



Firefighter Mandatory Certification Regulation

Objectives

The objectives of this presentation are to provide municipal leaders:

- A better understanding of what the mandatory certification regulation is, and why it was established
- A better understanding of what NFPA standards are, and how the certification process works
- Guidance on how to successfully meet new requirements
- A strategic level understanding of the OAFC's on-going efforts related to this regulation

How has the Fire Service Evolved?

The Fire Department is a municipalities “all hazards” emergency response organization and provides its residents, visitors and businesses with protection against loss of life, property and the environment from the effects of fire, illness, accidents and all other hazards through preparedness, prevention, public education and emergency response

Over time, and out of necessity, the fire department continued to add additional responsibilities by attending more and more incidents

*These added/assumed/expected responsibilities sometimes come without proper training, equipment and support

3 Things Still Hurt and Kill

Smoke

Fire

Building



Impacts of Technology

Our operational theatre is constantly changing:

- Lightweight construction: lightweight trusses, alternative construction/materials, renovations, intensification
- The increased use of synthetics: hotter and faster fire development, extreme fire behaviour, byproducts of combustion are highly toxic and more flammable
- Human behaviour

Which means we have to prepare and train for:

- Changing and new occupational hazards
- Occupational exposures (cancers & mental stress)
- Expectations

Certification / Training is not New

1936 Fire Marshal Scott- recognized the challenge to increase the effectiveness and confidence of the fire service

1949 Ontario Fire College was legislated, 1958 opened

- training was provided through regional schools, college and itinerant instructors

1985 OAFC started work on the First Ontario Standard - released in 1986

1987 OAFC resolution - to create task force to produce an action plan

1988 OAFC and OFM in collaboration developed the “Paradigm for Progress”

- Professional standards body
- Minimum standards
- Delivery and support systems
- Provincial certifications

Certification in Ontario

- 1995 Ontario Fire Service Standard a competency based system was released
- 2010 OAFC decided not be the holder of the Standards
- 2013 NFPA standards were adopted by the OFM
- 2018 Mandatory certification first attempt
- 2022 Mandatory certification is legislated

Why the Need?

Successive coroner's inquests and a subsequent technical table identified significant gaps in firefighter training

This wasn't specific to a department type (career, composite or volunteer) or municipality type (large urban, urban, suburban or rural)

The issue is systemic and has been problematic for decades

Why the Need?

Harry Chevalier – Port Colborne – 1990

Bill Wilkins – Barrie – 2002

Gary Kendall – Point Edward – 2010

Multi-fatal Fire – Whitby – 2012

Multi-fatal Fire – East Gwillimbury – 2013

Dispatch Incidents – Sudbury – 2013/2014

Adam Brunt – Durham College – 2015

Why the Need?

How many hours of training does it take to become a firefighter?

Police officer – 12 weeks at the Ontario Police College (standardized curriculum)

Paramedic – 2 years at a college approved by the Province (standardized curriculum)

The Problem

Fire departments:

- Perform (or intend to perform) services for which they may not be properly trained nor equipped
- Municipal Council's have not consistently been the ones to establish level of service
- Fire Department Establishing & Regulating By-laws are outdated and/or lack accurate information related to level of service
- Fire department's being left to determine how much or how little training to provide left too much interpretation and inconsistency

The Problem

How can being a firefighter in Cornwall be that different from being a firefighter in Sarnia?

The truth is that it isn't.....

A house fire in Kenora burns the same as a house fire in Kingston, a person trapped in swift water in Belleville is the same as a person trapped in swift water in Brockville and a person with difficulty breathing in North Bay requires the same treatment as a person with difficulty breathing in Napanee

Council's Role

PART II (FPPA) RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Municipal responsibilities

- **2 (1)** Every municipality shall,
 - (a) establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention; and
 - (b) provide such other fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances.

Council's Role

Municipalities may establish fire departments

- **5** (0.1) The council of a municipality may establish, maintain and operate a fire department for all or any part of the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 475 (2).

Fire departments

- (1) A fire department shall provide fire suppression services and may provide other fire protection services in a municipality, group of municipalities or in territory without municipal organization. 1997, c. 4, s. 5 (1).

Council's Role

Fire chief, municipalities

6 (1) If a fire department is established for the whole or a part of a municipality or for more than one municipality, the council of the municipality or the councils of the municipalities, as the case may be, shall appoint a fire chief for the fire department.

Responsibility to council

- (3) A fire chief is the person who is ultimately responsible to the council of a municipality that appointed him or her for the delivery of fire protection services.

