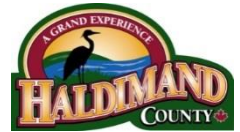

HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report EMS-06-2018 Update on Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Regulations

For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 11, 2018



OBJECTIVE:

To provide Council with updated information in regards to the draft regulations proposed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS), in respect to the changes to the proposed regulations which included Firefighter certification. The report will define the proposed training/certification for Haldimand County Firefighters, as well as, community risk assessments and response time reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report EMS-06-2018 Update on Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Regulations be received.

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Respectfully submitted: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Community and Development Services

Approved: Donald G. Boyle, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On January 25, 2018, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) released proposed regulations under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA) related to new requirements for; mandatory training and certification for firefighters; and, community risk assessments and mandatory reporting of response times to improve the delivery of fire protection services. This mandatory training would require fire departments to train and certify members to the National Fire and Protection Association Standards (NFPA).

The Community Risk Assessment and Mandatory Reporting of Response times, similar to Paramedic Services which was introduced as a Mandatory Reporting Plan in February of 2018, will come into effect on July 1, 2019. While Haldimand County Fire Department and all fire departments in Ontario were informed by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, that any Legislation for the Mandatory Certification of Firefighters was being repealed, effective October 5, 2018, staff have always supported the principle of certification to the national standard, and in fact have pursued training to this standard. The issue that some municipalities raised was related to the timing and cost of implementing it, which led to the Province repealing it as a mandatory requirement. Staff are proposing to implement a certification training program to continue to train our firefighters at the NFPA Standards despite the repeal by the Province. Staff believe that the repeal by the Province is a temporary measure and Haldimand County must prepare to meet the standard when it becomes mandatory. This is consistent with the approach being taken by a number of other fire services in the province. Fire services in the province of Ontario are the only emergency service which its members are not certified, compared to those in the Police and Paramedic services. Also, every other province in Canada has

certified firefighters. Staff have taken the necessary steps to plan and implement a strategy that will allow our current firefighters who require certification to become certified and allow our recruits to complete a comprehensive program through a third party provider as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry received input on how to modernize fire service delivery in the province from a group of fire service experts, known as the Provincial Fire Safety Technical Table (the Table), which was established in January 2017. The Table was established to examine current and emerging fire safety challenges and opportunities, identify priorities for action, and support the development of evidence-based recommendations that will enhance fire safety in Ontario. The key focus areas that the Table examined included:

1. Firefighter training and professionalism (e.g. identification of specialized knowledge requirements and core competencies).
2. Public education and prevention measures, including community risk assessments.
3. Provincial standards for fire services, such as fire dispatch.
4. Public reporting of fire service data.

The Table consists of members from:

- Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS), the Office of the Fire Marshal, Emergency Management (OFMEM) executive and staff;
- the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA);
- the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (OAFC);
- the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters Association (TPFFA);
- the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario (FFAO); and
- an Association of Municipalities (AMO) staff member and a lower-tier CAO representative.

As a result of the input of the Table, the Province introduced new requirements relating to the following:

- Community Risk Assessment – Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, (MCSCS) is proposing to require that municipalities conduct a standard risk assessment every five years focusing on key profiles in their communities (e.g. demographics, geography, past fire loss and event history, critical infrastructure, building stock profile within the community, etc.).

Municipalities would be responsible for reviewing their risk assessment annually to ensure that any significant changes in the mandatory profiles are identified. If there are any significant changes (e.g. addition of retirement homes or care facilities) the municipality will be responsible for updating their assessment. This information will be used to inform decisions about fire protection services in their community.

Haldimand County Fire Department had completed a report back in 2013, similar to what the Province is proposing. Staff will update Haldimand County Fire Department's report and ensure all aspects of the report meet the standard set out by the Province.

This proposed standard would be implemented July 1, 2019, and Municipal Fire Departments would have 2 years to prepare. The MCSCS and the OFM have stated draft assessments would be available to municipalities in the near future.

- Mandatory Response Time Reporting – This new regulation would increase transparency and accountability by requiring all fire departments to report to the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) and Emergency Management (OFMEM) on a number of standard response times (e.g. the amount of time between when a fire truck is on route to an emergency incident and when the fire truck arrives at the scene). OFMEM would provide fire departments with calculated response

time data, unless fire departments choose to conduct their own calculations. Fire departments would be required to submit this information to their local municipal Council.

Every year, OFMEM would be responsible for making these response times public on its website.

The proposed standard would become mandatory July 1, 2019, which means staff would be reporting on 2018 STATS. This type of reporting already is a requirement for Paramedic Services.

- Firefighter Certification – The regulations proposed to establish mandatory certification requirements set out by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for all new firefighters employed or appointed to a fire department for the following positions:
 - suppression firefighters;
 - pump operators;
 - technical rescue;
 - fire officers; and
 - fire educators.

