

# 2026



**Emergency  
Management  
Group\***



## Town of Innisfil Fire Master Plan



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This document has been prepared in response to the Town of Innisfil's request for consulting services for the development of a Fire Master Plan (FMP). Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services (IFRS) must plan proactively to address the pressures of rapid community growth over the next decade. This FMP will provide a 10-year roadmap to ensure effective, sustainable, and legally compliant service delivery, and will provide for proactive growth associated with, but not limited to:

- Increase full-time suppression staff and apparatus,
- Increase volunteer firefighter numbers to adjust for the challenges of recruitment and retention/call response, and rank structure that will fit a larger suppression division,
- Increase senior management and rank structure for a medium-sized fire department,
- Increase fire administrative assistance to manage growth,
- Increase the fire prevention/public education division,
- Increase to the training division.

Traditionally, an FMP focuses on identifying community risks and challenges and evaluating appropriate strategies to mitigate or eliminate those risks. Modern hazard and risk assessments, however, have expanded beyond traditional fire problems to encompass a broader range of emergencies, including medical responses, hazardous materials incidents, and other public safety concerns. In response, greater emphasis is now placed on fire prevention, public education, and control systems as communities work proactively to reduce emergency-related losses. With this in mind, the project work will be delivered in three phases:

### **Preliminary Work and Stakeholder Engagement**

Consultation with Town staff and key internal stakeholders.

### **Draft Fire Master Plan**

Development and presentation of a 10-year plan, including station location analysis, to Council.

### **Final Fire Master Plan**

Delivery of the completed plan, with phased short -, medium -, and long-term recommendations to Council.

This process will equip Innisfil with a strategic framework to manage growth and maintain community safety into the future.

## Benefits of Fire Services Master Planning

Developing an FMP provides municipalities, fire departments, and the communities they serve with multiple advantages:

**Strategic Direction and Long-Term Planning:** Establishes clear goals, guides capital investment, and prepares for future growth and development.

**Risk-Based Decision Making:** Uses data and Community Risk Assessments to prioritize resources and determine appropriate service levels.

**Improved Operational Efficiency:** Identifies service gaps, recommends improvements to staffing, training, response, and promotes evidence-based practices.

**Enhanced Public Safety:** Strengthens fire prevention, education, and community engagement to reduce risks and impacts of emergencies.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Ensures alignment with provincial legislation and industry standards such as NFPA.

**Budget and Resource Justification:** Provides a credible basis for funding requests and investment in personnel, equipment, and infrastructure.

**Council and Community Engagement:** Supports informed decision-making and builds public trust in fire services.

**Promotes Continuous Improvement:** Establishes performance baselines and encourages ongoing evaluation and refinement of services.

A well-developed FMP ensures that fire services are strategic, sustainable, and aligned with community expectations and risks, ultimately enhancing public safety and organizational accountability.

This review evaluates service levels from both historical and current perspectives, ensuring alignment with the department's overall goals and expectations. Based on the findings, The Emergency Management Group Inc. (EMG) has developed a series of recommendations, each categorized within specific timelines to support effective evaluation, prioritization, and implementation.

<b>Immediate</b>	Should be addressed <b>urgently</b> due to legislative or health and safety requirements.
<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>
<b>Mid-Term</b>	<b>4 to 6 years</b>
<b>Long-Term</b>	<b>7 to 10 years</b>
<b>Future Consideration</b>	<b>10 to 15 years</b>

This timeline categorization is intended to assist the Fire Chief and the Council in identifying any budgetary implications associated with each recommendation and its respective timeframe. Ultimately, the implementation of these recommendations will depend on the Town’s available resources and its capacity to proceed with the proposed actions outlined in this report.

## Scope of Work and Deliverables

In alignment with the Work Plan and Deliverables outlined in Section A.3 of Innisfil Request for Proposal (RFP) No. P-25-097, this report was developed through close collaboration with IFRS. The process involved extensive consultation with IFRS leadership, Town staff and key stakeholders.

## Research and Information Gathering

The initial phase of this FMP focused on research and information gathering, establishing a solid foundation for the study. This phase included a detailed review of the Town’s current operations, service delivery models, and departmental capabilities, ensuring that all recommendations are supported by accurate, performance-based data.

The final report reflects the culmination of extensive research, stakeholder consultation, data analysis, and alignment with industry best practices. The recommendations are informed by a comprehensive evaluation of the following key areas:

### Key Areas of Review

#### *Legislative and regulatory Framework*

- Review the Town’s Establishing and Regulating (E&R) By-law, applicable policies, and operational guidelines.

- Identify and review all relevant provincial legislation, codes, and standards, including but not limited to:
  - The *Fire Protection and Prevention Act*, 1997 (FPPA)
  - Public Safety Guidelines and Communiqués from the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM)
  - Ontario Regulation 343/22 made under the FPPA concerning Firefighter Certification
  - Ontario Regulation 378/18 made under the FPPA concerning Community Risk Assessments
  - The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) program, which evaluates fire departments based on NFPA standards, local legislation, and industry best practices; CFAI is administered by the Centre for Public Safety Excellence
  - The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Ontario and guidance from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
  - Ontario Fire Service Section 21 Guidance Notes, developed by the Section 21 Committee established under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address workplace safety and reduce injuries
  - Various National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards
  - Technical documents from the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS)
  - Research and standards from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
  - Assess alignment with applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards

### ***Operational Analysis***

Incident response data, including call volumes, types, response times, staffing, and apparatus deployment, will be analyzed. The current organizational structure, staffing model, and response coverage areas will be evaluated. Firefighter health and safety measures will be reviewed against provincial and municipal standards. Station locations and coverage will be assessed to identify gaps and opportunities for optimization.

### ***Growth and Risk Considerations***

Findings from the Community Risk Assessment will be integrated. Future population growth, land use trends, and service demand over the next decade will be examined. Emerging risks related to development, aging infrastructure, and demographic changes will be identified.

### ***Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements***

Existing agreements with neighbouring municipalities will be reviewed to assess service effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement or expansion.

### ***Training, Policies, and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs)***

Firefighter training programs, NFPA certification compliance, professional development, and succession planning will be assessed. Policies and SOGs will be reviewed to ensure alignment with contemporary standards and legislative requirements.

### ***Fire Prevention and Public Education***

Fire prevention activities, code enforcement, investigations, and public education programs will be evaluated. Outreach strategies will be assessed, focusing on vulnerable, rural, and high-risk populations.

### ***Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment***

The condition, suitability, and functionality of fire stations, vehicles, apparatus, and major equipment will be reviewed. Maintenance programs, capital planning, and asset replacement strategies will be assessed.

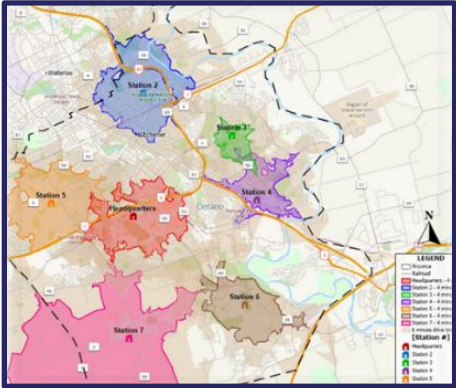
### ***Financial and Resource Planning***

Operating and capital budgets, historical spending, and resource allocations will be analyzed. Financial forecasts and scalable implementation strategies will be developed to support recommended service enhancements.

## Geographic Information System Mapping

GIS technology is a critical tool for understanding community risk, evaluating response coverage, and identifying service gaps. For this Fire Master Plan, EMG used GIS mapping to analyze call volumes, incident types, and response times, integrating Town-provided datasets (including ResponsePro reports) to develop accurate response models.

These analyses highlight current and future coverage needs, identify high-risk geographic areas, and inform recommendations for station locations, apparatus deployment, and resource allocation. The resulting visual outputs and data-driven insights support informed decision-making and strategic planning, helping ensure IFRS remains ready to meet community needs as the Town grows.



## Summary Overview of Recommendations

Based on the information gathered through meetings, a review of supporting documents, and reference to applicable industry standards and best practices, a total of 46 recommendations have been developed for consideration by the Fire Chief, senior management, and Council. These recommendations are designed to strengthen collaboration with the CAO and ensure alignment with Council’s strategic priorities.

Detailed information for each recommendation is provided in the corresponding sections of this report. Emergency Management Group Inc. notes that any cost estimates are preliminary and may change depending on the timing, scope, implementation approach, and final direction provided by the Fire Chief.

*Note: A chart found in Section 8 outlines all the recommendations, their suggested implementation timelines, estimated costs and rationale.*

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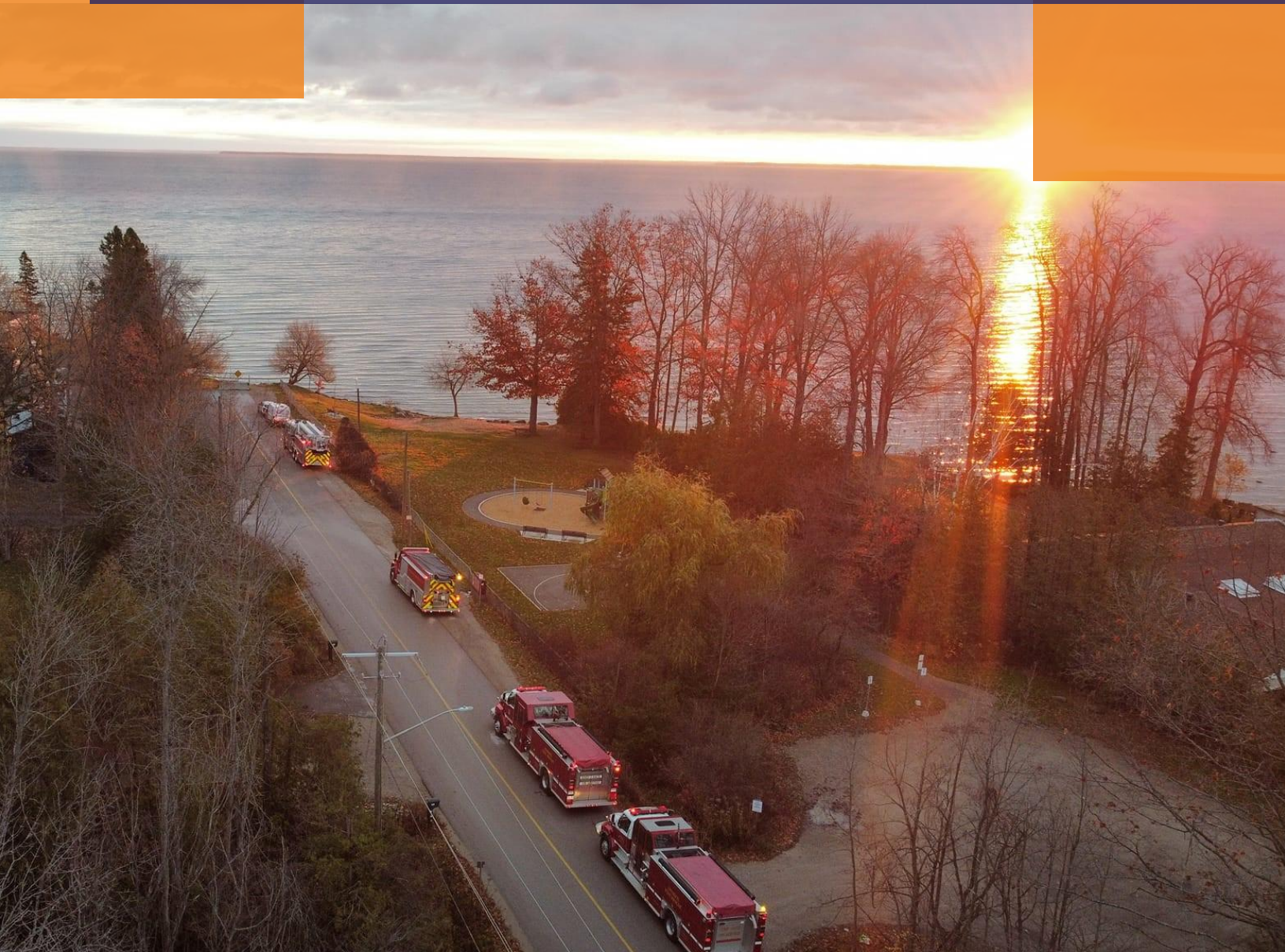
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## ACRONYMS

BFES	Barrie Fire & Emergency Service
CFPO	Chief Fire Prevention Officer
CRA	Community Risk Assessment
CRR	Community Risk Reduction Plan
CRRO	Community Risk Reduction Outreach
E&R Bylaw	Establishing and Regulating By-law
FPPA	Fire Protection and Prevention Act
FPI	Fire Prevention Inspector
FPO	Fire Prevention Officer
FMP	Fire Master Plan
FUS	Fire Underwriters Survey
IFRS	Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OFM	Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario
PFLSE	Public Fire and Life Safety Educator
POC	Paid-on-Call Firefighters
SSPS	South Simcoe Police Service
YRP	York Regional Police

# Introduction



# INTRODUCTION

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## Project Methodology

Emergency Management Group Inc. conducted this review in alignment with the Town's Request for Proposal and our project proposal, ensuring that the scope of work and deliverables were fully addressed. The Fire Master Plan (FMP) was developed using recognized best practices, industry standards, and relevant legislation as guiding principles.

To understand the community's current and future fire protection needs, EMG combined quantitative data analysis with qualitative stakeholder engagement, including document reviews, risk assessments, growth studies, and consultations with Council, municipal leadership, and both career and paid-on-call firefighters.

Key activities included reviewing the Establishing and Regulating By-law, evaluating operations and administration, analyzing response coverage, inspecting stations and apparatus, assessing training, fire prevention, and public education programs, and examining operating and capital budgets.

The result is a strategic, high-level planning document designed as a living resource to guide decision-making, align fire service priorities with community growth, and identify both strengths and areas for improvement.

## Project Consultants

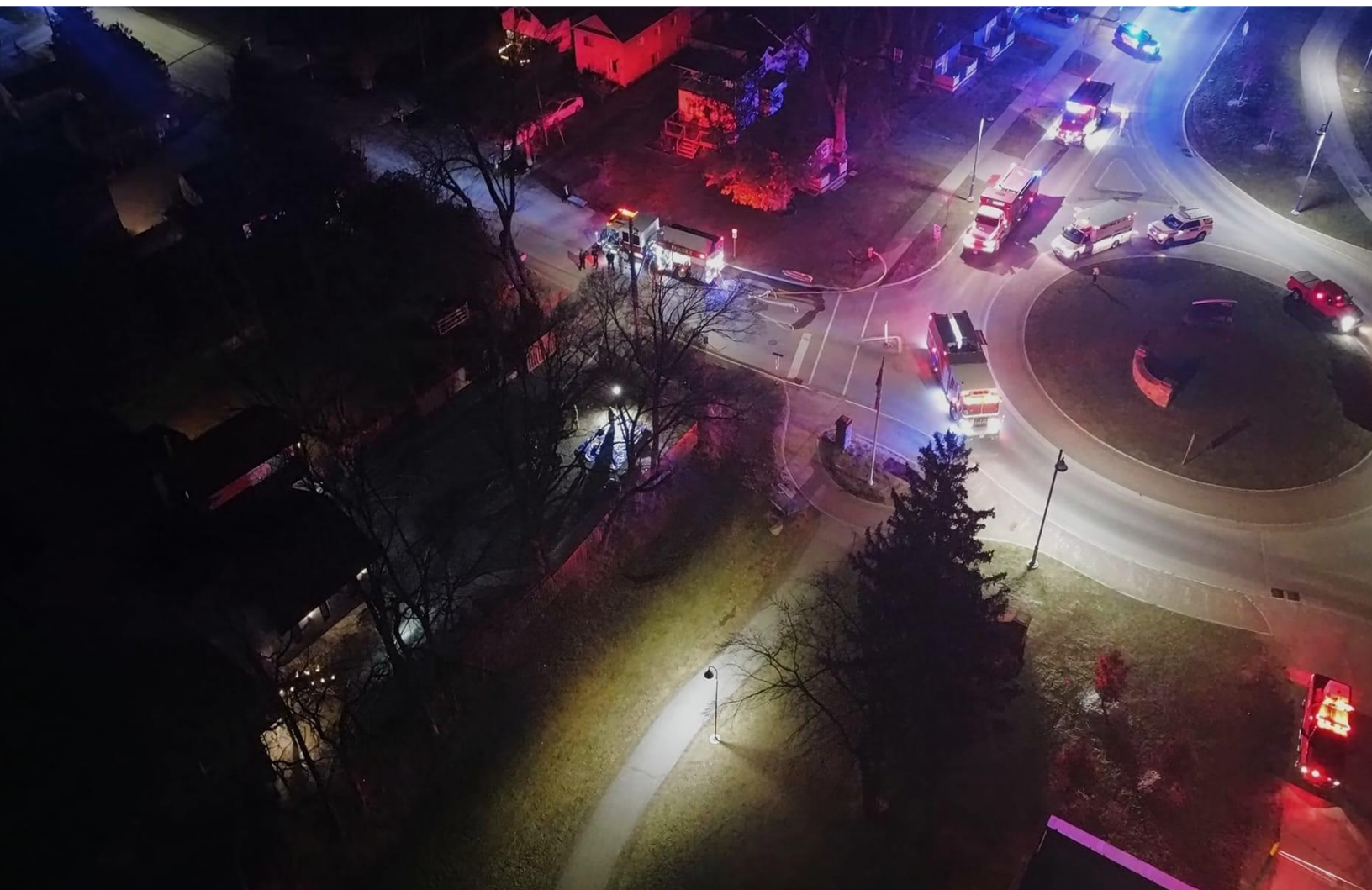
The Emergency Management Group Inc. team that collaborated on and completed this Fire Master Plan includes:

- Darryl Culley, President
- Lyle Quan, Vice President of Operations
- Lana Kiernan, Director of Administration
- Greg Hankkio, Fire Services Consultant
- Rick Monkman, Fire Services Consultant

The project team offers extensive expertise in developing, reviewing, and enhancing fire and emergency services programs. Their collective experience includes conducting municipal fire service studies across Canada, preparing strategic Fire Master Plans, and designing customized emergency response programs to address the specific needs of individual municipalities.

# Section 1

## Community and Fire Department Overview



# SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY AND FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

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## 1.1 Community Overview

The Town of Innisfil is a fast-growing lakeside municipality located on the western shore of Lake Simcoe in Simcoe County. Bordered by the City of Barrie to the north and the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury to the south, Innisfil covers approximately 262 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to more than 43,000 residents (2021 Census)<sup>1</sup>. The community has experienced steady population growth in recent years, with projections indicating a potential population of 85,000 by 2051<sup>2</sup>. Innisfil is a diverse and well-educated community, with more than half of its residents having completed post-secondary education.

TABLE #1: INNISFIL VS. ONTARIO 2021 CENSUS INFORMATION

Age	Innisfil	Ontario
0 to 14 years	17.40%	15.80%
15 to 64 years	65.80%	65.60%
65 years and over	16.80%	18.50%
Average Age of Population	41.3 years	41.80%
Median Age of Population	42.0 years	41.60%

Growth management is guided by the “Our Place” Official Plan and the long-term development vision known as “The Orbit,” which emphasizes compact, transit-oriented, mixed-use growth. This approach is intended to balance rapid population increases with sustainable land use and localized employment opportunities, with Simcoe County projecting 26,000 jobs in the municipality by mid-century.<sup>3</sup>

Innisfil has also gained recognition for its innovative service delivery. Since 2017, the municipality has operated an on-demand public transit system in partnership with Uber, replacing traditional bus services. The Town also promotes accountability through its Municipal Performance Dashboard, which tracks progress across key service and community priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Innisfil, Town (T) [Census subdivision], Ontario, accessed October 7, 2025. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00053543017&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>2</sup> Planning Our Growth to 2051 | Get Involved Innisfil Accessed October 7, 2025. <https://www.getinvolvedinnisfil.ca/growth>

<sup>3</sup> Planning Our Growth to 2051 | Get Involved Innisfil Accessed October 7, 2025. <https://www.getinvolvedinnisfil.ca/growth>

The community is renowned for its high quality of life and recreational amenities, with over 47 km of shoreline, 399 acres of parks, and 258 km of trails. Major attractions include Innisfil Beach Park, Friday Harbour Resort, and Georgian Downs racetrack and casino. The Town Square in Alcona further enhances community engagement with public spaces and year-round events.

Economically, Innisfil blends rural and urban characteristics, supporting agriculture, small business, tourism, and residential development. Communities such as Alcona, Cookstown, Lefroy and Stroud each contribute unique cultural and economic assets. Tourism plays a strong role through festivals, waterfront amenities, and specialty retail, while the municipality has also benefited from long-term revenues generated by gaming operations.

Innisfil's population profile is shifting, with a growing senior cohort, anchored by large adult-lifestyle communities such as Sandy Cove Acres, which brings increased demand for medical response, injury prevention, and home safety programs. At the same time, many working-age residents commute daily to the Greater Toronto Area, creating pronounced daytime outflows and evening inflows that influence call patterns, roadway risks, and daytime availability of paid-on-call firefighters.

Innisfil is a rapidly growing, progressive, and community-oriented municipality. Its combination of accelerated urban development, innovative services, and strong recreational and cultural assets creates both opportunities and challenges for future planning. Ensuring the delivery of effective and sustainable fire protection services will require a strategic response to this unprecedented level of growth.

Over the next decade, the Town is projected to see significant development, including three high-rise buildings reaching 40 storeys, an additional 22 high-rises between 8 and 15 storeys, two 15-storey hotels, a new casino, a hospital, and two long-term care homes. Residential expansion will add approximately 5,000 single-family dwellings, along with a wide range of medium-density housing, including back-to-back and double-stacked townhomes, as well as two new schools.<sup>4</sup>

Complementing this urban growth, the community will also see unique risks and demands, such as agricultural and barn-style event centres in non-hydrated areas, a propane facility upgrading to Level 2 classification, and over one million square feet of commercial and industrial space, alongside major industrial expansion.

This scale and diversity of development will significantly impact service delivery requirements and underscores the need for forward-looking fire protection planning.

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<sup>4</sup> Innisfil Request for Proposals for Fire Master Plan No. P-25-097, accessed October 7, 2025

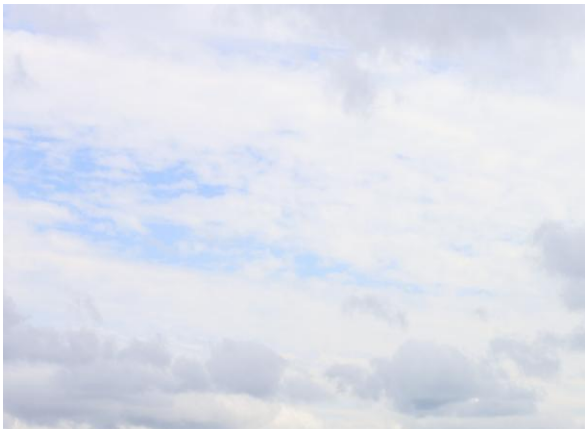
## 1.2 Fire Department Composition and Overview

Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services (IFRS) operates as a composite department combining career and paid-on-call (POC) firefighters to provide 24/7 emergency response. The department offers a broad range of services, including fire suppression, medical response, auto extrication, ice and surface water rescue, hazardous materials response, public education, Ontario Fire Code enforcement, and fire investigations. IFRS currently operates out of five fire stations located in Alcona (Station 1), Lefroy (headquarters) (Station 2), Stroud (Station 3), Cookstown (Station 4), and Big Bay Point Road (Station 5). The IFRS current staff composition comprises 1 Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Fire Chiefs, 1 Business Manager, 1 Administrative Assistant, 40 Career Firefighters, 1 Fire Prevention Officer, 2 Fire Prevention Inspectors, 2 Training Officers and at full compliment, 85 Volunteer Firefighters.

Training and community outreach form key parts of IFRS's mandate. The department operates the Innisfil Regional Training Centre, which offers Ontario Fire College programs to firefighters across the province. Community programs include fire prevention campaigns, burning permits, and educational outreach. In 2024, IFRS responded to approximately 2700 calls. That same year, the department secured nearly \$100,000 in grant funding to upgrade radio systems and purchase a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV), enhancing both response capacity and communications reliability.

Overall, IFRS is a modern and responsive service that is well-positioned to adapt to Innisfil's transformation into a larger, more urban municipality. Continued investment in infrastructure, staffing, apparatus, and training will be critical to ensuring reliable, sustainable, and effective fire protection for the community as it grows.

# Section 2 (a)



## Risk Assessment Profile



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## SECTION 2(A) – RISK ASSESSMENT PROFILE

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### 2.1 Community Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the process used to determine the level of fire protection needed within the municipality's boundaries. It assesses the likelihood and potential effects on health, property, an organization, the environment, or a community resulting from an event, activity, or operation.

The Province of Ontario Regulation 378/18 Community Risk Assessment (CRA) states, "a community risk assessment is a process of identifying, analyzing, evaluating and prioritizing risk to public safety to inform decisions about the provision of fire protection."

Collecting and reviewing these factors allows for using this information to identify potential risk scenarios. During the assessment of the gathered data, including the likelihood of these scenarios occurring and their subsequent consequences, the following questions are addressed:



Once answered, these questions will form the basis for creating and prioritizing risk management decisions to reduce the likelihood of these incidents and mitigate their impact.

The completed CRA may identify gaps and areas where actual conditions differ from the desired outcomes. Data to review for each mandatory Profile includes:

- Demographics Profile
- Critical Infrastructure Profile
- Geographic Profile
- Building Stock Profile
- Public Safety Response Profile
- Community Service Profile
- Hazard Profile
- Economic Profile
- Past Loss/Event Profile

The CRA is a separate document from this FMP and was completed by IFRS personnel in 2024. During its preparation, the Fire Chief should review the risks and discuss their findings with the Council, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and senior management. Once finished, the recommendations and mitigation options in the CRA and this FMP will form the basis for developing a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Plan.

### *2.1.2 Town of Innisfil Fire Loss Statistics*

The OFM provided the following information and documents, obtained from previous reports supplied to EMG. The data offers a summary of community concerns, ranked from highest to lowest for easier review. This information will assist in developing and implementing fire prevention and public safety awareness initiatives. It pertains to incidents within the Town of Innisfil, regardless of which fire department responds.

The following provides a brief overview of the structure fires that occurred in the Town between 2020 and 2024, including their origin and probable cause. Based on statistics such as the OFM reports, IFRS can identify areas of concern where commonalities between the fire's origin and cause may be found. They can then adjust their fire prevention programs to decrease the frequency of specific fires and their locations (such as building occupancy).

This may require more frequent fire inspections, focusing on a specific occupancy, or developing public education that highlights where the fire occurred and its cause, such as in a kitchen when cooking with grease.

#### ***Town of Innisfil Fire Loss by Property Classification***

Based on data from the OFM's Standard Incident Reporting (SIR) system, the following building classifications for property loss are listed, sorted by the number of fires in each occupancy type

from 2020 to 2024. Please note that the data from the previous year (2024) from the OFM is generally not fully verified and confirmed until late the following year (2025), and may still change until then.

*Note: The following fire data pertains to the Town of Innisfil and does not include areas where IFRS provides fire protection in nearby municipalities.*

- **Group C - Residential** had 89.4% of all structure fires, totalling 95, of which 85 were in residential occupancies, with damages amounting to \$19,134,950.
- **Group E – Mercantile** accounted for 4% of the structure fires, with four fires resulting in a total loss of \$5,231,000.
- **Structures or properties not classified by the Ontario Building Code** accounted for 4% of this type of fire, totalling four incidents with \$103,000 in damage.
- **Group F – Industrial** fires made up 2% of the structure fires, with two incidents causing a total loss of \$63,000.
- **Group D – Business and Personal Services** made up 1% of the structure fires, with one incident causing a total loss of \$200,000.
- **Classified under the National Farm Building Code** - it accounted for 1% of all the fires, totalling one, and fire loss totalling \$8,000.
- **Group A – Assembly and Group B – Care and Detention**, accounted for no fires over the past five years.

Historically, losses are often highlighted in a structure fire, while the property saved is overlooked. A fire may cause \$1 M in damage but save \$3 M worth of property.

A significant statistic is the number of vehicle fires from 2020 to 2024, which totalled 101 fires resulting in \$2,459,829 in damages. Over the past five years, most vehicle fires in Innisfil have started in garages. Between 2021 and 2023, Innisfil Fire and Rescue Services responded to 11 structure fires originating in garages, with three in 2021, four in 2022, and three in 2023. The causes of these fires ranged from faulty battery charging to improper installation of wood stoves. Notably, with Hwy 400 running through the Town, many vehicle fires and motor vehicle collisions occur on that busy highway, where thousands of vehicles travel daily. Many of these vehicles are commuters living in the area and heading to the Greater Toronto Area for work. Others travel further north to cottage country on weekends and holidays or attend one of the many sports facilities in the region.

However, a growing concern with garages is their changing use, as many are now being converted into extra living spaces. This often increases the electrical load beyond what the

garage's electrical system was originally designed to handle. During charging, lithium-ion batteries in scooters or electric vehicles can go into thermal runaway, causing intense fires that are very hard to put out and often result in significant damage to both the vehicle's structure and the appliances inside.

### ***Town of Innisfil Reported Fire Causes***

Assessing potential causes of fires is crucial for identifying trends and areas that require increased public education on fire prevention. This is part of the community fire protection plan alongside the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Plan.

The leading causes of fires were:

- Undetermined accounted for 51%, with a total of 49 fires.
- Misuse of ignition source/ materials first ignited accounted for 18%, with a total of 17.
- Other Unintentional accounted for 8%, with eight fires.
- "Other" accounted for 8%, with a total of eight fires.
- Mechanical/electrical failure accounted for 6%, with a total of six fires.
- Unintentional Undetermined accounted for 6%, with a total of six fires.
- Design/Construction/Maintenance Deficiency saw 3% of the fires with three.

Notably, over the course of five years, no fires were identified as deliberately set structures causing damage. This does not mean that no fires were intentionally started; rather, it means that none were classified as intentional.

### ***Town of Innisfil Ignition Source Class***

The leading causes of ignition sources were:

- Undetermined accounted for 29% of the fires, with a total of 28.
- Miscellaneous also accounted for 16%, with a total of 16 fires.
- Cooking Equipment accounted for 11% with a total of eleven fires.
- Exposure accounted for 10%, with a total of ten fires.
- Heating equipment, chimney, etc., accounted for 9%, with a total of nine fires.
- Open flame tools and smokers' articles accounted for 8%, with eight fires.
- Appliances had 6% of the fires, with six.

- Electrical distribution equipment accounted for 5%, with a total of five fires.
- Other electrical/mechanical accounted for 2%, with a total of two fires.
- Lighting equipment also had 1% of the fires, with one.
- Processing Equipment also had 1% of the fires, with one fire.

The data indicate that most fires occur in residential buildings, with the origin and cause undetermined. Understanding fire science is crucial for determining the origin and cause. Fire investigators rely on a solid foundation of scientific principles to analyze fire scenes and reach accurate conclusions. As mentioned earlier, some fires may have been deliberately set, but this has not been officially confirmed. Reducing the number of cases with unknown causes and ignition sources will require additional resources, such as funding and training opportunities. Meanwhile, IFRS should adopt improved investigation methods when examining vehicle fires.

★ **Recommendation #1 - Allocate funding for training to improve investigation techniques for structure and vehicle fires to determine the fire’s cause, origin, and circumstances.**

## 2.2 Community Risk Assessment (CRA)

Having completed the required CRA, the Town and IFRS can make well-informed decisions about the fire protection they offer to their residents. Risk assessment involves evaluating the likelihood and potential impact of an event that could harm the community, including health, property, organization, environment, and society. The most effective way to reduce any fire risk is to address the threat before the fire department needs to respond.

To develop an effective community fire safety plan, the OFM identifies a fire protection planning strategy called the "Three Lines of Defence" (see Table #2). Using this strategy highlights the importance of recognizing that multiple options exist for creating a community fire safety plan, including education, code enforcement, and emergency response. Although emergency response (fire suppression) will always be necessary, it remains a reactive measure. A fire service must proactively enhance public fire safety programs within the community.

Preventing fires effectively requires a comprehensive fire prevention plan that includes regular fire inspections, smoke and carbon monoxide alarm programs, and public education. The Three Lines of Defence model is a risk management framework used in Ontario that combines fire protection services. It features three separate lines of defence, each with its own specific role and purpose.

**TABLE #2: OVERVIEW OF THE THREE LINES OF DEFENCE**

Line of Defence	Description
<b>1. Public Fire Safety Education</b>	Educating community members on their fire and life safety responsibilities is an effective way to reduce the number of fires and other hazards. Only through education can fires be prevented, and those affected by fires can respond properly to save lives, minimize injuries, and limit the damage caused by fires.
<b>2. Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement</b>	Conducting inspections and enforcing the Ontario Fire Code (OFC) ensures that buildings have essential fire protection systems and safety features. This may require property owners or tenants to create fire safety plans and maintain smoke alarms and sprinkler systems in good working condition, which helps reduce the impact of a fire. Inspections not only find fire hazards but also help lower other risks, such as trip and fall dangers caused by cluttered conditions in a facility.
<b>3. Emergency Response</b>	Fire departments require well-trained and equipped firefighters, led by capable officers, to effectively manage fires and safeguard residents' lives and safety.

A thorough review, combined with effective strategic planning, will lead to success by reducing fires, fire-related injuries, and property damage costs through ongoing fire prevention efforts. These include early warning detection systems (such as smoke alarms), proactive inspections, and public education.

### 2.3 Community Risk Reduction Plan

After completing the CRA and identifying all risks, the next step is to develop a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Plan. When properly implemented, the CRR Plan aligns emergency operations with prevention and mitigation efforts throughout the community and at the fire station level. The participation of fire station personnel is crucial for gathering local risk data and executing the necessary measures to carry out the CRR Plan.

Beyond benefiting the community, a CRR Plan also supports the fire department. It improves the safety and occupational health of firefighters and emergency responders, leading to fewer line-of-duty deaths. This is partly due to increased fire inspections, fire and life safety education events, and stricter enforcement of the Ontario Fire Code (OFC), which has helped lower the number of fires.

Besides firefighter safety, there are several other reasons why departments should begin creating a CRR Plan, including:

- Recognizing new and emerging hazards and managing risks helps to make the community safer.
- To enhance resource allocation amid shrinking budgets in fire departments and local governments.
- It quickly recognizes shifting demographics within the community.
- It promotes greater community involvement.
- May help prevent the potential outcomes of overlooked hazards.
- Better explains the fire department's role and importance in the community beyond just fighting fires.

