



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

*We are the trusted leader in fire services
by inspiring and influencing a safer Ontario.*

September 6, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Handbook Equips Firefighters with Vital Knowledge on Solar Electricity and Battery Storage Systems Safety

[AJAX, ON] In a collaborative effort to enhance the safety of first responders and emergency personnel, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC), the Canadian Renewable Energy Association (CanREA), and Energy Storage Canada proudly announce the release of the **Solar Electricity and Battery Storage Systems Safety Handbook for Firefighters**. This comprehensive manual is designed to provide crucial information to protect firefighters in situations involving solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery storage installations.

The handbook, which will also be available in French, represents a significant advancement over the 2015 Solar Electricity Safety Handbook for Firefighters, a joint venture between the O AFC and the Canadian Solar Industries Association (CanSIA). With CanSIA's merger into CanREA in 2020, the collaboration continues, underscoring the commitment to ensuring the safety of first responders in the rapidly evolving landscape of renewable energy technologies.

Canada's solar PV industry has witnessed remarkable growth, expanding by over 40% since 2015, with an estimated 45,000 on-site solar PV installations in 2020 across residential, commercial, and educational structures. Simultaneously, on-site battery storage systems have gained traction, serving as backup power sources across various scales, from households to industrial applications.

The *Solar Electricity and Battery Storage Systems Safety Handbook for Firefighters* addresses the pressing need for up-to-date safety guidelines. While these technologies are generally safe when properly installed and maintained, the handbook prepares firefighters for potential hazards that might arise during emergency situations involving solar PV and battery storage systems.

One noteworthy aspect highlighted in the handbook is the diversity among battery energy storage systems (BESS) and PV arrays from different brands. Each may have distinct disconnection, shutdown procedures, and thermal runaway safeguards. To ensure the preparedness of emergency personnel, the handbook underscores the importance of fire departments collaborating with operators of large-scale battery and solar projects within their jurisdiction. This collaboration ensures that responders are informed about unique safety protocols for projects in their area.

"As the adoption of solar electricity and battery storage technologies accelerates, it becomes increasingly crucial to equip our first responders with accurate and updated safety measures," said Deputy Chief Rob Grimwood, President, O AFC. "This handbook stands as a testament to the commitment of our organizations and the industry to prioritize the safety of those who work tirelessly to protect our communities."

"CanREA is proud to partner with the O AFC and ESC to create a new technical resource for firefighters. It is key to provide clear, reputable, consistent and up-to-date information for all



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

*We are the trusted leader in fire services
by inspiring and influencing a safer Ontario.*

stakeholders, as we work together to integrate renewable energy and energy storage into the grid to help advance provincial and federal net-zero goals. It is especially relevant now as CanREA's members develop new energy-storage projects in Ontario," said Vittoria Bellissimo, President and CEO of the Canadian Renewable Energy Association.

Justin W Rangooni, Executive Director, Energy Storage Canada, said, "Energy Storage Canada and its members understand the critical importance of providing reliable, factual information about safety issues and concerns in connection with clean energy technology resources, like energy storage, to first responders. We appreciate O AFC contributing to the development of these resources to ensure the safety of Ontario's first responders, which in turn, ensures the safety of Ontario's communities."

The O AFC, CanREA, Energy Storage Canada, along with their partner organizations remain steadfast in their dedication to the safety of first responders. The *Solar Electricity and Battery Storage Systems Safety Handbook for Firefighters* is a significant step forward in ensuring that firefighters are well-prepared to handle the unique challenges posed by renewable energy technologies.

About the organizations:

- **Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC):** The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) represents the chief fire officers of the 437 fire departments in the province of Ontario. Our mission is to provide leadership and support to the Ontario fire service through advocacy in service delivery, public and firefighter safety.
- **Canadian Renewable Energy Association (CanREA):** CanREA is the voice for wind energy, solar energy, and energy storage solutions that will power Canada's energy future. We work to create the conditions for a modern energy system through stakeholder advocacy and public engagement.
- **Energy Storage Canada:** Energy Storage Canada (ESC) is a not-for-profit organization and the only national trade association in Canada dedicated solely to the growth and market development of the country's energy storage sector as a means of accelerating the realization of Canada's ongoing energy transition and Net Zero goals through advocacy, education, collaboration, and research.

-30-

Media contact(s):

Karthik Swaminathan

Communications Strategist
Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs

Phone: +1 (905) 426-9865 x.1222

Email:

karthik.swaminathan@oafc.on.ca

Bridget Wayland

Senior Director of Communications
Canadian Renewable Energy
Association

Phone: +1 (613) 227-5378

Email:

communications@renewablesasso-
ciation.ca

Leone Benson-King

Manager, Communications &
Member Relations
Energy Storage Canada

Phone: +1 (613) 818-3849

Email:

leone.benson.king@energystorage-
canada.org