Council's Role

Determining what fire protection services will be provided is a Role of Council, in consultation with the Fire Chief

With each service selected, additional training and equipment may be required, and there may be an investment of time and money

In departments that utilize volunteer firefighters, the capacity of volunteers to “take more on” is also a significant consideration, but with the desire to take on more comes the need for additional municipal support

Establishing & Regulating By-Law

Council typically regulates its Fire Service through it's E&R by-law:

- Goals and Objectives;
- General functions and core services to be delivered (based on needs and circumstances & risks of the community);
- The authority to effect necessary operations;
- Organizational structure;
- General responsibilities of fire department personnel;
- Authority to proceed beyond established response areas;
- Authority to apply costs to property owners;

*An Establishing & Regulating by-law is not required under the FPPA, but is a good practice used by most municipalities

Level of Service Decision

Many factors need to be considered when deciding the level of service including, but not limited to:

- Risk (Does this risk exist in the community? – Community Risk Assessment – O Reg 378/18)
- Frequency (What has the historic call volume been? How often do the calls occur?)
- Capacity (Does the department have the capacity to take on additional training?)
- Cost (Can the community commit the necessary funding to perform the service? When a level of service is determined the municipality has a duty under the OHSA to train and equip firefighters)
- Options (Do other reasonable options exist? Do other agencies perform the service? Are there neighbouring departments who perform the service?)

Level of Service - Firefighting

Interior Attack

- Firefighters trained and equipped to enter a burning structure for the purpose of suppressing the fire and/or search & rescue of victims

Exterior Attack Only

- Firefighters will suppress the fire from the exterior of the structure only (including protecting exposures) and there is no reasonable expectation of rescue

Level of Service - Medical

Medical training is not required under the certification regulation...for example only

No tiered response calls

Tiered response agreement

- Fire department can typically select various parameters for call types and/or ambulance delay parameters

Tiered response – standard first aid & CPR (16 hours training)

Tiered response – Emergency First Responder (40 hours training)

Tiered response – Emergency Medical Responder (80 hours training)

Other – symptom relief, symptom assist, epi-pens, narcan etc.

Level of Service – Hazardous Materials

Awareness level

Operations level

- Placing absorbent on a spill (common fire department skill) and basic air monitoring is considered Operations Level hazardous materials skills

Technician level

Level of Service – Technical Rescue

DISCIPLINES

Rope Rescue
Confined Space Rescue
Trench Rescue
Structural Collapse Rescue
Surface Water Rescue
Swift Water Rescue
Ice Rescue

LEVELS

Awareness Level
Operations Level
Technician Level

Mandatory certification

2. (1) Every municipality, and every fire department in a territory without municipal organization, must ensure that its firefighters perform a fire protection service set out in Column 1 of Table 1 only if, on or after the corresponding day specified in Column 3 of that Table,

(a) the firefighter performing the fire protection service is certified, at a minimum, to the corresponding certification standard set out in Column 2 of that Table;

The Regulation

Four (4) to six (6) year implementation window

- Four (4) years for most standards
- Six (6) years for technical rescue standards

Applicable to the specific level of service of each fire department

- Full NFPA certification for full service fire departments
- “Ontario Seal” for departments who train and certify to an Ontario specific standard (based on NFPA) and do not perform interior firefighting + auto extrication + hazardous materials response

The Regulation

The minimum certification standards are based (in whole or in part) on NFPA professional qualification standards

The regulation also creates Ontario based certification options to allow a municipality to identify the level of service and then train and certify to meet that level of service

Ontario based certifications are based on components of full NFPA standards that match the level of service outlined in the Regulation

NFPA Standards

Internationally recognized consensus standards

Revised on a five year cycle

Committees include Canadian members

Include professional qualification standards, performance standards, equipment standards, apparatus standards, fire protection system standards and more

NFPA Standards



4.3.13 Overhaul a fire scene, given PPE, an attack line, hand tools, a flashlight, and an assignment, so that structural integrity is not compromised, all hidden fires are discovered, fire cause evidence is preserved, and the fire is extinguished.

Δ (A) Requisite Knowledge. Types of fire attack lines and water application devices most effective for overhaul, water application methods for extinguishment that limit water damage, types of tools and methods used to expose hidden fire, dangers associated with overhaul, obvious signs of area of origin or signs of arson, and reasons for protection of fire scene.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. The ability to deploy and operate an attack line; remove flooring, ceiling, and wall components to expose void spaces without compromising structural integrity; apply water for maximum effectiveness; expose and extinguish hidden fires in walls, ceilings, and subfloor spaces; recognize and preserve obvious signs of area of origin and arson; and evaluate for complete extinguishment.