Completing the CRA and this FMP document provides the Fire Chief with the essential components for the CRR Plan. The foundation of the CRR Plan is based on the information and recommendations in the CRA and FMP forms. A successful CRR Plan will generate additional resources through partnerships within the fire department and the community it serves. The community-based approach strengthens public safety by encouraging collective efforts to understand, assess, and develop inclusive solutions to safety issues within the community. NFPA 1300 is a valuable resource when developing the CRR Plan.

## 2.4 Next Steps

As the community grows, calls and demand for services will rise. Therefore, there will be a future need for more staff in the Fire Prevention Office and the Fire Suppression and Training Divisions. Supporting information regarding the staffing needs of each division can be found in the sections related to this FMP document.

✦ **Recommendation #2** - With the Community Risk Assessment and this Fire Master Plan now complete, EMG recommends that the Fire Chief incorporate elements from both documents to develop and implement the Community Risk Reduction Plan, that takes into consideration the three lines of defence and an inclusion of the IFRS' Emergency Response Matrix.

## 2.5 Establishing & Regulating By-Law

An Establishing and Regulating By-law, other bylaws of the municipality, resolutions of the Council, agreements, policies, operating guidelines, and the interaction of the department with allied departments of the municipality, committees, and officials may guide the administration and governance of a fire department.

The Establishing and Regulating (E&R) By-law for a fire service is a vital document that outlines its goals and expectations. Therefore, conducting a thorough review of this By-law is an essential first step in determining the services provided by the IFRS and assessing whether these services meet the requirements of the E&R By-law.

Several sections of the E&R Bylaw must align with the expectations of the FPPA of 1997. The current E&R Bylaw 103-14 was last updated in 2014, making it an eleven-year-old document. In 2022, an amendment updated Appendix C of the original by-law to reflect changes in Emergency Response Services. To help the Fire Administration meet the needs and expectations of Council, the E&R Bylaw specifies the types of incidents the Fire Department is to respond to, as this significantly influences department training and equipment requirements. The document also details technical rescues and the response levels available.

The current by-law includes the Primary Goals and Mission Statement. These should also be reviewed, renamed, and retitled as Vision, Values, and Mission Statements to better reflect current fire service trends. It is recommended that they be displayed prominently in all fire stations to remind firefighters of their purpose in serving the community. Some fire departments have taken it a step further and developed a motto.

E&R bylaws should be reviewed annually and updated to reflect new legislation, changes in response types and levels, fire prevention initiatives, public education programs, and training expectations. Establishing and regulating bylaws should include references to relevant guidelines and standards, such as:

- The FPPA of 1997
- The Ontario Fire Code

- The Health & Safety Act of Ontario
- Section 21 Guidance Notes for Ontario's Fire Services
- OFM Guidelines concerning staffing and response recommendations
- Related NFPA Standards that deal with:
  - Training
  - Fire prevention and public safety programs
  - Fire department response goals and objectives
  - Response times.
  - Communications

By implementing these guidelines and standards, IFRS will ensure that staffing, training programs, fire prevention initiatives, and community response align with industry best practices.

***Other items to consider changing or including within the next revised by-law include:***

- Some fire services have created a Fire Prevention Policy and incorporated it into the E&R Bylaw as an Appendix.
- It should identify that Fire Prevention activities will follow the best of their ability, NFPA 1730 and/or FUS's recommended frequency for inspections. If not, develop an internal goal and its proposed outcomes.
- The completion of the CRA is not mentioned in the by-law, per O. Reg. 378/18, either in the main body or the schedules. It should also specify the requirement to develop and implement a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Plan, in accordance with NFPA 1300, including goals and expected outcomes.
- Indicate whether a pre-incident plan and program complying with NFPA 1620 exists, which highlights priority locations needing a plan to be developed. Aiming for each station to complete at least two plans annually could be a suitable goal.
- The document does not address the fire apparatus or the importance of following FUS's recommended replacement schedule, nor does it specify that the apparatus must be built according to NFPA 1901 and ULC S515-12.
- The document does not mention any of the mandated programs, such as:
  - A Mental Wellness (PTSD) Program per the OH&SA of Ontario

- A Respiratory Program that complies with the OHSA, O. Reg., 833, O. Reg. 490/09, CSA Z.94.4, NFPA 1981 and Section 21, GN 4-9.
- A Cancer Prevention Program, per the OH&SA of Ontario.
- It was noted that there was no discussion regarding dispatching and communications provided by a third party.
- Technical rescue and HAZMAT training are essential parts of firefighter education. The training levels and the department’s response capabilities for different types of rescue and HAZMAT incidents are detailed in the Amended Appendix C. It should also specify that NFPA 1006 will serve as the standard for training and response. For rescues that IFRS cannot manage with their current training, a mitigation strategy should be outlined, such as the Memorandums of Understanding that the Town signed with the City of Barrie for Technical Rescue and HAZMAT mitigation services.
- The By-law states that “Volunteer Firefighter means a Firefighter who provides Fire Protection either voluntarily or for a nominal consideration, honorarium, training or activity allowance.” To better align with current Town practices of compensating firefighters for their duties, their title could be changed from “Volunteer” to “Paid-on-Call.”
- Recently paid-on-call firefighters may now join the OMERS pension plan, in some cases, if other municipal employees are members.
- The document states that Fire Suppression is responsible for conducting fire investigations and should specify that investigators must meet NFPA 1033 qualifications, including certification. They should also complete the NFPA 921 program, for which certificates are not yet available in Canada.
- Make mention of Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure Regulation, O. Reg. 588/17 (as amended by O. Reg. 193/21), effective January 1, 2018, as well as Record Management Programs and retention policies. Effective January 1, 2016, amendments took effect mandating enhanced records retention procedures under Ontario’s two public sector privacy and access laws – the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

## 2.6 Assessment of Current Fire Service By-Laws

The other fire service-related by-laws reviewed for this FMP include:

- Development Charges By-Law 101-23 (referenced in Section 6, Finance)
- Fees and Service Charges By-Law 057-24 (Referenced in Section 6, Finance)

- Fire Burning By-Law 045-06
- Parking By-law 068-22 to amend By-law 019-25 (Referenced in Section 2.6.5.
- Register Accessory Dwelling Units By-Law 044-21
- Sale of Fireworks and the Setting Off of Fireworks By-law 041-17
- Emergency Response Agreement (Tiered Medical) - 076-07 (Referenced in Sections 3.4 and 5)

### 2.6.1 Fire Burning By-Law – 045-06

The Fire Burning By-law governs outdoor burning in the Town of Innisfil and came into effect in July 2006. It replaces and updates the previous By-law 106-91. The By-law specifies the rules for outdoor burning within the Town. Since this by-law is nearly 20 years old, it should be reviewed and updated before being submitted to the Council for approval.

This bylaw is comprehensive, covering a range of topics. The Town should consider including the following in the revised by-law:

- Although the by-law references the Ontario Fire Code (OFC), the updated version should specify

***Open-Air Burning 2.4.4.4. (1) Open-air burning shall not take place unless (a) it has been approved, or (b) the open-air burning consists of a small, confined fire that is***

- (i) used to cook food on a grill, barbecue or spit,*
- (ii) commensurate with the type and quantity of food being cooked, and*
- (iii) supervised at all times.*

***(2) Sentence (1) does not apply to the use of an appliance that***

- a) meets the requirements of the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000,*
- b) is for outdoor use,*
- c) if assembled, has been assembled in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and*
- d) if installed, has been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.*

- O. Reg 256/14 under the FPPA, 1997, of the OFC and include Article 2.4.4.4.
- Reference should be made to O. Reg. 207/96, Outdoor Fires, from the Forest Fires Prevention Act.<sup>5</sup>
- Article 4) vi) should include wood products that have been treated with preservatives. The preservatives used in pressure-treated wood are designed to be stable under normal environmental conditions. However, when burned, these compounds break down and release hazardous substances.
- Being a tourist area with several parks and beaches, include a clause specifically prohibiting burning along any beach. It is common for visitors to light fires on the beach in the evening.
- Include in Article 4 that burning is not permitted during a fire ban.
- With the increase in residential occupancies and population, it is expressly prohibited to burn leaves and grass clippings.
- Article 6 discusses the use of commercially manufactured wood-burning appliances; the by-law should specify that all spark arrestor devices must be maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Some municipalities have included a clause that prohibits outdoor burning after a certain hour. This clause aims to reduce noise from activities around the fire in the neighbourhood.
- In the by-law, note that wood-burning outdoor furnaces are becoming increasingly popular as a cost-saving option for heating homes and household water. Some of these appliances can hold pieces of wood longer than a metre and must meet the requirements of the Technical Standards and Safety Act (TSSA) of 2000.
- Review and update the map of the Restricted Burn Area listed in Schedule A.
- Update the Fine Schedule listed in Schedule B.

### *2.6.2 Indigenous Sacred Fires*

“Ceremonial/Sacred Fire” refers to an open-air fire conducted by Indigenous peoples as part of or in observance of a ceremonial or sacred event. Indigenous groups use the Sacred Fire for spiritual gatherings, which involve celebration, prayer, gratitude, and personal healing.

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<sup>5</sup> CanLII, Outdoor Fires, O. Reg. 207/96, accessed August 2025, <https://www.canlii.org/en/on/laws/regu/o-reg-207-96/latest/o-reg-207-96.html>

Firekeepers support local Indigenous communities by maintaining the sacred fire in accordance with their specific traditions. Firekeepers must always stay with the fire.

Some municipalities have amended their Burning By-law to acknowledge this important tradition, and some have included an exemption from requiring a permit.

The Town of Innisfil's adoption of amendments to the existing Fire Burning By-law to include sacred fires aligns with Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #43 and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Article 12.1. It also recognizes and collaborates with the local Indigenous community.

### *2.6.3 A By-Law to Regulate – the Sale of, and Setting Off, of Fireworks 041-17*

Municipalities like the Town of Innisfil often have separate bylaws for the sale and discharge of fireworks, reflecting a wider trend across Ontario. Safety risks partly drive this shift towards regulating fireworks to protect lives and property. Every year, many people suffer serious injuries or lose property due to reckless use. When used properly with all safety precautions and procedures, fireworks can produce a stunning display. With more visitors, special celebrations, and religious events, the frequency of fireworks being discharged has increased.

Consider the following for inclusion in the by-law:

- While the by-law provides details about consumer fireworks (for recreational use) and display fireworks (used in high-hazard public displays), it does not mention fireworks used during events like shows or music concerts (pyrotechnics). Additionally, it should specify that the municipality's authority to regulate fireworks is governed by the Ontario Fire Code, O. Reg. 213/07, Division B, Part 5, ss 5. 2..
- Include the relevant federal regulation on the training required to set off commercial and display fireworks in the document. This will guide those who need this training and education, helping them find the necessary supporting information. The by-law already distinguishes between consumer fireworks and display fireworks, but not pyrotechnic fireworks, as outlined in the Explosives Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. E-17.
- Include the requirement for documentation confirming the completion of the Display Fireworks Safety and Legal Awareness Training, authorized by the Explosive Regulatory Division of Natural Resources Canada.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ontario, O. Reg. 378/18: Community Risk Assessments, accessed August 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180378>

- The supervisor responsible for discharging high-hazard professional fireworks and their assistant(s) must have obtained a Fireworks Operator Certification.<sup>7</sup>
- Individuals who operate special effects pyrotechnics, such as visual gunshots in a stage production, a shower of sparks at a concert, or an explosion on a film set, must hold a pyrotechnician certificate specific to the type and purpose of the pyrotechnic device used. There are four categories of certification for pyrotechnic use.
- The by-law should emphasize the importance of fire safety when setting off fireworks. It would also be appropriate to include safety guidance on the correct way to ignite fireworks and the protective gear used by those handling consumer fireworks. Additionally, it is essential to specify that some form of extinguishing method, such as a pail of water, a fire extinguisher, or a garden hose, should be easily accessible, and children should be kept away from the discharge area.
- For beaches under the Town of Innisfil's jurisdiction, they are popular spots for parties in the summer, and a section should address the discharge of fireworks along the beach areas year-round. The by-law does not specifically mention beaches, even though it refers to other public places owned by the Town.
- Include the requirement that all individuals discharging high-hazard fireworks complete the National Fireworks Certification Program (NFCP).
  - The Fire Chief or another fire officer of IFRS should also complete this mandatory training to better understand the Act and its requirements. It enables them to act as an expert witness during an accident investigation, which could lead to charges.
- The by-law should specify that the Fire Chief or designated person is responsible for overseeing procedures when igniting high-hazard ordnances. It should also include a requirement that a fire apparatus with four firefighters remain on standby at high-hazard firework displays.
- The standby crew should not leave the site during discharge to attend to other incidents.
  - There should be at least two post-event inspections of the area next to the discharge zone to check for unexploded ordnance. One occurs on the night of the display, and the second occurs the following morning during daylight hours.

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<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada, Fireworks Operator Certification, accessed August 2025, <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/our-natural-resources/minerals-mining/explosives-fireworks-and-ammunition/fireworks-and-pyrotechnics/fireworks-operator-certification/fireworks-operator-certification/9885>

- Include the pre- and post-discharge inspections, along with the standby fire crew, in the Fees and Charges By-law.

#### *2.6.4 Registry and Regulating Accessory Dwellings By-law 044-21*

Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan encourages the development of accessory dwellings to help address some affordable housing shortages. Secondary dwellings are a crucial part of Ontario's rental market, offering affordable housing options across the province. These self-contained units are usually permitted in single-family, semi-detached, and row houses. The Act also specifies that secondary dwellings can be located in auxiliary structures such as garages, laneway houses, or garden suites.

The Town currently has a standalone by-law that regulates accessory dwelling units through a registry system for designated living spaces, but it does not treat them as being licensed. The by-law allows the Town to inspect new constructions or renovations of existing homes that include a secondary residence, and at any time thereafter. The Town should consider establishing not only a registry but also a licensing system, introducing a fee for these licensing services. Provisions should also include a mandatory annual fire inspection.

The Town should also consider options for creating a system to report unregistered or illegally built accessory dwellings, such as an anonymous tip line.

A few points to consider regarding accessory dwellings:

- Tenants with limited budgets might live in residences that do not meet the requirements of the OBC and OFC. Violations include improper exits, undersized basement windows, smoke alarms, CO alarms, fire extinguishers, fire escape plans, and more.
  - It might not have a direct exit to the outside from the basement.
  - The windows are either too small or difficult to access for a person to escape through during a fire.
  - Property owners might not completely understand their responsibilities regarding fire safety and the fire code.
- IFRS should review its Fire Prevention Division's resources to ensure there is enough staffing to inspect all accessory dwellings in the municipality for OFC violations.
- IFRS and the Building Department should create and promote a reporting system to identify potential illegal sites in collaboration with by-law enforcement.

- Many secondary dwellings may have wood-burning appliances installed. Consider requiring a Wood Energy Technology Transfer (WETT) inspection. Town staff could complete these inspections with training, and until that is possible, refer clients to a third-party certified in WETT inspections.

### **2.6.5 By-law No. 068-22, Consolidated Parking By-law**

Vehicles parked in emergency routes on private property often raise concerns for fire personnel across Canada. Such vehicles can block access for emergency vehicles, including fire trucks, and hinder fire department standpipe and hose connections, as well as private hydrants.

Although none of the designated emergency routes are listed in the by-law, the fire chief should work with mercantile, industrial, and resort properties to ensure that security gates, if present, do not block access to the complex. The Town should regulate private laneways and roads regarding their design and capacity to support heavy trucks, vegetation removal, winter maintenance, and turn-around areas. Some municipalities have taken an additional step by requiring annual inspections by municipal staff to ensure compliance.

The Town should include in the revised by-law and enforce OFC Articles 2.5.1.2. (1), 2.5.1.3. and 2.5.1.3.4.

- *2.5.1.2. (1) Fire access routes and access panels or windows provided to facilitate access for firefighting operations shall not be obstructed by vehicles, gates, fences, building materials, vegetation, signs or any other form of obstruction.*
- *2.5.1.3. Fire access routes shall be maintained to be immediately ready for use at all times by fire department vehicles.*
- *2.5.1.4. Approved signs shall be displayed to indicate fire access routes.*

## **2.7 New By-laws Being Considered**

### **2.7.1 By-law to Regulate Short-Term Accommodation**

No by-laws regulate short-term accommodations in the Town of Innisfil, as families increasingly choose “staycations” instead of travelling abroad due to tariff challenges with the United States. The demand for STAs has risen significantly, leading to many issues such as noise, littering, disregard for property, and parking problems among neighbours. Many accommodations operate year-round, attracting multiple visitors, making short-term rentals (STRs) more visible. These need to be regulated and inspected like other businesses. For the Town to issue a licence for these establishments, it must ensure they are fire-safe; otherwise,

the Town could face liability if it issues permits without confirming the safety of the location for residents.

Owners and operators of Short-Term Accommodations (STAs), such as those with Accessory Dwelling Units, must prioritize guest safety. As mentioned, it is their legal duty under the Ontario Fire Code, O. Reg 213/07, as amended. A few points about rental properties:

- An unknown number of short-term accommodations are operating in the Town.
- An increase in all types of housing within the Town raises demands on the fire service.
- Dwellings are increasingly serving as lodging for multiple visitors, with potential bedrooms in basements.
- It may not comply with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and Ontario Fire Code (OFC). Violations include missing proper exits, inadequately sized basement windows, smoke alarms, CO alarms, fire extinguishers, fire escape plans, and more.
  - Sometimes, it may not have a direct exit to the outside from the basement if there are sleeping quarters below ground level.
  - Windows are too small for a person to escape through in a fire.
- Short-term rental owners and operators might not be aware of their responsibilities related to fire safety and fire codes.
  - IFRS should review its Fire Prevention Division's resources regarding sufficient staffing to inspect all short-term accommodations in the town for OFC violations.
    - With an unknown number in operation, IFRS may lack the resources to properly conduct these inspections, along with the other inspection requirements of the Town.
  - Once the bylaw is passed, the IFRS and the Building Department should develop and promote a process (reporting line) to identify potential illegal locations in collaboration with By-Law enforcement.
- Most fires happen in residential units.
- According to the Town's Fees Schedule, there will be a fee for IFRS to conduct a fire inspection related to these occupancies, which is predetermined and outlined in the Fees By-law.

Considering these points, IFRS and the Planning and Building Departments should endorse a by-law regulating these units, including licensing these locations. The document should specify the responsibilities of the fire department.

## 2.8 Newly Sitting Council Awareness

Educating new sitting councils on fire service-related by-laws every four years helps them understand the full scope of the Fire Department's level of service and commitment to the community.

# Section 2(b)

## Overview of Interviews Conducted



## SECTION 2(B) – STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION SUMMARY AND KEY THEMES

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### 2(b).1 Consultation Process

In alignment with the Town of Innisfil Request for Proposal (P-25-097), stakeholder consultation formed a foundational component of this Fire Master Plan. The consultation process was designed to validate operational data, identify emerging pressures, and ensure that strategic recommendations reflect both quantitative analysis and practitioner experience.

Engagement activities included structured interviews and meetings with:

- Career and Paid-on-Call (POC) firefighters
- Fire Chief and Deputy Chiefs
- Fire Prevention and Training personnel
- Town administrative leadership

Consultation was conducted to gather operational insight, clarify service expectations, and confirm alignment between documented performance data and lived operational experience.

### 2(b).2 How Consultation Informed the Plan

Feedback obtained through consultation was not treated as standalone commentary. Rather, it was analyzed, categorized into themes, and integrated throughout Sections 3 through 8 of this report.

- Stakeholder input was used to:
  - Validate response time and deployment data
  - Confirm staffing and turnout realities
  - Identify operational pressures related to growth
  - Highlight training, prevention, and administrative workload trends
  - Provide context to financial and capital planning discussions

The consultation findings reinforced and supported the empirical analysis conducted through GIS modelling, incident data review, CRA findings, and financial trend evaluation.

## 2(b).3 Key Themes Identified

While individual comments are not reproduced verbatim, several consistent themes emerged across multiple stakeholder groups:

### 1. Growth and Increasing Call Complexity

Stakeholders identified accelerated residential and commercial growth as a primary driver of increased demand, particularly in developing areas such as Innisfil Heights and the Orbit corridor.

### 2. Response Coverage and Travel Distance

Operational personnel noted that geographic expansion has increased travel distances, influencing total response times despite consistent apparatus turnout performance.

### 3. Paid-On-Call Availability

Daytime availability of Paid-On-Call firefighters was identified as an operational variable influenced by commuter patterns and employment trends — a challenge consistent with national composite fire service models.

### 4. Organizational Capacity

As the department transitions toward a medium-sized service model, stakeholders noted increasing administrative, training, and supervisory demands.

### 5. Training and Professional Development

Maintaining NFPA-aligned competencies while managing operational call volumes was identified as a balancing pressure within the training division.

### 6. Water Supply and Rural Risk

Non-hydranted areas and tanker shuttle operations were recognized as areas requiring continued strategic planning as development expands.

## 2(b).4 Alignment with Operational Analysis

The themes identified through consultation directly align with the quantitative findings presented later in this report, including:

- NFPA 1720 staffing and response benchmarks

- GIS-based coverage modelling
- Call volume and concurrency trends
- Paid-On-Call turnout statistics
- Financial and capital forecasting data

The consistency between stakeholder insight and objective data strengthens the validity of the analysis and supports the strategic direction outlined in this Fire Master Plan.

## **2(b).5 Conclusion**

Stakeholder consultation confirmed that Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services remains a capable and professional composite service. At the same time, it highlighted structural pressures associated with growth, increasing complexity, and evolving service expectations.

The findings from consultation have been embedded throughout this document and form part of the evidence base supporting the long-term planning framework presented to Council.



# Section 3

## Fire Department Operational Analysis



## SECTION 3 - FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

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This section presents the operational analysis for IFRS. It examines incident response data, including call volumes, incident types, response times, staffing and apparatus deployment, alongside the department’s organizational structure, staffing model, and response coverage. Firefighter health and safety practices are reviewed against applicable provincial and municipal standards, and station locations and coverage are assessed to identify service gaps and opportunities for optimization.

In alignment with the Town’s RFP, EMG evaluates current capabilities and future staffing needs across all divisions – Suppression, Training, Prevention, and Administration – and provides recommendations to ensure resources, deployment, and practices align with Council-approved service objectives.

### 3.1 Community Safety – Lines of Defence

The Office of the Fire Marshal's community safety model identifies three primary lines of defence. Public Fire Safety Education, Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement, and Emergency Response. Although not addressed in this report, EMG recognizes Emergency Management as a fourth, overarching line that should be integrated into the broader community safety framework.

**Public Fire Safety Education** – Focuses on preventing fires before they occur through sustained outreach and behaviour-based programs that evolve as the community grows.

**Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement** – Ensures buildings meet code through inspections and corrective action.

**Emergency Response** – Relies on well-trained, well-equipped firefighters and appropriate station placement to deliver timely, effective incident operations.

**Emergency Management** – Establishes municipal readiness through legislated planning, training, education, mitigation, and coordinated response for all hazards.



Alongside these four lines, EMG references industry best practices, particularly NFPA standards and FUS guidance, as non-legislated benchmarks that can enhance performance and inform service design.

### **3.1.1 National Fire Protection Association 1201**

The NFPA 1201: Standard for Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public defines how a fire department should organize and deliver its services, scaled to the community's needs and appropriate to the department's structure and resources.

#### **Section 4.3.5 of the Standard notes:**

*The Fire and Emergency Services Organization (FESO) shall provide customer service-oriented programs and procedures to accomplish the following:*

- *Prevent fire, injuries and deaths from emergencies and disasters.*
- *Mitigate fire, injuries, deaths, property damage, and environmental damage from emergencies and disasters.*
- *Recover from fires, emergencies, and disasters.*
- *Protect critical infrastructure.*
- *Sustain economic viability.*
- *Protect cultural resources.*

To meet this standard, the FESO should maintain regular and transparent communication with the CAO and Council and anchor operations in a comprehensive master plan. It should also formalize mutual-aid and automatic-aid agreements and implement an asset control and maintenance program.

To assist fire services focused on response objectives, NFPA recommends using response time as a key performance indicator. NFPA 1720 sets expectations for composite departments by defining response and staffing benchmarks to be included in performance assessments.

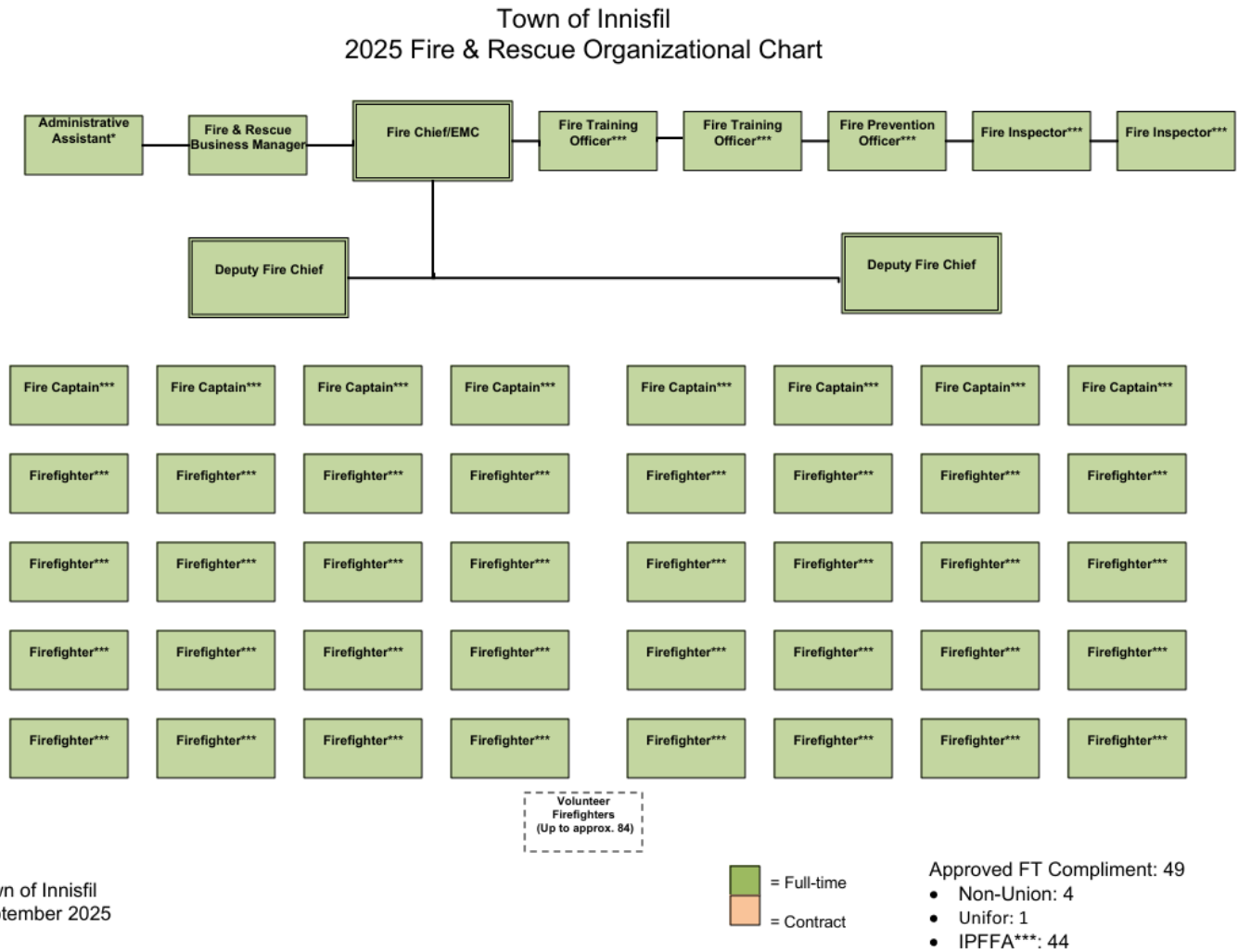
## **3.2 Administration Division**

### **3.2.1 Current Organizational Structure**

The department is organized under the Fire Chief, with two divisional deputies and centralized administrative support. The Fire Chief provides overall leadership, governance and labour-

relations oversight, council reporting, and department-wide capital and operating budget stewardship.

**FIGURE #1 – CURRENT IFRS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Town of Innisfil  
September 2025

### 3.2.2 Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)

The CFAI Accreditation program includes a dedicated component that evaluates a fire department’s administrative functions, emphasizing the following areas:

#### **Category 9C: Administrative Support and Office Systems**

Administrative support services and general office systems are in place to conduct and manage the agency’s administrative functions, such as organizational planning and assessment, resource

coordination, data analysis/ research, records keeping, reporting, business communications, public interaction, and purchasing.

As the Town grows, and service demand rises, the administrative workload will expand across planning, reporting, records, purchasing, payroll/scheduling, and public interaction. These are precisely the functions CFAI category 9C evaluates. To stay ahead of this curve, IFRS should scale administrative capacity and office systems in step with operational growth. Establishing annual workload reviews tied to population, call volume, and staffing changes, along with funded plans for training, succession, and technology enhancements, will keep administrative support aligned to service objectives, mitigate risk, and sustain efficient, high-quality service delivery.

### *3.2.3 Records Management System*

An electronic records management system (RMS) is the backbone of modern fire service governance and operations. It standardizes incident reporting, preserves auditable histories, and enforces retention and access rules under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (MFIPPA), the Occupational Health & Safety Act, and the FPPA. By housing rosters, response matrices, pre-incident plans, training records, fire prevention and inspection information, and deployment records in one place, the RMS supports timely, accurate decision making and demonstrates performance against the Council's Establishing & Regulating by-law service targets.

While conducting the research for this report, it was identified that IFRS is in the process of transitioning to the First Due RMS, which includes a Rollout Plan. The plan establishes clear governance, role-based access, device readiness, and a data migration plan, which are good foundations for adoption, data quality, and MFIPPA and FPPA compliance. Staged integration with the Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) (Barrie Fire), staffing/payroll, assets, and the Corporate LMS should eliminate duplicate entry, centralize people, incidents, training, equipment, and prevention records. At the same time, the Responder App enables mobile availability, paging, and field documentation. Incident reporting is tailored to OFM's Standard Incident Reporting requirements, training, and JPR tracking support NFPA credential currency with expiry alerts, PPE, and asset modules will support required inspections and lifecycles, and prevention/pre-plans standardizing inspections and permitting for mobile completion.

Overall, the plan will deliver a modern fire service RMS that is interoperable, secure, field-ready, and built for continuous improvement and long-term value.

### *3.2.4 Current Status and Proposed Staffing Enhancements*

Innisfil Fire & Rescue Service has a clear command structure, which includes a Fire Chief and two Deputy Fire Chiefs overseeing Operations/Training and Prevention/Emergency Management. The administrative workload is concentrated on the Business Manager and a single Administrative Assistant. High-volume tasks such as payroll and scheduling for career and paid-on-call members, council reporting and freedom of information (FOI) requests, records management/First Due rollout, response-matrix upkeep, purchasing and reconciliation, claims/billing, and Office of the Fire Marshal Standard Incident Reporting create persistent pressure and draw Deputies and Training Officers into clerical work.

Training administration is a particular pinch point. Two Training Officers are responsible for program design and delivery for both career and paid-on-call streams while also handling Job Performance Requirements (JPR) and Learning Management System (LMS) entries, course logistics, vendor coordination, and Innisfil Regional Training Centre (RTC) support. Fleet and facilities program work (inspection schedules, equipment checks, contracts and leases) further disperses responsibility across senior officers without dedicated coordination.

In the near term, additional administrative capacity is necessary to protect instructor and senior leadership time and to alleviate persistent clerical and logistical bottlenecks. To address these pressures, add one Administrative Assistant, with specific workload distribution to be assigned at the discretion of the Fire Chief based on operational priorities. This flexible model allows the role to be applied where it provides the greatest organizational benefit, whether supporting training program administration, inspection workflows, public education coordination, reporting requirements, or other emerging needs.

Depending on the Chief's direction, this position may support tasks such as course scheduling, JPR/LMS data entry and auditing, certification and expiry tracking, vendor coordination, RTC logistics, inspection file preparation and closure, follow-up documentation, public education event coordination, fee invoicing, and monthly or quarterly reporting. Centralizing these functions within a dedicated administrative role reduces reliance on higher-cost operational staff for clerical duties, protects specialized personnel for core mandates, and improves overall organizational efficiency.

This flexible administrative model strengthens compliance with legislative and standards-based requirements (e.g., complete JPR documentation, timely inspection and SIR records), improves service timeliness, and enhances audit readiness through accurate and consistent record-keeping. As community growth or complexity increases future workloads, the Administrative Assistant role can be scaled or restructured without disrupting established processes or functional responsibilities.

In the immediate term (0 to 1 year) IFRS should prioritize establishing an Assistant Deputy Chief (ADC) role overseeing the Operations portfolios. In the mid term (4 to 6 years) an Assistant Deputy Chief Support services should also be established. As service demands, regulatory obligations, and program complexity continue to grow, adding ADC's is essential to stabilizing the department's span of control, strengthening supervisory depth, and enabling the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief's to focus on strategic leadership and operational readiness. These roles will provide dedicated oversight to key functional areas, including training, fire prevention, assets, health and safety, and suppression, ensuring consistent managerial coverage and timely decision-making across the organization.

Once the ADC structure is in place, the department can proceed with developing specialized program leadership roles within those portfolios. The Chief Training Officer (CTO) (see Section 3.3.5), and Chief Fire Prevention Officer (CFPO) (see Section 3.2.7.2) should be formalized in the mid-term (4 to 6 years) to advance curriculum management, certification alignment, community risk reduction, and inspection oversight, all under the direction of the respective ADCs.

Also in the mid-term, the current Business Manager position should be reclassified to a Division Chief, Administration & Business Services, reflecting the complexity and breadth of the role. The portfolio already encompasses human resources, finance, procurement, records management, FOI coordination, First Due governance, council reporting, grants and funding, and claims and billing. Transitioning this position to a Division Chief, appropriately elevates accountability and aligns the role with the organizational hierarchy while maintaining the integrity of the ADC structure. This adjustment strengthens administrative governance, distributes workload more effectively, and ensures administrative functions support operational and regulatory requirements.

★ **Recommendation #3** – Add 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant to support departmental administrative functions, with specific duties and workload distribution to be assigned at the discretion of the Fire Chief based on operational priorities.

