not have a common area.

15.5.7 Office Area

Station 3 does not have an office area.

15.5.8 Training Area

Station 3 does not have a training area.

15.5.9 Apparatus Bay

The apparatus floor at Station 3 (see Figure 19) is larger than the apparatus floors at the Department's other stations. However, the apparatus floor lacks enough space to house essential equipment, such as PPE, an air compressor, a workbench, and decontamination appliances.

Figure 19. Apparatus bay at Station 3, including space constraints.

15.5.10 Public Education Signage

Station 3 is set back from the road, with signage forbidding unauthorized personnel from entering the property (see Figure 20). As a result, the Department has limited capacity to display public education messages around the fire station.

Figure 20. Entrance to Station 3.

15.5.11 Security and Lighting Systems

Georgian Bay should consider improving the security and safety at Station 3 by installing additional lighting and security systems.

15.5.12 Administrative Office (at Port Severn Community Services building)

The Department's administrative staff work out of the shared office space in the Port Severn Community Services building. This building (see Figure 21) is at 71 Lone Pine Road, which is next to Station 3.

Figure 21. Port Severn Community Services building.

Upon review, the Port Severn Community Services building does not have any markings that indicate it houses the Department's administrative office.

The Department's administrative staff share the office space at the Port Severn Community Services building with bylaw officers and Community Services building staff. A view of the shared space is shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Shared office space at the Port Severn Community Services building.

If the Department hires a dedicated fire prevention officer, the office space at the Port Severn Community Services building will not provide an adequate workspace. This is not an ideal setup, because a fire prevention officer may need dedicated meeting space, as well as additional room to view floor plans and blueprints.

15.5.13 Improvement Options for Station 3

Option 1: Build a New Fire Station

As discussed above, the current Station 3 facility lacks many requirements of modern fire stations. Due to this lack, Georgian Bay can consider replacing Station 3 with a new facility. If a new facility is constructed, it could be designed to meet the unique needs of the Department. For instance, the new building could be purpose-built to house appliances and equipment designed to reduce firefighting-related illnesses and cancers.

A new station could also include office space for the Department's administrative staff, as well as a training centre. As of this FMP, the Department uses the Port Severn Community Services building's shared office space as an administrative office, and it is in discussions to use the former Honey Harbour Public School as a training centre.

If the Department includes administrative offices in its new fire station, it will be easier for administrative staff and firefighters to interact. As a result, administrative staff will be able to identify and address firefighters' challenges and concerns in a timely manner, leading to a more satisfied workforce.

The Department could use the new facility to demonstrate its presence in the community and deliver public education. A new station could be built closer to the road than the current station, allowing Georgian Bay taxpayers to see the facility more clearly. The facility should also include signage that displays public education messages. The Department should also consider hosting public education events at the new fire station. These events could allow residents of Georgian Bay to see and understand the investments that the township has made to ensure their safety.

Option 2: Renovate and Expand the Existing Fire Station

Georgian Bay can consider repairing and renovating the existing Station 3 facility. However, it should be noted that the cost of repairs and renovations may be comparable to the costs associated with constructing a new building. In addition, because the current Station 3 facility is an older building, it will likely need ongoing repairs in the future.

Repairs and renovations would include the following tasks:

- Complete an AODA assessment and then remediate all accessibility issues.
- Build a common room.

- Install a diesel exhaust system.
- Install additional storage space.
- Install a decontamination area.
- Build additional office space for administrative personnel.
- Build additional office space for the station's captains and district chief.
- Build an additional station bay.
- Build a small exercise area.
- Build a training centre and classroom.
- Install a kitchen.

Option 3: Maintain the Current Building Configurations

Georgian Bay can choose to keep the Department's administrative office at the Port Severn Community Services building and also open a training facility at the former site of Honey Harbour Public School. However, this course of action may require Georgian Bay to make a significant investment to maintain the former public school.

In addition to building maintenance costs, Georgian Bay should consider the effect that the training facility would have on response times. When fire crews are training at the facility, they will be unable to respond quickly to incidents that occur outside the Honey Harbour area.

Going forward, Georgian Bay should consider conducting a study of the Department's response times before making any significant investments in the former public school.

Recommended Option

The Loomex Group recommends that Georgian Bay choose Option #1 and construct a new fire station due to the benefits listed above.

For more information about replacing Station 3 with a new facility, see section 15.6 of this FMP.

15.6 Proposed Fire Station Location Models

All three of the Department's fire stations will likely require replacement within the foreseeable future. As such, Georgian Bay should take this opportunity to reconsider the Department's deployment model.

Georgian Bay should consider the following two options:

1. **Revised three-station model:** Establish a primary fire station in the Port Severn area, as well as two smaller satellite stations in the Honey Harbour and MacTier areas.
2. **Two-station model:** Replace or renovate Station 3 – Port Severn and establish a single station to replace Station 1 – Honey Harbour and Station 2 – MacTier.

The following subsections discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these options.

15.6.1 Option 1: Revised Three-Station Model

The Department can consider implementing a three-station model that involves establishing a primary fire station in the Port Severn area and two smaller satellite stations in the Honey Harbour and MacTier areas. As suggested in section 15.5.13, the new Port Severn station would house the Department's administrative personnel (including fire prevention personnel), as well as a training centre.

There is a high number of water-access-only properties in Georgian Bay, and traffic on the waterways increases significantly in the summer. Station 1 is the closest station to the marina where Marine Unit 1 is docked. In addition, personnel from Station 1 are familiar with marine rescues, as well as the natural hazards and local landmarks in the waters of Georgian Bay.

If Station 1 were no longer operational, it would take firefighters approximately 15 minutes to drive from Station 3 to the marina, increasing response times drastically. The effect of response time on a fire's severity are well documented (see section 14.2).

Station 1 and Station 2 are currently located near residential areas in Honey Harbour and MacTier. As a result, firefighters who live in these areas can respond quickly from their homes, reducing the Department's assembly times and overall response times.

Station 3's current location is also beneficial. Because the facility is located near Highway 400, it allows responding units to reach the northern portion of the township in a timely manner. Responding units from Station 3 may include firefighters and administrative staff.

To illustrate the benefits of a three-station model, Figure 23 shows the locations of dollar loss fires that occurred in Georgian Bay between 2019 and 2023. It is worth noting that a large portion of these fires occurred near the current locations of the Department's fire stations.

Figure 23. Dollar loss fires in Georgian Bay (2019-2023)

15.6.2 Option 2: Two-Station Model

Georgian Bay can consider reducing costs by replacing Station 1 – Honey Harbour and Station 3 – Port Severn with a larger fire station located between the two communities.

If the Department implements this option, its response times will likely increase, and its level of service will likely be reduced. This effect is due to the following factors:

- Assembly times would increase, since most volunteer firefighters live near the fire stations they are currently assigned to.
- A new central station would be located away from the cores of Honey Harbour and Port Severn, increasing travel time to both locations.
- Other responding units from Station 2 or fire departments in other municipalities would take a significant amount of time to reach the Honey Harbour area.

15.6.3 Recommended Option

After considering the benefits and drawbacks of each option presented above, The Loomex Group recommends that Georgian Bay choose Option 1.

It is in the best interest of the Department and the Georgian Bay community to construct new fire stations according to a revised three-station model.

The suggested next steps and rationale for this decision are discussed below.

Station 1 – Honey Harbour

A small satellite station should be built in the Honey Harbour area to replace Station 1.

The new facility should be located near the current location of Station 1 (due to the location's proximity to the core of Honey Harbour, including the marina where Marine Unit 1 is docked).

Although each member of the Department should receive marine-related training and certifications, the Department can focus on delivering specialized marine training to specific personnel who respond to incidents in the Honey Harbour area on a reliable, consistent basis.

Figure 24 shows the distance that a unit responding from Station 1 can reach within 15 minutes.