Job Performance Requirements

4 Job Performance Requirement (Do What? Given What? How Well?)

Task:

Perform overhaul at a fire scene

Given:

approved PPE, attack line, hand tools, flashlight, and an assignment

So That:

structural integrity is not compromised, all hidden fires are discovered, fire cause evidence is preserved, and the fire is extinguished

5

Requisites

Knowledge (Know What?)

Knowledge of types of fire attack lines and water application devices for overhaul, water application methods for extinguishment that limit water damage, types of tools and methods used to expose hidden fire, dangers associated with overhaul, signs of area of origin or signs of arson, and reasons for protection of fire scene

Skills (Do What?)

The ability to deploy and operate an attack line; remove flooring, ceiling, and wall components to expose void spaces without compromising structural integrity; apply water for maximum effectiveness; expose and extinguish hidden fires in walls, ceilings, and subfloor spaces; recognize and preserve signs of area of origin and arson; and evaluate for complete extinguishment

NFPA Certification

The OFM is the authority having jurisdiction to certify individuals to the professional qualification standards (FPPA – 9(2)(d))

Certification requires completion of written and practical testing (accredited by IFSAC & ProBoard)

The testing is completed at no cost, facilitated by OFM proctors (written test) and provincial evaluators (practical test) and can be done locally

Once ready, a department makes a request for testing and the OFM arranges the evaluators to attend at the fire department

NFPA Certification

Testing may include candidates from multiple departments (partnership opportunity)

Departments who have gone through the process (of which there are many) report success rates generally in excess of 80% on the first attempt

Candidates that are unsuccessful have the opportunity to continue re-testing

Full Service Fire Department

Full service is defined as a fire department that performs:

- Interior fire attack
- Hazardous materials response to operations level
- Auto extrication

For these departments, certification to all standards for services they provide are required

- Firefighter, Fire Officer, Apparatus Operator etc.

Alternate Ontario Seal Certification Components

If a Fire Department is not required to train and certify to the full NFPA standard (does not perform interior fire attack + hazardous materials operations + auto extrication) then it must complete testing with the OFM to demonstrate competency to only those services which it provides

These departments also have the one time option of applying for legacy standing (equivalency based on previous knowledge and experience)

Legacy Provision

In 2013/14, the OFM implemented grandfathering (under IFSAC/ProBoard) in order to exempt anyone from having to start over in any program and would allow firefighters to achieve alternative compliance with specific NFPA standards based on existing knowledge and experience.

In 2018 grandfathering was re-opened a second time (also under IFSAC/ProBoard).

As part of the 2022 Regulation, legacy applications will only be accepted for the Ontario based certifications including:

- Exterior Attack (with optional add-ons of Auto Extrication and/or Hazmat Operations)
- Interior Attack (with optional add-ons of Auto Extrication OR Hazmat Operations but not both)
- Team Lead – Exterior or Interior Attack

Legacy Provision

In order to apply for a letter of compliance, documentation must be available to substantiate that the firefighter has received training that meets or exceeds the level of certification being applied for and the firefighter must meet the service time criteria:

- Exterior/Interior Attack – start date (as a suppression firefighter) prior to January 1, 2021 (2 years of service)
- Team Lead – Exterior/Interior- start date (as a suppression firefighter) prior to January 1, 2020 (3 years of service)

The OFM will have a rigorous review and auditing process to ensure that applicants are qualified for the letters of compliance based on **documented training records**.

The legacy application will be shared in September 2022 and the OFM will work with departments as they prepare for the first application window which opens in January 2023.

Other Services

If a service (rope rescue, water rescue etc.) is not provided by that fire department, there is no need to certify to that standard

If a service is not provided, it is imperative that a municipality ensure that is clearly laid out in its establishing & regulating by-law and that it is effectively communicated to the public

If a service is not provided, it is not provided and firefighters need to be prepared to accept the fact that they will not be trained or equipped to assist someone in need

Training Options

Departments have various options including:

- Delivering training in-house and utilizing the assessment checklist route to certification
- Having students attend Regional Training Centres to complete training & certification
- Entering into a learning contract with the Ontario Fire College

In-House Training Option

A department ensures that it's in-house training program is effective (frequency is appropriate, learning materials are available, content is in place and instructor(s) are qualified)

Training is completed in-house using qualified instructors (due diligence is required should a fire department utilize third party trainers)

Students are provided with learning materials to study for written tests and opportunities to prepare for practical testing

Once ready, the department schedules the NFPA certification testing

RTC Training Option

There are currently 28 Regional Training Centres that are operated under the oversight of the Ontario Fire College

Departments can register students for courses where all learning materials, instruction and certification testing will be completed as part of the program

There are registration costs, and depending on your departments policies and/or collective agreements also costs related to travel, accommodations, incidentals etc.