*(Further addressed in Section 3.3.5 and 3.2.7.2)*

★ **Recommendation #4** – Establish Assistant Deputy Chief Positions for the Support and Operations portfolios as follows:

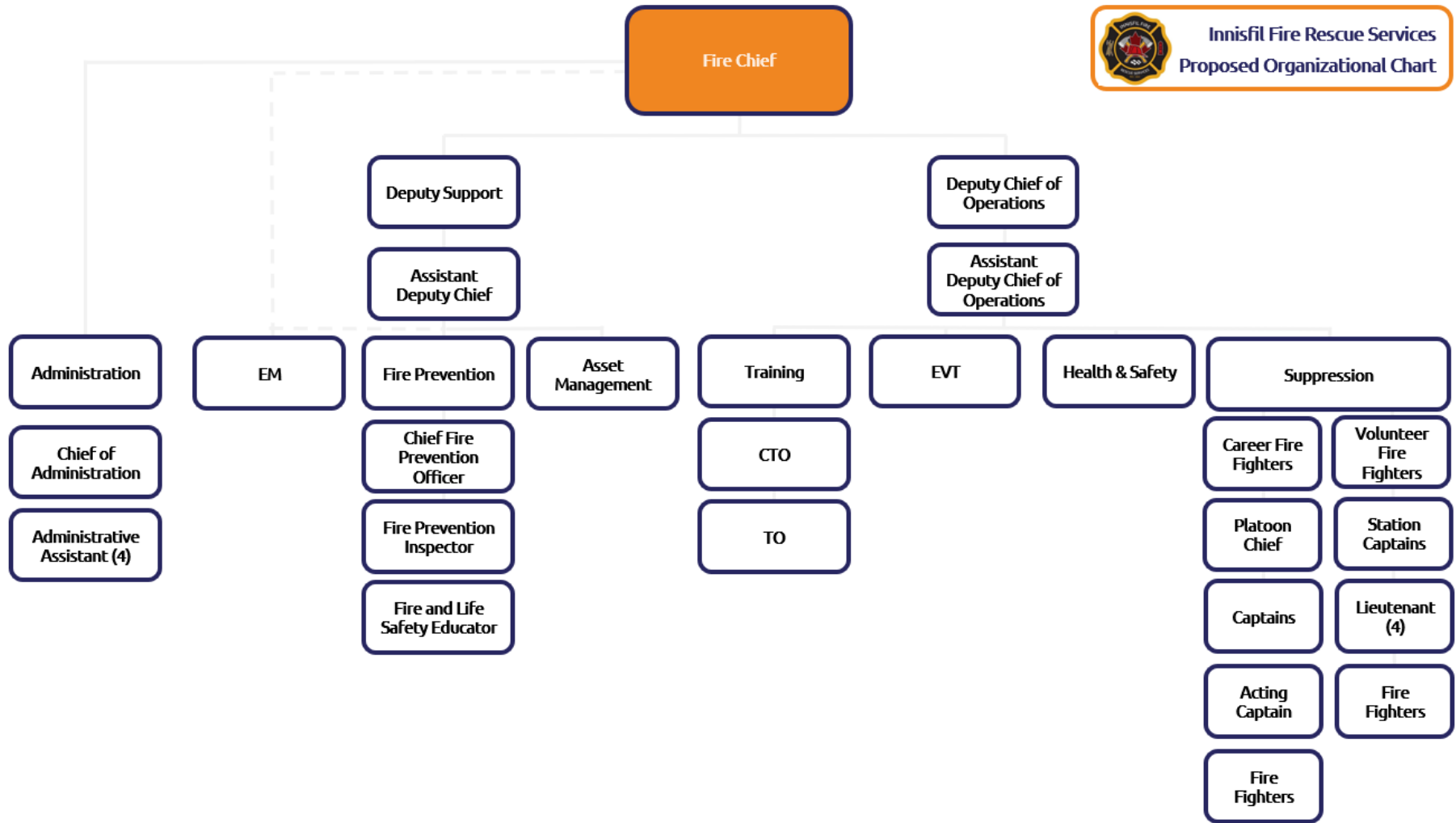
- Assistant Deputy Chief Operations (Immediate)
- Assistant Deputy Chief Support Services (Mid Term)

★ **Recommendation #5** - Reclassify the Business Manager position to Division Chief, Administration & Business Services to reflect the scope and strategic importance of this portfolio within IFRS.

*Note: Costing of FTE expansions is included in Section 6 Finance*

### 3.2.5 Proposed Future Organizational Structure

FIGURE #2 – RECOMMENDED IFRS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



### 3.3 Inspections, Enforcement, and Investigations, and Community Risk Reduction Outreach

This section of the FMP evaluates the community's ability to respond quickly and effectively to fire-related emergencies, including Community Risk Reduction Outreach (CRRO), formerly known as fire and life safety education. It also assesses the current staffing and deployment model in light of industry standards and offers recommendations based on current and future service needs.

IFRS conducts inspections based on complaints and requests, in addition to the mandatory inspections directed by the OFM. Four occupancies are classified as vulnerable, including one retirement home and three care homes. With an aging population, additional vulnerable occupancies with residents who have significant cognitive and mobility issues may require inspections. The Division has implemented NFPA 1730's frequency of inspections. The Division lacks the resources to implement the Fire Underwriters Survey; therefore, it should develop a hybrid model that is feasible until resources permit a more comprehensive inspection program.

#### 3.3.1 Fire Prevention Policy

It is worth noting that IFRS does not have a standalone fire prevention policy included in its Establishing and Regulating By-law. Having such a policy helps set a clear direction for those working within IFRS. Fire prevention divisions should develop a fire prevention policy for their community to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and visitors. A fire prevention policy assists in:

- Create clear guidelines for fire safety practices and procedures within the community.
- Implement fire safety education programs to increase awareness and encourage safe behaviours.
- Perform routine fire safety checks to spot and fix potential fire hazards.
- Ensure adherence to local and national fire regulations to uphold safety standards.
- Work with local authorities and community groups to improve fire safety measures.
- Review and update the policy regularly to stay current with changing circumstances and enhance effectiveness.

By following a fire prevention policy, communities can establish a safer environment, lower the risk of fire incidents, and safeguard lives and property.

### 3.3.2 Fire Prevention Division Functions

EMG reviewed and evaluated the current fire inspection strategy, community risk reduction program, and fire investigation. The analysis is based on NFPA 1730: *Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations*, 2019 Edition.

The complexity of inspections demands varying levels of technical knowledge. The NFPA 1031: *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner* recognize additional skills required for fire inspectors conducting basic or complex inspections. The IFRS Prevention Division maintains an inspection schedule that aligns with the requirements of NFPA 1730, which serves as its benchmark as the Division has grown and implemented the standard.

The FUS functions as an entity supporting the insurance industry by assessing communities and assigning a risk score. This score serves as a foundation for insurance underwriting companies to determine the level of risk, which in turn influences the basic cost of insurance premiums. Afterwards, brokerage firms use this assessment to develop insurance policies for consumers. FUS performs a thorough analysis considering various factors such as the community's water supply systems, the structure of the fire department, available resources, fire station locations, and staffing.

Regarding inspection programs that influence fire rates, FUS suggests inspection intervals for different community components, as outlined in the following table (provided for illustrative purposes only).

**TABLE #3: THE FIRE UNDERWRITERS’ INSPECTION SCHEDULE**

Occupancy Type	Inspection Frequency Benchmark
Assembly (Class A)	3 to 6 months
Institutional (Class B)	12 months
Single Family Dwellings (Class C)	12 months
Multi-Family Dwellings (Class C)	6 months
Hotel/Motel (Class C)	6 months
Commercial (Class E)	12 months
Industrial (Class F)	3 to 6 months

Each type of building has its own risks and complexities. In many large departments, fire inspectors focus on a specific building occupancy type based on the Ontario Building Code’s (OBC) Occupancy Classifications. For example, multi-unit dwellings could be old houses converted into four-unit apartments. Meanwhile, another inspector might concentrate on a six-storey, mid-rise building constructed with non-combustible materials. Every building has unique features and different Fire Code requirements based on size, occupant load, construction, and other factors. This inspection model serves as a useful reference for evaluating the department’s current inspection program and determining whether improvements are necessary and feasible within available resources.

Although IFRS is still in its early stages of adopting the NFPA schedule, other municipalities, are shifting from a prescriptive inspection approach to a more risk-based strategy as stated in NFPA 1730. This approach means that communities with higher-risk occupancies, such as high-rises and industrial-based occupancies, require more fire prevention resources to prevent emergency incidents.

The following table shows the number of inspections IFRS has completed over the past three years. The Fire Prevention Division deserves significant credit for not issuing citations, thanks to its high compliance rate achieved through a cooperative approach.

**TABLE #4: THE NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS**

Event	Number of Fire Inspections		
	2022	2023	2024
Fire Inspections	470	477	557

While EMG applauds the achievements of the one Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) and two Fire Prevention Inspectors (FPI) for completing as many inspections as possible, the workload continues to grow each year, as shown in Table #4 above.

The proposed growth in large occupancies, such as Orbit and Innisfil Heights, will strain current resources. This can only be mitigated by conducting fewer inspections, which raises fire risks, or by adding more resources to handle the increased workload.

Several factors influence the duration of a thorough inspection. Each inspection varies and depends on several elements, including the following:

- **Property Type and Classification:** Residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties all have different requirements, complexities, and sizes.

- **Nature of the Request or Complaint:** Whether it's a proactive inspection, a complaint-driven visit, or a follow-up, the scope and depth of the inspection vary considerably.
- **Pre-Inspection Preparation:** This involves reviewing historical data about the property, coordinating with colleagues in Building or By-law departments, and evaluating the current use of the property.
- **Site Conditions:** For example, inspections related to large burn permits may require travel to remote or less accessible areas. Some sites are next to roads, while others require walking long distances to reach the burn site.
- **Travel Time - Location:** The Town of Innisfil covers a large area, and travel time between spots can be up to 40 minutes one way, depending on the destination and the location of the inspection.
- **Reporting and Follow-Up:** Preparing the inspection report, delivering it to the property owner, issuing orders if necessary, and conducting follow-ups or re-inspections all contribute to the total time spent on a file.
- **Support During Correction Period:** Property owners are given a reasonable amount of time to fix identified issues. During this period, inspectors may be called upon to provide additional clarification, guidance, or review verification documents before the owner proceeds with the next steps. This support is vital to ensure compliance and safety, but it also increases the overall time needed per file.
- **Consulting with Colleagues and Experts:** Some files may need guidance and support from outside agencies, internal departments, or advisors. This adds to the time required for the administrative tasks of fire inspections.

Each inspection is inherently unique, so this variation must be considered when assessing time commitments.

The following table indicates the time it takes to complete inspections.

**TABLE #5: AVERAGE TIME SPENT COMPLETING FIRE INSPECTION TIME WORKSHEET (NFPA 1730)**

Task - Inspections	Time to Complete Task	Administration Time	Travel Time	Follow-up Time	Total Time
Fire Prevention Officer	Site Inspection will depend on the building's size, systems, requirements, devices, and the complexity and current state. Approximately 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Initiation and scheduling: 10-20 minutes. Entering data and initial findings notes into the system. 20 - 60 minutes. Drafting Inspection report or Order (referencing code and pending number of infractions) 60+ minutes.	5 - 120-minute travel time. (there and back) per visit.	Varying - This could be as simple as a telephone call, a site visit, or multiple follow-ups. The same time allotted to an inspection should apply as a follow-up / re-inspection, 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Depending on the variables

Task - Inspections	Time to Complete Task	Administration Time	Travel Time	Follow-up Time	Total Time
Fire Prevention Inspector # 1	Site Inspection will depend on the building's size, systems, requirements, devices, and the complexity and current state. Approximately 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Initiation and scheduling: 10-20 minutes. Entering data and initial findings notes into the system. 20 - 60 minutes. Drafting Inspection report or Order (referencing code and pending number of infractions) 60+ minutes.	5 - 120-minute travel time.(there and back) per visit.	Varying - This could be as simple as a telephone call, a site visit, or multiple follow-ups. The same time allotted to an inspection should apply as a follow-up / re-inspection, 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Depending on the variables
Fire Prevention Inspector # 2	Site Inspection will depend on the building's size, systems, requirements, devices, and the complexity and current state. Approximately 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Initiation and scheduling: 10-20 minutes. Entering data and initial findings notes into the system. 20 - 60 minutes. Drafting Inspection report or Order (referencing code and pending number of infractions) 60+ minutes.	5 - 120-minute travel time. (there and back) per visit.	Varying - This could be as simple as a telephone call, a site visit, or multiple follow-ups. The same time allotted to an inspection should apply as a follow-up / re-inspection, 10 - 15 minutes per 9.29m <sup>2</sup> (10'x10')	Depending on the variables

As mentioned, the Town of Innisfil is experiencing significant growth, which is increasing pressure on the Fire Prevention Division. EMG recommends that IFRS retitle the current Fire Prevention Officer to Chief Fire Prevention Officer (CFPO) to establish clear program leadership and accountability for code compliance, community risk reduction, inspection quality, and performance reporting. The CFPO would report the Deputy Fire Chief – Fire Prevention, Facilities, and Emergency Management.

Add one additional FPI to the current complement to address growth-driven demand. Once staffed, divide the Town of Innisfil into quadrants and assign each Fire Prevention member to a specific quadrant. These assignments do not prevent inspectors from assisting others with inspections but establish a designated area for each inspector. This structure strengthens consistency, and accountability without a large staffing increase.

The Chief Fire Prevention Officer (CFPO) in fire departments has a vital role in protecting the safety and well-being of the community. The role includes:

- Performing fire inspections to evaluate fire safety and ensure regulatory compliance.
- Enforcing fire codes and regulations to prevent fire hazards.
- Providing public education on fire safety and prevention.
- Investigating fire incidents to identify causes and enhance safety measures.
- Training and supervising fire prevention personnel to uphold high safety standards.

The Chief Fire Prevention Officer's is responsible for the deployment of a fire safety strategy, ensuring all aspects of fire prevention are properly managed and that the community is protected from fire-related dangers.

★ **Recommendation #6** - That IFRS hires one Fire Prevention Inspector within two years.

★ **Recommendation #7** - That IFRS hires a Chief Fire Prevention Officer within six years

*Note: Costing of FTE expansions is included in Section 6 Finance*

### 3.3.3 Fire Prevention – Inspection Duties & Qualifications

As mentioned, IFRS's new organizational chart displays a more streamlined reporting structure. Due to the Deputy Fire Chief's (DFC) workload, maintaining this setup is difficult, primarily because of ongoing updates on the Division's activities. The DFC's roles within IFRS may need to be realigned soon.

EMG commends IFRS for updating the job descriptions of both the FPO and FPI in February 2025. One clause that should be revised in the FPO’s job description is the reporting structure, as it currently states that the FPO reports directly to the Fire Chief, not the Deputy Fire Chief. Since the Fire Chief is busy with ongoing duties, it would be better for the hierarchy if this were amended so that the FPO reports to the Deputy Fire Chief responsible for Prevention. In contrast, the FPI’s job description states that they report directly to the FPO. When appointed, the job descriptions for the roles of Fire Prevention Officer and Inspector should clearly define each position within the IFRS framework.

Furthermore, all job descriptions should align with the NFPA 1031 definition of Fire Inspector I, II and III as identified in Table #6 below.

**TABLE #6: NFPA 1031 FIRE INSPECTOR DEFINITIONS**

NFPA 1031 - Title	Definition
<b>Fire Inspector I</b>	<p>An individual at the initial progression level who has met the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level I.</p> <p><b>Fire Inspector I conducts essential fire inspections and applies codes and standards.</b></p>
<b>Fire Inspector II</b>	<p>A person at the second or intermediate level of progression who has fulfilled the job performance requirements outlined in this standard for Level II.</p> <p><b>The Fire Inspector II conducts most inspections and interprets applicable codes and standards.</b></p>
<b>Fire Inspector III</b>	<p>An individual at the third and highest level of progression who has fulfilled the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level III.</p> <p><b>The Fire Inspector III performs all fire inspections, plan review duties, and resolves complex code-related issues.</b></p>

The table below outlines the recommended qualifications for both roles. EMG noted that the updated Job Descriptions for the FPO and FPI include the NFPA qualification and certification levels required for each position, along with several that are considered assets. The IFRS should

consider making those listed as assets also mandatory and adjusting to the required levels of competence. The following table outlines the minimum qualifications that FPOs and FPIs should possess.

**TABLE #7: FPO AND FPI QUALIFICATIONS**

	<b>Fire Prevention Officer</b>	<b>Fire Prevention Inspector</b>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFPA 1001 Firefighter I and II, NFPA 1072 (472)</li> <li>• NFPA 1041 Fire Instructor I</li> <li>• NFPA 1031 Levels I, II and III</li> <li>• NFPA 921 (not a certified course in Canada) and 1033</li> <li>• NFPA 1035 Level I and II</li> <li>• EM 200, the Basic Emergency Management Course.</li> <li>• Improving Fire Safety for Vulnerable Ontarians: Training for Chief Fire Officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Inspector, Level II Course</li> <li>• NFPA 1035 Level I and II</li> <li>• NFPA 1072 Hazmat Awareness Course.</li> <li>• NFPA 921 (not a certified Course in Canada) and 1033</li> <li>• OFC Parts 2 &amp; 6.</li> <li>• EM 200, the Basic Emergency Management Course.</li> <li>• Improving Fire Safety for Vulnerable Ontarians: Training for Chief Fire Officials.</li> </ul>

The EMG believes that FPO qualifications and certification should be established at the Fire Inspector III level, considering the position’s supervisory responsibilities, and that the position be certified to NFPA 1021 Level I to enhance supervisory skills.

EMG noted that all personnel in Fire Prevention are certified to NFPA 1033: *Standards for Fire Investigator Professional Qualifications*. The FPO and FPIs should be the only ones certified to NFPA 1033, notwithstanding the complexity of fire investigations and factors associated with circumstances where buildings requiring complex inspections may contribute to the cause of the fire. A detailed analysis is provided in Section 3.2.6.

### **3.3.4 Fire Prevention – Community Risk Reduction Outreach Program**

EMG’s review of the current fire prevention programs focused on identifying strengths, gaps, and areas for growth and improvement. When evaluating the Fire Prevention Division, it was clear that its strengths lie in inspection, resiliency, and risk reduction functions. As mentioned, the familiar term “public education” can be replaced with the Community Risk Reduction Outreach (CRRO) program within IFRS, and this name change will be reflected in the updated E&R By-law.

EMG’s review of the CRRO indicated that the program is strong, comprehensive, and community focused. While the current staffing levels support the existing program implementation, this level of engagement cannot be maintained without affecting other areas of fire prevention. Due to this and the expected growth within the Town in the coming years, the need for a dedicated Public Fire and Life Safety Educator (PFLSE) becomes clearer.

★ **Recommendation #8** - That IFRS hire a dedicated Public Fire and Life Safety Educator.

*Note: Costing of FTE expansions is included in Section 6 Finance*

The following Table indicates the CRRO.

**TABLE #8: STATISTICS FOR THE COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION OUTREACH PROGRAM**

Event	2022	2023	2024
CRRO Events	49	52	29

### 3.3.4.1 Demographics of the Town of Innisfil

The projected demographic growth in the Town of Innisfil over the coming years will inevitably impact the efficiency of the IFRS CRRO program due to increased demands for services and program delivery. The most significant residential growth is in the Alcona and Lefroy areas, which will expand the housing stock, increase the population, and lead to more calls for service to the IFRS Fire Prevention Division. Another region experiencing notable growth is the Innisfil Heights Employment Area, a key area for development. It covers 1,600 acres along Highway 400 and can support over 16,000 jobs.<sup>8</sup> This area is particularly attractive for industrial, commercial and manufacturing sectors. The IFRS must monitor call volumes, their effects, and the demands placed on fire prevention and community risk reduction outreach.

Currently, fire prevention personnel also fulfill their duties as the PFLSE. The team is doing an excellent job delivering the CRRO program with the time they have available. However, as the demand for services increases, it is clear that they will need additional support to maintain the program’s current quality.

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<sup>8</sup> Innisfil-Heights-Investment-Guide-(Interactive).pdf, accessed September 2025, [https://innisfil.ca/en/business-and-employment/Economic-Development-Site/Reports/Innisfil-Heights-Investment-Guide-\(Interactive\).pdf](https://innisfil.ca/en/business-and-employment/Economic-Development-Site/Reports/Innisfil-Heights-Investment-Guide-(Interactive).pdf)

Fire Stations should engage more in the Community Risk Reduction Outreach program to address this gap. A Fire Station PFLSE would need to help coordinate and deliver the programs after completing NFPA 1035. Some departments have taken it a step further, requiring all POC members to complete NFPA 1035 and commit a minimum of 12 hours per year to support the CRRO program.

★ **Recommendation #9** - Each IFRS fire station establishes a station PFLSE , along with all other IFRS firefighters, completes NFPA 1035 to support the delivery of the CRRO programs.

### 3.3.4.2 *Social Media*

Social media provides platforms to introduce the community to IFRS and educate residents about reducing fire and safety hazards. These platforms also serve as valuable resources for recruiting members and sharing stories about the department's achievements. IFRS uses the Town's website to promote fire and life safety education programs. Residents can contact the Fire Prevention Division through the Town website for information, questions, and comments. Creatively leveraging social media can also help introduce the fire department's work to a younger audience through its CRRO campaigns.

One of the most valuable tools that the FPO/PFLSE can use is social media to share fire and life safety messages. IFRS must maintain accounts on multiple social media platforms and manage all communications to ensure that important notifications, such as emergency alerts, are sent promptly and accurately. IFRS should follow corporate social media policies.

The significance of fire prevention divisions cannot be overstated. While the brave efforts of emergency responders will always be vital, a balanced strategy that equally prioritizes prevention can help build safer, more resilient communities. Fire departments that focus on fire prevention can lower the frequency and severity of emergencies, ensuring their resources are used more efficiently and effectively. The message must shift to acknowledge that prevention is not just a secondary role but a fundamental part of a comprehensive fire service.

### 3.3.5 *Fire Inspection Program*

The IFRS Fire Inspection program forms the core of the Fire Prevention Division. According to IFRS statistics, the division carried out an average of 501.3 inspections annually from 2022 to 2024. This is significant given that there were only two staff members, one of whom retired in 2024. In that year and in 2025, a replacement was hired, and a new position was filled, raising the division's total staff to three. An additional FPI is allocated for 2026. During this period, a total of 1,504 inspections were conducted in conjunction with the CRR outreach presentations.

Maintaining this level of activity will be challenging for the current staff without additional resources in the future.

When considering all personnel involved, EMG praises the members for their initiative in establishing an inspection frequency schedule based on NFPA 1730. The standard specifies a minimum inspection frequency according to the risk matrix (high, medium, and low occupancy risk) outlined in the following table. Other entities, such as FUS, also suggest inspection frequency schedules that could help the IFRS improve their existing schedule to better align with their needs and circumstances.

As time advances and the new schedule is developed, the department could create its own hybrid model that includes the FUS inspection frequency.

**TABLE #9: NFPA 1730 - MINIMUM INSPECTION FREQUENCY**

Occupancy Risk Classification	Frequency
High	Annually
Moderate	Biennially
Low	Triennially
Critical Infrastructure	Per AHJ*

*\*AHJ – Authority Having Jurisdiction (the Town Council)*

★ **Recommendation #10** - That IFRS’s Fire Prevention Division develop a proactive hybrid fire inspection frequency chart that incorporates aspects of NFPA 1730’s and FUS’s recommended schedules, best practices and meets the Town’s best practices.

### 3.3.6 Fire Investigation Program

The Fire Prevention Division handles fire investigation functions. For fire investigation services provided by the IFRS, OFM data from 2022-2024 show that less than 1% (0.76%) of all calls responded to by the department involved structure fires with a dollar loss. During the same period, a similar statistic was seen for vehicle fires (0.88%) of all calls.

**TABLE #10: NUMBER OF PROPERTY FIRE/ EXPLOSIONS 2020 THROUGH 2024(OFM DATA)**

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Number of Structure Fires	19	17	15	23	23	97
Number of Vehicle Fires	17	12	25	24	23	101

The fire investigation results help identify trends used in developing building and fire codes, as well as public fire and life safety education, and fire prevention initiatives. The standard outlines the minimum requirements for establishing, structuring, operating, and managing fire investigation units. This standard aims to assist fire investigation units in enhancing the quality of their work and operations by defining policy requirements for organizations, encompassing management systems, resources, health and safety, and documentation and reporting.

Typically, fire investigation falls under fire prevention, as is the case in IFRS, and personnel have received certification in NFPA 1033. The entire division is required to complete a course based on NFPA 921, *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations*. Certification in NFPA 921 is not available in Canada but is accessible in the United States. Having qualified and certified personnel aligns with best practices recommended by NFPA 1730 and complies with O. Reg. 343/22: Firefighter Certification, enacted under the FPPA, 1997.

EMG believes that IFRS fire investigation operations comply with the new NFPA 1321: *Standard for Fire Investigation Units*, which is expected to be published in 2025. Additionally, in accordance with NFPA 1730, all fire officers involved in determining the origin, cause, and circumstances of any fire or explosion, securing the incident scene, and safeguarding evidence or potential evidence from damage or destruction should be trained according to the job performance requirements of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. It would be advantageous for division members to pursue training opportunities related to investigating vehicle fires. Due to the economic downturn, it is uncertain whether any vehicle fires involve insurance fraud.

### 3.3.7 Determination of Current Staffing Requirements

#### 3.3.7.1 Fire Prevention Inspector and Support Staffing

EMG refers to the NFPA 1730: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations. Fire departments also consult Annex C when conducting a staffing analysis. NFPA 1730 offers guidelines for organizing and deploying fire prevention inspections, code enforcement, plan review, investigation, and public education activities. It aims to assist fire departments and other organizations in ensuring they have the resources and procedures to manage fire prevention efforts effectively.

*Annex C* of NFPA 1730 provides a sample staffing exercise, a practical tool to help fire departments determine the appropriate staffing levels for their fire prevention programs. This annex presents a five-step approach for evaluating staffing needs.

- 1 Specify Services Offered**  
List all fire prevention services your organization provides.
- 2 Determine Time Requirements**  
Assess the time needed for each service.
- 3 Calculate the Total Hours Needed**  
Add up all the hours required to perform each service.
- 4 Assess Available Hours**  
Calculate the total hours current staff can provide.
- 5 Calculate Staffing Needs**  
Compare the required and available hours to identify staffing gaps.

Reviewing the Fire Prevention personnel's workload will determine how long it takes to complete inspections and other duties. It would be remiss not to mention the various responsibilities beyond inspections, including fire safety plan reviews, permit inspections, fire

investigations, consultations, plans examination and assisting with the community risk reduction outreach program when needed.

The personnel hours analysis does not account for other clerical or administrative duties involved in record management and data quality assurance.

### **3.3.7.3**      *Summary of Considerations*

During a review of Fire Prevention activities and discussions with various stakeholders, several areas were identified that could improve the Division's overall efficiency and effectiveness through a few operational adjustments. The following items should be considered for moving forward.

- Currently, after inspections are completed in the field, staff make notes on paper and then return to the office to input those notes into the Record Management System used by IFRS. Soon, the department will transition to a new platform called First Due, an all-in-one system designed to replace many of the existing platforms at IFRS.
- It is at that time when all personnel in the Fire Prevention Division should be issued iPads or tablets to complete their inspection reports on, provided they have an internet connection to the RMS. All reports are automatically saved in the occupant's profile, and staff will no longer need to rewrite their reports into the system, except to add additional notes. Doing so will save a significant amount of time, improve the division's efficiency, and enable it to complete more inspections as the amount of administrative work is reduced.
- While the Fire Prevention Division, with support from the Planning and Building Departments, has successfully required a new development in the Gilford area to include residential sprinklers, mainly due to the area's lack of water supply, this initiative could be expanded further. Sprinklers have proven their effectiveness, and there has never been a fatality in a Canadian residential fire with sprinklers installed. They save lives, and more efforts could be made to increase their installation in residential developments across the Town of Innisfil. Credit to the Fire Prevention team for using a small prop at functions; however, an actual demonstration at a new residential development for potential buyers would offer a much stronger example of their value.
- Although the Town has many bylaws to regulate activities, strengthening their structure could improve enforcement. Clarifying the wording would better support each by-law's purpose. To aid enforcement, by-laws such as Outdoor Burning and Fireworks could appoint Fire Prevention Personnel as Provincial Offences Officers, enabling them to issue tickets to offenders instead of relying solely on By-Law Enforcement Officers.

- The Town is considering the need to establish a registry that includes licensing for short-term accommodations. This issue has emerged in nearly every municipality in Ontario due to their popularity, as more families choose staycations over international travel. A key requirement in the by-law should be that fire inspections are carried out annually to verify OFC compliance. Simultaneously, the Town should regulate accessory dwellings such as secondary suites and granny flats. Many fire fatalities have occurred in basement apartments where occupants could not escape due to the lack of egress options, like direct exits or windows that are large enough and low enough to climb through. The IFRS should be consulted during the development of these bylaws.
- Full-time firefighters could assist more with fire inspections of simpler buildings, such as small businesses. This can be achieved by members completing NFPA 1031 Level I. While all suppression personnel have supported CRR outreach programs, members should also complete NFPA 1035.
- As mentioned earlier, social media is a crucial tool for sharing fire safety messages and facilitating communication during emergencies. The IFRS requires better control and access to these platforms to enhance their effectiveness in informing the public.
- The service fees should be more comprehensive to cover situations such as when inspectors need to conduct multiple re-inspections due to non-compliance; in such cases, fees should be charged for each visit. Additionally, annual inspections of food trucks operating throughout the Town should be carried out.
- The Town does not require Wood Energy Technology Transfer (WETT) inspections for newly installed solid fuel appliances, such as woodstoves. There should be a requirement for these inspections to be carried out by a third party, and copies of the certificates should be submitted as part of the building permit process.
- Regarding water supply in the Town, cisterns must be inspected to ensure compliance with NFPA 22.
- The Town, in collaboration with InnServices, should jointly create a by-law concerning hydrants. It will cover issues such as snow removal, preventing snow buildup (such as piles of snow left on top of hydrants during clearing), prohibiting the planting of vegetation around them, and stopping unauthorized colours, obstructions, including parking too close to the hydrants.
- An effective community risk reduction outreach (public education) should involve outside stakeholders to support the Fire Prevention Division's efforts to lower the risk of fires. This might include items such as grocery bags with messaging printed on them, a designated venue like a hall for hosting a CRRO event, or high school students volunteering their public service hours to the IFRS.

## 3.4 Training and Career Development

The evaluation of IFRS current training and education programs, in alignment with the Town's fire protection delivery model, is a critical step in ensuring the department is prepared to meet both the operational demands of emergency response and the evolving needs of community risk reduction in a rapidly growing municipality.

The evaluation is essential for identifying gaps in training, ensuring compliance with recognized industry standards such as NFPA, and aligning training efforts with IFRS's emergency response objectives and community risk reduction (CRR) initiatives. It also provides a foundation for forecasting future training requirements and associated costs, allowing the Town to proactively allocate resources as Innisfil continues to expand.

A well-trained, well-equipped workforce is the cornerstone of effective fire protection services. For IFRS, maintaining an acceptable level of service means ensuring personnel have the skills, knowledge, and tools to meet the challenges of a growing and changing community. This extends beyond emergency response to include fire prevention, public education, and CRR programs that safeguard both firefighter and community safety while supporting sustainable service delivery as Innisfil experiences significant population and development growth.

Training and education in a composite department like IFRS face challenges with uneven skill levels, paid-on-call recruitment pressures, limited training capacity, and inconsistent integration between paid-on-call and volunteer staff. Rapid growth in Innisfil will further increase call volumes and complexity, intensifying these risks.

Investment in training programs, facilities, and delivery models must keep pace with the Town's growth to ensure IFRS can meet required standards, safeguard firefighter safety, and uphold community expectations.

### *3.4.1 Industry Standards and Legislative Requirements*

Training programs at IFRS must align with Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) in applicable NFPA standards, comply with all legislated requirements, and directly support the departments response objectives. EMG's review of IFRS training evaluated current programs, capacity, record keeping, and identified service gaps, with measurable targets developed against Ontario Regulation 343/22 Firefighter Certification, and the following NFPA standards:

- NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Programs;
- NFPA 1201: Standard for Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public;

- NFPA 1041: Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications;
- NFPA 1006: Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications;
- NFPA 1402: Standard on Facilities for Fire Training and Associated Props;
- NFPA 1403: Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions;
- NFPA 1401: Fire Service Training Reports and Records; and
- NFPA 470: Standard for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications. (formerly NFPA 1072)

Given the inherently high-risk nature of firefighting, comprehensive training is essential to ensure personnel respond safely and effectively to emergencies. Part III of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) sets out employers' duties; specifically, subsection 25(2) provides that an employer shall:

- *(a) provide information, instruction, and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker,*
- *(c) when appointing a supervisor, appoint a competent person, and*
- *(h) take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.*

Alongside the OHSA, the Section 21 Firefighter Guidance Notes set out best practices to protect the health and safety of Ontario's fire service personnel. Part 7 (Training) underscores the need for training that is consistent, documented, and competency based. The FPPA defines municipal responsibilities for delivering fire protection services; In the Town of Innisfil, these responsibilities are operationalized through the E&R By-law, which specifies local service types and thereby informs the scope of requirements of IFRS training programs. With the enactment of Ontario Regulation 343/22 (Firefighter Certification) under the FPPA in 2022, all firefighters who provide fire protection services must be certified to the minimum standards prescribed by the regulation.

### 3.4.2 Training Programs

Proper training is essential not only to build new skills but also to maintain existing competencies, with the Fire Chief ultimately responsible for ensuring firefighters meet the level of service expected by the community. Given Innisfil's rapid growth, firefighters must demonstrate higher levels of proficiency than ever before in prevention, suppression, and emergency management, where decisions can mean the difference between life and death.

To support this, IFRS should adopt a career-path training model that guides personnel from entry-level firefighter through officer development and extends across specialized functions, ensuring a well-prepared and future-ready workforce.

NFPA 1201: Standard for Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public guides Fire Chiefs in developing training programs that protect lives, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment from hazards such as fires, hazardous materials, and natural disasters.

Section 4.11 requires every Fire and Emergency Services Organization (FESO) to maintain training and education programs that ensure personnel are competent to perform their responsibilities effectively, efficiently, and safely. The Fire Chief holds ultimate responsibility for these programs, including budgeting for facilities, training aids, supplies, and instructors (in-house or contracted), as well as maintaining records, assessing effectiveness, and meeting the professional qualifications required for the role.

NFPA 1201 further emphasizes, under Section 5.1.1, that departments must establish and maintain training, education, and professional development programs with the goal of preventing occupational deaths, injuries, and illnesses.

In practice, fire service training typically falls into four key areas:

- Recruit Firefighter Training
- Maintenance Training
- Professional Development Training
- Special Operations Training

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) also evaluates training as a core component of organizational performance. CFAI stresses that training and educational resources reflect a department's philosophy and mission. These should include access to instructional materials, methodologies, technologies, and facilities. Where internal resources are not available, departments are expected to identify and secure external resources to ensure compliance with training and education requirements.

### **3.4.2.1 Recruit Firefighter Training**

NFPA 1500, Section 5.1.3 states the following:

*5.1.3 The fire department shall establish training and education programs that provide new members with initial training, proficiency opportunities, and a method of skill and knowledge*

*evaluation for duties assigned to the member prior to engaging in emergency operations.<sup>9</sup>*

The recruit training requirements and evaluation process will be assessed against the core services that are being provided by the department.