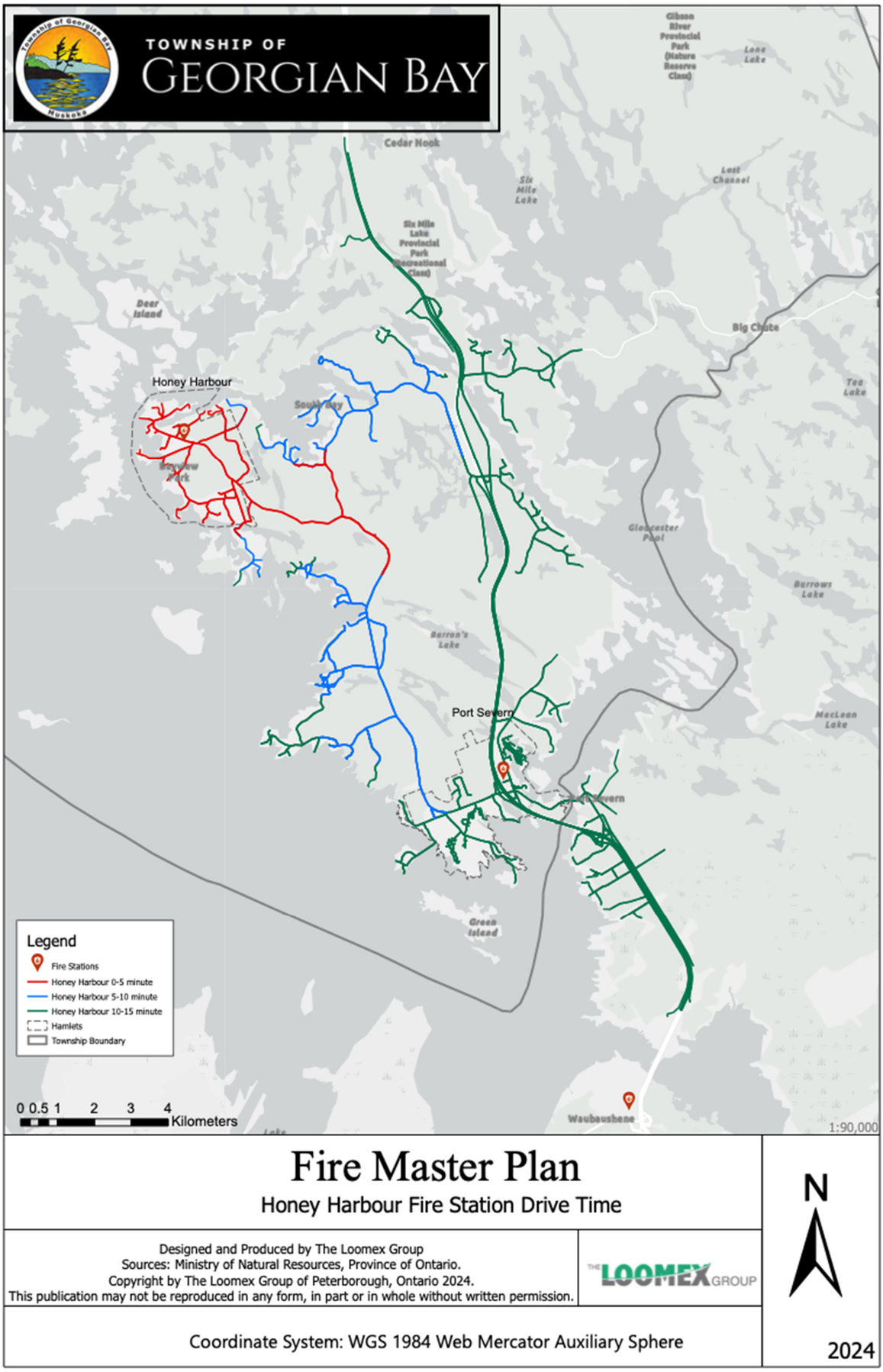

Figure 24. Response distance from Station 1 within 15 minutes.

Station 2 – MacTier

Figure 25 shows the distance between Station 2 – MacTier and the Foot's Bay area of the Township of Muskoka Lakes.

Figure 25. Fire stations in MacTier and Foot's Bay.

Muskoka Lakes Fire Department operates a fire station in the Foot's Bay area. Figure 26 shows the distance that a unit responding from the station in Foot's Bay can reach within 15 minutes.

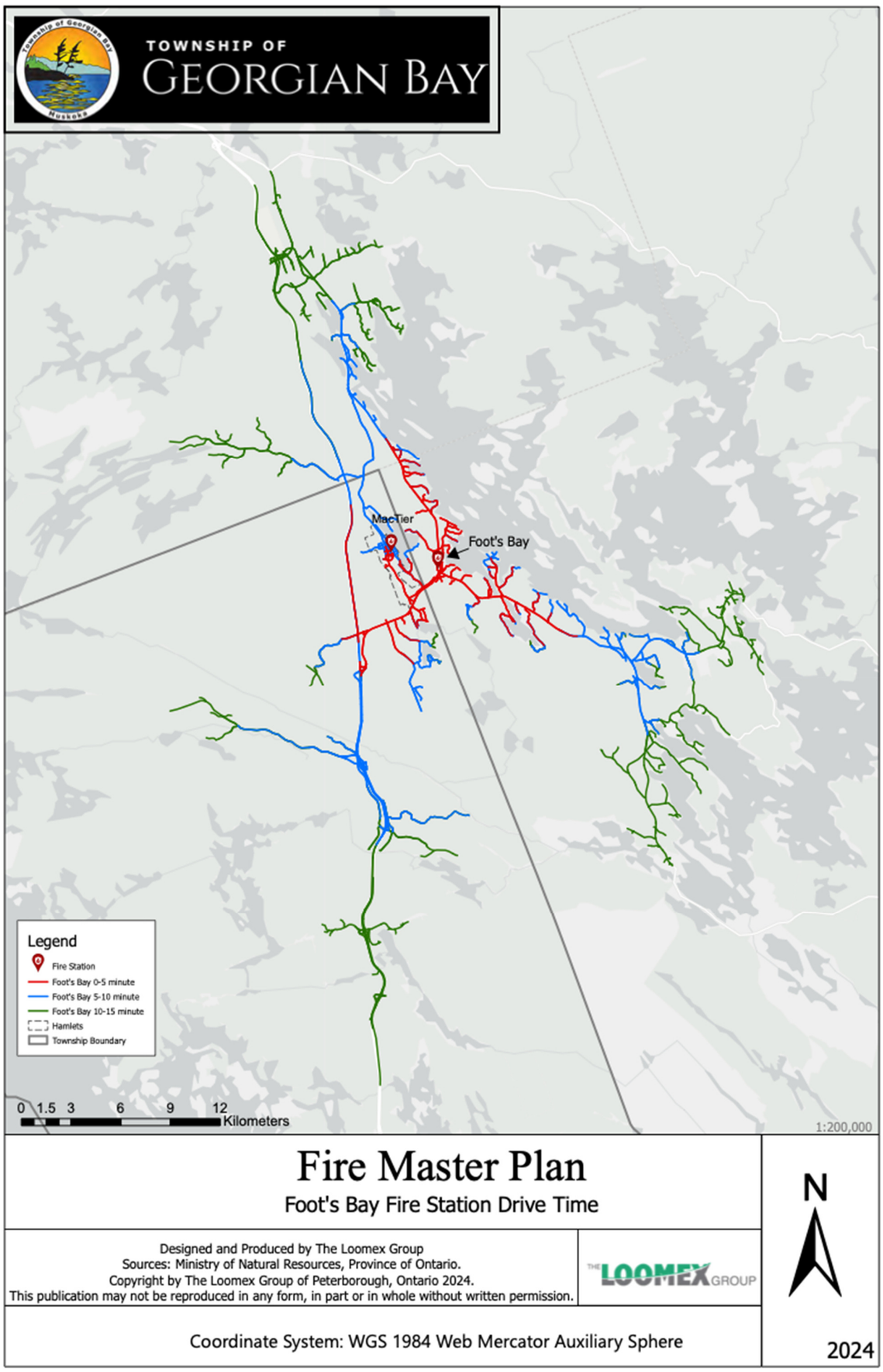

Figure 26. Response distance from Foot's Bay fire station within 15 minutes.

As seen in the maps above, MacTier and Foot's Bay are close to each other. Given this close proximity, Georgian Bay and Muskoka Lakes should discuss whether they can combine their resources to create a single fire station that would provide fire services to both communities. The shared station could be staffed by the firefighters who serve at Station 2 and the fire station currently located in Foot's Bay.

If Georgian Bay and the Township of Muskoka Lakes choose to operate a shared fire station, they will need to establish a shared services agreement.

The Department should also work with the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department to standardize procedures, training, and equipment protocols across both fire departments to ensure firefighter safety and consistent service delivery.

Station 3 – Port Severn

Due to its location and easy access to Highway 400, Station 3 – Port Severn is well located to support Station 1 and Station 2. The location of Station 3 is especially crucial when responding to incidents in Honey Harbour and MacTier, as units from Station 1 and Station 3 help the Department provide an ERF in those areas.

Figure 27 shows the distance that a unit responding from Station 3 can reach within 15 minutes.