Learning Contract Training Option

A department may enter into a learning contract with the Ontario Fire College where they will receive Ontario Fire College learning materials and support

There is a per student administration cost (\$65) which also includes access to the blended/on-line learning via the Ontario Fire College LMS

The department will still have their own qualified instructor(s) deliver the materials locally during regular training sessions, but the content comes directly from the Ontario Fire College

Once ready, the department schedules the NFPA certification testing

Success Examples





Stone Mills Fire Department
@StoneMillsFD

Today our newest firefighters are writing their NFPA 1001 exams. Our firefighters are certified to the same standard as all firefighters across North America.



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CFES Training
@FireCaledon

32 Caledon firefighters completed NFPA exams today for 1031,1035 & 1521. [#neverstoplearning](#) [#progress](#) [#caledonfire](#)



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DeputyChief812
@DChief813

Crews from Napanee and Loyalist Emergency Services qualify for NFPA 1006 ice operations in preparation for certification. [@NapaneeFire](#) [@Greater_Napanee](#) [@LoyalistFire](#) [@NapaneeBeaver](#) [@ONFireChiefs](#)



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Augusta Fire Rescue
@AugustaFire

[@AugustaFire](#) + [@PrescottFire](#) Firefighters are being trained to NFPA 1001 Firefighter 1 over the next few weekends. This is an example of our municipalities working together, sharing costs, and ensuring firefighters meet the upcoming provincial mandatory training standards.



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Puslinch Fire and Rescue Service

@PuslinchFRS

Firefighters from Puslinch, Minto and Wellington North are attending OFC NFPA Pump Operators course hosted in Puslinch over the next few weekends.



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HLOB Fire Department

@HLOBfire

Three courses on the go this weekend. First Responder, NFPA 1021 I Fire Officer and some new drivers obtaining their DZ license. [#firefighter](#) [#training](#) [#lifelonglearning](#)



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Southwest Middlesex Fire

@SWMFireDept

40 recruit firefighters representing Aylmer, Bayham, Dutton Dunwich, Malahide, Southwold, West Elgin, Central Elgin, Strathroy Caradoc, Lucan Biddulph, Southwest Middlesex & Middlesex Centre are writing their Provincial NFPA1001 Firefighter Level 1 Certification Exams.



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Dutton/Dunwich Fire Department

@DuttonDFire

Busy week [@DuttonDFire](#) [@ONFireMarshal](#) Mobile Fire Training Unit. Our firefighters spent more than 12 hours in live fire training. Also attended graduation ceremony for our new recruits. Congratulations on achieving NFPA1001-1002. & Haz-Mat Ops. Great Teamwork!!



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Next Steps

The recommended next steps for a municipality:

- Determine it's level of service (Community Risk Assessment – O Reg 378/18)
- Update it's Establishing & Regulating By-law to reflect the chosen level of service
- Review it's training program to ensure firefighters are being effectively trained to the accompanying standard for services being performed
- Revise it's training program (if necessary) to ensure training is being done appropriately (ensure appropriate frequency, chose training option etc.)
- Explore potential partnership opportunities
- Explore potential grant opportunities
- Schedule NFPA testing through the OFM once training is complete

OAFC Actions

Worked with the OFM as a primary stakeholder

Engaged in a series of 14 meetings with approximately 550 of our members to hear and better understand concerns

Through the stakeholder consultation process, many of those concerns led to positive changes between the initial draft and the final draft

Generally, most members were in support of the principles and concept of regulating minimum training standards and certifications

Members had various concerns regarding the achievability, costs and impacts

O AFC Actions

Provided the OFM with constructive feedback and recommendations in the following areas which were identified as member concerns or barriers to success:

- OFM Capacity
- Training & Testing Processes
- Access to Training
- Costs & Funding
- Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters

O AFC Actions

Continue to work positively and constructively with the OFM, and to date the OFM has done the following:

- OFM hiring of additional staff (instruction & evaluation)
- Introduction of Mobile Live Fire Training Units
- Work to ensure all materials are available in French & English
- Opened learning contracts to multiple departments
- Working on improving RTC operations
- Produced a certification workbook to assist departments with the process
- Introduction of the option of on-line testing
- Working with the O AFC on VFF recruitment & retention guidance

OAFC Actions

We continue to work with the OFM on implementing other recommendations that would improve training and testing processes, improve access to training and assist departments with achieving compliance with the certification regulation

We continue to advocate for Provincial funding to improve firefighter training and safety, assist departments with achieving compliance and ensure that all Ontario firefighters have sustainable access to training

There has been a recently announced Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council grant that fire departments can utilize towards learning materials