### **3.4.2.2 Maintenance Training**

NFPA 1500, Section 5.1.9 states the following:

*5.1.9 As a duty of function, members shall be responsible to maintain proficiency in their skills and knowledge, and to avail themselves of the professional development provided to the members through the department training and education programs.<sup>10</sup>*

This expectation applies to all members of the fire department, regardless of division or rank. The skills required of an effective firefighter are extensive, and mastering them demands ongoing, repetitive training. Because firefighters operate in high-pressure, high-stress environments where coordination and precision are critical, regular practice in a controlled setting is essential. Consistent, focused training ensures safe, efficient fireground operations and enhances overall performance in real-world emergencies.

### **3.4.2.3 Professional Development Training**

NFPA 1500 states that fire service members shall avail themselves of professional development opportunities. The purpose of professional development training is to prepare firefighters for advancement within the service. Inclusive of certification training to the NFPA 1021 Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications Levels I to IV, training should also focus on management functions such as dealing with difficult people, time management, labour relations, and effective leadership, to name a few.

Additional educational opportunities are available through community colleges and universities, including fire service administration certificates and degrees in emergency management. These programs support career advancement to senior leadership roles such as Fire Chief or Deputy Fire Chief. Increasingly, today's highly trained fire service leaders also transition into executive positions within corporate or private sector organizations.

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<sup>9</sup> Free Access - NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program, accessed November 13, 2024. <https://link.nfpa.org/free-access/publications/1500/2021>

<sup>10</sup> Free Access - NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program, accessed August 26, 2025. <https://link.nfpa.org/free-access/publications/1500/2021>

### 3.4.2.4 Special Operations Training

NFPA 1500, Section 5.4.1 states the following:

*5.4.1 The fire department shall provide specific and advanced training to members who engage in special operations as a technician.<sup>11</sup>*

Section 5.4.2 goes on to state:

*5.4.2 The fire department shall provide specific training to members who are likely to respond to special operations incidents in a support role to special operations technicians.<sup>12</sup>*

Depending on the needs and circumstances of the community, some fire services may not be required to provide a technical rescue response. In other instances, the service may not have the personnel or equipment capacity to provide such a response and may rely on a fire protection agreement, for example, to fill the gap in service.

For those departments that do provide technical rescue response, NFPA 1006: Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications details the minimum job performance requirements at the awareness, operations, and technician levels.

### 3.4.3 Current Status

To ensure IFRS training programs effectively meet departmental needs and achieve required response objectives, the following factors must be carefully considered:

- **Required Training Programs:** Identify the specific training programs needed based on the services the fire department is tasked with providing.
- **Certification Hours:** Determine the number of hours required to achieve certification for each competency as outlined in relevant NFPA standards.
- **Training Resources:** Assess the resources necessary for successful training, including instructors, curriculum, training aids, and equipment.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Explore partnerships with neighboring fire departments, industry stakeholders, and other corporate divisions to enhance training efficiency and effectiveness.

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<sup>11</sup> Free Access - NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program, accessed August 26, 2025. <https://link.nfpa.org/free-access/publications/1500/2021>

<sup>12</sup> Free Access - NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program, accessed August 26, 2025. <https://link.nfpa.org/free-access/publications/1500/2021>

- **Annual Training Calendar:** Develop an annual training calendar at the beginning of each year, to be presented by the fire chief or designate, which outlines training goals and objectives aligned with the department's needs.
- **Training Records:** Maintain comprehensive and accessible training records that track individual firefighter history, training completion, and success rates.

Annex E Management of Training Programs of NFPA 1041 Fire Service Training Reports and Records, Section E.1 Training Manager states the following:

*“The training manager can either be a uniformed officer or a civilian. The manager should have experience in fire service training; a clear understanding of the fire department culture, structure, operations and mission; and knowledge of adult learning principles, course development, instructional methods, and evaluation of training. This individual should also be an effective leader and manager who can determine the training needs of the organization, develop goals and objectives to achieve those needs, implement training programs, evaluate the effectiveness of training, and develop the resources needed to sustain an effective and efficient training program”.*

According to the NFPA 1041, the management of fire service training programs requires a manager, regardless of fire service affiliation or instructor level, who can accomplish the following tasks:

- Budgeting
- Resource management
- Management of personnel
- Management of instruction
- Program evaluation
- Training needs analysis
- Scheduling
- Goal setting
- Networking with other training agencies
- Technical writing
- Effective verbal and written communication

The Training Division of IFRS is currently staffed by two Training Officers and overseen by the Deputy Fire Chief, Operations and Training. This structure is consistent with many composite

fire departments of similar size across Ontario. The Training Officers are responsible for coordinating and, in some instances, delivering all aspects of recruit training, ongoing skills maintenance, and specialized programs to both career and paid-on-call firefighters.

At present, the division operates without dedicated administrative support, which places additional demands on Training Officers to manage scheduling, recordkeeping, certification tracking, and other clerical tasks. While manageable under the department's current scale, the division is at capacity, and this administrative workload reduces the time available for program development, instructional delivery, and innovation. Despite these challenges, the Training Division provides effective redundancy with two officers, ensuring the department can run multiple training streams simultaneously and maintain alignment with operational priorities through Deputy Fire Chief oversight.

As the Town of Innisfil continues to grow and IFRS staffing expands, training demands are expected to increase significantly. New legislative requirements, evolving NFPA standards, and expanded risk profiles will require the division to deliver more complex and frequent training. The current structure has served the department well, but the absence of a dedicated senior officer and administrative support represents a limitation that will become more pronounced as the organization evolves.

### *3.4.4 IFRS Training Programs*

#### **3.4.4.1 Fundamentals of Recruit Training**

A well-structured recruit training program ensures firefighters begin their careers with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to work safely and effectively. In Ontario, training is governed by the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), the FPPA, and NFPA standards, with certification overseen by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

Programs are based on NFPA 1001 Level I & II competencies, including fire suppression, rescue, hazardous materials, and emergency scene operations. Instruction should be delivered by certified trainers (NFPA 1041) through classroom, skill labs, and live-fire training, supported by appropriate facilities, equipment, and PPE.

Recruits should be evaluated through written, practical, and scenario-based testing, culminating in OFM-administered certification. Documentation and recordkeeping are essential to track progress and compliance. Training should also emphasize teamwork, leadership, decision making, and increasingly, wellness and resilience.

### **3.4.4.2 Recruit Training Program**

The department delivers recruit training through an intensive, front-loaded program for career hires and a streamlined Tuesday/Saturday schedule for paid-on-call firefighters. Career recruits complete a full NFPA 1001 curriculum - SCBA confidence/survival, Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), thermal imaging camera use, ladders/ventilation, forcible entry, pump/relay/drafting, aerial operations, high-rise/standpipes, radio, Incident Management System (IMS)/accountability/gas detection, prevention/investigation, marine operations, fitness and fit testing – culminating in Job Performance Requirements (JPR) sign-offs and written/practical examinations.

The IFRS paid-on-call recruit program is delivered over 14 sessions from May to October (approximately 48 contact hours) and covers core competencies for entry-level firefighters. Recruits progress from orientation, Section 21/OHSA requirements, and PPE fit testing to hands-on modules in suppression, ladders/ventilation, search and rescue, water supply and pumper operations, wildland firefighting tactics (including Grass Fire Unit and All Terrain Vehicle), basic medical response (CPR/AED), and vehicle extrication. Safety, Incident Management awareness, fire behaviour, building construction, tools, ropes, forcible entry, and fireground operations. The program concludes with a full-day practical and written evaluation, supporting compliance with departmental procedures and provincial certification pathways.

### **3.4.4.3 Opportunities for Improvement**

Strengthening joint training between the career and paid-on-call firefighters to include regular multi-company evolutions that reinforce tactics and communications. Keeping different cadences is fine but enhancing multi-company objectives—e.g., initial attack, water supply/relay, and ventilation coordination—and capture timed performance metrics such as first line charged, water-on-fire, and primary search complete to drive more cohesive, consistent fireground operations in real-world conditions.

✦ **Recommendation #11** - Enhance joint training between career and paid-on-call firefighters by expanding shared multi-company evolutions, aligning skill expectations, and strengthening common performance objectives to support consistent fireground operations.

#### 3.4.4.4 *Career Development*

A career development program is essential for every fire department, career, composite, or paid-on-call. It should be built on current, well-defined job descriptions that translate into clear competencies and training requirements across divisions. This alignment ensures personnel are prepared to meet Council-approved service-level objectives.

A well-structured program also underpins succession planning. It should outline transparent pathways to advanced roles, including supervisory, senior leadership, and management positions, with defined prerequisites, learning milestones, and evaluation criteria. This gives members a clear route to progression and enables the organization to intentionally build its leadership pathway.

Education and certification must be paired with practical experience. Providing acting and temporary assignments, mentoring, and structured feedback so members can apply skills in real conditions. Acting opportunities both test readiness and reveal development needs, while giving individuals firsthand insight into the role and whether it aligns with their goals. This hands-on approach strengthens personal growth and ensures the department maintains capable leaders at every level.

Policy No. CP-02-19-06 Volunteer Firefighter Policy has an NFPA-aligned career development framework for paid-on-call firefighters, which includes prerequisites, certifications, and appraisals, for probationary, firefighter levels I and II, Acting Captain, and Captain.

Additionally, Guideline 6.2.4.2 Course Attendance includes a flowchart that maps development to NFPA pathways and serves as a base for a formal career development program. For career members, promotion, testing and development must align with the IPFFA collective agreement (e.g., posting/eligibility rules, standardized written/practical/interview components, recognition of acting time, probation/trial periods, training on paid status/tuition support, and appeal/grievance steps)

To formalize and make a career development program defensible across both paid-on-call and career streams, the department should set explicit prerequisites and JPRs for each position and extend the progression ladder to include NFPA 1021 Fire Officer III and IV, plus core management competencies. The framework below outlines key elements required to build and sustain such a program.

### Align roles to service needs

Update job descriptions across all ranks to define competencies and qualifications; anchor the program to Council approved service level objectives.

### Map clear pathways

Publish progression routes (e.g., Firefighter → Captain → Division Chief → Platoon → Chief Deputy/Chief) with eligibility, and prerequisites.

### Set training standards

Specify core certifications by role (e.g., NFPA 1021, IMS 100 – 400, leadership, ICS). Distinguish mandatory vs optional courses.

### Mentor and Coach

Pair members with experienced officers, offer leadership development in communications, decision-making, conflict resolution, and strategic thinking.

### Enable with policy and resources

Formalize expectations (training, progression, evaluation) and budget for courses, certifications, conferences, and materials.

### Promote continuous learning

Recognize achievements (e.g., certificates, tuition support) and encourage lifelong learning.

### Measure and improve

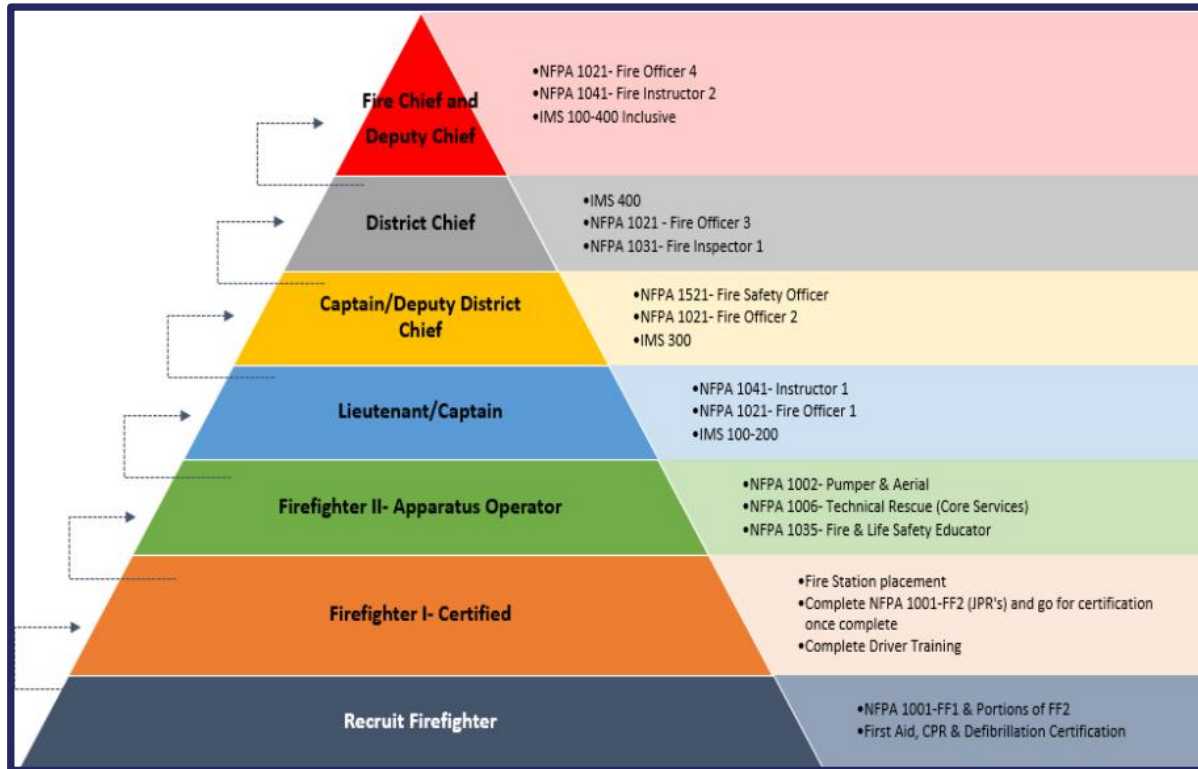
Collect feedback, track outcomes, and update the program as risks, technologies, and best practices evolve.

### Lead and plan succession

Ensure senior officers actively sponsor development and integrate pathways with succession planning to identify and prepare future leaders early.

A strong career development program fosters continuous learning, sets clear advancement pathways, and prepares members for each role. By combining targeted training, hands-on experience, and transparent evaluation, it meets operational needs today while developing future leaders who enhance the department's performance and service to the community.

FIGURE #3 – TRAINING CONTINUUM MODEL



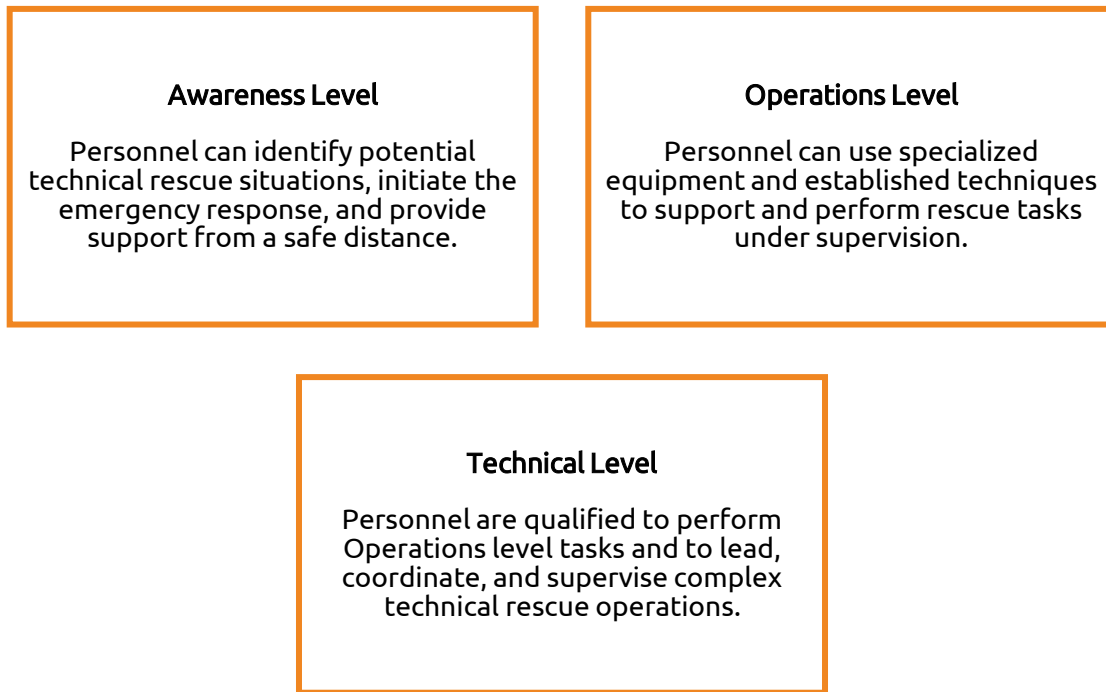
✦ **Recommendation #12** - That IFRS review and update its current officer development plan to ensure it aligns with Council-approved service levels, NFA standards, and the IPFFA collective agreement, and clearly defines prerequisites, competencies, and progression expectations for all officer ranks.

### 3.4.4.5 Technical Rescue

Innisfil Staff Report DSR-070-22 detailed required amendments to Appendix C of By-law 103-14 (E&R By-law) to define, among other levels of response, the scope of response for various technical rescue disciplines and hazardous materials.

Technical rescue covers a broad set of specialized emergency responses that fire departments may be required to perform. The governing qualification standard is NFA 1006: *Standard for Technical Rescue Professional Qualifications*, which establishes the minimum knowledge and skill requirements for responders to operate safely and effectively. NFA 1006 includes nineteen discipline-specific chapters and requires each fire department to define its scope of service and adopt written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that align with the operational level selected for each technical rescue.

NFPA 1006 recognizes three tiers of capability:



Per Appendix C of By-law 103-14 (as amended), IFRS is designated at the Awareness Level for the following technical rescue disciplines: confined space, trench, and high-angle rescue.

To augment capability for low-frequency, high-risk incidents, the Town maintains a Special Operations Service Agreement with the City of Barrie (Barrie Fire & Emergency Services) covering high/low-angle rescue, confined space rescue, and trench rescue.

While these incidents are uncommon, IFRS will provide an initial response within the municipality. Accordingly, all IFRS suppression personnel must be trained, at minimum, to the Awareness Level for each discipline included in the Special Operations Agreement, ensuring they can recognize hazards, establish control zones, establish control zones, initial appropriate actions, and support incoming specialty teams.

#### **3.4.4.6 Water/Ice Rescue and Marine Response/Firefighting**

Lake Simcoe is one of Innisfil's signature assets, drawing residents and visitors to an active waterfront with numerous docks and piers. In peak season, hundreds of vessels are on the water each day. Like any transportation corridor, collisions, medical emergencies, and mechanical failures occasionally occur, requiring rapid intervention on the lake or along the shoreline. Nearby agencies maintain marine capabilities, but IFRS is often the first point of contact for local incidents and must be prepared to operate safely and effectively.

For these reasons, robust water/ice rescue and marine response training is essential. Proficiency in boat operations, night navigation, victim recovery, and ice rescue techniques reduces time-to-intervention in hypothermic environments, improves survivability, and protects firefighter safety. Well-trained crews also ensure seamless interoperability with neighbouring services and align with applicable standards and guidelines (i.e., NFPA 1006 competencies and OHSA/Section 21 practices). Investing in this capability aligns with the community risk profile and safeguards Innisfil's most valued public amenities.

To its credit, the IFRS Training Division has developed several lesson plans associated with water/ice rescue and vessel operations that include:

- Airboat1 Familiarization – Practical
- NFPA 1006 Ice Rescue Technician Level – Row & Go
- NFPA 1006 Ice Rescue Shore Based – Talk, Reach, Throw
- Marine 1 Night Operations
- Night Ops Fall Marine 1

Presently, paid-on-call firefighters receive only water/ice rescue awareness level training, while more advanced training is specifically for career firefighters.

IFRS's water/ice rescue and marine training program provides a solid, NFPA 1006-aligned baseline that matches Lake Simcoe risk.

To build sustained, all-conditions capability, the curriculum should be expanded beyond short 2–3-hour blocks and introduce measurable performance standards (i.e., dispatch to launch, time to man overboard contact, recovery and packaging). Marine firefighting typically requires a 6–8-hour module covering vessel fire behaviour, boundary cooling, foam application, fuel/electrical isolation, including lithium-ion risks, marina pre-plans, and coordinating shore water supply.

IFRS is to be commended for building a disciplined, standards-based water/ice rescue and marine firefighting training program that reflects both the community's risk and best practice.

#### **3.4.4.7 Hazardous Materials**

The previously mentioned Staff Report (DSR-070-22) states that IFRS are trained according to By-law #11-015 of the County of Simcoe Hazardous Material Response Team (rescinded) for responding to hazardous materials (Hazmat) incidents. The Special Operations Service Agreement with the City of Barrie includes CBRN/Hazmat response from Barrie Fire & Emergency Services and requires that IFRS personnel are responsible for recognizing the nature of the incident and determining whether a technical level response is required. This is

consistent with NFPA 470 *Standard for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications* (formerly NFPA 1072), Awareness Level training.

NFPA 470 hazardous materials awareness training is readily available through the OFC in an online learning version. Like the training that is involved with other fire service disciplines, a maintenance component that reviews the applicable JPRs at the awareness level should be included in the annual training calendar for career and paid-on-call firefighters.

#### **3.4.4.8 Growth Based Training Enhancements**

Given Innisfil's projected growth, the department could consider formalizing Hazmat competency at the NFPA 470 Operations level, focusing on core and mission-specific skills (decontamination and defensive product control) that match the community's transportation and light-industrial risk profile and are feasible for a composite service to sustain. This path aligns with Ontario's firefighter certification framework and provides a prudent baseline while reserving Technician-level responses for BFES and provincially established teams when required. In parallel, the department could expand its risk-based technical rescue program (water/ice rescue), prioritizing rope rescue as the most immediate and relevant area of focus.

#### **3.4.4.9 Pre-Hospital Care Training**

Under the Town's Medical Response Agreement with the County of Simcoe, IFRS provides a Level A response. In 2024, medical incidents represented 65% of total call volume, similar to 2022 – 2023 (64% each year).

Training and equipment are aligned to first-responder care, and firefighters are trained in First Aid/CPR with defibrillation. Additionally, where personnel have completed all required training and work under medical directives, IFRS can administer naloxone, epinephrine (auto-injector), oral glucose gel, and 81mg ASA, with oversight by a physician medical supervisor; the plan is to extend medication capability to all stations over time.

Medical training levels vary by station. Career staff at Stations 2 and 5, and all members at Station 4, are trained as Emergency Medical Responders (EMR); other stations maintain basic first aid and AED credentials through Red Cross programs. Dispatch now uses the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), and IFRS training incorporates the MPDS determinants so crews can anticipate likely patient needs and coordinate effectively on arrival.

For training purposes, scenario-based drills should reflect MPDS determinants and local risk, such as apartment/high-rise access, CO exposures, and marine incidents, as some examples.

Training should incorporate career and POC personnel to ensure parity, with additional repetitions at Stations 2 and 5 where the medical workload is highest.

#### **3.4.4.10 Fire Prevention, Code Enforcement, and Fire Cause and Determination Training**

Shifting the Fire Prevention Division related training and its budget to the Training Division centralizes scheduling, certification/JPR tracking, and quality assurance under one governance model, bringing the financial controls needed to make training timely, consistent, and auditable across the service. A single, consolidated budget eliminates duplicate spending and supports clear cost-per-member metrics.

Operationally, the Training Division is structured to manage certification pathways and maintenance training, and it can plan multi-year training programs and costs. The Prevention Division remains the content authority, determining priorities and subject matter training needs. Meanwhile, the Training Division manages delivery methods and budget oversight, reducing clerical load on inspectors and ensuring mandatory prevention training is delivered on schedule and on budget.

★ **Recommendation #13** - Transfer the Fire Prevention Division’s training responsibility and budget to the Training Division.

#### **3.4.5 Staffing Level and Workload**

Council’s 2025 – 26 budget added one new Training Officer for 2025. For a composite fire service of Innisfil’s size, having two Training Officers under a Deputy Fire Chief is feasible if they focus on program design/delivery and receive assistance with scheduling, record keeping, certification tracking, and training program logistical needs. Without at least shared administrative support, the Training Officers spend significant time managing clerical duties and logistics instead of focusing more on program design and delivery.

It is anticipated that Innisfil will reach 85,000 residents by 2051, driving higher staffing levels, larger recruit classes, and expanded mandatory/maintenance training.<sup>13</sup> Anticipated high-rise development and growth in industrial/commercial occupancies will materially increase training complexity and volume. Beyond NFPA 1001: *Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications* fundamentals, IFRS will require recurring, scenario-based modules that mirror vertical firefighting, large-area operations, and extended water-supply requirements.

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<sup>13</sup> Planning Our Growth to 2051 | Get Involved Innisfil Accessed October 7, 2025. <https://www.getinvolvedinnisfil.ca/growth>

To deliver this at scale while maintaining current requirements with two Training Officers, implement a short-term plan to add on shift instructors and administrative support. In the mid-term, establish a Division Chief of Training (Platoon Chief level) to lead curriculum management, instructor development, and annual competency sustainment. These enhancements will keep the training programs aligned with Innisfil’s evolving risk profile and maintain the service levels authorized in the E&R by-law.

✦ **Recommendation #14** - Investigate adding on shift instructors to support medical and technical rescue training programs.

✦ **Recommendation #15** - Establish a Division Chief of Training position.

✦ **Recommendation #16** - Establish an additional Training Officer position.

*Note: Costing of FTE expansions is included in Section 6 Finance*

### 3.4.6 Live Fire Training & Training Facility

#### 3.4.6.1 Live Fire Training

Live-fire training is essential because it’s the only safe, controlled way to practice modern fire attack, search, ventilation, hose management, water flow, pump operations, mayday and rapid intervention scenarios, and incident command decision making under real heat, smoke, and time pressure. Concurrent training between career, POC firefighters for building a consistent playbook, common radio language, role clarity, and trust is needed to ensure seamless operations at an emergency scene. It also ensures that mixed crews arriving together can execute coordinated tasks, such as primary search, water supply, ventilation, and fire attack, to meet time-based benchmarks, supporting both NFPA 1710/1720 performance goals and local risk.

As the Town of Innisfil’s growth intensifies, the need for live-fire training intensifies. The increase in high-rise and intensification, developments such as the “Orbit” development, plus larger commercial/industrial occupancies, adds vertical and complex fire dynamics. High-rise fires include complexities such as wind-driven fire, long hose stretches, standpipes, lobby control, stair management, elevator control, smoke control systems, and higher occupant life risk. Live-fire evolutions, such as standpipe, high-rise packs, door control, flow path, and large flow operations, to name a few, are necessary to hone skills. Joint career – POC training is the only reliable way to assemble multi-company teams that can operate safely and efficiently in

tall, mixed-use buildings, parking structures with Electric Vehicle (EV) hazards, and large commercial/industrial buildings.

Large commercial/industrial occupancies bring high fire loads, long interior hose stretches, complex fire protections systems, and industrial hazards which materially elevate risk. When incidents occur, they can escalate quickly and demand more water, firefighters, and coordination than typical structures. To prepare for these types of emergencies, live-fire training should be the core method for building fireground execution. Additionally, as this development occurs, joint live-fire training with neighbouring fire departments should be a consideration.

### **3.4.6.2**      *Current Status*

Innisfil's current live-fire training program relies on the use of the Canadian Forces Base Borden training facility, which is located approximately 42 km from Innisfil. The current program provides a compliant baseline but yields limited training time per firefighter and uneven participation due to voluntary sign-ups. Offsite delivery also carries overtime/backfill challenges, as well as increased travel time, and does not adequately address career/POC crews to drill together under realistic conditions. The OFM Mobile Live Fire Training Unit (MLFTU), which has also been utilized over the last few years, reduces costs and supports evening and weekend training if the sessions are tightly scheduled and fully utilized.

### **3.3.6.3**      *Opportunities for Improvement*

Incorporating a purpose-built Class A/B burn tower, at an appropriate location, and with an integrated classroom would close current training gaps and scale with Innisfil's growth and changing risk profile. As a formal expansion of the IFRS Regional Training Centre (RTC), a multi-story facility compliant with NFPA 1403: Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions would enable cost-effective, full-scenario training aligned to emerging hazards.

Operationally, an on-site tower would support mandatory, rostered annual live-fire for all members; concurrent career/POC evolutions, and standardized, metrics-driven drills, eliminating most travel and reliance on the MLFTU, reducing backfill and overtime, avoiding external fees, and increasing high-quality repetitions and mixed-crew interoperability.

As an RTC asset, Station 6 could host NFPA-compliant courses, regional multi-agency exercises, and classroom programs for neighbouring services and private sector partners, generating cost revenue and new revenue. The site would serve as a scalable, revenue-generating hub that keeps IFRS proficiency aligned with Innisfil's growing complexity and call volume.

★ **Recommendation #17** - Concurrent with municipal growth, Innisfil proceeds with design and construction of a multi-story, NFPA 1403 compliant Class A/B burn tower, at an appropriate location, and with an integrated classroom.

*Note: Estimated costing of a burn tower and an integrated classroom is included in Section 6, Finance*

### 3.3.7 Full-Scale Class A/B Burn Tower

A full-scale Class A/B burn tower is a purpose-built training facility designed to support realistic, repeatable live-fire evolutions in accordance with NFPA 1402: *Standard on Facilities for Fire Training and Associated Props* and NFPA 1403: *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions*. These standards establish the planning, construction, and operational requirements necessary to ensure firefighter safety, structural durability, and instructional effectiveness. For Class B (natural gas/propane-fueled) systems, compliance with applicable fuel-gas codes such as NFPA 54 or NFPA 58 is also required to support safe ignition, monitoring, and emergency shutdown procedures.

Structurally, a burn tower typically consists of a multi-storey, non-combustible shell (e.g., reinforced concrete or steel) with heat-resistant interior finishes, replaceable burn-room liners, and integrated thermal expansion features to withstand repeated heating and cooling cycles. The design often incorporates multiple floors, stairwells, and a roof deck to enable vertical firefighting, search and rescue, vertical ventilation and ladder operations. Class A burn rooms include controlled ventilation openings, temperature monitoring, and smoke management systems to allow for realistic fire growth and safe reset between evolutions. Gas-fueled Class B props are engineered with primary and emergency shut-offs, flame supervision, interlocks, ventilation, and control panels, allowing instructors to precisely manage fire conditions and training scenarios.

The tower integrates a comprehensive fire protection and control infrastructure, including standpipes and hose outlets on each level, instructor protection lines, fire department connections, and a robust water supply to meet NFPA 1403: *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions* flow benchmarks. Safety systems, such as emergency egress, signage, and

accountability areas, are integrated throughout the site, alongside dedicated rehabilitation and medical monitoring zones.

To maximize training value, these facilities often include configurable search mazes, forcible-entry doors, ventilation props, rappelling anchors, and confined space features, allowing multiple disciplines (fire suppression, search and rescue, technical rescue) to be trained in one location. Support spaces such as SCBA filling stations, bunker gear staging areas, decontamination facilities, including AODA-compliant showers, nourishment facilities, classrooms, and maintenance bays are essential to sustain daily training operations and align with best practices for firefighter health and safety.

Finally, the successful operation of a Class A/B burn tower depends as much on documentation and procedures as on the physical structure. Departments must maintain detailed SOGs, fuel loading guidelines, ignition and shutdown procedures, instructor/student ratios, water supply plans, inspection records, and safety officer oversight in full compliance with NFPA 1403. Together, these elements create a safe, versatile, and durable training environment that supports realistic skill development while ensuring regulatory compliance and firefighter safety.

*Note: The accompanying images illustrate features of Class A/B burn towers in other municipalities (e.g., Grimsby, ON) and are provided as examples. The proposed facility in Innisfil will incorporate similar training infrastructure and support spaces tailored to the community's needs.*

### **Grimsby Class A/B Burn Tower**



### *Grimsby Integrated Classroom*



#### *3.3.9 Training Props and Equipment*

Using a robust and thorough annual training schedule that aligns with IFRS's response objectives, which delineates training for both career and paid-on-call firefighters, the Training Division does an admirable job of supporting the established training programs using the training props and equipment that are currently available.

To support the delivery of realistic training, the department has constructed a firefighter survival prop in an apparatus bay of Station 1 (Alcona). A well-built firefighter survival prop provides a controlled, non-live fire environment to practice critical self-rescue skills, SCBA management and air control, entanglement avoidance and escape, zero visibility orientation, engineered anchor points for firefighter survival and high-angle rescue training, and egress options such as window exits and through-the-studs breaches. It supports numerous NFPA standards and associated JPRs and aligns with Firefighter Certification Regulation requirements.

Research conducted by EMG has identified a lack of readily available training equipment and props, including a dedicated training pumper. This leads to wasted instructor time and degrades operations. Training officers spend significant time rounding up necessary equipment, and in

some instances taking equipment from in-service apparatus. This can lead to deficiencies in operational readiness, inventory errors, accelerated wear, and increased safety risks.



IFRS - Interior Survival Prop



IFRS - Exterior Survival Prop

★ **Recommendation #18** - That IFRS establish a fully equipped dedicated training pumper and centrally located cache of training props and equipment and implement an inventory-control process. In addition, establish a budget dedicated to training props and equipment to protect operational readiness and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

### 3.3.10 *Training Documents and Training Records*

Thorough training records are essential to a safe, compliant, and accountable fire service. They document competency according to NFPA/OHSA standards, support certification and recertification, and demonstrate due diligence in case of injury, complaint, or legal review. Complete records also enable the Fire Chief to track skills, identify gaps, target remedial training, and plan staffing based on verified capabilities. Finally, robust documentation strengthens audits and accreditation, protects the municipality's risk profile, and demonstrates to Council and the public that firefighters are prepared for the hazards they face.