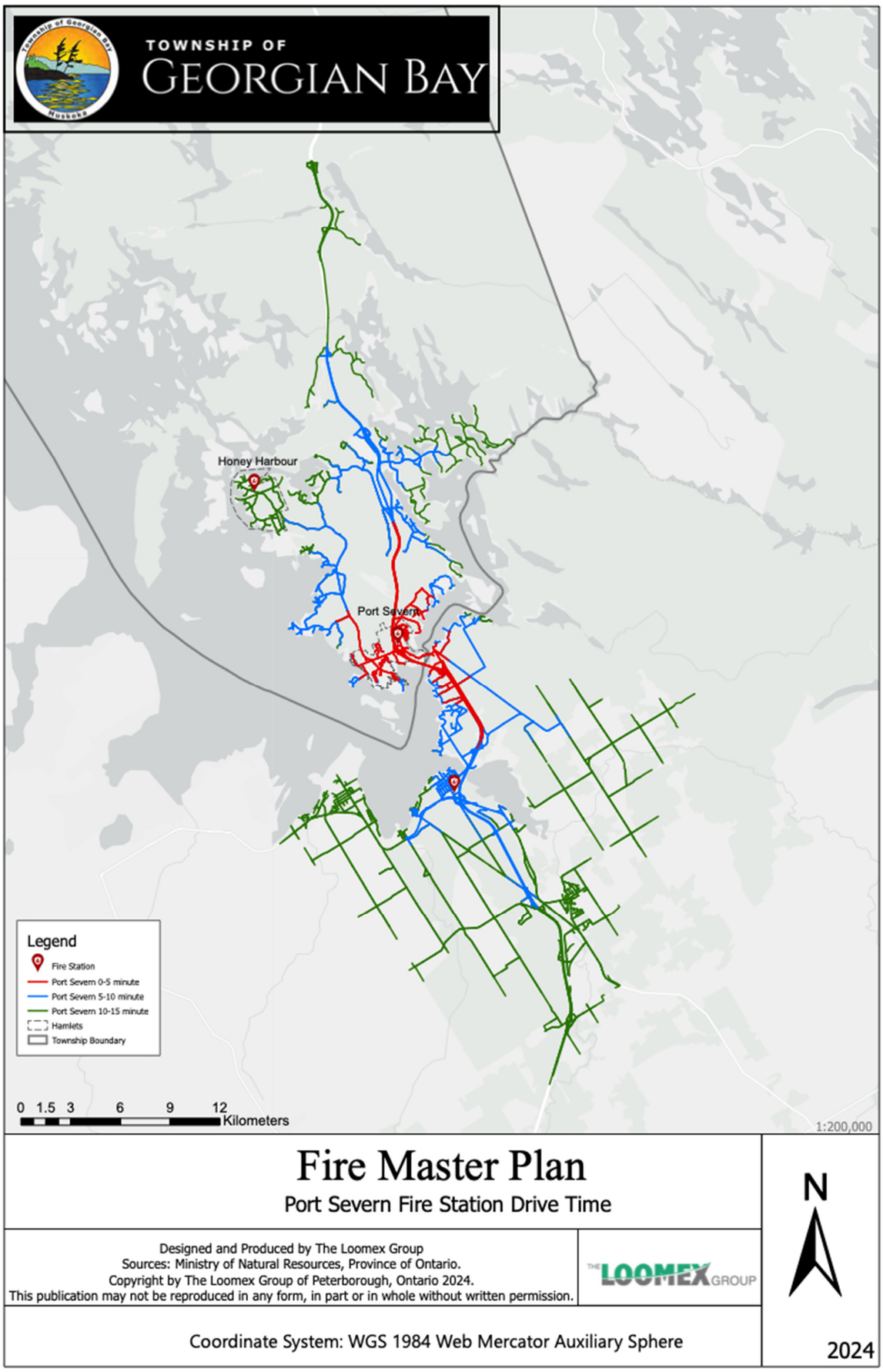

Figure 27. Response distance from Station 3 within 15 minutes.

15.7 Fire Chief Initiatives

For a list of “Fire Chief Initiatives” related to fire stations, see Appendix E.

15.8 Recommendations

After assessing the fire stations in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

15-1. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider installing signs in front of its fire stations to deliver public education messages.

15-2. Georgian Bay should set aside reserve funds and develop a long-term plan to replace Station 1 – Honey Harbour.

15-3. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should replace the door separating the apparatus floor and the office space at Station 1 – Honey Harbour. The new door should have a large window that will allow the station’s firefighters to see when someone is going to enter or exit the space.

15-4. Georgian Bay should continue working with the Town of Muskoka Lakes to build and operate one fire station that provides fire services to the districts of MacTier and Foot’s Bay.

15-5. Georgian Bay should replace Station 3 – Port Severn with a new fire station that has enough space to house a fire suppression division, an administrative division, a fire prevention division, and a training centre.

15-6. Georgian Bay should evaluate its fire stations to determine whether they comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

15-7. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider improving the security and safety of its fire stations by installing additional lighting and equipment, such as security cameras.

16.0 Water Supply

16.1 Overview of Water Supply

In the context of fire suppression, a water supply is either a municipal water supply (which is found in hydrant-protected areas) or a rural water supply (which is found in areas without fire hydrants).

Fire departments must remain aware of which water supplies are available in their communities, as a reliable water supply is essential for delivering effective fire suppression services.

16.2 Municipal Water Supplies

Context

In hydrant-protected areas, municipal water and distribution systems provide the water supply that firefighters use for emergency responses.

In a hydrant-protected area, the municipal water system must have the capacity to provide firefighters with a water supply that has a sufficient flow for firefighting operations. The water system must also support the local distribution system, including fire hydrants.

All municipal fire hydrants should adhere to the following standards:

- NFPA 291, *Recommended Practice for Water Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants*
- OFC, section 6.6.3.5 (regarding fire pump flow tests)
- OFC, section 6.6.4 to 6.6.6 (regarding hydrant condition, inspection, and markings)

Each municipality is responsible for maintaining its fire hydrants to the standards listed above. In addition, municipalities are responsible for arranging flow testing (for fire pumps), hydrant testing, repairs, and replacements for their municipal hydrants.

From an insurance standpoint, hydrant-protected properties usually pay lower insurance premiums than non-hydrant-protected properties.

Findings

Georgian Bay contains municipal fire hydrants in the Port Severn and MacTier communities. Post Severn uses an underground storage container to store water, while MacTier uses a water tower.

The subdivisions in Oak Bay and Marina Town also have hydrant-protected areas. The township's overall water supply and distribution system are both managed by the District of Muskoka.

Upon review, many fire hydrants in Georgian Bay do not have steamer ports. (The hydrants that have steamer ports do not have threads of the same size.) A fire hydrant with a steamer port usually increases the volume of water that firefighters can receive from the hydrant. The improved water supply helps firefighters perform fire suppression duties and protect lives and property.

During the development of this FMP, the Department advised that fire service representatives of the lower-tier municipalities in Georgian Bay have held discussions with the District of Muskoka regarding the fire hydrants in the township.

In the future, the District of Muskoka will take steps to standardize the fire hydrants. As part of this process, Georgian Bay should ensure that all local fire hydrants have steamer ports that are compatible with the Department's large-diameter supply hose.

Going forward, Georgian Bay should also take steps to determine the status of its municipal infrastructure. The township should strive to verify that the infrastructure is in good working order and is capable of supporting the community's current and anticipated water supply needs.

16.3 Fire Hydrant Identification for Municipal Hydrants

Context

Table 27 shows the fire hydrant colour-coding scheme outlined in NFPA 291, *Recommended Practice for Water Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants*.

Table 27. Colour classifications for municipal fire hydrants as per NFPA 291.

Class	Top and Nozzle Colour	Barrel Colour	Fire Flow	Pressure
AA	**Light Blue**	**Chrome Yellow**	1,500 gpm (5,680 L/min or greater)	20 psi (140 kPa)
A	**Green**	**Chrome Yellow**	1,000 to 1,499 gpm (3,785 to 5,675 L/min)	20 psi (140 kPa)
B	**Orange**	**Chrome Yellow**	500 to 999 gpm (1,900 to 3,780 L/min)	20 psi (140 kPa)
C	**Red**	**Chrome Yellow**	500 gpm (1,900 L/min or less)	20 psi (140 kPa)

The NFPA colour scheme helps fire crews identify the amount of fire flow they can expect from a given hydrant. This allows firefighters to arrive at an incident site and quickly verify if there is enough water to complete the necessary response services. The colour-coding scheme also ensures that fire crews can make decisions about increasing the water supply by attaching it to another hydrant (if needed).

Findings

The fire chiefs in the District of Muskoka have met with the district's Engineering and Public Works Department to discuss adopting the fire hydrant colour scheme outlined in NFPA 291. As a result of those discussions, the District of Muskoka will work with the applicable communities to paint fire hydrants accordingly.

Going forward, Georgian Bay should consider working with the District of Muskoka to find ways of making the township's hydrants more visible from the main roadway. For instance, the addition of reflective markings on all sides of the hydrants would allow the Department's personnel to identify where the hydrants are located, regardless of the direction they are travelling when responding to an emergency site.

16.3.1 Private Hydrants

Context

When a property has a private hydrant, the property's owner or developer must provide hydrant installation and water flow certifications to the Chief Fire Official. The Chief Fire Official must then approve that certification before the owner or developer is allowed to occupy the property.

After receiving approval to occupy their property, the developer or owner must ensure they test their on-site hydrants annually to verify they remain operational. In contrast to the NFPA colour-coding scheme (discussed above), private hydrants are usually painted red to distinguish them from municipal hydrants.

Figure 28 shows an example of a municipal hydrant compared to a private fire hydrant.

Figure 28. Example of a municipal fire hydrant compared to a private fire hydrant.

Findings

As of this FMP, Georgian Bay contains one private fire hydrant.