Since that time Haldimand County Fire Department has completed the grandfathering of approximately 187 Firefighters in NFPA Certification. Firefighters were grandfathered by submitting a document to the Province signed by the Fire Chief that confirms the level of training each firefighter has obtained over their career. To be grandfathered, a firefighter must have 5 years of continual service at the level they are performing to within the municipality. As of October 5, 2018, mandatory certification of firefighters has been reprieved by the Ministry of Community Services and Correctional Services. Although the mandatory certification has been reprieved, Haldimand County Fire Department has met with other Municipal Fire Departments including those with voluntary firefighters, and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (OAFIC) who agree certification to this national standard is appropriate. It is proposed that Haldimand County Fire Department will continue to train to the level required by the NFPA Standards. This is the same process that the majority of Municipal Fire Departments in Ontario are following.

- Technical Rescue Certification the regulations would apply to any firefighter working in a municipality who trains and delivers services defined as Technical Rescue which was set out by the Province and the Technical Table. Types of Technical Rescue that Haldimand County would be required to be certified in is:
 - Ice and Water Rescue; and
 - Advanced Auto Extrication.

Currently, Haldimand County does train and test its firefighters to NFPA standards in regards to the Technical Rescue topics listed above. Haldimand County does not train in other areas of technical rescue (e.g. Confined Space, High Angle Rescue, etc.), and therefore, it is not mandatory for Haldimand's Firefighters to be trained to that level.

This Certification has also been reprieved by the Province and is under review.

ANALYSIS:

In accordance with new regulations, Haldimand County Council will need to approve a Community Risk Assessment. It will also need to report fire response times similar to how paramedic response times are reported.

After the regulations for Firefighter Certification were put in place, Haldimand County went through a process of ensuring its firefighters would be grandfathered as certified to the national standard, with the result that currently has 187 of the 274 complement comply. Given this effort and that such certification

is desirable to provide consistent training with NFPA Standards, it is proposed that on an on-going basis the County continue to train new recruits and maintain certification for existing staff to the NFPA standard. In order to provide this training, staff examined alternative methods including internal training and the use of a 3rd party service. Based on this analysis, staff are proposing the use of a third party service for the following reasons:

1. The 3rd party trainer is certified by the Province in delivery of NFPA curriculum to the level proposed by the Province.
2. Recruits would be trained and tested to the level of Firefighter I and II. Once completed each firefighter would be certified as per the standard, (NFPA 1001, Firefighter Level I & II).
3. The 3rd party provider would be able to complete the recruit program and certification within a 7 month process. Students attend the college 6 weekends in 6 months for a total of 96 hours in class. Students are also required to complete assignments online, which is mandatory to ensure completion of the program. The written exams and practical testing is completed in the 7th month, which would result in the recruit being provincially certified.
4. Haldimand County's prior training of recruits also included 1 weekend a month of training, but for 5 months. Recruits were also required to attend training during the week over and above regular station training. This became an increased cost to the division as recruits were being paid for their time and mileage, as well as Haldimand County's own trainers were being used, which also increased costs. Each recruit also had to attend the annual Haldimand County Fire School where they were tested on the skills they had learned over the past 5 months of training. Once completed they were able to participate in emergency response, however, on-going training was required to ensure consistency with NFPA standards.
5. To train a Haldimand County Recruit to NFPA Level I & II internally would cost \$2,895 each. That total takes into account, mileage, firefighter's time, cost of instructors and meals. To send a firefighter to the 3rd party service would cost \$1,295 per firefighter, a savings of \$1,600 per firefighter. As Haldimand County would be paying for the course, the firefighter would not be receiving mileage, an hourly rate, or provided meals. When the candidate graduated the program he/she would be given a per-diem of \$60 dollars per day, currently offered to County Employees at a cost of \$720. This would still be a savings of approximately \$880 per firefighter.

Therefore, the training for recruits in Haldimand County Fire would be most efficient if provided by the third party provider out of Delhi called Southwest Fire Academy. The Southwest Fire Academy is a certified Fire Academy with the authority to train and test firefighters to the levels of NFPA, specifically NFPA 1001, Level I and II Firefighter. Haldimand County would send each recruit that was not certified to Level I and II for a seven month training/testing program. Those recruits that are already certified would not need to take the training as they have been certified through a college program, third party instructor, or a career fire department.

Staff have determined that the new approach can be accommodated within existing budget allocations. Haldimand County's Fire Training budget for its volunteer firefighters is \$286,730 which is determined by an average annual cost of \$900 per firefighter, keeping in mind that there is an over complement due to the closure of 2 fire halls in the past and that the County has implemented an approach to reduce this staffing level as retirements and resignations occur.

By using this 3rd party training the overall training costs for the Fire Service will be better managed relative to the annual budget.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Haldimand County Fire Department would be able to provide the training required within its existing budget allocations. There would be no increase required over and above the operating budget as per the 2019 operating budget. Staff have reviewed the proposed training program with Human Resources and no issues were identified.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Haldimand County Fire Department Comparison-Haldimand County Fire Department (HCFD) vs. Southwest Fire Academy (SFA).