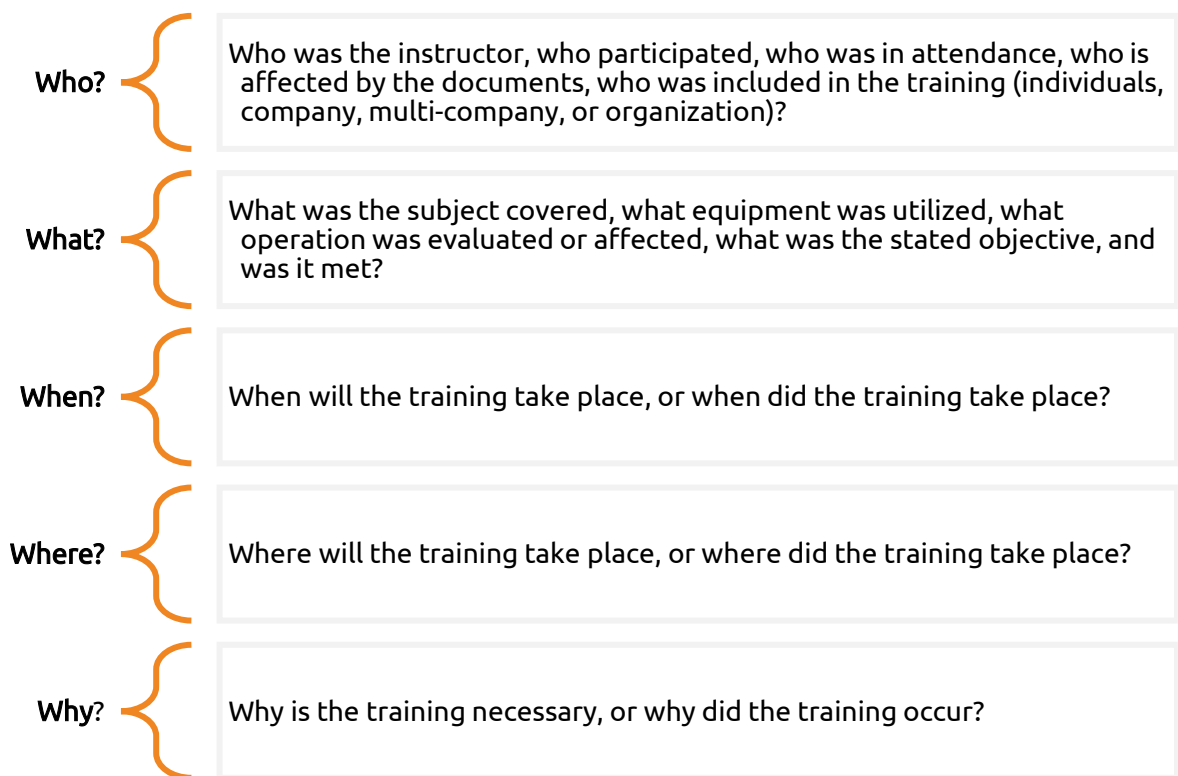
NFPA 1401: *Fire Service Training Reports and Records* outlines a systematic framework for providing essential information to manage the training function of the fire department and provides fire service personnel with definitions and guidelines for records and reports, as well as sample forms, designed to serve as tools for effective training administration. NFPA 1401

also provides best practices for the computerization of records and reports and the legal aspects of record keeping.<sup>14</sup>

Section 1.3.1 of NFPA 1401 states the following:

*“Training records have an important function in the administration of a fire service organization. As with any other community business, records and reports are an integral part of business management. Fire training records and reports are often only part of the documentation that is necessary to meet legal and statutory requirements. When properly compiled and evaluated, these records enable management to make effective decisions for planning, programming, and budgeting operations”.*

Training documents, regardless of their intent or level of sophistication, should focus on content, clarity, and accuracy. These documents should communicate at least five specific elements of information.



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<sup>14</sup> How to Build NFPA 1401 Compliant Training Records - Emergency Reporting, accessed on September 28, 2025 <https://emergencyreporting.com/blog/how-to-build-nfpa-1401-compliant-training-records/>

Additional information that should also be included in personnel training records includes, but may not be limited to the following:

- **Source of the information used as a basis for the training** – Textbooks title and edition, lesson plan title and edition, policy name and reference number, videotapes or DVDs, internet address, industry best practices, post-incident analysis (PIA), or other?
- **Method of training used for delivery** – Lecture, demonstration, skills training, self-study, video presentation, mentoring, drills(s), or other?
- **Evaluation of training objectives** – Written test, skills examination, or other?

Training records should be evaluated regularly by Training Division staff. The training records of all fire service personnel should be evaluated for the following:

- Has each member received the required training to support the effective completion of all job requirements and ensure the employee's health and safety?
- Have deficiencies been identified and documented in an individual's training records? If deficiencies exist, what remedial steps are being taken to overcome them?
- Have personnel met all required job performance requirements established by the department?

Several training records were provided to EMG for analysis against NFPA 1401. Overall, the training files capture the basics, including date, time, topic, hours, attendance, and a brief narrative of the evolutions performed. This provides a workable baseline and some audit trail value.

Key gaps remain for achieving full alignment with NFPA 1401. Records are not consistently complete or timely for every scheduled session; instructor-of-record and credential information are uneven; lesson plans are not routinely cited; and links to specific JPRs with documented evaluation results are often missing, and safety-related documentation is inconsistent.

To achieve improvement, IFRS should develop a standardized training record process that aligns with the requirements of NFPA 1401 as previously detailed. Additionally, an audit process should be established, and training credit hours should not be granted until the training documents are reviewed and approved by the Training Division. These steps will produce complete, evaluable, and defensible training records.

★ **Recommendation #19 -**  
That IFRS adopt a department-wide NFPA 1401 compliant training records protocol and institute an audit process that withholds training credit until the Training Division reviews and approves training records.

### 3.5 Fire Suppression/ Emergency Response

During the development of this review, many aspects of IFRS response capabilities were collated and discussed with the Chief Officers of IFRS to understand better the current response capabilities versus industry standards and best practices. IFRS is a combined Fire Department as defined in Article 1.1 of NFPA 1720. It has five stations with paid-on-call firefighters, two of these stations also have a crew of full-time firefighters on duty 24/7/365. No standard specifies the number of firefighters required for a specific population or whether the Fire Department should be composed of career, composite (a mix of career and paid-on-call (volunteer) firefighters) or paid-on-call staff. The Fire Chief must keep the Council well-informed about staffing issues and develop a mitigation plan for the Council to review. Such strategies might include increasing staffing levels to add more apparatus staffed by full-time firefighters.

Some municipalities have used other similarly sized municipalities as a benchmark for staffing numbers and types (i.e., career or paid-on-call). However, it is important to remember that each community is unique in its geographical makeup, population demographics, and the size of its residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.

Call volumes for the IFRS may increase due to the influx of new residents and visitors, leading to higher traffic and housing demand over the next decade. New residential developments are likely to affect call volumes. Therefore, careful monitoring of call volumes and response times is crucial to determine if the Fire Department meets its response expectations.

Consideration relies on the following points to make an informed decision about suppression staffing requirements:

- Does the Fire Department have an approved response criterion as a standard?
  - Has the Council provided guidance to the Fire Chief (based on his recommendations) regarding expected response times that the Fire Department must meet?
    - If so, is the Department consistently meeting this response criterion, or is it struggling to meet the response times and possibly falling behind?
- What local and national standards and guidelines are in place to guide the Fire Department's decisions regarding station locations and staffing models?
  - Specifically, the OFM's Public Fire Safety Guidelines (PFSG), NFPA 1710 and 1720, along with the CFAI "industry best practices" recommendations.
- What rise or fall in population and industry might lead to more or fewer fire stations and staff?

A key notation in NFPA 1720 for composite fire departments, Chapter 4.3.1, pertains to the deployment of paid-on-call firefighters and emphasizes the Department's response times.

*The fire department shall identify minimum staffing requirements to ensure that the number of members available to operate can meet the department's needs.*

As shown in the following fire propagation diagram, it is crucial to initiate fire suppression activities promptly. IFRS responds to more than just fires; for example, motor vehicle collisions can cause medical or fire emergencies that require urgent response. Therefore, it is crucial to be as efficient and effective as possible when responding to calls for assistance.

FIGURE #4 – FIRE RESPONSE / PROPAGATION CURVE

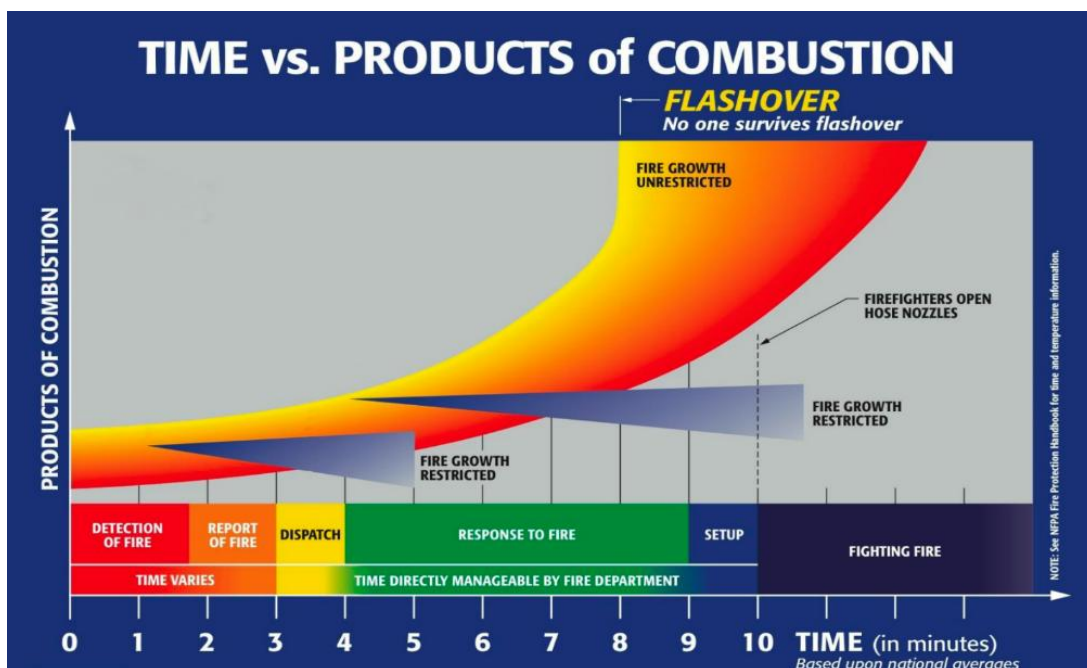


Figure #4 notes the following time variables:

- **Detection of Fire** – This is when the occupant discovers a fire. The fire may be in a very early stage or could have been burning for quite some time before being detected.
- **Report of Fire** – fire has been identified, and 9-1-1 has been called for help.
- **Dispatch** – the dispatcher's time to receive the information and dispatch the appropriate resources.
- **Response to the Fire** – response time is a combination of the following:

- **Turnout Time** - how long it takes the career firefighters to get to the fire truck and respond, or how long it takes the volunteer firefighters to get to the fire station to respond on the fire truck.
- **Drive Time** - is when the crew advises dispatch that they are responding until they report on the scene.
- **Setup Time** – the time it takes for the fire crews to get ready to fight the fire.
- **Fighting the Fire** – actual time to extinguish the fire on scene.

The authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) may establish a response time to meet the community's needs. The table below shows that NFPA 1720 has set a response time chart.

**TABLE #11: NFPA 1720 STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIME**

Demand Zone	Demographics	Minimum Staffing	Response Time	Meets Objective
Urban Area	>1,000 people/m <sup>2</sup> (2.6 km) <sup>2</sup>	15	9	90%
Suburban Area	500-1,000 people/mi <sup>2</sup> (2.6 km <sup>2</sup> )	10	10	80%
Rural Area	<500 people/mi <sup>2</sup> (2.6 km <sup>2</sup> )	6	14	80%
Remote Area	Travel Distance > 8 mi (12.87 km)	4	Directly dependent on travel distance	90%
Special Risks	Determined by AHJ.	Determined by AHJ based on risk.	Determined by AHJ.	90%

The Town of Innisfil has a population density of 165.1 persons per square kilometre (427.6 per square mile), which falls within the rural response criteria of having six firefighters on the scene within 14 minutes.<sup>15</sup>

Given the higher density of built-up areas in Alcona, Cookstown, and Stroud, EMG believes that IFRS needs to aim for a response of ten firefighters within 10 minutes in those communities, as defined in Table 11 for Suburban Area responses. When referencing NFPA 1720, it does not specify the industry best practice for the number of firefighters required for specific structures during a fire, as NFPA 1710 (for career departments) does.

**TABLE #12: POPULATION DENSITIES IN THE TOWN OF INNISFIL**

Town of Innisfil		
Area	Population	Population Density per km <sup>2</sup>
Town of Innisfil	43,326 <sup>16</sup>	165.1
Urban Areas		
Alcona	21,846 <sup>17</sup>	2,286 (5,920 /sq mi) <sup>18</sup>
Cookstown	1,647	1,440 (3,729 /sq mi)
Stroud	3,216 <sup>19</sup>	1,029 (2,665 / sq mi)
Friday Harbour	3,500 to 4,000 (Approx, based on 1,350 residential units (2.7 residents/unit)	369 (955 / sq mi)
Gilford	724 <sup>20</sup>	139 (360 / sq mi)

<sup>15</sup> Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Innisfil, Town (T) [Census subdivision], Ontario, accessed September 2025, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00053543017&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>16</sup> Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Innisfil, Town (T) [Census subdivision], Ontario, accessed September 2025, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00053543017&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>17</sup> Alcona, Simcoe Neighbourhood Guide, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.squareyards.ca/neighbourhood-ontario-simcoe/alcona>

<sup>18</sup> Average demographic municipal population density sq km in Innisfil, Ontario, Canada - Houski, Accessed November 2025, [https://www.houski.ca/location/average/demographic\\_municipal\\_population\\_density\\_sq\\_km/ca/on/innisfil](https://www.houski.ca/location/average/demographic_municipal_population_density_sq_km/ca/on/innisfil)

<sup>19</sup> Stroud, Simcoe Neighbourhood Guide, accessed September 2025, <https://www.squareyards.ca/neighbourhood-ontario-simcoe/stroud>

<sup>20</sup> Gilford, Innisfil, ON, Canada - Population and Demographics, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.city-facts.com/gilford-beach/population>

Town of Innisfil		
Area	Population	Population Density per km <sup>2</sup>
Lefroy	589 <sup>21</sup>	989 (2,561 / sq mi)
Sandy Cove Acres	2,500 (Approx based on 1,280 residential units (2.0 residents/unit))	174 (450 / sq mi)

**TABLE #13: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE TOWN OF INNISFIL**

Population	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026 <sup>22</sup>	2031 <sup>23</sup>
Innisfil	31,175	32,727	36,566	43,326	50,572	57,191
% Change	8.8%	5.0%	11.7%	18.5%	14.6%	13.1%
	2006	2011	2016	2021	2025	2030
Ontario	12,160,282	12,851,821	13,448,494	14,782,117	15,640,958	16,502,275
% Change	6.6%	5.7%	4.6%	n/c	5.8%	5.5%

*Note: Between 2006 and 2021, the census population in Innisfil increased from 31,175 to 43,326, according to data from Statistics Canada. The remainder of the table uses Manifold 2021 demographic estimates.*

*Note: The Town of Innisfil is expected to experience faster growth than the province over the next decade, with a projected 29.6% population growth for Innisfil, compared to 11.6% for Ontario.*

Based on the 2022 Hemson Report prepared for the County of Simcoe, Innisfil’s growth is projected to outpace that of other areas.<sup>24</sup>

Some findings of the report indicate that 79% of all population growth is expected to occur in the six municipalities with primary settlement areas identified in the Growth Plan (Bradford West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, Innisfil, Midland, New Tecumseth, and Penetanguishene).

<sup>21</sup> Lefroy, Innisfil, ON, Canada - Population and Demographics, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.city-facts.com/leeroy-innisfil/population>

<sup>22</sup> Town of Innisfil Community Profile 2021, accessed September 2025, <https://innisfil.ca/en/business-and-employment/Economic-Development-Site/Innisfil-2022-Community-Profile.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Town of Innisfil Community Profile 2021, accessed September 2025, <https://innisfil.ca/en/business-and-employment/Economic-Development-Site/Innisfil-2022-Community-Profile.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> HEMSON - Revised Simcoe County Growth Forecasts and LNA Results - 31May22, accessed September 2025, <https://simcoe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/HEMSON-Revised-Simcoe-County-Growth-Forecasts-and-LNA-Results-31May22.pdf>

Approximately 63% of all population growth is forecasted to occur in the Southern Regional Market Area, primarily in Innisfil, New Tecumseth, and Bradford West Gwillimbury, which account for 20%, 18%, and 20% of the total County growth, respectively.

**TABLE #14: HEMSON REPORT POPULATION GROWTH IN THE TOWN OF INNISFIL**

Municipality	2021	2051	2021-51
Innisfil	44,170	80,590	39,740

One notable development not included in any growth forecasts for the Town of Innisfil is the 6th Line into Orbit. This project features a major new development expected to attract thousands of residents and businesses, along with a GO train station. The Orbit initiative, with an estimated full-build population of 150,000, is expected to have a significant impact on the community for many years. It will also require upgraded traffic routes to the area, including a new interchange at the Line 6 bridge on Hwy 400.

Additional forecasted growth includes a hospital, high-rises, retirement homes, commercial and industrial occupancies, and high-density housing. The road network will require enhancements and expansion to keep pace with this growth, as it is experiencing traffic congestion on all its major arteries, including concession roads, sideroads, county roads, and highways. Throughout this document, it identifies the need for IFRS to keep pace with, or even ahead of, this growth, such as fire stations being built and operational before occupancy permits are issued.

A review of future growth statistics and community demographics is necessary to identify where potential needs will arise and where efficiencies can be implemented. IFRS must continually monitor response times. The process follows the OFM definition, which is from “dispatch time, to time of arrival at the incident”; in other words, from when the call is received to when the fire station or pager tones activate or cell phones ring, and firefighters get on the fire trucks and arrive at the emergency scene.

### 3.4.1 Call Volumes

A key area of this review is the number of calls that IFRS responds to each year. The following data provides a picture of the number of calls the paid-on-calls are summoned to, along with the career personnel.

The following table lists the call volume to which paid-on-call firefighters at each fire station have responded over the past few years.

**TABLE #15: EMERGENCY RESPONSES BY PAID-ON-CALL PERSONNEL**

Fire Station	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	<b>Total of all Calls</b>				
Station 1 – Alcona	57	52	65	92	84
Station 2 – Lefroy	59	55	129	180	175
Station 3 – Stroud	53	51	85	77	86
Station 4 - Cookstown	191	187	277	281	273
Station 5 – Big Bay Point	41	39	53	89	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>700</b>

**TABLE #16: EMERGENCY RESPONSES BY FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTERS**

Fire Station	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	<b>Total of All Calls</b>				
Station 2 – Lefroy (Engine 2)	1,401	1,730	1,860	1,888	1,885
Station 5 – Big Bay Point (Engine 5)	1,156	1,121	1,147	1,248	1,292
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,557</b>	<b>2,851</b>	<b>3,007</b>	<b>3,136</b>	<b>3,177</b>

**TABLE #17: NUMBER OF PAID-ON-CALL FIRE FIGHTERS ATTENDANCE**

Fire Station	2022	2023	2024	Total	Average Attendance per Call
Station 1 – Alcona	498	638	467	1,603	6.65
Station 2 – Lefroy	635	587	431	1,653	3.42
Station 3 – Stroud	697	635	759	2,091	8.43

Fire Station	2022	2023	2024	Total	Average Attendance per Call
Station 4 – Cookstown	3,021	2,870	2,897	8,788	10.58
Station 5 – Big Bay Point	65	101	82	248	1.11
<b>Total*</b>	<b>4,916</b>	<b>4,831</b>	<b>4,636</b>	<b>14,383</b>	<b>6.03 Firefighters per Call-Out</b>

According to Table #17, the average number of paid-on-call firefighters responding to a call-out over three years is 6.03 across the five stations. Several factors can influence the number of responding paid-on-call firefighters, including their availability at the time of the call, the time of day, low turnout due to personnel turnover, and high call volume, among others. The Cookstown station has the highest average response per call, but it also has ten more members than any other station in Innisfil, so its average is expected to be higher.

The main reasons for the lower turnout are the number of vacancies in the department and the small allocation of firefighters per station. To the credit of IFRS, a significant recruitment has taken place in 2025, which brought the rosters of every station back to the maximum number as permitted by the Council.

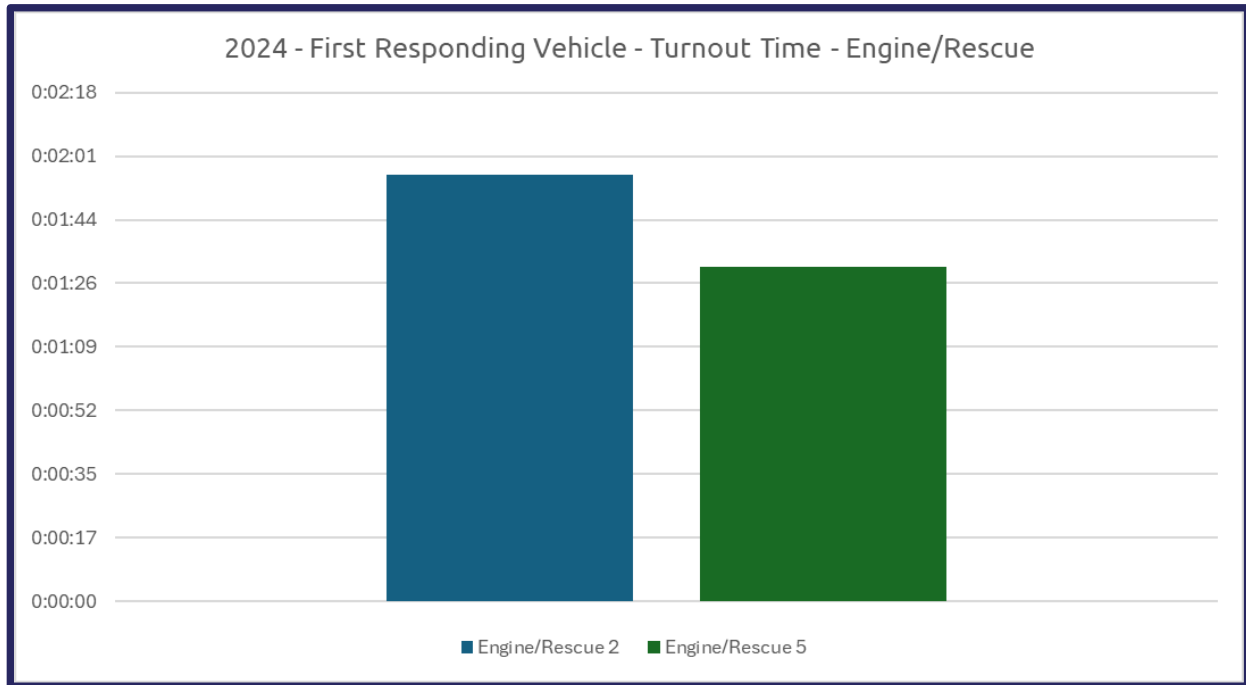
Within the IFRS, response capabilities can vary depending on several factors, including the station, day of the week, and time of day. Some stations consistently have stronger firefighter turnout during daytime hours, while others have more limited responses. There is a strong, consistent response from Station 4. On some days, it is not easy to get apparatus responses from all other stations. While recruits may help ease this pressure, there could be delays in seeing this effectiveness because they need time to become comfortable with their responsibilities in IFRS and to develop into drivers/operators. Currently, when a station is toned out and response is poor, the protocol is to send a second page. If turnout remains inadequate after that, personnel from nearby stations are dispatched.

### 3.4.2 Turn-Out Times

The turn-out time is another area reviewed, which is the time it takes firefighters to respond from the station. For career firefighters who are already at the station, they should be departing the station much sooner than paid-on-call members who must respond to the station, get dressed and depart the station on the apparatus. NFPA 1710 states in Article 4.1.2.1 (2) that

the turn-out time for career firefighters should be 80 seconds. NFPA 1720 addresses rural Fire Departments having six members on the scene within 14 minutes to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**TABLE #18: TURNOUT TIME FOR THE TWO FULL-TIME APPARATUS**

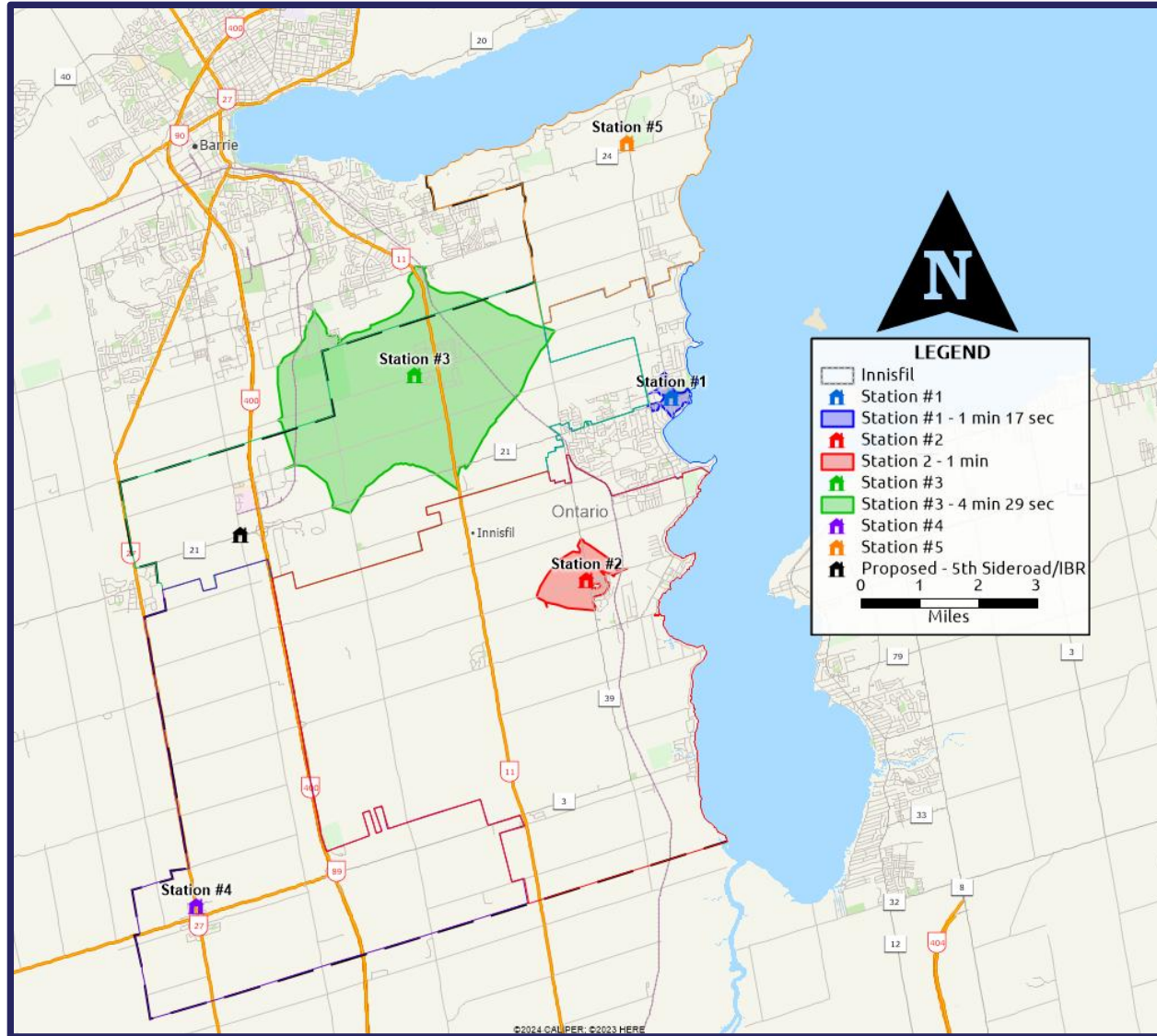


**TABLE #19: AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME OF POC FIREFIGHTERS' LEAD APPARATUS FOR EACH STATION IN 2024**

Average Turnout Time of Pumpers at POC Stations in 2024					
	Station 1 - Alcona	Station 2 - Lefroy	Station 3 - Stroud	Station 4 - Cookstown	Station 5 - Big Bay Point
Turnout Time	0:12:43	0:13:30	0:09:31	0:15:29	0:15:29

The following map (Figure #5) considers the difference in turnout time when subtracted from the 14-minute response zone. In some cases, it took over 15 minutes for the apparatus to depart the station, which is one minute over the 14 minutes allotted to arrive on the scene per NFPA 1720.

FIGURE #5 – LEAD APPARATUS (PUMPERS) TURNOUT TIME ZONE, MINUS THE 14 MINUTES ALLOTTED



As highlighted in the following table, in 2013, when the previous Fire Master Plan was completed, and since then, the call volume has increased each year.

**TABLE #20: EMERGENCY RESPONSES FROM 2007 TO 2011 AND 2020 TO 2024**

**2007 - 2011**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Calls	1,266	1,704	1,496	1,590	1,532

**2020 - 2024**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Calls	2,218	2,525	2,610	2,698	2,709

**3.4.3 Call Types**

The following charts (through the supplied data) help identify the types of calls creating the bulk of response demands.

**TABLE #21: CALL TYPES 2020 - 2024**

Call Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Property Fires/ Explosions	19	17	15	23	46
Overpressure rupture/ explosion (no fire)	0	0	1	0	0
Pre-fire conditions/ no fire	33	39	31	53	31
Burning (controlled)	146	110	70	72	70
CO Alarm Calls	98	64	97	70	62
False Fire Alarm Activations	200	242	228	270	237
Public Hazard	123	127	109	73	92
Rescue	257	264	288	303	341
Medical/ Resuscitator Call	1,264	1,587	1,681	1,720	1,755
Other Response	51	43	48	77	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,218</b>	<b>2,525</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>2,709</b>

Table#21 outlines the different call types. Most are medical, false fire alarms, or rescues. Many fire alarm activations are false alarms caused by faulty equipment or testing of alarm systems without notifying the answering service, etc.

Although adherence to the NFPA response times is not compulsory, it would be advantageous for the Fire Chief to establish a response time goal supported by the Council as a benchmark. The Fire Chief must present a response time goal for the Council's approval, which may reference NFPA 1710 (2020 Edition) – the expectation of 16 staff arriving within 8 minutes (90th percentile) for structures other than high-rises and that performance measures be monitored continuously. The response time for high-rises is 10 minutes, 10 seconds (610 seconds), or less, for the initial full alarm assignment at a fire suppression incident. The number and type of apparatus dispatched to the initial full alarm assignment are determined by the AHJ, and typically include a minimum of three pumpers, an aerial, a rescue, and a chief officer. For a high-rise fire, NFPA 1710 states that a minimum of 38 firefighters is required if the building is greater than 23 m (75 feet). IFRS currently cannot meet that benchmark with existing staffing levels.

★ **Recommendation #20 - IFRS continues its commitment to meet effective response times by including response time expectations within the E&R By-law. Based on NFPA 1710 and 1720.**

### 3.4.4 Medical Responses

Questions often asked by the public include why the fire department responds to medical calls and why they use such large trucks for these emergencies. Career fire departments have personnel available at the fire station 24/7 who are often trained to manage medical emergencies. The costs related to attending these calls include fuel for the trucks, vehicle wear and tear, and possibly medical supplies that the paramedic service does not provide. In Simcoe County, many fire departments, such as IFRS, are dispatched to medical calls through simultaneous notifications between the fire and paramedic dispatch centres. Typically, the fire department arrives before the Simcoe County Paramedic Service (SCPS) due to the earlier call notification.

The Town of Innisfil has entered into a Medical Response Agreement with the County of Simcoe. The agreement states that IFRS participates in a Level A response. IFRS's medical response accounted for approximately 65% (1,755 calls) of its total 2,709 calls in 2024.

The firefighters train in First Aid and CPR, including defibrillation. The agreement permits the exchange of equipment, provided it is compatible with items used by the SCPS. This exchange program helps reduce the cost of medical supplies paid by the Town.

These equipment items include:

- Defibrillator pads
- Backboards, straps, splints,
- Cervical Collars
- Oxygen masks
- Oral airways
- Bag Valve Masks

The town is responsible for the costs of replacing disposable supplies such as bandages and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Provided that full-time firefighters and firefighters at Station 4 – Cookstown complete all required training, they are permitted to administer medication only when guided by a medical directive. Currently, IFRS administers naloxone (Narcan), epinephrine (EpiPens), glucose gel (glucagon), and 81 mg of acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) to patients in need. The medication component of the tiered agreement is managed and overseen by a local physician who acts as the medical supervisor for the IFRS medical program. Over time, firefighters at all stations will gain the capacity to administer medications. The Town is not enrolled in the Quality Assurance Program that the County of Simcoe Paramedic Service offers.

Other training includes career staff at Stations 2 and 5, and all Station 4 members are trained to the Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) level. In contrast, the other stations receive basic first aid and external automatic defibrillator training per the Red Cross Programs.

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Health, ambulance dispatch services have started using the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), sometimes called the Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System (AMPDS). It is a unified system designed to send appropriate assistance during medical emergencies, including structured caller questioning and pre-arrival instructions.

MPDS today still begins with the dispatcher asking the caller key questions. These questions help dispatchers categorize the call by chief complaint and assign a determinant level ranging from A (minor) to E (immediately life-threatening) based on the severity of the patient's condition. The system also includes the determinant O, which may indicate a referral to another service or a situation that might not actually require an ambulance response. An additional sub-category code is used to classify the patient further.

**TABLE #22: MEDICAL CALLS**

		2022	2023	2024
The percentage of Calls was Medical.		64%	64%	65%
Total Medical Calls		1,681	1,720	1,755
Total of all Calls		2,610	2,698	2,709
Station 2 – Engine 2	Total	1061	1081	1089
	At the scene > 1 hr.	2	3	4
Station 4 – Rescue 4	Total	119	117	112
	At the scene > 1 hr.	1	1	0
Station 5 – Engine 5	Total	611	637	692
	At the scene > 1 hr.	2	1	1

A problem arises when the call is transferred to fire departments, such as IFRS, as a critical incident. Still, as more information is gathered from the caller, the priority is downgraded. This sometimes results in the ambulance en route to one call being rerouted to another, leaving the fire department at the scene for an extended period while awaiting another ambulance. EMG was informed that this has sometimes led fire crews to remain at the scene longer than needed.

The IFRS needs to consult with the paramedic service on a method for releasing fire crews if the call is downgraded. If this does not lead to a solution, the fire department could consider charging for services that last longer than an hour at the current MTO rate. Another option is the use of a patient release form, which allows a competent family member to sign, stating that they assume responsibility for the patient's care until an ambulance arrives. Further discussion of this agreement can be found in Section 5.

### *3.4.5 Staffing and Response Time*

To give the fire department a clearer focus on the ultimate goals for emergency response criteria, the NFPA recommends that response times be a key performance measure. NFPA 1720 applies to paid-on-call (POC) departments where stations are generally unstaffed, and firefighters respond to pagers from their homes, workplaces, or other locations, rather than from the station. This aspect of POC response introduces an important variable – member availability. Unlike full-time on-duty personnel, POC firefighters cannot reliably guarantee response, except when they are already at the station at the time of the alarm.

IFRS still relies heavily on paid-on-call firefighters to respond to calls, supplementing its full-time team as necessary or vice versa. Often, a full-time crew may not be available to respond because they are already at an incident and cannot leave; therefore, the POC firefighters must handle the incident alone.