16.4 Non-Hydrant-Protected Areas

Context

Section 3.2.5.7 (1) of the OBC states, “An adequate water supply for firefighting shall be provided for every building.” When fire departments respond to emergencies in areas without fire hydrants, they must use an alternate water source to provide fire suppression services. Dry hydrants and tankers are common alternative water sources that fire departments can use to meet the requirements of the OBC.

Dry hydrants provide fire departments with a water supply culled from rivers, lakes, ponds, or storage tanks. Many fire departments that respond to calls in non-hydrant-protected areas rely on dry hydrants.

A tanker is a type of fire apparatus that can transport water to non-hydrant-protected areas. One benefit of a tanker service is that it may lead to reduced costs for a community’s residents. Many insurance providers offer reduced fire insurance premiums in communities that have fire departments with Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation.

The Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation program is available for fire departments that meet the following criteria:

- The fire department can maintain a minimum water supply of 200 gallons/minute for a two-hour duration for residential properties up to 8 km away from a fire station.
- The fire department can maintain a minimum water supply of 500 gallons/minute for a two-hour duration for commercial properties up to 5 km away from a fire station.

Although using dry hydrants and tankers can help fire departments access a water supply in areas that lack municipal fire hydrants, they often require firefighters to purchase specialized equipment or complete specific training.

Findings

Due to the abundance of lakes and rivers in Georgian Bay, the Department should consider identifying strategic locations to install dry hydrants throughout the township. The main benefit of installing dry hydrants is that the Department would gain access to a reliable water source for firefighting operation.

If the Department pursues this option, it should focus on installing the dry hydrants in locations that are close to assumed roads. Those locations will be accessible for the Department's fire apparatus. Once it has selected the best locations for the dry hydrants, the Department should then obtain the required approvals and arrange for the hydrants to be installed.

16.5 Recommendations

After assessing the water supply in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

16-1. The Fire Chief should lobby the District of Muskoka to prepare and implement a fire hydrant upgrade program. Under this program, all fire hydrants would be equipped with steamer ports to accommodate the large-diameter supply hose used by Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.

16-2. Georgian Bay should work with the District of Muskoka to investigate the condition of the township's water system infrastructure. Based on the results of that review, Georgian Bay should work with the District of Muskoka to develop a plan for upgrading the water distribution infrastructure as required.

16-3. Georgian Bay should continue working with the District of Muskoka to explore ways of making the township's fire hydrants more visible from the main roadway, such as by adding reflective markings.

16-4. The Fire Chief should conduct a study to identify locations where Georgian Bay can install dry hydrants. The Fire Chief should then write a report that explains why installing dry hydrants is beneficial for firefighting operations. (The report should also identify the potential costs associated with installing dry hydrants.) The Fire Chief should then submit the report to Council for consideration and approval.

17.0 Asset Management

17.1 Overview of Asset Management

Asset management refers to the purchase, use, and upkeep of the various vehicles and equipment that fire departments use during emergency responses. Fire departments need their assets to remain in good working condition in order to provide services safely and effectively.

A prudent asset management plan is essential to the success of a fire department's operations. The primary components of asset management plans include strategic planning, cost forecasting, and budgeting.

17.2 Fire Apparatus

17.2.1 Purchasing and Maintaining a Fire Apparatus

Context

Firefighters respond to many kinds of emergencies, including fires, explosions, and motor vehicle collisions. In order to arrive at an emergency scene and deliver the required services safely and effectively, firefighters rely on a variety of fire apparatus. Common examples of fire apparatus include pumpers, tankers, rescue vehicles, and aerials.

Each fire apparatus is an expensive vehicle, and purchasing an apparatus is a significant investment for any municipality. As such, fire departments should only acquire the apparatus needed to address the risks in their communities. Each type of apparatus serves a different function, and not every fire department requires each type of apparatus.

Maintaining and replacing a fire apparatus is also costly. A fire apparatus is subject to intense conditions and use, which means most apparatus will require routine maintenance and upkeep. Therefore, municipalities must set aside funds to maintain and replace their fire apparatus as needed.

Despite the time and monetary commitments needed to purchase a fleet of fire apparatus and keep the vehicles in good working order, it is essential for fire departments to have properly equipped apparatus to control and mitigate emergencies.

Findings

The Department's fire apparatus are serviced by different organizations depending on the maintenance required. Some of the service is completed by Georgian Bay's operations division.

17.2.2 Safety Standards

Context

Fire apparatus have undergone considerable changes over the years. For example, many modern vehicles are much larger than older counterparts, and most newer vehicles are more technologically sophisticated than older vehicles. Moreover, many older fire apparatus lack features required by current legislation, such as anti-lock braking systems and roll stability control.

Due to changes in construction materials and features, fire apparatus must meet more rigorous safety standards than in years past, including the requirements of the OHSA, NFPA 1901: *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus,* and ULC S515-04: *Automotive Fire Fighting Apparatus*.

Municipalities and fire departments must take the time to review all applicable legislation and safety standards before purchasing a new fire apparatus.

Findings

The Department follows the guidelines of NFPA 1901 when replacing its fire apparatus. Doing so helps the Department ensure that each apparatus is safe for the firefighters to operate.

17.2.3 Inspections, Testing, and Maintenance

Context

Fire departments should complete weekly and annual inspections, tests, and maintenance on each fire apparatus they use in order to ensure that all vehicles can start and operate properly whenever an emergency occurs.

In addition to routine maintenance (such as checking and adjusting brakes and making lubrication and oil changes), a fire apparatus must undergo annual pump tests, non-destructive ladder tests, and Ministry of Transportation inspections. As a result of this routine upkeep, an apparatus will be out of service for several days each year due to scheduled maintenance.

Fire departments must also recognize that maintaining a modern fire apparatus requires hiring mechanics with specialized training to inspect and repair the vehicle’s safety systems, pollution control, and engine and driveline systems. In years past, a mechanically skilled firefighter could have performed those tasks, but the complex technology in modern fire apparatus has made it necessary to contract specialized assistance. Advanced maintenance work may also require a fire apparatus to be taken out of service for an extended period.

Findings

The Department ensures that each of its fire apparatus meets the requirements of all relevant legislation and standards. By doing so, the Department keeps each apparatus ready to respond to an emergency at any given time.

The Department ensures that each of its vehicles undergoes annual safety and pump testing. The Department contracts personnel from Georgian Bay to maintain and repair its fire apparatus.

17.3 Fire Fleet

17.3.1 Fleet Renewal and Rationalization

Context

Assessing a fire fleet can begin with the following considerations:

- What apparatus comprise the fire department's current fire fleet?
- What types of responses does the fire department make?
- What are the fire department's available staffing levels for responses?

A fire department should keep these considerations in mind because they will help identify which fire apparatus it should purchase to suit its current and expected needs.

Once a fire department has identified which fire apparatus it is likely to need, it should work with its municipal council to develop a strategic plan that outlines an appropriate fleet replacement schedule.

A fleet replacement schedule should consider several factors for each vehicle in the fire department's fire fleet. The main factors to consider are as follows:

- age of current vehicle
- availability of replacement parts
- number of engine hours
- safety features
- current costs of maintenance and servicing
- reliability
- features and technology of current vehicle compared to new vehicle

Annex D of NFPA 1901 also provides guidelines about fleet replacement:

> It is recommended that apparatus more than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status; be upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1912; and incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard.

Findings

Table 28 summarizes the Department's fire fleet and indicates the proposed replacement schedule for each vehicle.

Table 28. Fire fleet in Georgian Bay.

Vehicle	Make and Model	Station	Year Built	Replacement Year
Pump 1	Fort Garry (Freightliner)	1	2019	2039
Tank 1	E-One (Freightliner)	1	2004	2024
Pump 2	Fort Garry (International)	2	2018	2038
Tank 2	E-One (Freightliner)	2	2004	2024
Pump 3	Pierce (Custom)	3	2013	2033
Tank 3	E-One (Freight liner)	3	2005	2025
Rescue 3	Ford F350	3	2018	2033
Car 3	Chevy 2500	3	2009	2024
Car 1	F150	Admin.	2021	2029
Car 2	Dodge Big Horn	Admin.	2022	2029

17.3.2 Financial Considerations for Fleet Replacements

Context

Financing a fire fleet requires significant capital investments and careful financial planning.

Most municipalities develop fleet replacement plans for five- or ten-year timeframes. In order to be realistic, the plans must account for inflation rates. Some price fluctuations are due to heightened material and labour costs.

Other price changes are due to supply chain issues. Due to inflation rates, suppliers may reserve the right to increase the amount they charge customers for a new apparatus, even if a customer has a fixed-price contract or has pre-ordered an apparatus. Because inflation rates are difficult to predict with certainty, municipalities should include a contingency plan as part of their capital replacement budgets. Doing so can help a municipality manage potential price increases to its apparatus order. A capital contingency plan may also help a municipality set aside funds that it can use to offset apparatus maintenance and service costs.

