

Ministry of the Solicitor General

Office of the Fire Marshal

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MEMORANDUM TO: All Ontario Pre-Service Firefighter Students

FROM: Jon Pegg
Ontario Fire Marshal

DATE: March 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Unregulated third-party training providers

Firefighting is widely acknowledged as a dangerous profession. It is fundamentally difficult, yet important, to provide a training environment that is safe, and meets the training needs and expectations of the student. Sadly, Ontario continues to see several individuals and small companies providing high-risk firefighter training with no oversight. These unregulated training companies may not be following provincial health and safety requirements or fire service best practices when it comes to training and education.

There continues to exist a large cohort of pre-hire firefighting students that believe attending these unregulated courses will enhance their chances of being hired. Firefighter recruitment is extremely competitive, and prospective firefighters often compete for many years to be hired as a full-time firefighter in the province.

“Resume stacking” is a common practice where candidates take multiple courses they believe, and that are advertised, to be a pathway to advancing through a recruitment campaign. Unfortunately, these prospective firefighters often look for the most economical and/or shortest courses first, while not fully appreciating the risks that could be associated with this training. Many of the courses that are advertised claim to meet the NFPA 1006 standard, but they are not certified courses.

Students enrolled in a pre-service firefighter program at an Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) recognized college of applied arts and technology or registered private career college should be reminded that training in these high-risk technical rescue disciplines is not a requirement to become a firefighter in the Province of Ontario. Moreover, unless training in these areas is being done under contract with a municipal fire department and approved by the OFM, certification will not be offered, nor recognized. As such, pre-service students that enter the

fire service having completed this training by unregulated providers will not be meeting Ontario Regulation 343/22: Firefighter Certification requirements that the fire service will demand if they are to perform that level of service through their employment.

The OFM's pre-service program is delivered by recognized entities across Ontario who uphold the program to the highest standard. Other non-accredited firefighter training may be available in Ontario, but the OFM does not recognize this training. All firefighters in Ontario are required to be certified. Therefore, it is important that students complete their pre-service program and wait until they are employed by a municipal fire department before they engage in this level or experience of training. The health and safety of the students depends on it.

The OFM works hard to not only develop some of these technical rescue programs but ensure participant safety throughout. With a growing trend of pre-service firefighters participating in some of this high-risk training before they are duly prepared, as Fire Marshal I have a responsibility to provide information that will ultimately protect the health and safety of the future members of the fire service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Pegg', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Pegg
Ontario Fire Marshal