**TABLE #23: TOTAL NUMBER OF PAID-ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS PER STATION**

	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3	Station 4	Station 5	Total
Current Staffing	14	17	19	24	15	89
Number Approved by Council	15	15	15	25	15	85

The Town of Innisfil’s Council has approved a maximum of 15 POC firefighters at four of its fire stations. The fifth station has a staffing level of 25. The FUS requires that a fire station maintain an active complement of 15 firefighters to keep its grade, and failing to do so may result in the station no longer being considered as providing adequate fire protection to the residents in that area, which could lead to a lower grade and, consequently, increased insurance rates.

★ **Recommendation #21 -**  
**That the Town of Innisfil increase its number of POC firefighters at all Stations to 25.**

Throughout this document, there is significant discussion about Station 6 and the need to construct it in the Innisfil Heights area. One key factor to consider is POC firefighter staffing. Since the region is mainly commercial and industrial, there are few residential neighbourhoods from which to recruit potential candidates. Residents in the area are either professionals, commuters outside the region for work, or retirees. The pool of potential candidates is limited, and the Town will need to monitor the recruitment process carefully; the requirement to hire additional full-time firefighters for a second apparatus may arise sooner than expected. It should be noted that some firefighters from other stations may be working in that area during the day and could respond to Station 6; however, what staffing is available when they return home?

The capacity of fire services depends on community resources. Larger municipalities generally require more fire stations and personnel. Having a fire station indicates that staff and equipment are ready for immediate response, but this is not always the case, as staffing in paid-

on-call fire departments is becoming a challenge across Canada, with the number of POC (volunteers) decreasing each year, according to recent surveys.<sup>25</sup>

When evaluating a community's response times and needs, the fire response curve (Figure #4) provides a general understanding of how fire can develop within a furnished residential structure over a short period. Many factors influence the growth rate, which can be affected in various ways to either accelerate or slow the burn rate through fire control measures inside the structure.

When reviewing a fire department's response time, it depends on various factors, including, but not limited to:

- The distance between the fire department and the response location.
- The layout of the community.
- Impediments that affect responses include weather, construction, traffic jams, and lack of direct routes (rural roads).
- Notification time
  - Assembly time is when the number of firefighters reaches the prescribed requirement at both the fire station and the incident scene. Assembly time includes dispatch time, turnout time to the fire station, and response to the scene.
  - Like response times, assembly time can vary greatly due to weather and road conditions, as well as the time of day, since many firefighters are at their regular jobs and cannot respond to calls during work hours.

Ideally, the first arriving apparatus has a crew of four firefighters onboard, as does each additional apparatus, but this may not always be possible due to a lack of available POC firefighters, and the type of apparatus (tankers carry two firefighters).

### *3.4.6 Scene Staffing*

The primary goal of any fire service is to reach the scene of a fire or emergency as quickly and effectively as possible. When a fire truck arrives within eight minutes or less, accompanied by a crew of four or more firefighters, it increases the chances of controlling the fire by preventing it from spreading further through the structure. Conversely, if the initial fire attack team arrives with fewer than four firefighters, their operational options are limited.

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<sup>25</sup> Final Census 2024.docx - Google Docs, accessed August 2025, [https://cdn.ymaws.com/cafc.ca/resource/resmgr/census\\_2024/report/Final\\_Census\\_2024.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/cafc.ca/resource/resmgr/census_2024/report/Final_Census_2024.pdf)

According to studies and evaluations by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the NFPA, firefighters will not start interior operations until enough personnel have arrived. A minimum of three firefighters and one officer must be present to form the initial fire suppression team. This team of four can effectively assess the scene, secure a water source (such as a fire hydrant), prepare the fire truck to receive water, and activate the fire pump. They can also unload and prepare the fire hose for entry into the structure. Having a team of four also ensures compliance with the recommended “two-in, two-out” rule, which means that two firefighters are inside the structure while two are outside on standby as backup. On most days, IFRS struggles to staff the POC apparatus with four firefighters within the target turnout time, resulting in departures with a reduced crew complement.

Although 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*, does not directly influence the operations of POC fire departments, the information contained within it serves as a valuable reference and guideline for composite Fire Departments such as IFRS.

The table below outlines the recommended staffing for structure fires as specified in NFPA 1710.

**TABLE #24: NFPA 1710 SECTION 5.2.4 DEPLOYMENT**

Building Occupancy	Number of Firefighters Required
Initial full alarm assignment capacity for single-family dwellings. A 185.81 m <sup>2</sup> (2,000 square feet) two-storey dwelling without a basement and no exposures.	16 (17 if an aerial is in use)
Open-air strip shopping center's initial full alarm assignment capacity. Typical open-air strip shopping centers range from 1203 m <sup>2</sup> to 18,209 m <sup>2</sup> (13,000 ft <sup>2</sup> to 196,000 ft <sup>2</sup> ).	27 (28 if an aerial is in use)
Apartment initial full alarm assignment capacity. Fires in a 111 m <sup>2</sup> (1,200 ft <sup>2</sup> ) apartment within a three-storey garden-style apartment building.	27 (28 if an aerial is in use)
High-rise initial full alarm assignment capacity. Fires in structures with the highest floor greater than 23 m (75 feet) above the lowest level for fire department vehicle access.	38 (39 if an aerial is in use)

### *3.4.7 Response*

Turnout times and Travel times are not necessarily recognized by 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. as they are in 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.

Travel time grids are calculated using GIS software, specifically Caliper Maptitude, which models the road network with posted speed limits, taking into account the direction of travel, traffic lights, and stop signs. While the posted speed limit applies, it is understood that fire apparatus responding to calls may occasionally exceed the limit if it is safe to do so, thereby helping to reduce response times. Conversely, due to weather conditions, construction, and traffic congestion, there will be times when fire apparatus travel at speeds below the posted limit, even with emergency lights and sirens. Therefore, the posted speed limit provides a reasonable estimate for travel distance. The accompanying map shows areas where crews can arrive within a ten-minute drive.

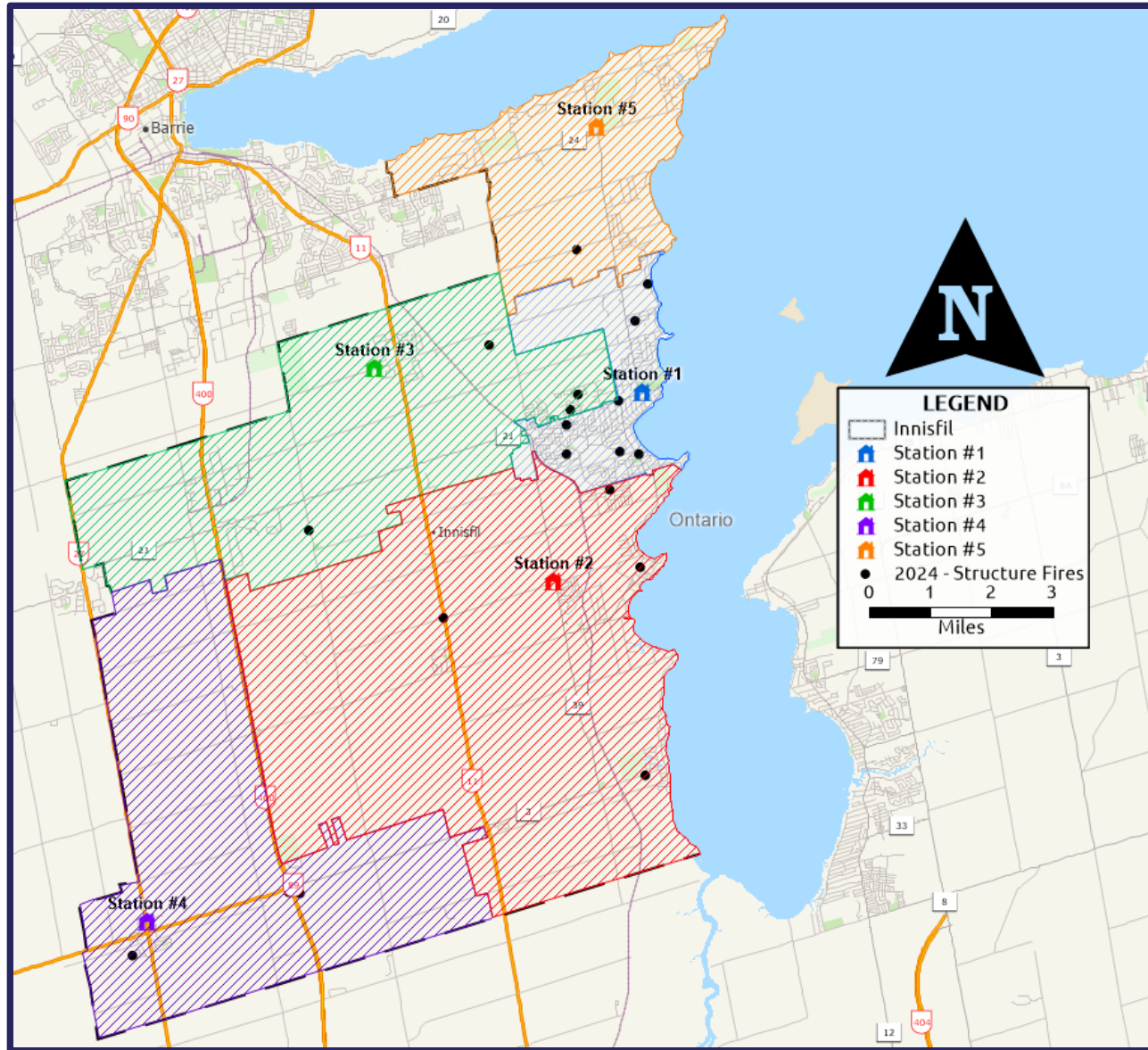
During the 2013 FMP, travel times were under 15 minutes for fire-related calls and under 14 minutes for medical calls, based on the 90th percentile. All other calls averaged approximately 15 minutes in duration over the five years. It is unclear if this was for all calls or just those responded to by career firefighters. However, they regarded the entire Town as an urban area rather than rural or suburban, where the 80th percentile is typically used. When calculating percentiles, the data may be skewed by including non-emergency responses, since the vehicle's speed is usually slower in those cases; thus, the response time can be longer than it would be for an emergency with lights and sirens activated.

### *3.4.8 Response Data*

Our analysis shows that EMG used actual response times recorded for incidents between 2022 and 2024. It is important to note that fire apparatus responding to calls may sometimes exceed the speed limit if it is safe to do so, thereby reducing response times. Conversely, due to weather conditions, construction, and traffic congestion, there are times when fire apparatus will travel at speeds lower than the posted speed limit, even when using emergency lights and sirens.

Figure #6 maps the concentration of structure fires in 2024. The call-cluster mapping indicates that the majority of structure fires occur within the strategic location of the fire station.

FIGURE #6 – STRUCTURE FIRE CLUSTER MAP 2024



A fire station on the west side of the Town in the Innisfil Heights area is under consideration; additional details are available in Section 4. With a new fire station in the west of the Town, the IFRS would provide good coverage of the entire Town for many years. When reviewing the geographical locations of the current stations, four of the five are primarily east of County Road 4.

### **3.4.9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, ideally, IFRS wants to be on the scene of a residential structure fire with a firefighting force to actively begin fire extinguishment within eight minutes, based on Figure #4, the Fire/Response Propagation Curve. But NFPA 1720 identifies that the Town, being rural, needs to have six firefighters on the scene within 14 minutes, and in suburban areas such as Alcona, Cookstown and Stroud, ten firefighters within 10 minutes. In either situation, IFRS is unable to achieve these benchmarks with its current staffing model. To meet the growth and industry standards, the following is required:

- The roster of POC firefighters at Stations 1, 2, 3, and 5 should be increased to 25 in total. Focusing on recruits with daytime availability.
- There is a need for additional full-time firefighters, now and in the future.
- Increased the number of stations to include a new one in the Innisfil Heights area, which is discussed further in Section 4.
- The Council provide direction on response time goals, which become embedded in the Establishing and Regulating By-law.

### **3.4.10 NFPA Benchmarking and Department in Transition**

Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services (IFRS) is best understood as a department in transition, moving from a predominantly composite model toward a more career-staffed deployment model as the municipality continues to grow and urbanize. At present, IFRS aligns most closely with 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*, which reflects the realities of unstaffed stations, variable paid-on-call availability, and the Town’s historically rural and suburban character.

To avoid creating perceptions of a “two-tier” level of fire protection within the municipality, this Fire Master Plan recommends that Council continue to use NFPA 1720 as the primary response and staffing benchmark for IFRS across the entire Town. NFPA 1720 should be embedded in the Establishing and Regulating (E&R) By-law as the department’s industry-standard and best-

practice reference for response-time objectives, staffing expectations, and performance reporting.

However, as Innisfil continues to expand, several areas, including Alcona (with multiple high-rise proposals and vulnerable occupancy development along Innisfil Beach Road), Friday Harbour (with multi-unit residential projects), Cookstown, Stroud, Gilford, Sandy Cove Acres, the Innisfil Heights Employment Lands, and the developing Orbit district, are experiencing significantly higher population densities, increased call volumes, and more complex building types. These zones present elevated risks when compared with the Town's rural regions, due to factors such as:

- **Higher occupant loads**, increasing the likelihood of rescue situations and the complexity of evacuation.
- **Multi-storey and multi-unit buildings**, requiring greater staffing for search, ventilation, and fire control.
- **Large commercial and industrial facilities**, particularly within the Innisfil Heights Employment Lands, which demand more coordinated fireground operations, additional resources, and enhanced water-supply capabilities due to greater fire loads and structural complexity.
- **Faster fire spread potential**, driven by modern lightweight construction, closer building spacing, and increased fire loads.
- **Increased traffic congestion**, slowing response times and lengthening travel distances to emergencies.
- **Larger numbers of vulnerable residents**, especially within retirement communities and higher-density residential environments.
- **Higher overall emergency demand**, including medical calls, alarms, and public hazards typical of high-activity urbanized areas.

If Council approves the suppression staffing expansions outlined in this Fire Master Plan, particularly the staffing of additional apparatus with full-time personnel, IFRS will begin to meet the 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* in these higher-risk, higher-density neighbourhoods. Section 3.3.13 of NFPA 1710 defines a career fire department as one in which full-time or full-time-equivalent station-based personnel are immediately available to comprise at least 50 percent of an initial full alarm assignment.

Once IFRS consistently meets this threshold, Council should consider transitioning to NFPA 1710 as the department's primary benchmark standard, supported by updates to the E&R By-law. NFPA 1710 establishes more robust expectations for staffing, turnout time, travel time, and the completion of critical fireground tasks—standards that directly support firefighter safety, public safety, and property-loss reduction in higher-density, higher-risk environments.

This approach enables Innisfil to maintain a single service standard today, grounded in NFPA 1720, while establishing a clear, planned pathway toward NFPA 1710 as staffing levels, apparatus deployment, and community growth continue to evolve. It ensures that IFRS can meet the increasingly complex risks of a rapidly growing municipality while providing fair, consistent, and defensible service to all residents.

### *3.4.11 Critical Fireground Tasking and the Importance of Transitioning Toward NFPA 1710*

As Innisfil population and density continue to grow, and structural complexity increases, the ability of Innisfil Fire and Rescue Service (IFRS) to perform critical fireground tasks in a timely and coordinated manner becomes increasingly essential to ensuring firefighter safety, public safety, and the protection of property. NFPA 1710 provides the clearest industry benchmark for defining these tasks and the staffing required to complete them safely and effectively.

#### **NFPA 1710 – Critical Fireground Tasking Requirements**

NFPA 1710 outlines the minimum number of personnel required to safely and effectively conduct all essential fireground operations at a typical single-family dwelling fire (185.8 m<sup>2</sup> / 2,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, two-storey, no basement, no exposures). These tasks include:

- **Command and Safety Management**
  - Establish incident command
  - Assign a dedicated safety officer
- **Fire Attack and Rescue Operations**
  - Perform size-up and initial interior fire attack
  - Conduct primary search and rescue
  - Support “two-in/two-out” firefighter accountability
- **Water Supply and Pump Operations**
  - Secure water source
  - Operate pump and supply lines

- **Ventilation**
  - Complete horizontal or vertical ventilation to control fire behaviour
- **Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC/RIT)**
  - Provide a dedicated team prepared to rescue trapped or injured firefighters
- **Laddering and Forcible Entry**
  - Ladder the building for rescue or egress
  - Force entry if required for rescue or fire attack

According to NFPA 1710, performing these critical tasks simultaneously, rather than sequentially, requires a minimum of 16 firefighters (17 if an aerial device is being used) for the initial full-alarm assignment.

### ***Why Critical Task Completion Matters***

#### ***Firefighter Safety***

Fireground operations are inherently hazardous. Ensuring adequate staffing enables compliance with safety mandates such as two-in/two-out, and supports coordinated, progressive interior operations. Understaffed crews must delay fire attack or search activities, increasing risk to firefighters and reducing the likelihood of successful rescue.

#### ***Public Safety and Rescue Outcomes***

Effective task completion within minutes of arrival significantly increases the likelihood of rescuing trapped occupants, containing fire spread, and preventing flashover. In growing communities with higher residential densities and more multi-storey dwellings, rapid coordination of fireground tasks is essential to protecting life.

#### ***Property Loss Reduction***

The ability to perform ventilation, suppression, and search simultaneously accelerates the control of the fire and limiting structural damage. This results into lower insurance impacts, reduced business interruption, and fewer displaced families following an incident.

#### ***Municipal Risk Reduction and Liability Management***

Municipalities are accountable for ensuring their fire service meets a reasonable standard of care. NFPA standards are widely referenced in legal proceedings, fire investigations, and risk audits. Demonstrating alignment with NFPA 1710, when staffing

levels support it, significantly reduces municipal exposure and supports defensible, evidence-based decision-making.

### ***Why This Transition Matters for a Growing Community Like Innisfil***

Innisfil is experiencing sustained population growth, intensification of its built-up areas, and the emergence of higher risk occupancies including multi-residential buildings, high-rises, commercial plazas, industry, and major new development initiatives such as Orbit. These changes increase the complexity and demand of fire suppression operations.

Transitioning toward NFPA 1710 as staffing increases provides Innisfil with:

- A deployment model capable of keeping pace with urban-style risks
- Improved ability to meet realistic and legally defensible response-time benchmarks
- A stronger foundation for future station planning and apparatus staffing
- A safer operating environment for firefighters and the community
- Predictable, scalable workforce planning that aligns with community growth

While IFRS currently aligns with NFPA 1720, transitioning to NFPA 1710 once staffing and apparatus deployment meet the Section 3.3.13 criteria are natural evolution for a maturing municipality. It ensures that Innisfil remains ahead of emerging risks and provides a modern, resilient, and accountable fire service capable of supporting its long-term growth.

This transition is therefore not only operationally necessary, but also a strategic investment in public safety, community confidence, and municipal risk management.

### ***3.4.12 Communications and Dispatching***

#### ***3.4.12.1 Dispatching – Barrie Fire & Emergency Service (BFES)***

IFRS receives its dispatching services from the Barrie Fire and Emergency Service's (BFES) dispatch centre. The agreement, which is for a term of five years, was last updated in 2024. Based on the information received and a review of the dispatching data, IFRS appears to receive adequate dispatching services. The agreement with the City of Barrie outlines a fee for services, as well as related infrastructure and operational activities. The current agreement for call-taking and fire dispatch reflects an effective strategy for IFRS in providing these services.

BFES is also responsible for activating real-time texting (RTT) systems and paging over cell phones and portable radios to alert volunteers and career firefighters to respond. BFES uses the Sinirji 9-1-1 app to communicate with firefighters when there is a fire call. The app identifies the

firefighters who are responding to the fire call. A call is initiated for additional resources whenever the number of responding firefighters is low. Currently, this app is not being used to its full potential by the firefighters. Providing additional training and support to optimize its use and advising on the significant data it offers should help reinforce the importance of its application. If it is found that the Sinirji app is not meeting the needs of IFRS, alternative apps, such as “I Am Responding” and “Who’s Responding”, are available.

A feature available to clients using Sinirji is the ability to display ongoing call data in Innisfil, which can be projected onto a large computer monitor mounted on a wall in the apparatus bays. When properly set up, it will display the number of IFRS members ready to respond and, upon receiving a call, indicate how many members are responding. The IFRS should consider implementing this feature along with installing monitors in the bays of each fire station.

The Fire Chief has established response protocols regarding the types and numbers of apparatus that should respond to the call types specified in the CAD at BFES’s Communications Centre. Upon reviewing the running assignment matrix, EMG suggests that the list be reviewed annually and updated as circumstances within IFRS and the Town change. It is recommended that, due to less-than-optimal response from paid-on-call members, two paid-on-call stations be dispatched to all structure fires automatically to support the full-time crews from the current single station. Another apparatus was noticeably absent from the matrix, which is the aerial. It is dispatched on an as-needed basis, but this should be updated to include all structure fires. To ensure this, the POC firefighters at the station where the aerial is housed should all be trained on its operation, including driver training. During structure fires, it should be the first apparatus to leave the station, followed by either the pumper or tanker, depending on the location of the fire.

★ **Recommendation #22** - Until the staffing levels of responding POC members increase, two POC stations should be automatically dispatched to all structure fires.

BFES uses Symposium as its Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Reports of each incident’s dispatch log are accessible to IFRS for review and as records for future reference. The CAD data is transferred to the FIREHOUSE™ computer program for report generation and submission to the OFM.

In 2025, BFES plans to update its records management computer system for dispatching, as the FIREHOUSE provider will no longer support this technology and program, rendering it outdated. Many departments, such as IFRS, are transitioning their record management to First Due, which offers many features that will benefit IFRS's operations.

Further reference to this Agreement may be found in Section 5 of this FMP.

### 3.4.13 Radio System

Radio systems are constantly evolving with new technological advancements, which makes it challenging for fire services to keep up with current standards. Some of these technologies include:

#### *Simplex vs. Repeater Radio Signals*

A simplex radio system has radios that communicate directly with each other (i.e., radio to radio). The radio signal strength of a simplex system is lower than that of a repeater radio system. A repeater system receives a radio message and then rebroadcasts it at a higher power, providing better coverage. Most fire services operate a repeater system for improved radio signal coverage.

#### *Analogue vs Digital*

An analogue signal weakens as it travels away from the source; a digital radio signal retains the same strength regardless of the distance.

IFRS upgraded their mobile and portable radios to the digital platform using repeaters, and the pagers have also been upgraded to the digital platform.

Currently, IFRS uses two transmitter sites, with a third expected to come online in late 2025. All sites have battery backup power to maintain continuous radio operations for a short period but cannot sustain service during extended power outages. The Town should consider installing permanent standby generators at every transmitting tower site. Fortunately, each station's generator provides power to the base radio station, ensuring its operation during power failures.

The IFRS has interoperability with local fire services; however, it does not connect with other emergency services, such as paramedics, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), York Regional Police (YRP), and the South Simcoe Police Service (SSPS). The IFRS is unlikely to gain this feature, since both the paramedic system and the OPP are under provincial jurisdiction and are heavily regulated. The other police services probably would not permit it due to security concerns. The department also has several mobile repeaters available.

In the construction of large buildings, substantial amounts of steel are required. This structural element can obstruct radio transmissions. Large structures like high-rises and extensive industrial complexes interfere with radio communications. Several accessories are available to significantly enhance radio communication in facilities with substantial steel and concrete structures. Depending on the circumstances and building occupancy, the Planning Department

may need to work with the fire department to include a clause in the approval document or pass a by-law through the Council that mandates these accessories in specific situations.

Examples of the accessories for the IFRS radio system to enhance coverage in large structures include the following:

**Bi-Directional Amplifiers (BDAs):** These devices amplify signals to and from the radio system, ensuring clear communication within the building and outside. They are particularly useful in buildings with concrete or metal construction, which can absorb or block radio signals.

**Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS):** A network of strategically placed antennas that serve as signal carriers, extending wireless coverage to all corners of the building. DAS is effective in large or complex buildings where signal strength can vary significantly.

**Radiating Cable Systems:** These systems use a flexible antenna with slots to broadcast radio frequency signals, providing RF coverage throughout the facility. They can be installed in mechanical shafts, stairways, or corridors within a building.

These accessories are designed to enhance the performance of fire department radio systems, ensuring emergency responders can communicate effectively during incidents. It is crucial to select the appropriate accessories for the building where they will be installed. During the approval stage, plans of developments such as high-rise buildings are the critical point at which fire communications need to be addressed.

The town's topography has historically impacted the quality of radio signals. Installing a third transmitter site at the Cookstown water tower should greatly reduce this risk.

Radio terminology for fire services is, for the most part, standard across the country. Specific words/ phrases convey important messages to everyone on the fireground, which in some cases may prevent injuries or the death of a firefighter. Officers and firefighters of all ranks must know and use the proper radio terminology at the incident. Departmental policies and SOGs supported with training would ensure continuity in the radio system operations and the language used.

Radio technologies are constantly improving, and to ensure they incorporate the latest innovations, all new portable radios should be intrinsically safe and comply with NFPA 1802, *Standard on Two-Way, Portable RF Voice Communications Devices for Use by Emergency Services Personnel in the Hazard Zone*. The standard outlines rigorous testing against extreme heat, water immersion, and impact, and evaluates for high battery life and remote speaker microphone connections.

In a profession where a routine call can quickly turn into a critical situation, a firefighter’s radio must have no room for error as it needs to maintain a reliable connection to their most vital resource – their crew. To IFRS credit, it has recognized gaps in radio communications and is addressing them by obtaining enhanced radio equipment. The IFRS needs to keep radio communications in mind when reviewing plans for high-rises and high-density occupancies where radio communications may be impaired.

### 3.4.14 *Marine Responses*

The Town of Innisfil’s greatest feature is its Lake Simcoe waterfront and the amenities for residents and visitors. In the summer, hundreds of boats utilize the numerous docks and piers. Like any mode of transportation, accidents can happen, requiring emergency services to assist the injured and determine the cause of the incident. Fortunately, there are several nearby emergency services with marine vessels available. These include the SSPS, the OPP, and the YRP. The YRP also have a vessel for ice rescues when Lake Simcoe freezes over.

The Commercial Vessel Regulations of Transport Canada govern emergency services that operate a vessel. The IFRS received a grant from Friday Harbour to assist with the purchase of the Marine firefighting and rescue ummer vessel, which is moored at Friday Harbour.



**Innisfil Fire Rescue Services**

**Marine 1**

An area that lacks clear delineation when operating an emergency service on the water is the responsibility of each agency. IFRS have ensured that water rescue is included in its Establishing and Regulating By-law as one of its services. Marine emergencies are critical due to the high risk of drowning. Time is of the essence, and IFRS can respond rapidly if a crew is available to operate the boat from Station 5 at the time of the call; otherwise, the crew may have to travel from Lefroy.

Operating a vessel requires many hours of program development and training for staff, and IFRS has collaborated with the South Simcoe Police and its marine unit. Given the high number of boats in the area, especially during holiday weekends, IFRS should allocate funds to staff the boat at least one, if not two, days of the holiday weekend, with a crew from 1200 to 1800 hours when boating traffic is heaviest. The crew could remain at Station 5 during this time due to its proximity.

During winter, ice fishing is a popular activity that attracts anglers from around the world, targeting species such as Perch, Whitefish, and Lake Trout. The best spots are Cooks Bay and Kempenfelt Bay. Unfortunately, some anglers take risks and fall through the weak ice, and on several occasions, multiple people have become trapped on an ice flow requiring rescue. The IFRS has an ice boat for this purpose, and a replacement is on order from 1000 Island Airboats, formerly based in Ontario and now located in Wisconsin.

Like the summer vessel, crews operating the iceboat comply with Transport Canada Regulations regarding the training and equipment required onboard each vessel.



**Innisfil Fire Rescue Services**

**Current Ice Boat**



**Innsifil Fire Rescue Services**

**New Ice Boat**

### 3.4.15 *Technical Rescues & Hazardous Material Responses*

Fire services are being called upon to provide enhanced assistance, including technical rescues. IFRS mitigation practices for ice, surface water, and watercraft rescues are implemented at the Operations level for some disciplines and at the Technician level for others, as well as for HAZMAT responses. The Ontario Ministry of Labour's Section 21 committee for fire services develops guidance notes for fire services to follow as best practices and as directed by the OFM. At a minimum, firefighters must train to the Awareness Level for technical rescues and HAZMAT responses. The Awareness Level provides an introduction to rescue and HAZMAT incidents but does not permit incident mitigation.

The following list identifies the level of technical response IFRS provides:

- **HAZMAT** – IFRS is a founding member of the HAZMAT response program, established between the municipalities of Simcoe County and Barrie Fire and Emergency Service (BFES). The program has undergone some changes, resulting in the relocation of the County's HAZMAT trailer and equipment to the Orillia Fire Department (OFD). Thanks to the Town of Innisfil and its fire department, which has entered a memorandum of understanding with the City of Barrie to provide both technical rescue and HAZMAT mitigation services, this arrangement remains effective. This agreement is discussed further in Section 5.
- **Elevator rescue** training, which must meet the requirements of the Technical Safety Standards Authority (TSSA), is underway at IFRS.
- **Technical Rescue** - As mentioned, the Town of Innisfil and its Fire Department have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Barrie and its fire service for the management of the following technical rescue disciplines.
  - Confined Space Rescue
  - Trench Rescue
  - Low/ High Angle Rope Rescue

The existing agreement helps ensure that personnel will respond promptly to Innisfil, as no permissions are required before deployment.

### 3.4.16 *Pre-Incident Plans*

A pre-incident plan is a strategic document that provides vital information about a specific location, such as a building or property, to assist firefighters during emergency responses. Plans include locations like fertilizer plants, LPG facilities, fuel depots, places of worship, large retail

stores, multi-unit residences, industrial facilities, and commercial outlets along main streets. Key advantages are as follows:

**Improved Response:** Pre-incident planning ensures that arriving firefighters are well-informed. They learn about access points, stairwell locations, building systems, and premise hazards, which enhances their response capabilities and can ultimately save lives and reduce property damage.

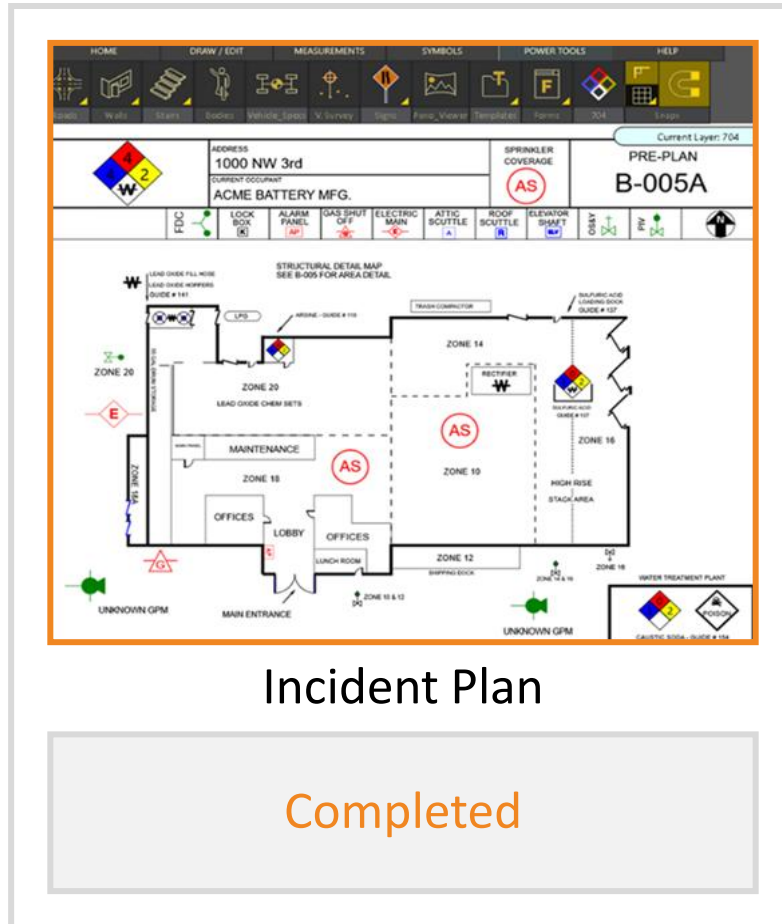
**Risk Reduction:** Familiarizing responding crews with the involved property decreases firefighters' risk of injury and death.

The plan covers important details about fire suppression systems, occupancy, utilities, contents, water sources, and other factors influencing firefighting efforts. The IFRS has created some pre-incident plans, but they do not meet NFPA 1620 – Standard for Pre-Incident Planning.

Resources need to be allocated to develop the pre-incident plan program and to ensure the plans are consistently completed and maintained according to NFPA 1620. Once finalized, IFRS uploaded their current plans into the corporate record management system (MOAR). A feature of IFRS's new record management system, First Due, is its ability to support an active pre-incident plan development program. Appointing a program coordinator will assist in continuously improving the program and encourage officers to use these plans.

Other considerations for having an active pre-incident plan program include:

- Ensure plans comply with NFPA 1620 – Standard for Pre-Incident Planning, are kept in the Records Management System (RMS), and can be accessed remotely, such as on tablets in the apparatus.
- Encourage officers to utilize the plans throughout the Officer Training Program.
- Depending on the location the plan covers, work collaboratively with the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) to complete it, as they may also refer to the document during an emergency.
- Fire departments can develop the plan with as much detail as needed, and numerous computer-aided applications are available.



Improvements could be achieved by strengthening the current pre-incident plan program and updating any existing plans to meet NFPA 1620 standards. IFRS might rely on their firefighters to complete these plans with each full-time crew and volunteer station, aiming to finish two annually.

### 3.4.17 *Electric Vehicle Technologies*

By September 2023, there were 135,000 electric vehicles in Ontario; by 2030, this number is expected to reach one million. Generally, some fire services are falling behind in training firefighters for incidents involving electric vehicles. Historically, most vehicle fires involve those powered by fossil fuels. Electric vehicles use high-voltage lithium-ion batteries, which can reach dangerously high temperatures if the vehicle catches fire. Firefighters are also at risk of electric shock from damaged lithium batteries when handling such fires. Before starting any extrication involving an electric vehicle, firefighters must ensure the vehicle is de-energized to avoid electrical shock from compromised wiring. High-voltage batteries contain many cells tightly

packed in a water-tight, fire-resistant box. When a cell fails, it can generate heat of up to 1,200°F in as little as a tenth of a second.<sup>32</sup>

Historically, a portable dry chemical fire extinguisher has successfully controlled, if not entirely extinguished, a vehicle fire, if it is a Class A or B fire. Flammable metal fires are far more challenging to extinguish, partly due to the high temperatures they can generate.