Supply and demand can also affect fleet replacement schedules. As of this FMP, there is a backlog in truck orders due to supply chain disruptions that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the backlog is that protracted delivery times for new apparatus are possible. As such, fire departments and municipalities should consider ordering their new apparatus at a time that accounts for possible delivery delays.

Findings

The Department has a fleet management program that is part of an asset management program. This arrangement ensures that funds are available.

Going forward, Council and the Department should review the fire fleet replacement program and then take time to develop a long-term budget. Doing so should help make sure the township has money available to replace the Department's various pieces of equipment at the appropriate times. Ideally, the budget can be incorporated into an asset management plan that forecasts the Department's equipment and apparatus needs over a ten-year timeframe.

Council could also establish a fire fleet reserve account. This kind of account can be used to set aside funds to purchase support vehicles for the Department, which will reduce the financial strain in any one year. Proper planning is essential to avoid putting Georgian Bay or the Department in a financial or operational deficit.

17.3.3 Inflation Rates

Context

It is essential for municipalities to take inflation rates into consideration when preparing any long-range financial planning. Municipalities must also consider other factors that may affect asset planning, such as demographics, population growth, and applicable legislation.

Although there is no proven method of predicting inflation rates, municipalities have typically used historical data and current trends to estimate future asset needs. Unfortunately, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and high inflation rates have made it unusually difficult for municipalities to create reliable long-range financial plans.

Moreover, the current economic state has left many municipalities in a financial deficit due to the cost of investing in assets such as fire stations, fire trucks, water main replacements, and SCBA equipment.

Findings

Georgian Bay and the Department should continue to monitor economic trends when preparing any long-range financial plans. Doing so will help align the township's financial planning with current market pricing and valuations.[30]

17.3.4 Fleet Deployment Model

Context

It is imperative for fire departments to dispatch an appropriate number of vehicles and an adequate number of personnel in response to calls for fire protection or emergency services.

A fleet deployment model outlines which vehicles a fire department will dispatch in response to emergency calls. It is essential to have a well-considered fleet deployment model, as fire departments with multiple stations may have different vehicles and resources housed at each facility.

For more information about response times and statistics, see section 14 of this FMP.

Findings

At a minimum, the Department has equipped each of its fire stations with a pumper and a tanker.

Equipping each fire station with a pumper and a tanker allows the Department's firefighters to have quick access to the apparatus they need for fire suppression purposes. The use of tankers allows the Department to shuttle water quickly while receiving support from tankers responding from other stations.

17.4 Fire Service Equipment

17.4.1 Standard Equipment, PPE, and Systems

Context

In addition to fire apparatus, firefighters rely on a range of equipment to perform various tasks.

[30] Note: All cost estimates in this FMP are based on prices as of 2024. Due to current high interest rates and other variables, all quoted pricing may be inaccurate in the future.

Examples of fire service equipment include:

- fire hoses and nozzles
- fittings
- ladders
- generators and lighting
- ventilation fans
- portable pumps
- saws
- gas detectors
- thermal imaging cameras
- various hand tools

All equipment is considered part of a fire department's assets. Municipalities should keep track of the equipment their fire departments use, as this will assist with budget planning for any necessary repairs or replacements.

Findings

The Department has an inventory of common fire service equipment. All personnel who perform internal firefighting are provided with suitable PPE.

Upon review, the Department has made improvements in the process it uses to clean its equipment after completing an emergency response. To expand on these improvements, the Department should continue to formalize its program for maintaining its equipment in order to ensure that all equipment is always clean and ready for service. The equipment maintenance program should include a documentation component to ensure accountability.

17.4.2 Radio Communications

Context

Radio communication systems play a crucial role during emergency responses. First responders use radio systems to communicate with dispatch services, response agencies, and other responders at emergency scenes. Without effective radio communications, it is difficult for first responders to coordinate safe, effective response efforts.

Findings

Due to the size and various geographic factors of Georgian Bay, the Department has experienced communication disruptions during previous emergency responses. During those disruptions, the Department's firefighters were unable to communicate with each other or their dispatch provider. The inability to use radios during emergencies has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of the Department's response efforts. Poor radio service also endangers firefighters who are responding in hazardous environments.

Going forward, the Department should continue to work with its communication services provider or refer to a radio communications consultant to develop a cost-effective communications maintenance and improvement plan. The plan should include a long-term strategy regarding the radio tower equipment used by the Department. The Department should then use the communications plan to prepare recommendations for Council that advocate working with neighbouring fire departments to improve radio communications in the township.

17.4.3 Records Management System

Context

It is vital for every fire department to maintain up-to-date records. Doing so ensures a fire department has documentation to support the following administrative and operational needs:

- Proper records management provides evidence that the fire department, its fire chief, and its municipal council are meeting their legislative requirements.
- Proper records management can help a fire department reduce the risk of liability issues for itself and its municipality.
- Proper records management gives a fire department documentation that it can use to complete strategic planning.

Best practices have shown that using a formalized RMS is the most efficient way of maintaining accurate records.

Findings

The Department recently replaced its RMS. Prior to the acquisition of the new RMS, the Department's personnel found it difficult to input and retrieve data in a timely manner, which hindered their administrative efficiency.

The new RMS should help the Department's personnel complete administrative tasks more quickly. The new RMS should also allow the Department's personnel to identify and monitor gaps in the Department's services, which could lead to ways of enhancing operational efficiency.

As of this FMP, the Department is exploring new ways to capture, organize, store, and retrieve data using its newly installed RMS.

17.4.4 Capital Expenditures and Equipment Replacements

Context

Fire departments and municipalities must budget to replace their fire service equipment in a way that is timely and cost-effective. Most fire service equipment is expensive and has a life span, and it is crucial to have a replacement schedule that will not place the fire department or the municipality in a financial or operational deficit in any given year.

Findings

The Department has been working diligently to improve its equipment over a gradual timeframe. In order to assist with this goal, Council and the Department should continue to review the Department's current equipment inventory. Doing so will help support the current asset management plan.

Going forward, Georgian Bay should consider formalizing a long-term asset replacement plan. The scope of that plan could take the following considerations into account:

- estimated replacement dates
- estimated costs
- current asset inventories
- current asset conditions
- asset maintenance history

By having this information on hand, Georgian Bay will have data that it can use to forecast future resource needs more accurately.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should also continue to research new technology that has the potential to help the Department's firefighters—and other applicable emergency responders—perform their duties more productively.

17.4.5 Rescue Equipment

Context

If a municipal council authorizes its fire department to perform rescue services, that fire department needs to have the proper rescue equipment.

Fire departments should monitor the life expectancy and condition of each piece of rescue equipment in order to determine whether the equipment meets all applicable standards. It is also prudent to research new technologies on a regular basis to ensure that the fire department has up-to-date rescue equipment.

As a best practice, a fire department should ensure that rescue equipment is given due consideration during the budget planning process.

Findings

Because the Department delivers several different rescue services,[31] the organization should develop a rescue equipment program with the goal of modernizing its rescue equipment inventory. (The Department could also consider contracting a qualified third party to develop the program.)

As part of the program, the Department should:

- Identify the rescue equipment it needs to deliver its approved rescue services.
- Assess the rescue equipment it currently uses.
- Develop a schedule for purchasing new rescue equipment to replace existing equipment (or add to the current inventory).

17.5 Recommendations

After assessing asset management in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

17-1. The Fire Chief should consider contacting a qualified third-party company to help develop a communications plan to improve the reliability and performance of the radio system used by Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.

17-2. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should develop a rescue equipment program. The program should identify which equipment the fire department requires to perform its approved rescue services. The program should involve assessing the fire department's current rescue equipment and developing a schedule for purchasing new rescue equipment.

[31] For more information about the types and levels of service provided by the Department, see section 12 of this FMP.

18.0 Marine Services

18.1 Overview of Marine Services

Often, municipalities and fire departments struggle to set an appropriate level of service for water rescue, ice rescue, and marine rescue services.

Although residents, councillors, and firefighters may pressure municipalities to offer marine services, the services are costly to deliver, and they often require firefighters to complete a significant amount of specialized training. Moreover, training to the standards outlined in NFPA 1006 (as per the requirements of O. Reg. 343/22) has made completing the required training more time-consuming than ever before.

Each municipality that wants to offer marine services must take the time to review the community's geography and demographics to make sure there is a real and definite need to provide those services. Due to the associated costs, time commitments, and legislation, a municipality must ensure that it can fully justify its need for water rescue services.

18.2 Marine Services in Georgian Bay

Geographic Considerations

The Township of Georgian Bay contains numerous bodies of water, including Georgian Bay and 164 inland lakes and rivers. The township also contains approximately 2,933 kilometres of shoreline, as well as 619 islands and approximately 3,652 properties that cannot be accessed by road. This is an unusually high number of water-access-only properties.

Providing fire services to water-access-only properties is challenging. In addition to normal assembly times, the Department needs additional time to travel by boat to the emergency scene. Those additional travel times can vary depending on factors such as water and wind conditions, as well as how far the Department must travel.