Other notables include:

- An electric vehicle fire could require up to 40 times more water to extinguish than a conventional gas-powered vehicle.<sup>33</sup>
- Lithium batteries have been known to ignite hours after being involved in an MVC.
- Each fire in an electric vehicle has unique characteristics that require some Incident Commanders to summon resources quickly.
- Foam is not an effective extinguishing agent because it struggles to penetrate a water-tight, fire-resistant box.
- Batteries are not composed of solid lithium, which makes Class D fire extinguishers ineffective. The powder from the extinguisher cannot reach the inside of the box, where the failed cell(s) are located.
- Pancake nozzles are new on the market and are relatively ineffective because there is no way to spray water inside the box. The water sprayed only cools the outside of the box and does not make contact with the failing cells.
- Departments should avoid using devices that slide underneath the vehicle and then pierce the battery box because of the risk of electrical shock.
- Structural firefighting piercing nozzles should never be used to penetrate the box because of the electrocution risk.

The best approach when dealing with an electric vehicle fire is to let it burn itself out, as gaining access to the batteries inside the compartment is almost impossible. It typically takes about an hour for a battery to burn out, compared to continuously spraying water to cool the compartment for six to eight hours. Once the battery has burned out, use water to extinguish any remaining Class A material that is still burning.

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<sup>32</sup> Fire Rescue 1, 'Electric Vehicle Fires: Where the Waiting Game Wins', accessed September 2025, <https://www.firerescue1.com/electric-vehicles/articles/electric-vehicle-fires-where-the-waiting-game-wins-f934UedqlpVqc1k2/>

<sup>33</sup> Changing America, 'Firefighters have to blast 40 times more water at burning Tesla than other cars', accessed September 2025, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/arts-culture/568255-firefighters-have-to-blast-40-times-more-water-at/>

The IFRS must ensure that all Operating Guidelines, procedures, and training are current when responding to electric vehicle emergencies.

There might be a need to source training courses and acquire specialized equipment for fighting fires in electric vehicles, such as an emergency plug that communicates with the vehicle's software, preventing its operation and the risk of it driving away.<sup>34</sup>

Online training, such as NFPA's Alternative Fuel Vehicles Training Program for Emergency Responders, is accessible.<sup>35</sup>

In the third quarter of 2023, the OFM issued Communique 2023-8, mandating that fire departments notify their office of all fires involving lithium batteries.<sup>36</sup> This issuance is in response to the increasing number of fires related to lithium batteries, some of which have resulted in fatalities.

### **3.4.18**      *Cancer Prevention*

In recent years, there have been more reviews of cancer prevention and its link to firefighting. The focus has been on managing contamination around fire incidents. From pre-fire activities to cleaning and decontamination after fires, all prevention efforts are now being closely examined by fire service management at all levels. Departments aim to reduce opportunities for cross-contamination and secondary exposure to carcinogens involved in fire scenes.

Not all IFRS fire stations have a direct connection to an exhaust extraction system to capture the apparatus's exhaust. The source system activates as soon as the master switch in the apparatus is turned on. Installing a direct-connect exhaust system at every station would significantly reduce this health concern. The Ministry of Labour, through its Section 21 Committee, issues guidance notes for the fire service. Guidance Note: 3-1 Reducing Exposure to Diesel Exhaust states:

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<sup>34</sup> Darley, 'Emergency Plug, accessed September 2025, [https://www.edarley.com/emergency-plug/?utm\\_source=hp&utm\\_medium=topbanner&utm\\_campaign=eplug](https://www.edarley.com/emergency-plug/?utm_source=hp&utm_medium=topbanner&utm_campaign=eplug).

<sup>35</sup> Register for Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) Online Training, accessed September 2025, <https://www.nfpa.org/product/afv-training-program-for-emergency-responders/evt004>

<sup>36</sup> Ontario, Fire Marshal' Communiqués from 2023, accessed September 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fire-marshals-communiques-2023>

*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.*

It further states that “*direct capture (tailpipe) exhaust system extractors, which are considered to be the most effective engineering control.*”<sup>37</sup>

NFPA 1500: *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program* specifies that fire departments must contain all vehicle exhaust emissions to a level of at least 100 percent effective capture.

Cancer prevention can even begin at the scene of a structure fire. Bunker gear becomes contaminated with smoke, toxins, and gases for some time after a fire. Decontaminating firefighters at the scene to ensure they don't bring their dirty gear back to the station or transport it in the truck's cab is another vital step in cancer prevention. To support this effort, IFRS's investment in on-scene decontamination equipment should include clear bags for transporting bunker gear back to the station.

Several resources are available online to aid the IFRS in enhancing its cancer prevention program, including the Province of Ontario's cancer prevention checklist.<sup>38</sup>

Cancer prevention goes beyond just removing and bagging bunker gear at the fire station for cleaning; the firefighter's clothing may also retain cancerous contaminants. The hygiene and decontamination program should include the firefighter's uniform worn during fires. This may require firefighters to have spare clothing at the station or in their vehicle, ready to change into after showering. Firefighters must wash their clothing at the fire station, not at home. Contaminants can be brought into the house via their cars and then transferred to their families. To IFRS credit, it has obtained bunker gear extraction machines, and some stations have also been outfitted with domestic washers and dryers.

Cancer prevention is not a simple, one-step task. The strategies for prevention are as varied as the exposures firefighters encounter in any emergency. Whether motivation comes from leadership or grassroots efforts, prevention is a long-term, ongoing journey that must commence today. IFRS needs to implement a comprehensive health and wellness program that addresses all aspects of health and well-being.

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<sup>37</sup> Ontario, '3-1 Controlling exposure to Diesel Exhaust' accessed September 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/document/firefighter-guidance-notes/3-1-controlling-exposure-diesel-exhaust>

<sup>38</sup> Ontario, 'Firefighter's Cancer Prevention Checklist', accessed September 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/firefighters-cancer-prevention-checklist>

Fire departments need to have spare gear available for members to use when their primary equipment becomes contaminated and requires cleaning. They do this by issuing a second set of gear to each member or by keeping a stock of spare gear that members can access during cleaning. In IFRS's case, career firefighters have a second set of bunker gear, and the POC firefighters have one set. Each station should keep sets of spare gear in different sizes. The spare gear worn by a member must be a matching set, meaning it should be the same make, model, and components.

Since the two-hatter rule has been relaxed, allowing career firefighters to also belong to a paid-on-call department where they live and support their community, the issue of cancer in the fire service has taken on a new dimension. Municipalities are now questioning when two-hatter firefighters can have cancer recognized by legislation. How was it proven when they were exposed, and which fire department were they working with at the time? Which incident was it? Was it during their time with the career department or the paid-on-call? Which municipality is responsible for their wages and appropriate coverage? Once again, documentation such as exposure reports completed after each fire and the initiation of a comprehensive cancer prevention and screening program are crucial to ensure members receive the support they need promptly, without delays caused by bureaucracy.

IFRS has identified the need to make enhancements to its cancer prevention program and intends to acquire more equipment and establish procedures to help reduce members' risk of developing cancer.

### *3.4.19 Rehabilitation*

NFPA 1584: *Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises* outlines requirements for the safe, effective, and efficient rehabilitation of firefighters following strenuous emergency service delivery (firefighter rehab is not just for fires). The standard addresses nine components of rehabilitation that fire departments should aim to include in their related SOGs.

- Responder accountability (who is in rehabilitation?)
- Administer EMS treatment as necessary.
- Relief from weather conditions
- Calorie and electrolyte replenishment
- Rehydration (fluid replacement)
- Medical monitoring
- Active and/or passive cooling or warming as needed.



- Rest and recovery release procedures (who has left the rehabilitation area and where did they go?)

### 3.4.20 *Health and Fitness*

The health and wellness of staff are a crucial focus for all municipalities, and the Town of Innisfil is no exception. Because paid-on-call often hold another primary job, their focus on fitness is often overlooked. Firefighting is inherently stressful and physically demanding. During the review, EMG noted that three of the five fire stations have been equipped with workout facilities to help staff stay fit, which can reduce work-related injuries. The fire department should aim to incorporate fitness equipment into all stations.

Many fire departments regularly assess firefighters to ensure they meet occupational fitness standards, either through internal testing or by third-party providers. NFPA 1582 outlines the core expectations for firefighters. IFRS should support the review and adoption of these standards in candidate assessments, firefighter fitness programs, and operational procedures. EMG encourages IFRS to consider the physical demands placed on firefighters during emergency responses, training, and recruitment.

As people age, they are generally more prone to injury and illness due to several physiological changes and health conditions.<sup>39</sup>

- **Decreased muscle mass and strength:** Older adults often experience sarcopenia, which leads to weaker muscles that can increase the risk of falls.
- **Reduced Bone Density:** Osteoporosis increases the risk of fractures, making bones more fragile.
- **Changes in Balance and Coordination:** Aging can impair balance and coordination, making falls more likely.
- **Chronic Health Conditions:** Many older adults have chronic conditions like arthritis, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, which can impair mobility and increase injury risk.
- **Slower Healing Process:** Aging can slow down the body's healing, prolonging recovery time from injuries.

These factors heighten the risk of injuries and illnesses among older adults, highlighting the need for preventative measures and healthy lifestyle choices. While this is relevant to the wider population, firefighters are also not immune to experiencing similar conditions, if not the same.

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<sup>39</sup> Common Injuries as We Age | Still Going Strong | CDC, accessed September 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/still-going-strong/about/common-injuries-as-we-age.html>



Innifil Fire and Rescue Service

Station 4 - Fitness Room

NFPA 1582 *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments* outlines 14 essential job tasks that specify the physical and physiological demands placed on firefighters. The Standard details the requirements for a department's medical program, including conditions that might pose risks during firefighting activities. As the main reference for evaluating the physical demands of firefighting, IFRS must understand the expectations it sets for all its personnel. By adopting the NFPA 1582 standard, the Town and IFRS demonstrate a commitment to the health and well-being of their firefighters.

The 14 essential job tasks outlined in NFPA 1582 serve as the foundation for NFPA 1583 *Standard on Health-Related Fitness Programs for Fire Department Members*. NFPA states that "this standard outlines a complete health-related fitness program (HRFP) for fire department members involved in emergency operations to enhance their ability to perform occupational activities and reduce the risk of injury, disease, and premature death."

★ **Recommendation #23** - Review NFPA Standards 1582 and 1583 to develop a fitness assessment program for both recruits and current members.

### 3.4.21 *Mental Health – Sense of Well-Being*

The Town of Innisfil has included all its fire department staff in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered through its municipal employee benefits. This support program is a vital part of employee wellness. Not all EAP services provide access to trained, accredited mental health professionals (psychologists or psychiatrists), and some only offer limited support through counselling and therapy. IFRS should meet with administrative staff from the Town who oversee it to ensure that firefighting personnel are fully aware of the benefits available through the EAP, should they need it.

In 2017, the Ministry of Labour required municipalities and their emergency services organizations to submit a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Prevention Plan under *the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)*, 2016. This initiative aligned PTSD with Occupational Stress Injuries (OSI), which are regarded as workplace injuries and can be compensated through the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB). The IFRS has initiated different stages of a program that includes peer support. Training related to peer support has been developed and made available for its members, covering what PTSD is, the risks it poses, training, ongoing support, early intervention, WSIB claims management, recovery, and return to work. The document should also list the available peer support agencies. A useful reference is the Ontario Government's website on PTSD.<sup>40</sup> The Town of Innisfil and IFRS completed and submitted its PTSD document to the Ministry in 2017 as required.<sup>41</sup>

Although municipalities often have employee assistance programs, these typically fall short in addressing long-term mental health issues caused by repeated exposure to extreme (and traumatic) events throughout a firefighter's career. Being proactive by recognizing this problem and dedicating resources to educating members and providing mental health support before someone develops PTSD is the best approach. IFRS has members trained in PTSD peer support to help colleagues facing difficulties. Still, a missing element is having a trained psychologist available to assist with complex situations that exceed the capabilities of the peer support group.

The department should organize an evening training session for members and their partners on PTSD, its signs and symptoms, and the support available for those affected or dealing with

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<sup>40</sup> Post-traumatic stress disorder prevention plans | ontario.ca, accessed February 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-prevention-plans>

<sup>41</sup> Innisfil\_main.docx, accessed September 2025, [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.labour.gov.on.ca%2Fptsd%2Finnisfil\\_main.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.labour.gov.on.ca%2Fptsd%2Finnisfil_main.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

other mental health issues. Provide a brochure for families to keep at home, including a list of support agencies.

### **3.4.22**      *Career Fire Fighters*

The full-time firefighters have been discussed in detail throughout several sections of this report. The current staffing includes 40 full-time personnel: 20 assigned to Station 2 – Lefroy and another 20 to Station 5 in Big Bay Point. Several studies have been referenced regarding the optimal number of firefighters needed at certain occupancies during a fire, such as a detached home, which requires at least 17 if an aerial device is in use, and a high-rise above 23 metres (75 feet), which requires 38, or 39 if an aerial is utilized. With an average response time of 6.03 minutes for paid-on-call firefighters, the IFRS struggles to provide adequate staffing at a working fire in any occupancy. With the proposed development of a casino and a community hub called Orbit, IFRS would not have enough staff without calling in resources from a neighbouring department.

Another consideration when fighting high-rise fires is the training of the resources called in from elsewhere, as dealing with high-rise fires is much more complex than dealing with fires in a detached single-family home. Fire departments that do not have buildings over three storeys typically do not provide high-rise firefighter training. If personnel from outside assistance arrive to support IFRS at a high-rise, their capabilities and limitations must be carefully considered to ensure safety, which also impacts the Innisfil Incident Commander.

With at least eight full-time firefighters on duty in addition to the six paid-on-call members (based on the three-year average in Table #17), it leaves the department short-staffed for any structure fire, let alone a residential one. The IFRS needs to hire another 20 full-time firefighters at this time. As the Town expands, the need for additional full-time staff will be recognized. This includes staffing of aerial devices to support firefighting operations at high rises, in addition to industrial and commercial occupancies.

A major concern with current response levels, as discussed previously, was the three-year average of POC members responding per call, which was low. While the department has conducted significant recruitment of POC members in 2025, they lack experience on the fireground, and this will only improve with increased training and experience. Until then, and

until the number of POC members per station increases, the best solution may be hiring additional full-time personnel.

★ **Recommendation #24** - Hire 20 full-time firefighters immediately to staff a third full-time apparatus (aerial). Following the onboarding of this initial group, hire an additional 20 full-time firefighters according to the phased timeline below:

- 5 full-time firefighters in Year 1
- 5 full-time firefighters in Year 2
- 5 full-time firefighters in Year 3
- 5 full-time firefighters in Year 4

*Proposed hires listed in the Finance Section.*

Although this staffing forecast is ambitious, it still leaves the Town understaffed to manage a fire in a high-rise, multiple structure fires at once, or a serious weather event such as a tornado, considering the unpredictable number of paid-on-call members available at the time of the call.

Future staffing requirements may include other options, such as staggering the hiring of full-time over a set period, and/or a greater use of the POC firefighters for staffing purposes. It will take considerable analysis and, in some cases, discussions with the local bargaining unit of the IAFF.

Station 1 – Alcona would be the best location to assign the 20 new full-time firefighters to be hired immediately. Therefore, the station will need many modifications to support this operational change.

★ **Recommendation #25**- Renovate Station 1 – Alcona to house 20 full-time firefighters.

### 3.4.23 *Platoon Chiefs*

A Platoon Chief is a leadership role responsible for supporting the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief of Operations in delivering all operational fire programs and managing staff and daily operations. Under the guidance of the Deputy Chief of Operations, the Platoon Chief oversees and manages an assigned Platoon to ensure smooth and effective operations as well as the execution of daily activities and programs.

The IFRS does not have Platoon Chiefs who work the same shifts as the career firefighters. Usually, there is one assigned to each platoon, and one is always on duty. A key role of the Platoon Chief is supervising firefighters at emergency scenes. When the Platoon Chief is not working, a career firefighter delegated as an Acting Platoon Chief takes over the role. The acting position is held by another Captain who has completed a qualification process. Since career firefighters work a 24-hour shift, there is a need for a Platoon Chief to be on duty at the same time. The IFRS needs to hire four Platoon Chiefs to ensure coverage. This can be done gradually through a hiring process over a set period.

★ **Recommendation #26** – IFRS hire four Platoon Chiefs based on the following schedule:

- Hire 1 Platoon Chief in sequence with the additional five firefighters hired in year 1 of Recommendation #25.
- Hire 1 additional Platoon Chief in sequence with the additional firefighters hired in year 2 of Recommendation #25.
- Hire 2 additional Platoon Chiefs in sequence with the additional firefighters hired in year 4 of Recommendation #25.

### 3.4.24 *Paid-on-Call (Volunteer) Firefighters*

Whether a truly volunteer, a paid-on-call, or a career fire service, it requires a high level of professionalism and commitment from its personnel. This is achieved through training, career development, and fostering a sense of self-worth and belonging within the community.

A 2023 census conducted by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) revealed that there are 126,000 firefighters in Canada, of which 90,000 are volunteers. Many receive some form of paid-on-call compensation or an honorarium or are given funding to cover expenses, but they do not earn a living wage from firefighting. The survey estimated there are currently 15,000 vacant positions in the fire service, with 9845 volunteer firefighters leaving the service in 2023.<sup>42</sup>

A common challenge across Canada and the United States is recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters. The goal of any paid-on-call fire department is to address recruitment issues and improve retention by adapting to factors like shifting demographics, shortages of affordable housing, and the increasing demand for better work-life balance. The modern fire service must rethink its strategies for recruiting and keeping firefighters. Similar to other civic organizations,

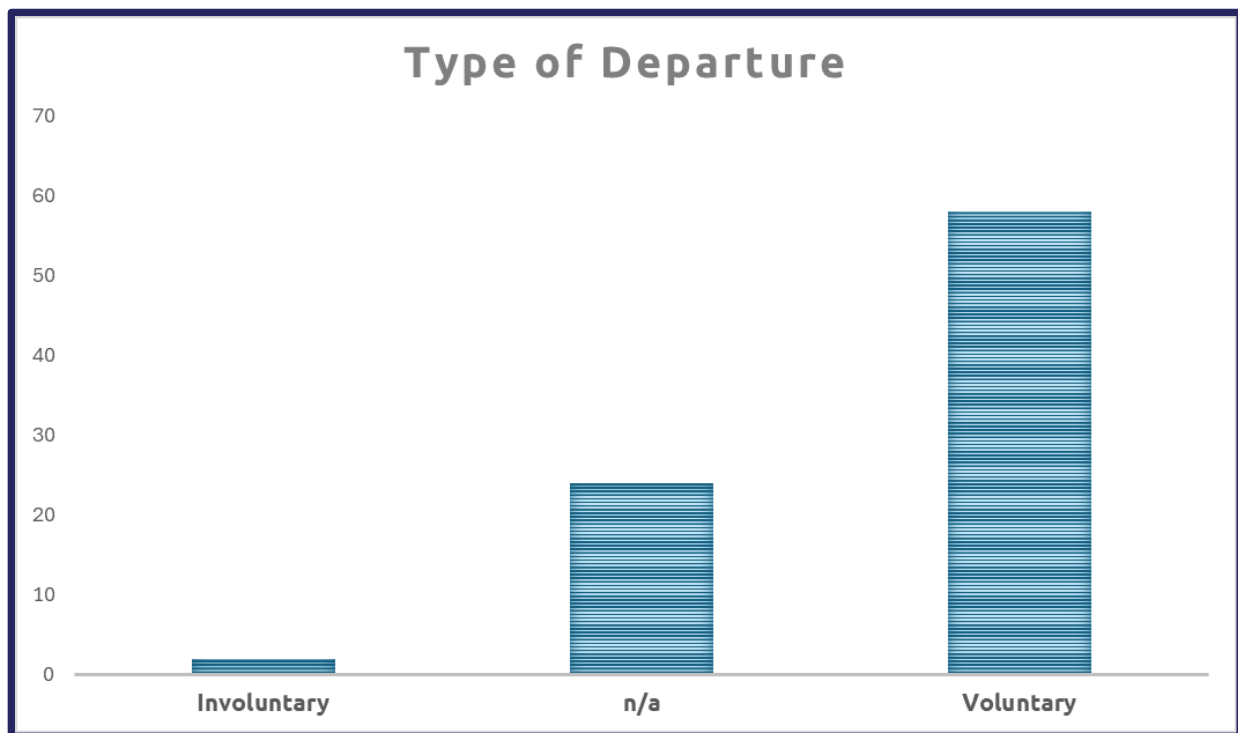
<sup>42</sup> 2022 Census Report - Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs Accessed September 2025. <https://cafc.ca/page/2022Censusresults>  
<https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/breaking-bad-habits-recruitment-and-retention-of-volunteer-firefighters>

which have faced declines of over 63% in the past decade, the fire service needs to be visible, approachable, welcoming, inclusive, and open-minded.<sup>43</sup>

One of the main reasons members leave is that they do not feel appreciated. People's time and energy are valuable resources; therefore, the fire service must find ways to show appreciation to its members and their families.<sup>44</sup>

Between 2018 and 2025 to date, some 66 members have left IFRS, many for a variety of reasons; some were dismissed involuntarily, but those were few in number. The following tables and graphs provide a picture of the reasons and number of members that left each of those years.

**TABLE #25: TYPE OF DEPARTURE**



<sup>43</sup> Breaking Bad Habits: Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Accessed September 2025. <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/breaking-bad-habits-recruitment-and-retention-of-volunteer-firefighters>

<sup>44</sup> Breaking Bad Habits: Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Accessed September 2025. <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/breaking-bad-habits-recruitment-and-retention-of-volunteer-firefighters>

TABLE #26: NUMBER OF POC FIREFIGHTERS LEAVING IFRS

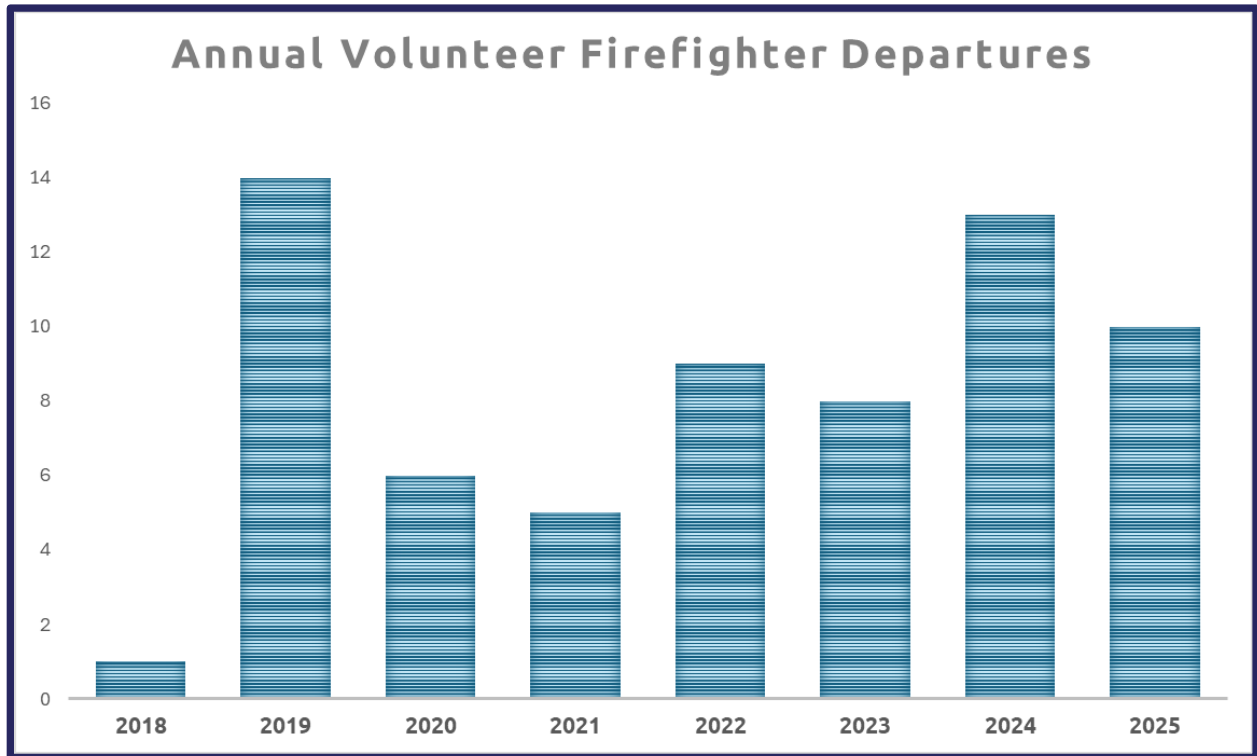
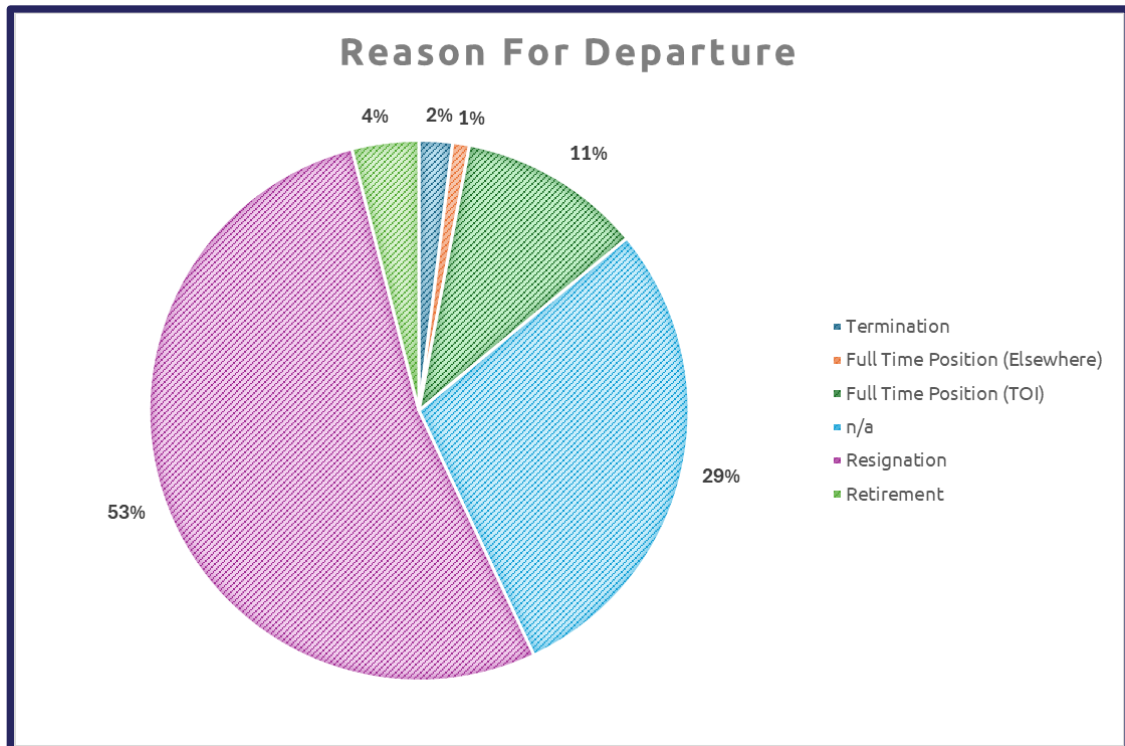


FIGURE #7 – REASONS FOR LEAVING IFRS



### 3.4.25 *Recruitment and Retention of Paid-on-Call Firefighters*

The IFRS is authorized to have 85 paid-on-call (volunteer) firefighters in its ranks. Like many other fire departments in Ontario, several members leave the department each year. Between 2024 and 2025, IFRS experienced a turnover of 22 POC firefighters, while between 2022 and 2024, there was a turnover of 15 members. The department does not have a formal recruitment and retention program.

Recruitment and retention of paid-on-call firefighters are increasingly challenging issues in the fire service. These problems are worsened by factors such as rising living costs and demands from careers and families. The new training certification requirements introduced by the OFM will necessitate greater training commitments, which could negatively affect volunteer retention. Fortunately for IFRS, any new paid-on-call firefighters receive training to NFPA 1001 standards and eventually attain certification in Levels I & II.

Paid-on-call firefighters often encounter difficulties responding to daytime calls from Monday to Friday because many are at their main job, school, or have family commitments.

With IFRS's proactive approach to recruiting, some of the previous suggestions may already be in place.

During the development of this report, IFRS had just completed a recruitment drive, bringing on board several firefighters. Notwithstanding that IFRS is currently well-positioned in terms of recruiting and retaining firefighters, maintaining this momentum requires a strategic, multifaceted approach that directly addresses the factors contributing to a trend of declining volunteer participation in the fire service. Fire departments can greatly improve engagement with their members through targeted efforts in recruitment, training, support, and leadership development.

To improve recruitment, departments should focus on community outreach and awareness. Hosting public events like open houses and demonstrations, collaborating with schools and local organizations, and using social media can effectively promote volunteer opportunities. Targeted campaigns directed at diverse groups, such as women and visible minorities, can expand the candidate pool.

Members of IFRS could conduct station and apparatus tours during recruitment sessions and hold in-person discussions about what it's like to be a volunteer. These talks can clarify the expectations for department members, such as the number of fire calls and training sessions required, any paid honorarium, and the satisfaction and friendships that come from genuine teamwork.

Diversity can only thrive in a welcoming, inclusive environment. To achieve this, inclusion requires a plan to help new members feel accepted and valued. The program should aim to transform the culture and remove barriers that hinder inclusiveness within the fire department. Form a recruitment committee with both male and female firefighters to promote a more balanced approach, as fire departments often recruit in a one-dimensional way, which is not always effective. Additionally, focus on visible minorities in the community and actively recruit individuals who share the department's Vision, Mission, and Values. To IFRS's credit, the department has been successful in recruiting women to join the department.

Some fire services have discovered that constructing a new fire station has sparked interest among potential recruits and could be the decisive factor for those wishing to join the department.

Recruitment can be challenging, especially when a department struggles to locate suitable candidates. As a result, retention programs are crucial for keeping members engaged. Some retention efforts may incur costs for the town or necessitate benefits outlined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures that govern volunteer management. Still, retaining trained personnel longer decreases the need to train new firefighters, thus enhancing the department's return on investment. Since training and equipping new firefighters is costly for the town, it is vital to develop and support retention strategies, which the Council should approve.

### **3.4.25.1 Retention Program**

The issue of retention has become a significant challenge for virtually every POC fire service. Several reasons contribute to firefighters leaving, such as feeling unappreciated by the municipality, the demands of training and responding to calls, and the difficulty of balancing work and family commitments.

#### ***The Magnitude of the Retention Issue<sup>45</sup>***

Results from a survey of current and former members of volunteer fire departments in the United States showed that more than two-thirds of respondents believe their departments have (or had) issues with volunteer retention. This includes nearly 70% of current department leadership.

Additionally, nearly half of all current volunteers have considered leaving the fire service at some point.

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<sup>45</sup> National Volunteer Fire Council, 'Volunteer Retention Research Report', Accessed September 2025, <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20Aug-NVFC-Retention-Research-Report-FINAL.pdf>

## *Reasons for Leaving*

Former volunteers cited a lack of department cohesion and unsupportive leadership as their main reasons for leaving the service in the survey, reinforcing feedback received during the qualitative research phase. The most common reasons for departure cited by former volunteers in the survey were:

- The department atmosphere is filled with cliques and groups that exclude others.
- Department leadership that neglects or fails to support members' needs.
- Department atmosphere where members of different generations struggle to get along
- Lack of camaraderie or community spirit within the department

Notably, the survey revealed that current volunteers have a mostly different list of top reasons for why they believe volunteers leave, emphasizing more on unclear expectations and how volunteering fits into an individual's overall life. The main reasons cited by current volunteers were:

- Lack of support and flexibility in balancing volunteer duties with other life commitments
- The realities of volunteering did not meet or change from the expectations set before signing up.
- Lack of clear expectations regarding the time and effort needed weekly or monthly for meetings and training.
- The department atmosphere is filled with cliques and groups that exclude others.

It's important to note that among the two most common reasons cited by former volunteers for leaving – department cliques and leadership that doesn't prioritise member needs – there are notable differences in how significantly current volunteers and current leadership perceive these issues; current non-leaders are much more likely to mention them compared to leadership.

Conversely, department leadership was much more likely to view juggling volunteering responsibilities as a problem compared to non-leadership members and former volunteers. This may suggest a disconnect between the experiences of current and past members, as well as between leadership and general members.

Members who initially considered leaving but ultimately decided to stay were troubled by issues with leadership, cliques, and training requirements. However, their desire to serve the community and their sense of responsibility ultimately kept them in their departments.

Further opportunities to increase retention may include:

- Family nights at the fire station, featuring a movie and activities for children.
- Assign an experienced member to mentor each rookie when a new member joins the department.
- Organize firefighter appreciation events (e.g., dinner, barbecue) where the Council recognizes members for their long-term, outstanding service or exceptional service performed.
- Council acknowledgement of the employers of the paid-on-call firefighters for allowing their participation in the fire department and/or permitting them to leave work to attend fire calls.
- Survey other fire services to compare pay rates and adjust the honorarium accordingly.
- Implement a service recognition pay incentive. This stipend could include offering an additional 5 to 10% pay increase for every five years of service in the department; this would help prevent the loss of years of experience.
- Performance pay for those who achieve a high percentage of attendance at training sessions and fire calls.
- Offer benefit packages, as many may lack benefits at their main job, and some are self-employed. These benefits could include basic dental, drug, and eyewear coverage.
- Offer an RRSP or pension savings plan (OMERS) with contributions from the town after they have been a department member for a set period.
- Implementing an “on-call or platoon” program that would pay a week or weekend allowance to the paid-on-call firefighters who commit to being available by signing up for weekdays and/or weekends may be necessary.
- Promote and offer educational assistance programs to support staff’s professional growth.
- Enhance and sustain morale by supplying up-to-date trucks, equipment, and stations.
- Support each station’s design of a logo to promote its region within the municipality or the services it offers. The logo could feature a tasteful mascot character. These logos might be displayed on t-shirts and possibly on the apparatus as a source of pride.
- Provide strong leadership that focuses on the department's Mission, Vision, and Values, and resolve conflicts promptly.
- Conduct exit interviews with departing staff to understand their reasons for leaving. While there may be straightforward explanations, there could also be underlying issues

the administration is unaware of, such as taunting, bullying, harassment, or feelings of rejection.

- Some suggestions might incur costs for the town or require benefits to be included in the Personal Policies and Procedures that oversee volunteers. However, retaining trained personnel longer reduces the need to train new firefighters, thus increasing the department's return on investment. Training and equipping new firefighters is costly for the town; a way to retain this investment must be developed and approved by the Council.
- Another consideration is IFRS's acquisition of an app such as "I am Responding" or "Who is Responding" to identify the availability of volunteers, especially over holiday weekends. This app would be accessible to full-time firefighters to determine their availability for a callback.
- Building morale can be as simple as the Chief Officers visiting career stations during the day for coffee or during training nights with paid-on-call personnel. Direct communication is crucial to prevent the rumour mill from running wild. In contrast, face-to-face contact allows members to ask questions and reduces the chances of disinformation spreading initially.