Building Stock Considerations

Many of the water-access-only properties in Georgian Bay have buildings that may cost millions of dollars to replace if they were destroyed due to a fire.

Marina, Waterway, and Tourism Considerations

As of this FMP, Georgian Bay has approximately 3,441 permanent residents. Historically, thousands of seasonal residents and visitors frequent the township during the summer months. This combination of year-round residents and tourists is good for the local economy, but the variable nature of the population has the potential to strain local resources and put increased pressure on the Department's services.

One of the main tourist attractions in Georgian Bay is the abundance of waterways, islands, and bays. The local marinas, bays, and coves on the lakes often have a large number of boats either docked or tied up together. This recurring scenario poses several challenges to the Department, the most significant of which is accessibility concerns. The lack of accessibility means that the Department may not be able to respond to emergencies in a timely manner when the incident occurs on a water-access-only property. In addition, the Department may not be able to respond easily to fires or medical calls when the incident involves a boat. Because of these challenges, lives and high-value properties and assets may be at risk of having little or no protection.

Key Takeaways

Due to the factors discussed above, the Fire Chief should work with the Department's officers and firefighters to develop procedures for handling emergencies at the local marinas, as well as on boats and water-access-only properties. In addition, the Department needs to work with the local marina owners to develop infrastructure for marina customers. Furthermore, whenever the construction of a new marina is proposed, the developers should ensure their new marinas include the infrastructure needed for firefighting purposes.

There is also a need for the Department to develop public education programs tailored to the needs of Georgian Bay's visitors and seasonal residents.

18.2.1 Council Responsibilities

Council must take time to determine which marine services the Department will provide that will necessitate the use of a marine vessel. That discussion should give due consideration to a range of factors, including transportation, rescue firefighting, and salvage operations.

Council should also consider the parameters surrounding each possible use of the marine vessel. For example:

- Will the marine vessel be used to transport first responders to and from emergency scenes exclusively, or will the boat also be used to transport patients to shore?
- Will the marine vessel be used to facilitate rescue from the boat only (with rescue tools onboard)?
- How will the marine vessel be used to respond to fire-related emergencies?
    - For instance, what are the applicable floating and PPE considerations?
- How will the marine vessel be used for salvage operations and towing disabled water vessels or other floating equipment to shore?

18.2.2 Fire Department Responsibilities

It can be very expensive for fire departments to operate and maintain a marine vessel. For instance, boats require servicing, which can be costly. In addition, all boats have a life cycle expectancy, and purchasing a replacement marine vessel can be expensive.

When a fire department has a marine vessel, the organization's firefighters must also devote a considerable amount of time to completing all required training. As noted above, current training demands are more time-consuming than in years past due to new certification regulations now mandated in Ontario.

In order for the Department to provide its Council-approved marine services, it will need to prepare an applicable operational guideline. That guideline must specify which kind of responses the boat is for, and it must also outline protocols for operating the boat safely. The operational guideline should also address the following considerations:

- What are the requirements and responsibilities of the boat's operator?
- How many staff members and guests are permitted on the boat?
- What are the standard practices for guests on the boat? How should firefighters identify who is considered a guest? How should firefighters ensure non-trained persons know what to do if an emergency occurs on board the vessel (for liability purposes)?
- How can the Department ensure that personal floatation devices will be used correctly (such as the use of seasonal life jackets vs. floater suits in cold weather conditions)?
- How can the Department ensure that safety plans will be followed to address staff needs, including ensuring a second boat is available if the primary boat fails?
- How will the boat be used to respond to emergency calls on and off the water?
- How will the boat be used to transport non-Department personnel?
- How will the boat be used to respond to vessel fires, including how to fight fires from the boat?
- How will the boat be used to deal with fuel spills on the water and in marinas?
- How will the boat be used to transport and operate PPE during rescues, as well as address all other PPE concerns?
- How will the boat be used to work with EMS crews?
- What is the role of EMS crews?
- What is permitted and not permitted on the boat?
- How will the boat be used to work with other fire departments?

- How will the Department trailer the boat?
- How will the Department ensure that its personnel know how to reverse the boat?

In addition to the considerations listed above, the Department must consider how it will provide training and related information about its marine vessel to applicable personnel.

18.2.3 Current Marine Vessels

As of this FMP, the Department operates the four marine vessels described below.

Marine Unit 1

Make:	Stanley
Year built:	2003
Storage:	2709 Honey Harbour Road (from April to December only)
Additional notes:	Marine Unit 1 is a 27-ft. work boat with a 500-gpm portable pump. The boat is powered by twin 200 hp motors, and it is a marine vessel equivalent of a pumper or rescue vehicle.

Marine Unit 3

Make:	King Fisher
Year built:	2001
Storage:	Station 3
Additional notes:	Marine Unit 3 is a 23-ft. people-mover boat with a 500-gpm portable pump. The boat is powered by a 200 hp motor, and it is a marine vessel equivalent of a pumper or rescue vehicle.

Marine Unit 4

Make:	Henley
Year built:	2022
Storage:	Station 3
Additional notes:	Marine Unit 4 is 22-ft. boat with a 200 hp motor. This boat is an auxiliary boat only, which means that it is not used solely as a response boat.

Marine Unit 5

Make:	Mirre Craft
Year built:	2012
Storage:	Station 3
Additional notes:	Marine Unit 5 is a 12-ft. aluminum boat with a 9.9 hp motor. The Department only uses this boat if it cannot launch Marine Unit 3 or if it is unable to maneuver Marine Unit 3 into an area where firefighters can off-load equipment.

As of this FMP, the Department uses its marine vessels to deliver fire protection services for vessels situated at the local harbours and marinas. (The Department also provides assistance to other marine vessels).

In addition, the Department also uses its marine vessels to perform water and ice rescues. In some scenarios, the Department will facilitate this service on behalf of the county paramedics. The Department may also use its boats to facilitate patient transfers on behalf of the county paramedics.

18.2.4 Benefits of Marine Vessels

There are several advantages to having the Department own and operate its own marine vessels rather than relying on a private-sector company to transport personnel and equipment.

The main advantages of the Department's marine vessels are as follows:

- The boats are accessible to the Department's personnel on a 24/7 basis. This availability is crucial during medical emergencies and when a large-scale fire occurs, as fast response times greatly affect the outcomes of such incidents.
- Marine Unit 1 has a wide, stable, and maneuverable design, making it superior to smaller boats often used as water taxis. This design facilitates quick and safe patient access in marine environments.
- Marine Unit 1 is equipped with a built-in pump and a plumbed water intake. These features enhance firefighter safety by enabling water streams to be applied from a safe distance during firefighting operations. This is especially important because it allows firefighters to maintain their distance from potential collapse zones.
- The Department can use its boats for various pre-incident planning tasks. Doing so is recommended because it will allow the Department's firefighters to familiarize themselves with local water bodies and locations where emergencies have the potential to occur.

- The Department has developed a response strategy that includes a backup boat, which is ready to deploy if the primary vessel is compromised. This plan ensures continuity of rescue operations and provides a means to transport patients requiring medical attention if the main vessel is unavailable. Because this arrangement prioritizes patient outcomes and firefighter safety, the use of a backup boat is highly advocated.

Overall, the Department's marine vessels have the potential to significantly enhance the organization's ability to provide effective emergency responses in Georgian Bay. However, the potential benefits of these boats cannot outweigh the importance of ensuring that all applicable health and safety training is completed.

If it continues using its marine vessels, the Department must ensure that it operates the boats in a way that is compliant with all applicable requirements of the OHSA and related health and safety legislation. In addition, the Department must ensure that all applicable personnel complete the required training to operate the boats safely. Completing the training may also help the Department's firefighters identify opportunities for safety improvements, which will allow them to address potential concerns before a real-world emergency occurs.

18.2.5 Marine Rescue Statistics

Marine-Related Incidents

Table 29 summarizes the how many types of marine rescue incidents the Department responded to from 2019 to 2023.

Table 29. Marine rescue incidents, 2019 to 2023.

Incident	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Approx. average
Medical assistance	8	14	10	13	29	15
Structure fire	2	4	1	3	1	2
Boat fire	0	1	2	1	1	1
Outdoor fire (no loss)	1	2	2	1	2	2
Search and rescue	1	1	3	1	1	1
Other	16	12	10	12	14	13
Total	**28**	**34**	**28**	**31**	**48**	**34**

Associated Dollar Amounts

Table 30 notes the approximate dollar loss caused by incidents at water-access-only properties in Georgian Bay between 2019 and 2023. The table also indicates the approximate value of the properties that were saved from destruction during those incidents.

Table 30. Fire loss and property saved at water-access properties, 2019 to 2023.

Item	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-year average
Fire loss	$7,000	$371,000	$1,000	$1,050,000	$1,000	$286,000
Property value saved	$873,000	$1,058,000	$5,000	$250,000	$400,000	$517,000

Average Response Times

Table 31 summarizes the Department's average response times (as rounded to the nearest minute) for the marine-related incidents that occurred in the community from 2019 to 2023.

Table 31. Average response times from boat launch to arrival on scene

Location	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Approx. average
Georgian Bay	10 min	14 min	14 min	15 min	20 min	15 min
Interior Lakes	23 min	25 min	41 min	23 min	19 min	26 min

Summary

Based on the number of water-access only properties in Georgian Bay, as well as the number of incidents that have affected those properties over the years, the Department should continue investing in its marine rescue services.

Going forward, the Department should develop a strategic multi-year plan regarding its services for marine incidents and water-access-only properties. The main goals of the program should be as follows:

- Improve applicable public education messages.
- Increase the types and frequency of applicable inspections.
- Continue to familiarize the Department's personnel with marine-related skills and equipment in order to improve service proficiency.

- Continue to familiarize the Department's personnel with Georgian Bay's geography in order to improve service proficiency.
- Improve fire suppression capabilities (for the purpose of reducing the frequency and severity of fires and other hazards that are unique to water-access-only properties).

Once the Department has prepared a proposed multi-year plan, the Fire Chief should present this document to Council for consideration and approval.

In addition to the items listed above, the Fire Chief should also explore opportunities to form partnerships with applicable public and private agencies. Doing so can help provide the Department with a secondary means of providing marine-related services if there is a scenario that overwhelms the Department's available resources.

Finally, the Department should review its historical statistics in order to identify opportunities to reduce its response times to water-access-only properties (if possible).

18.3 Public Education and Fire Prevention Considerations

18.3.1 Public Education for Water-Access-Only Properties

Georgian Bay should consider ways to strengthen the Department's public education programs for residents who occupy water-access-only properties.

There are several initiatives the Department can consider introducing in order to enhance its public education program, such as:

- Advertise and provide voluntary home/cottage safety inspections.
- Advertise and offer practical fire extinguisher demonstrations and training.
- Advertise and offer additional fire pump demonstrations and training.
- Promote the importance of home sprinkler systems.
- Advertise and provide smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm education.
- Provide additional information regarding the limitations and hazards associated with the fire pump program, ensuring all information is as clear as possible.
    - In order to reach as wide an audience as possible, public education should be delivered using a variety of means, such as in-person engagements and social media.
- Provide emergency preparedness messages tailored to the concerns specific to water-access-only properties.

18.3.2 Cottage Pump Program

As of this FMP, there is a Council-directed program called the Georgian Bay Cottage Portable Pump Training Program. According to the township's website:

> There are 79 portable fire pumps throughout Georgian Bay. Pumps are to be used to assist in fighting wildfires. Pumps can be used by the public once proper training has been obtained.[32]

Observations about the portable fire pump program are discussed below.

Associated Equipment

The portable fire pumps are kept at locations that can be accessed by land and water. Each location has a "dock box" that includes the following items:

- one Honda WH20XTC fire pump
- one hard suction
- four hoses (with a length of 100 ft and a diameter of 1.5 inches)
- hose nozzle
- one gas can

Maintenance

The Department services the portable fire pumps at specific times of the year.

During the spring, the Department completes the following tasks:

- Ensure the pump gets an oil change.
- Ensure new fuel is provided.
- Check the equipment for functionality.
- Run the pump to confirm it operates.
- Log all maintenance work performed during the inspection.

During the fall, the Department completes the following tasks:

- Ensure the pump is emptied of water.
- Ensure all equipment is checked and verified to be in good repair.
- Log all maintenance work performed during the inspection.

[32] Township of Georgian Bay, "Cottage Portable Pump Training Program."

Although the Department has the skills to complete the tasks listed above, the work can be time-consuming and labour-intensive. In total, the Department's firefighters spend approximately 269 hours per year servicing the portable fire pumps.

Associated Costs

Every year, the Department estimates a capital budget of $5,000 to $6,000 to replace three pumps, three dock boxes, and other items associated with the portable fire pump program. The average cost of fuel and oil is approximately $1,000 per year.

The maintenance costs quoted above do not include vehicle or vessel maintenance.

Issues with the Program

The portable fire pump equipment is subject to theft. There is the potential that gasoline or a pump will be stolen from its associated dock box.

Hazards

Any resident with access to the portable fire pumps and associated equipment may choose to deploy a hose line on a structure fire. However, doing so may expose a resident to a variety of hazards, including toxic smoke, high heat, and collapsing walls.

It is unlikely that the average citizen who chooses to use the portable fire pumps will have the proper firefighter PPE. In addition, it is unlikely that citizens will have the training needed to recognize situational threats or perform critical tasks at the same level as firefighters.

Conclusion: Proposed Next Steps

Based on the information discussed above, there are several options that Georgian Bay and the Department should consider in order to improve the safety and effectiveness of the portable fire pump program.

First, Georgian Bay should make repeated efforts to provide public education about the portable fire pump program. At a minimum, the township should ensure that the public education addresses topics that residents need to know, such as:

- What are the dangers associated with operating a portable fire pump?
- What are the risks associated with using portable pumps during emergencies or potential emergencies?
- What is the purpose of the portable fire pump program?
- What are the limitations of the portable fire pump program?

- How do you operate portable pump equipment safely in order to ensure it accomplishes its intended use?

The township should strive to provide public education messages across a variety of platforms, including its official website. Going forward, Georgian Bay should expand its website to ensure it provides citizens with more information about the risks associated with using portable pumps during emergencies or potential emergencies. Applicable warnings about using the portable pump equipment only for its intended use should also be provided.

In addition to providing an increased level of public education, Georgian Bay should seek legal consultation regarding the liabilities associated with the portable fire pump program. The township should also ensure that it seeks legal counsel regarding the endorsement and provision of the program. Doing so may help Georgian Bay gain a better understanding of the risks involved with offering the program, as well as the extent to which the township is liable for issues or damages associated with the program.

18.3.3 Residential Sprinklers in Water-Access-Only Properties

As discussed above, there are several reasons why the Department has extended response times when it is travelling to incidents on water-access-only properties. Specifically, it takes time for the Department's firefighters to assemble onto a marine unit, as a fire apparatus is incapable of reaching water-access-only properties.

It is likely that the Department will continue having extended response times to water-access-only properties in the future. In recognition of this fact, it is in the best interest of the community to find ways of enhancing the protection of those properties.

Georgian Bay should consider issuing a mandate that requires all new buildings constructed on water-access-only properties to include residential sprinkler systems. Although installing residential sprinkler systems will likely add to the cost and maintenance of the new buildings, having proper sprinkler systems in place should help reduce property damage and loss of life during a fire. Given the amount of time it takes for the Department to arrive at water-access-only properties, the installation of residential sprinkler systems will provide a crucial form of preliminary fire suppression before the Department arrives to complete the necessary critical tasks.

Going forward, the Fire Chief should complete a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis regarding the mandatory installation of residential sprinkler systems in new buildings constructed on water-access-only properties.

18.4 Recommendations

After assessing marine services in Georgian Bay, The Loomex Group developed the following recommendations:

18-1. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should develop a long-term strategic plan to reduce the frequency and severity of fires and other incidents that affect the local water-access-only properties. The plan should outline a multi-year approach that the fire department can use to improve the public education messages, inspections, and fire suppression services that it provides to those properties. The Fire Chief should present the plan to Council for consideration and approval.

18-2. The Fire Chief should complete a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis regarding the mandatory installation of residential sprinkler systems in new buildings constructed on water-access-only properties.

18-3. Georgian Bay should seek legal counsel regarding the risks involved with endorsing and facilitating its “cottage portable pump program.”

Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

This document uses the following acronyms and abbreviations:

AODA:	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
CEMC:	community emergency management coordinator
CEMPC:	community emergency management program committee
CISM:	critical incident stress management
Council:	Council of the Township of Georgian Bay
CRA:	community risk assessment
Department, **the**:	Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services
E&R bylaw:	establishing and regulating bylaw
ECG:	emergency control group
EMCPA:	Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990
EMP:	emergency management program
EOC:	emergency operations centre
ERF:	effective response force
Fire Chief:	Fire Chief Tony Van Dam
FMP:	fire master plan
FPPA:	Fire Protection and Prevention Act, S.O. 1997
ICS:	incident command structure
IMS:	Incident Management System
JHSC:	joint health and safety committee
NFPA:	National Fire Protection Association
OBC:	O. Reg. 332/12: Building Code
OFC:	O. Reg. 213/07: Fire Code

OFM:	Ontario Fire Marshal
OHSA:	Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990
PIAR:	post-incident analysis and review
PPE:	personal protective equipment
RIT:	rapid intervention team
RMS:	records management system
SCBA:	self-contained breathing apparatus
SCC:	Supreme Court of Canada
SDV-BS	Small Domestic Vessel – Basic Safety
SOG:	standard operating guideline
SVOP:	Small Vessel Operator Proficiency
WHMIS:	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

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Appendix C: Applicable Legislation for the Ontario Fire Service

Coroners Act: This act outlines the regulations that govern the control of bodies. The act authorizes and regulates coroner inquests and coroner inquest recommendations.

Dangerous Goods Transportation Act: This act outlines the regulations that govern the transportation of dangerous goods.

Day Nurseries Act: This act defines the legislative requirements that day-care operators must meet (to the satisfaction of their local fire chief) before they can operate a day-care facility.

Development Charges Act: This act authorizes portions of development charges to be allocated to the fire service.

Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act: This act requires every municipality to have an emergency management plan and a trained community emergency management coordinator to conduct training exercises for the emergency control group.

Employment Standards Act: This act outlines regulations pertaining to human resources. (See also: Labour Relations Act.)

Environmental Protection Act: This act requires fire department personnel to report spills to the Ministry of the Environment, Conversation, and Parks, which was formerly referred to as the Ministry of the Environment.

Forest Fire Prevention Act: This act only applies to areas classified as “fire regions.” The act outlines regulations for controlling outdoor fires in restricted fire zones. The act requires municipalities to extinguish all grass, brush, and forest fires that occur within their geographic limits. The act authorizes the applicable minister to appoint wardens and officers.

Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997: This act outlines the regulations that govern both the OFM and municipalities. Part IX is generally the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, except where terms and conditions in collective agreements may adversely affect the provision of fire protection.

Highway Traffic Act: This act outlines several governing regulations: how fire vehicles are to operate during emergency responses; firefighter responses on roads that have been closed by police; the use of flashing green lights on the firefighters’ personal vehicles; and controlling traffic at accident scenes.

Human Rights Code: This act defines how boards of inquiry, complaints, discrimination, and enforcement are handled.

Municipal Act, 2001: This act authorizes the passing of bylaws that are necessary for the provision of fire protection.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: This act defines how access to information held by institutions is granted and obtained. The intention of the act is to protect the privacy of individuals concerning personal information about themselves held by institutions.

Occupational Health and Safety Act: This act outlines regulations that govern various concerns related to occupational health and safety.

O. Reg. 332/12: Building Code: This regulation authorizes municipalities to appoint certain fire service personnel as building inspectors.

O. Reg. 213/07: Fire Code: This regulation outlines various requirements that fire departments must observe.

O. Reg. 207/96: Outdoor Fires: This regulation outlines governance for controlling outdoor fires that occur outside of restricted fire zones.

O. Reg. 211/01 and 440/08: Propane Storage and Handling: These regulations require propane operators to obtain approval from the presiding fire department for all risk and safety management plans. The fire department must approve the sections of the plans that deal with fire safety, fire protection, and emergency preparedness.

Pesticides Act: This act makes it mandatory to report wholesale and retail pesticide use to the fire department.

Provincial Offences Act: This act authorizes assistants to the Fire Marshal as provincial offences officers (regarding offences related to smoke alarms).

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act: This act requires employers to report on-the-job accidents. The act also requires employers to document employee training records and provide them upon request.

Appendix D: Training Summary

Tables 32 and 33 show the Department's training completion rates for the courses listed in section 13.2 and 13.3 of this FMP.

The table includes the following information:

- The number of personnel who should complete each course and become certified.
- The number of personnel who have completed each course or who are currently enrolled, waiting to write the certification exam, or waiting to receive exam results as of this FMP.
- The number of personnel who have legacy status for the certification.
- The percentage of eligible personnel who have completed the course, are completing the course, or have legacy status.

Table 32. Core certification data.

Certifications	Applicable Personnel	Completed or Pending	Legacy or Grandfathered	% Completed, Pending, or Legacy
NFPA 1001: Fire Fighter I and II	47	27	16	91%
NFPA 1002: Apparatus Equipped with Fire Pump	41	2	11	32%
NFPA 472: Hazardous Materials Response (Operations Level)	47	30	9	83%
NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector I	2	1	1	100%
NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector II	1	0	0	0%
Fire Plans Examiner	1	0	0	0%
NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator	5	3	0	60%
NFPA 1035: Fire and Life Safety Educator	3	3	0	100%
NFPA 1035: Public Information Officer	5	3	0	60%
NFPA 1021: Fire Officer I	13	7	6	100%
NFPA 1021: Fire Officer II	5	2	3	100%
NFPA 1021: Fire Officer III	3	3	0	100%
NFPA 1021: Fire Officer IV	1	1	0	100%
NFPA 1041: Fire Services Instructor I	15	7	8	100%
NFPA 1041: Fire Services Instructor II	5	2	3	100%
NFPA 1521: Incident Safety Officer	8	2	0	25%

Table 33. Other training and licensing data.

Certifications	Applicable Personnel	Completed or Pending	% Completed, Pending, or Legacy
Legislation 101	47	30	64%
First Aid CPR: Health Care Provider Level	47	47	100%
Resilient Minds/Road to Mental Readiness Mental Health Training	47	40	85%
DZ Licence	41	26	63%
Small Vessel Operator Proficiency	47	23	49%
Pleasure Craft Operator Card	47	33	70%
Small Domestic Vessel – Basic Safety	47	32	68%

Appendix E: List of Fire Chief Initiatives

Overview of Fire Chief Initiatives

The following “Fire Chief Initiatives” are designed to provide Georgian Bay’s Fire Chief with strategies for enhancing the operations of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services.

The initiatives are intended as suggestions for the Fire Chief’s consideration only. They do not require the same approval or budgetary considerations as the recommendations included in the 2025 Georgian Bay Fire Master Plan.

The Fire Chief should also note that implementing the “Fire Chief Initiatives” is in the best interest of the fire department, but it is not necessarily mandatory to do so.

Structure of the Fire Department

1. The Fire Chief should review the job descriptions for the captain and district chief positions in Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. (3.7)

2. The Fire Chief should ensure the members of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services understand which courses they are expected to complete and which accomplishments they are expected to achieve in order to progress through the organization’s various pay levels. The Fire Chief should also ensure that all personnel are given a reasonable amount of time to complete the expected requirements. (3.8)

Staffing Considerations and Social Dynamics

1. The Fire Chief should continue to explore informal ways of improving collaboration and camaraderie in Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. Doing so can help the organization’s firefighters gain a positive experience working in the fire service. (7.2)

Occupational Health and Safety

1. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should continue to purchase SCBA facepieces for each of its firefighters who perform fire suppression and fire investigation duties. (10.3.1)

2. The Fire Chief should deliver a training program that provides members of Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services with an increased awareness of wellness, fitness, and mental health as it relates to the fire service. (10.5.4)

3. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider introducing the positions of acting district chief and acting captain for succession planning and officer development purposes. (10.8)

4. The Fire Chief should consider implementing a formal driver competency program for Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services. (10.9)

Fire Prevention and Public Education

1. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should continue to look for cost-effective and innovative ways to deliver public education messages. (11.2)

2. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider hosting fire station open houses more consistently than it does now. (11.2)

3. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider developing an “after-the-fire” program as part of its public education program. (11.2)

4. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should use its records management system to improve the way it documents information about its public education activities. (11.2)

5. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services develop a smoke alarm/carbon monoxide alarm campaign that is based on considerations of historical data response times, water supply access, legislation, and local demographics. (11.3.4)

6. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should develop a smoke alarm/carbon monoxide alarm campaign that includes public education specifically for recreational trailers and trailer parks. (11.3.4)

7. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider partnering with local businesses to develop public education messages that address specific public safety concerns. (11.3.4)

8. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should consider working with relevant government and private organizations to identify vulnerable persons living in Georgian Bay that may benefit from receiving voluntary home safety inspections. (11.3.4)

9. Georgian Bay Fire & Emergency Services should continue to develop a pre-incident planning program based on risk, vulnerability, and potential dollar loss. (11.6)

10. The Fire Chief should continue to advocate for public safety and the installation of residential fire sprinklers, especially in new buildings that are constructed on water-access-only properties. (11.7)

Performance Standards and Response Statistics

1. The Fire Chief should consider implementing a formal process for conducting post-incident analysis reviews in order to find ways of improving response proficiency and firefighter safety. (14.1.2)

2. The Fire Chief should ensure that the terms of all current fire service agreements in Georgian Bay are being met.

3. The Fire Chief should ensure that all current fire service agreements in Georgian Bay are reviewed on a regular basis, undergoing approved updates or revisions as required. (14.2.6)

4. The Fire Chief should explore additional shared service opportunities with neighbouring fire departments. Specifically, the Fire Chief should focus on agreements for water rescues, auto extrication services, wildland fires, and other applicable specialty services.

5. The Fire Chief should continue to work with neighbouring fire departments to evaluate the compatibility of various equipment and systems related to service delivery and firefighter safety. (14.2.6)

Asset Management

1. The Fire Chief should continue to research new technology that will allow local firefighters and other emergency responders to perform their fire service duties more productively. (17.5)

Marine Services

1. The Fire Chief should continue to ensure that all firefighters who perform marine services in Georgian Bay strive to improve their proficiency by familiarizing themselves with the township’s geography, as well as the skills and equipment used to deliver marine services. (18.2)