While IFRS has adopted some of the suggestions mentioned earlier, the department might add more at little cost. Training and outfitting a paid-on-call team is a significant expense, and the Town needs to develop strategies to support this key investment. Conducting a recruitment is demanding for a fire department, especially for the training division, when multiple recruitments happen close together. It takes the training officers away from providing essential training to current members.

Building good relationships begins during the recruitment phase, when the Town posts job openings for applicants to join the fire department. A smooth, consistent, and fluid hiring process creates an image of an organization that is welcoming to those who want to volunteer their time and be part of it. Delaying the hiring process and failing to keep candidates informed can cause promising applicants to decide to move on, as they may have heard nothing from the municipality for an extended period.

IFRS has been fortunate to have dedicated, paid-on-call members, some of whom are genuinely interested in becoming full-time firefighters in the future. It would benefit IFRS to leverage its resources when recruiting full-time staff by adopting a comprehensive and proactive strategy, while continuing to strengthen its recruitment and retention efforts.

Many composite fire services have adopted a policy that when hiring full-time firefighters, the qualified paid-on-call member should be given first consideration for a full-time firefighting

role. Who better to hire than from within the department's own ranks, where they already know the candidate, their work ethic, and qualifications?

The recruitment and long-term retention issues of paid-on-call firefighters are widespread across Ontario and Canada. To IFRS credit, it has not faced challenges when recruiting new POC firefighters; the challenge is retaining them. While the OFM has provided suggestions on recruitment and retention, there is genuine concern among fire departments about how the certification process will affect the retention of firefighters, given the amount of work required and the time away from family and work.

★ **Recommendation #27** – The IFRS establish a retention committee comprising personnel from every division, including both career and POC staff.

### 3.4.26 *Station Captains and Lieutenants – Paid-on-call Stations*

In Ontario, volunteer fire departments, the primary station officer is responsible for various administrative and command functions to maintain efficiency and ensure community safety. One task that the POC Captains of IFRS currently do not do is the completion and submission of fire reports, which typically falls under the responsibility of the primary station officer to either complete or ensure the officer in command completes. Presently, they make some notes and pass them on to an on-duty full-time captain, who then prepares a fire report. Fire reports are considered legal documents that could be used in legal proceedings. If a captain were to claim that they did not complete the fire report while someone else had done so, it could put the municipality at risk of litigation.

Within the job descriptions for captains of IFRS, it states in Article 8 states the following:

*8. Performs administrative duties by completing standard forms and reports, maintaining records, establishing and monitoring files, requisitioning supplies and chairing and participating in department meetings so that the fire station is run in accordance with department regulations, policies and procedures.*

Each IFRS fire station has a captain responsible for the activities at the station. They liaise between the station members and the administration team on issues such as human resources, training, equipment repairs, and requisitions. Technically, their duties in many volunteer fire stations, include.

- Planning and directing firefighting operations: Primary station officers organize, plan, and oversee firefighting activities to prevent loss of life, property, or injury. They ensure

that all firefighters receive adequate training and are prepared to respond to emergencies.

- Monitoring and inspecting firefighting equipment: They are responsible for ensuring that all firefighting equipment is in good working order and properly checked.
- May assist in developing policies and procedures: Primary station officers create and enforce policies and procedures for firefighting that comply with Council direction, Corporate Policy, departmental Standard Operating Guidelines and Policies
- Training volunteers: In some cases, they are involved in the recruitment process, while also , train, and oversee the activities of volunteer firefighters to make sure they are available and prepared when needed.
- Taking command during emergencies: In the event of a fire, primary station officers take command to ensure a safe and effective response.
- Ensuring strict adherence to occupational health and safety practices, including reviewing safe work procedures, staff training, and completing required health and safety inspections by members of the joint health and safety committee.

While the Captains have done a commendable job, there is a need for a more structured hierarchy, with one individual in charge of the station, which is currently undefined under the existing structure. As an example of past practices, as mentioned, the POC Captains pass on the call information to a career officer to complete reports. This could become a liability, and technically, in most fire departments, it's the officer on the scene and in charge who is responsible for completing all the necessary administrative work after the call is terminated.

★ **Recommendation #28** – That IFRS consider the opportunity to reorganize the rank structure among the paid-on-call members of the Stations.

Having District Chiefs in place will enhance accountability, ensuring the captains carry this out. The District Chiefs will also liaise with the department's administrative team, rather than multiple individuals doing so, for continuity of processes in the department's operations. These responsibilities are essential for maintaining community safety and ensuring volunteer fire crews can respond to emergencies with the necessary resources and expertise.

### **3.4.27**      *Retirement Age of Paid-on-call Firefighters*

Many of Canada's firefighters are volunteers or on call, tackling everything from house fires with trapped occupants to highway pileups or leaks of hazardous chemicals. Fewer young people have signed up in recent years to face these dangers, which pose serious threats to

people and their homes, especially in rural areas. There might not be a fire crew nearby during an emergency, and it is increasingly likely that older firefighters will be the responders.

The risk of having paid-on-call (volunteer) firefighters over the age of 65 includes potential health and safety concerns due to an increased likelihood of heart-related events and other health issues linked to aging. While career firefighters are also at risk, the focus remains on the health and safety of POC firefighters, who may still be performing their duties despite age-related concerns. Some may argue that a mandatory retirement age for POC firefighters could lead to a loss of expertise and complicate recruitment and retention efforts. However, the consensus must be that the health and safety of all firefighters should take precedence, regardless of their role.

Evidence from Canadian studies and fire service research highlights age-related risks for senior firefighters, with particular attention needed for volunteers over the age of 70.

### ***Key Risk Factors***

#### ***Cardiovascular Events***

- Firefighters over 65 face a higher risk of heart attack and stroke, especially during strenuous fire suppression efforts.

#### ***Respiratory Illness***

- Prolonged exposure to smoke and toxic particulates increases the risk of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), asthma, and pulmonary infections among older firefighters.

#### ***Cancer***

- Cancer, including lung and prostate, is a leading cause of firefighter fatalities. Senior firefighters, due to cumulative exposure, face an increased risk.

#### ***Musculoskeletal and Traumatic Injury***

- Aging decreases muscle strength, flexibility, and reaction times, which increases the risk and severity of injuries at work.

#### ***Mental Health***

- Older firefighters may experience PTSD, depression, or anxiety due to repeated exposure to traumatic incidents throughout their careers.

## *Implications for Community Risk Assessment*

- **Assessment Should Include:** Demographic information on volunteers' age profiles, health screening outcomes, and duty assignments based on individual fitness.
- **Suggested Mitigations:** While Innisfil Fire Rescue Service already requires annual physicals for its members, these should be reviewed and tailored to be more age specific. The department should share the results of the yearly medical assessments, may consider assigning those at higher risk to non-operational roles, strictly enforce safety protocols, and educate all personnel on age-related risks.
- **Review Cycle:** An annual review of age-related risks, along with updates to volunteer demographics and health outcomes, is advised to ensure that mitigation strategies remain effective and relevant.

For years, Fire Chiefs have been uncertain about mandatory retirement; they acknowledge the physical demands of the job and its impact on older members, and they advocate for health and safety considerations within the profession. All firefighters should be treated equally regarding health and safety. According to provincial legislation, working beyond the age of 60 as a career firefighter is considered a health and safety risk; this same risk also applies to volunteer or paid, on-call firefighters. In Ontario, career firefighters are not allowed to engage in active firefighting duties past the age of 60.

The question has been raised numerous times: “Should full-time and POC firefighters receive equal treatment under provincial legislation?” They are trained to the same standards, face similar dangers, and often work side by side at incidents in composite fire departments and through the mutual aid system. The Office of the Fire Marshal has identified that volunteer fire departments across Ontario are facing challenges with recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters. Mandatory retirement at age 60 will significantly impact volunteer departments. In many smaller municipalities, these firefighters may be the only responders available during the day.

Many departments have established mandatory retirement ages. If a member wishes to stay beyond that age, they must pass a physical exam, which may include fire department-related tasks and/or a medical check-up by a family doctor. Losing years of experience and knowledge is challenging for the fire service, and many members still have much to offer their community, such as supporting the fire department at fundraising events or managing a canteen truck for firefighters during major incidents.

Chapter 13 of the FPPA states the following regarding mandatory retirement for career firefighters active in fire suppression duties.

## **Mandatory Retirement**

### **Application**

*53.1 (1) This section applies to a firefighter only if the firefighter is regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.*

### **Mandatory retirement provision permitted**

*(2) A collective agreement may contain a provision requiring firefighters to retire at a specified age of 60 or over and, if it does, a firefighter subject to the agreement shall, subject to subsection (4), retire at the specified age.*

### **Existing and new collective agreements**

*(3) Subsection (2) applies to collective agreements that are in operation on the day section 2 of the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011 comes into force and to collective agreements that come into force after that day.*

### **Reasonable accommodation**

*(4) A firefighter shall not be required to retire if the firefighter can be accommodated without undue hardship, considering the cost, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements, if any.*

### **Human Rights Code**

*(5) This section applies despite the Human Rights Code.*

*3. Section 53.1 of the Act, as enacted by section 2, is amended by adding the following subsection:*

### **Deemed mandatory retirement provision**

*(3.1) If a collective agreement does not contain a provision requiring firefighters to retire at a specified age or if it contains a provision requiring firefighters to retire at an age under 60, the agreement is deemed to contain a provision requiring firefighters to retire at the age of 60 and a firefighter subject to the agreement shall, subject to subsection (4), retire at that age.*

*4. Section 57 of the Act is amended by adding the following clause:*

*(c) prescribing forms for the purposes of subsections 46.2 (6) and 46.4 (8).*

Some municipalities have taken this legislation into account when developing retirement policies for their paid-on-call firefighters. The presence of senior (70+) volunteer firefighters poses distinct health and operational risks to fire departments across Canada. Recognizing and documenting these risks in the Community Risk Assessment will enable effective risk management and enhance the overall safety and resilience of the departments.

★ **Recommendation #29** – The Town of Innisfil and IFRS should collaborate to assess the issue of ageism in the fire service and determine the risks it presents to the overall operation of the service.



# Section 4

## Facilities, Vehicles and Equipment

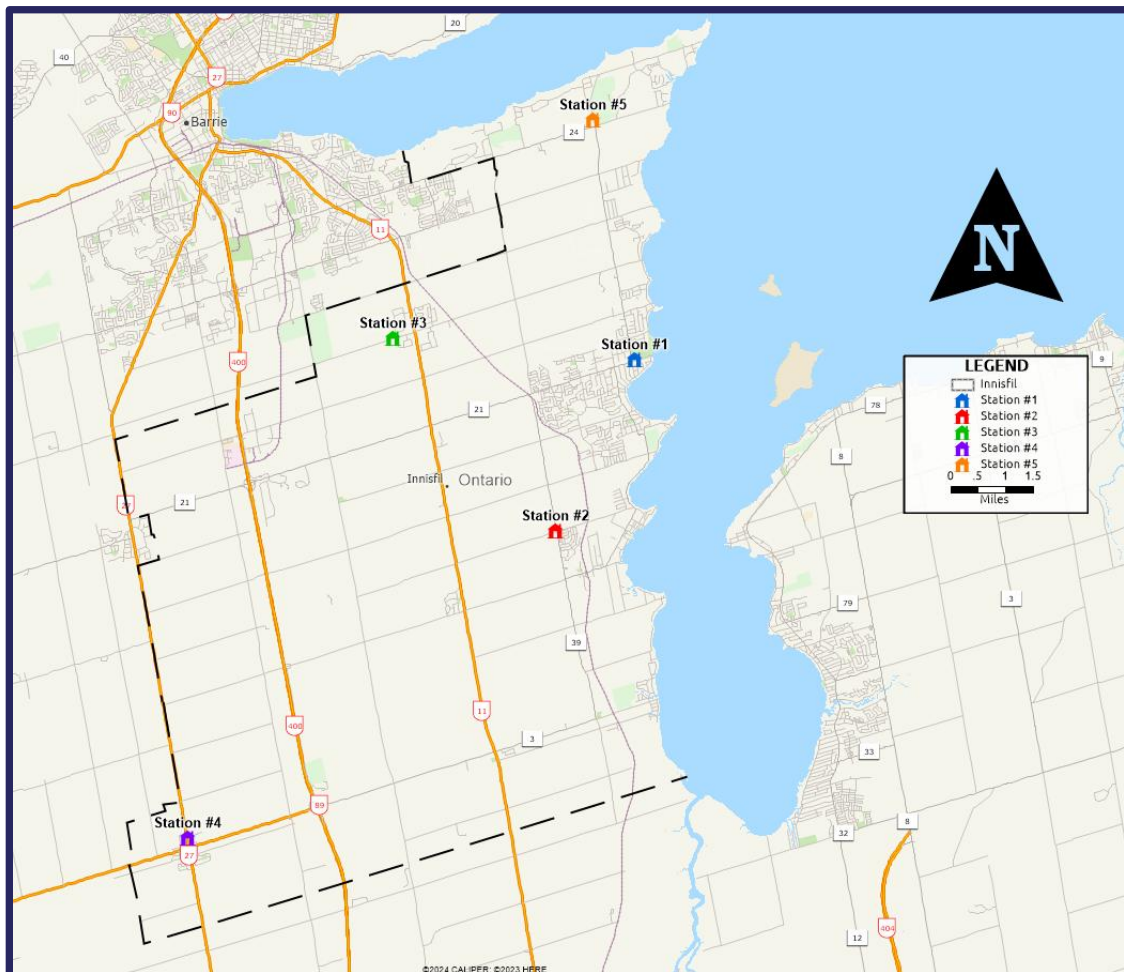
# SECTION 4 - FACILITIES, VEHICLES, & EQUIPMENT

## 4.1 Fire Station Review

This section will evaluate facility requirements and station placements by reviewing current facilities and suggesting future locations based on existing and projected service demands and relevant standards.

The five IFRS fire stations are Alcona, Lefroy, Stroud, Cookstown, and Big Bay Point. This review involved a walkthrough of the fire stations for visual inspection. EMG did not perform any destructive testing or engineering assessment. To the town's credit, four of its stations have been built in the past 23 years, and the fifth, Station 1, was constructed 37 years ago. All of the stations were found to be in good condition; however, some concerns were noted and will be addressed in the following pages.

FIGURE #8 – IFRS FIRE STATION LOCATIONS



### 4.1.1 Fire Stations

Historically, fire stations have served as key centers for communities. They have traditionally been located on main roads to allow quick access and prompt response by firefighters. Built to last up to 50 years, their planning and design should account for both present needs and those of the department 20 years from now and beyond.

Identifying fire station locations that provide the most efficient and effective response to the community they serve is essential. Placing them within a fixed response zone based solely on response times isn't always the best approach. The location of a fire station depends on several factors, including key risks in the response area, future community expansion, and the type of staffing—whether full-time, part-time, or paid-on-call firefighters. Another crucial factor is the geographical layout of the community, which may include natural barriers or divides, such as water, necessitating that some stations be positioned close to each other.

The OFM Public Fire Safety Guideline – PFSG 04-87-13 (currently under review) on Fire Station Location states that fire stations should be positioned to ensure the most effective and safe emergency responses. Distance and travel time may be primary factors; however, if the community's decision-makers establish a basic response time expectation—providing a more realistic level of service—and fire station location criteria are defined.

As noted, the stations are well-maintained, the equipment is clean and ready for use, and the floor areas are tidy and organized with minimal clutter. Current industry standards for designing and constructing a fire station have identified the need for amenities and features that were not considered in past construction. The following is a partial list of the essential components when building a fire station for either a career or paid-on-call fire department.

- Post-disaster-engineered structure
- Emergency backup power supply
- Gender-neutral washrooms, locker rooms, showers, and dormitory (When staffed 24/7)
- Barrier-free, AODA-compliant
- Negative pressure bunker gear storeroom
- Vehicle exhaust extraction system
- Water runoff separation tanks on the apparatus floor
- Emergency eye wash and decontamination station
- Offices for the station officer and firefighters
- Study room

- Communications Office (radio system to receive fire calls)
- Technologies room (i.e., phone, computer, radio, etc.)
- Kitchen
- Drive-through apparatus bays
- Lounge
- Fitness room
- Tool/repair room
- Station supply storeroom
- Clean maintenance room for cleaning/disinfecting and repairing items such as face masks, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), medical equipment, etc.
- Bunker gear extraction machine and dryer
- Domestic washing machine and clothes dryer
- Training/meeting room
- Emergency shut-off to cooking equipment.
- Given that the station would be a 40–50-year investment, a new station must include amenities required for full-time staffing.
- Red/green lights are installed at the overhead doors to notify the drivers when the overhead door is fully open.
- Sensors at a low level are installed on overhead doors to prevent their closing if the sensor's beam is blocked, indicating an obstruction in the doorway.
- Smoke and CO alarms and, in some instances, fire sprinklers.
- Advanced security entry and fire alarm systems, monitored by a third party

Overall, the stations were well planned and contain most of the features mentioned above. It should be noted that paramedics are housed at two stations, Station 1 – Alcona (paramedic post) and Station 3 – Stroud (paramedic station). This is a good use of the fire stations because it also allows for a more efficient use of the structure and paramedics within the community.

During a review of IFRS's existing facilities, it was observed that some features, including health and safety concerns, are missing. Stations 1 – Alcona and 3 - Stroud store their bunker gear on the apparatus floor, exposing it to diesel exhaust particulates that could adhere to the material and expose the wearer to carcinogenic particles. While Stations 2 - Lefroy and 4 - Cookstown have storerooms, they lack compartmentation and a negative-pressure ventilation system.

Currently, they have a positive pressure system that spreads contaminants throughout the building. Only one station has a properly equipped negative-pressure storage room: Station 5. Dedicated bunker gear storerooms should include a suitable negative-pressure ventilation system. This system would remove any off-gassing chemicals that might be present and prevent them from entering the general quarters. Although a ventilation system exists in bunker gear storage areas at some of the stations, it currently disperses the off-gases throughout the building rather than outside, as it is a positive-pressure system. With some modifications, such as installing closures and adjusting the existing ventilation system, these rooms could be converted into proper negative-pressure rooms.

As with many fire services, cooking facilities at the fire station are used before a meeting or during a special fundraising event. Stations should have an emergency shut-off valve/switch to the cooking equipment. This shut-off may be activated when a call is received to ensure that the power or gas supply to the cooking equipment is off until the members return and deactivate the valve/ switch.

Even though it was not a requirement when built ,post-disaster features are lacking in stations 1 and 3. Adding such features would be cost-prohibitive, as they are typically part of the original design and not completed after the structure is completed.



Station 1 - Alcona



Station 2 - Lefroy



Station 3 - Stroud



Station 4 - Cookstown



Station 5 - Big Bay Point

## 4.1.2 Current Conditions

Overall, the stations are in good to excellent condition, but the two oldest, 1 and 3, need major upgrades. During the walk-through, it was clear that there is little or no space for equipment and offices. At Station 3, the paramedics use an entire bay with up to three vehicles, while the fire department's space is fully used.

✦ **Recommendation #30 –**  
The IFRS explore the opportunities to complete the following modifications to the stations.

### All Stations

Upgraded security systems that use swipe security cards.  
A security and fire alarm system that a third party monitors.

### Station 1- Alcona

Install red/green lights on each overhead door.  
Requires an exhaust extraction system that is a direct connection at the source.  
An addition that houses bunker gear in a negative-pressure room.  
Fitness room  
An emergency generator that energizes the entire building during outages.

### Station 2 – Lefroy

SCBA washing machine  
Enclose bunker gear storage area and change to negative-pressure ventilation

### Station 3 – Stroud

Lacks an office where the captains can complete reports and handle administrative duties.

Requires an exhaust extraction system that is a direct connection at the source.

Bunker gear extractor, domestic washer, and dryer.

Install red/green lights at all overhead doors.

An addition that houses bunker gear in a negative-pressure room.

### Station 4 – Cookstown

Enclose bunker gear storage area and change to negative-pressure ventilation.

### Station 5 – Big Bay Point

Nothing noted

✦ **Recommendation #31** – The Town of Innisfil assess current space availability for the department's future growth, which may include analyzing the housing arrangements with the County of Simcoe's Paramedic Services.

#### 4.1.3 Building Maintenance

Building maintenance involves continuous upkeep and repairs of a building to ensure safety, functionality, and appearance. It includes tasks such as cleaning, inspecting structural integrity, and maintaining critical systems like HVAC, electrical, and plumbing. Regular maintenance is essential for preserving the building's structural integrity, improving safety, and avoiding costly repairs. Additionally, it helps support long-term value, comply with regulations, and present a positive appearance of the building.

By providing regular and proper maintenance, the town helps ensure that the asset stays in the best possible condition, reducing the need for future repairs and refurbishment work. Besides the building's structural components, maintenance also includes the grounds and other exterior

spaces, contributing to a pleasant and comfortable environment for both employees and visitors.

One of the key elements of building maintenance is carrying out regular inspections to identify potential issues or areas requiring attention. These inspections can be manual, where a technician physically examines various components, or technical, where specialized equipment and platforms are used to deliver a more thorough assessment of a building's condition. Consistent inspections and preventative maintenance are essential for keeping a building in optimal condition and minimizing any risks or problems that could arise.

Overall, maintaining buildings is a key responsibility of the Town of Innisfil's facilities department. However, caring for fire stations falls under the fire department's duties, and one of the roles of a Deputy Fire Chief is to coordinate repairs and meet regularly with contractors. Sometimes, this can cause delays in addressing more urgent issues. Since buildings and infrastructure require ongoing care, it is essential to have skilled technicians and workers who know how to keep structures functioning smoothly and efficiently. This expertise resides in the facilities department, not the fire department. Implementing a preventive maintenance program helps keep buildings in good condition, providing a safe and comfortable environment for everyone, which is not always the case at the IFRS's fire stations. This can lead to more costly repairs that could have been avoided. Years ago, the town completed a corporate-wide building assessment that included the fire stations. Unfortunately, these documents are not referenced often enough and could be key in developing plans and budgets to ensure the assets' longevity.

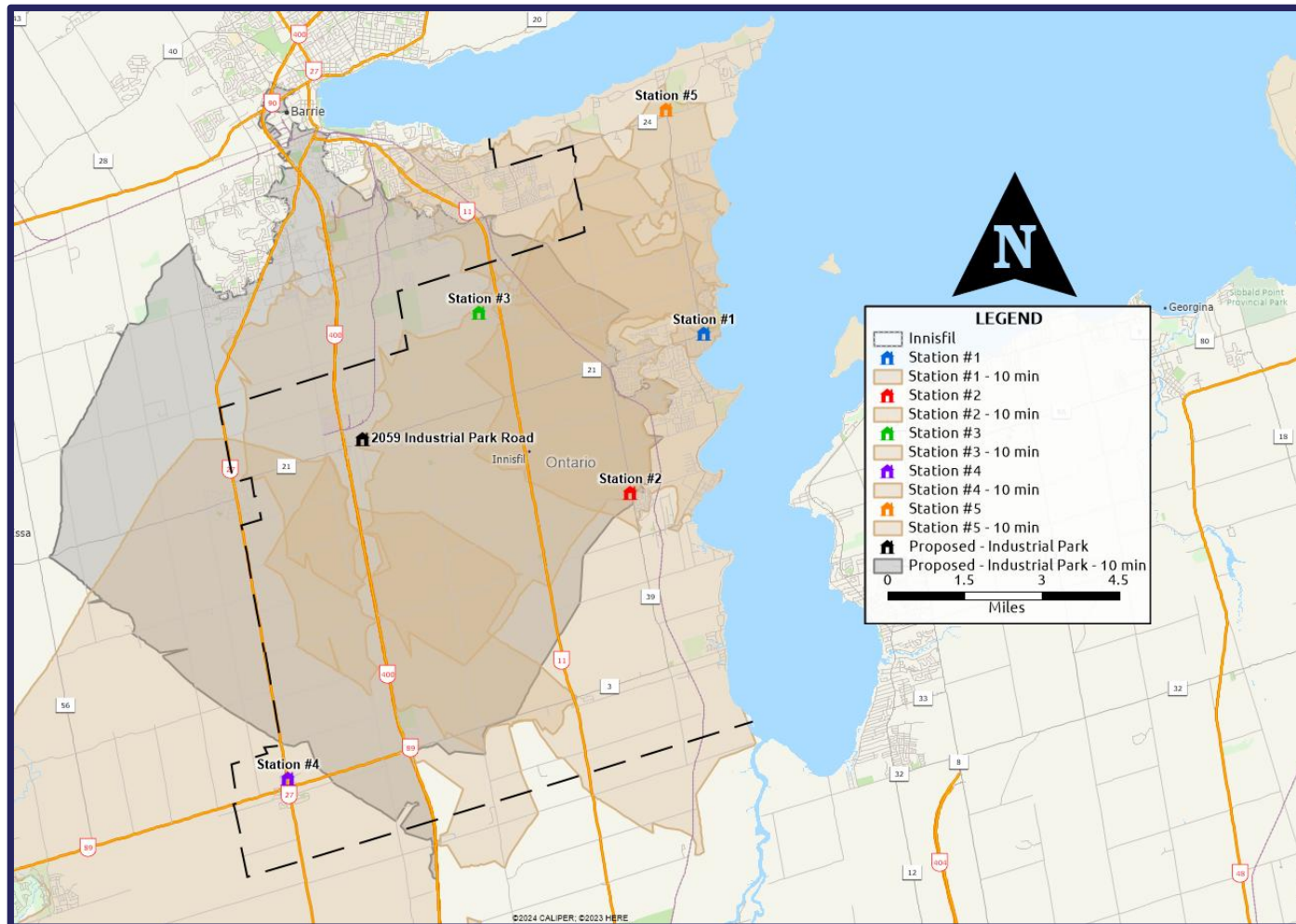
★ **Recommendation #32** –The responsibility for maintaining IFRS's fire stations be transferred to the Facilities Department of the Town of Innisfil, and that a preventative maintenance program be developed and initiated.

## 4.2 Station 6

One of the main priorities in developing this Fire Master Plan is addressing the need for Station 6 in the Innisfil Heights area. After careful review, EMG concluded that Innisfil requires a new fire station in Innisfil Heights, mainly due to the increasing population and infrastructure demands. Staffing shortages are common, with just over six POC firefighters responding on average when paged. According to NFPA Standards, at least 16 firefighters are needed for a residential structure fire, and for proposed high-rises, 38 firefighters are required on scene.

The new station will serve the area west of Highway 400, extending to County Road 27, north to the city limits of Barrie, and east towards Stroud and Alcona. The increasing number of larger and more valuable assets is a concern, and the station will help manage the rising volume of calls for service in the region. It will also provide the full-time firefighters necessary to support the current team. The station will enhance fire protection and improve response times for the community.

**FIGURE #9 - PROPOSED SITE OF STATION 6**



One aspect examined was whether to establish a standalone fire station or create a hub that accommodates all divisions of IFRS. A key point raised during stakeholder discussions was that IFRS divisions are scattered across the Town. Administration is at Stations 2 and 5, Fire Prevention at Station 4, and Training at Station 1. Spreading out these divisions leads to communication issues, unnecessary travel, higher vehicle expenses, and inefficiencies, which could be alleviated if all divisions were located in one place. Centralized fire departments offer a clear chain of command and faster decision-making.

Fire department divisions function more effectively when they are housed together. This approach enhances logistical efficiency by reducing operational costs. It also creates a central location for citizen services and encourages unity among departments, serving as a symbol of pride and safety for the communities they serve. Merging IFRS's divisions under one roof offers several benefits, including:

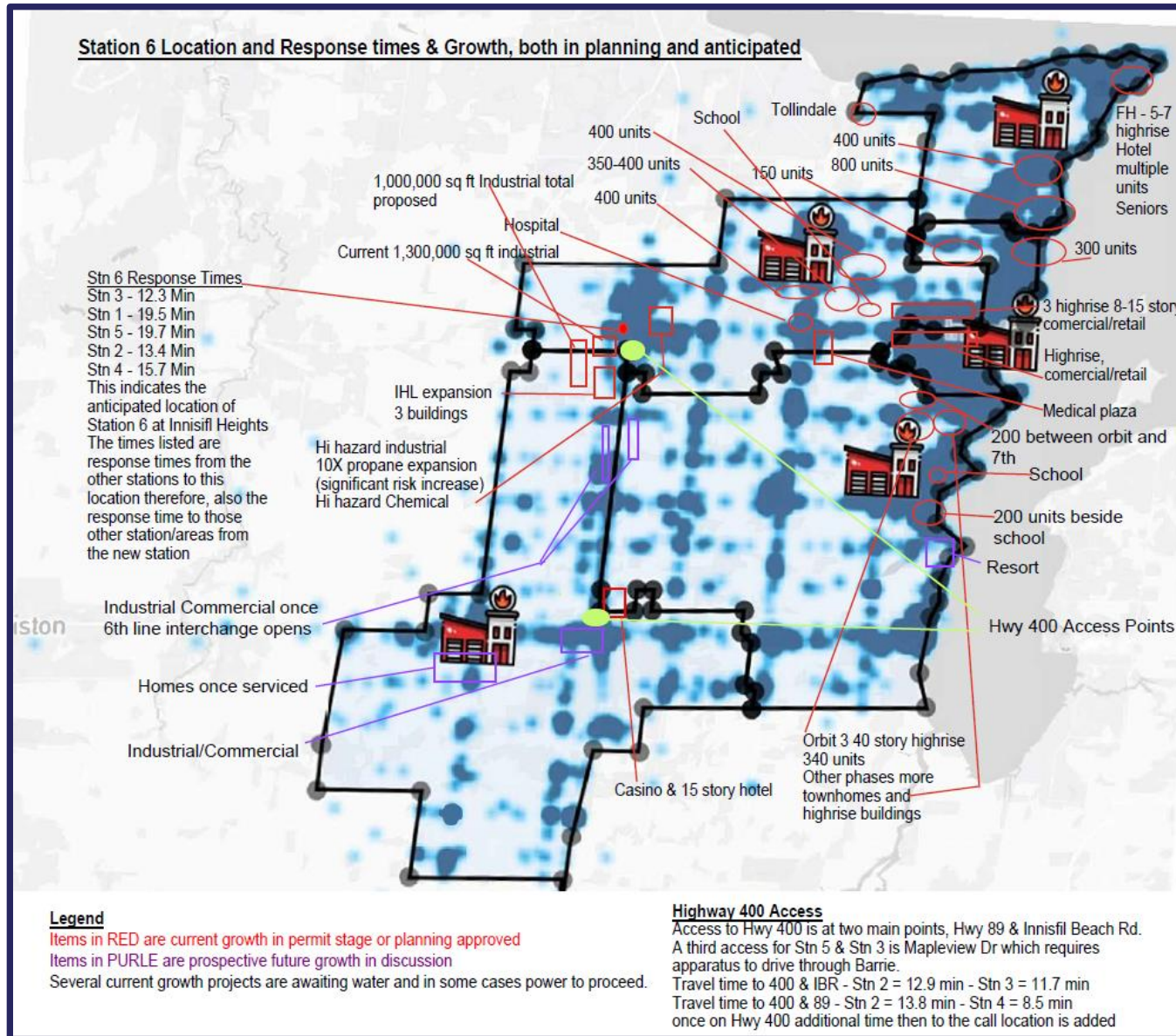
- **Logistic Efficiency:** Lowers operational costs and shortens response times for emergency vehicles.
- **Central Location:** Offers a central location for citizen needs and unites departments.
- **Community Pride:** Represents a symbol of pride and safety for the community.
- **Maintenance and Operational Costs:** Reduces overall costs for the community.

These benefits highlight the significance of a shared facility in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of fire department operations.

Some municipalities have taken it further by sharing facilities with other services, such as libraries, community centres, EMS, and police. The Township of Clearview constructed a shared facility that houses the OPP and Simcoe County Paramedics. Huron East's Brussels Station also contains the quarters of the Huron County Paramedics, and several locations in Toronto are shared facilities.

★ **Recommendation #33** –The Town of Innisfil build Station 6 and consider consolidating all the Divisions of IFRS, which includes Administration, Fire Prevention, Operations and Training, at this location.

FIGURE #10 – MAP OF GROWTH, CALLS, AND RESPONSE TIMES IN THE STATION 6 RESPONSE AREA



### 4.3 Type of Buildings and Options for Fire Stations

Because renovating or building new fire stations is costly, municipalities are exploring partnerships with non-profit organizations, EMS, and law enforcement, as well as leasing space in existing stations, to become more innovative in integrating fire stations into the community. This approach might not suit every community, but exploring these options can help reduce costs while boosting the fire department's response capacity.

Leasing an available facility reduces the initial capital expenditure, shifts maintenance responsibilities to the landlord, and provides the municipality the flexibility to relocate if community development needs change.

The City of Barrie has leased the end unit of a commercial strip mall as a fire station (pictured below). The landlord built the unit to meet the city's requirements. They are exploring opportunities to do the same for their seventh station.



EXTREME Fire Stations is a new concept and a Canadian-built product from Lethbridge, Alberta. They are modular buildings constructed to seismic and building code standards, using high-efficiency, energy-code-compliant HVAC systems and fire suppression systems; these are standard features on EXTREME stations.

As technology, community demographics, and operational requirements change, maintaining flexibility in the station's design, construction, and location will benefit the community in the long run. EXTREME fire stations are a relatively new concept adopted by some fire departments. They are custom-built in a factory and transported to the site, where they are quickly installed and ready for occupancy.

## *EXTREME Fire Station Assembly (On-Site)*



A typical fire station has a lifespan of about 40 to 50 years, after which the cost-benefit ratio begins to work against the municipality in terms of maintenance, basic functionality, and design. The EXTREME fire stations can meet that lifecycle because they are constructed from steel and aluminum and can add extra modules if the station needs to expand its footprint.

### **4.4 Fire Apparatus - New and Replacement Schedules**

The reliability of fire apparatus is essential for the effective operation of a fire service. Over time, delaying the replacement of a vehicle is unwise, as it will increase overall maintenance costs and can negatively impact insurance rates, according to the Emergency Service's Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) grading.

#### *4.4.1 Fire Underwriters Survey – Vehicle Replacement Recommendations*

The Fire Underwriters Survey considers the age of a fire apparatus as a key factor when evaluating an emergency service's capacity to respond and serve the community effectively.

The Medium Communities (outlined in blue lettering) recommends replacing vehicles (pumpers) in a community the size of the Town of Innisfil. It allows for a 20-year replacement cycle, during which the fire vehicle transitions to a second-line response role. However, it is recommended that all first-line units be replaced with a new or younger unit once they reach 15 years of age.

**TABLE #27: FUS VEHICLE REPLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Apparatus Age	Major Cities <sup>3</sup>	Medium Communities <sup>4</sup>	Small Communities <sup>5</sup> and Rural Centres
0 – 15 Years	First Line Duty	First Line Duty	First Line Duty
16 – 20 Years	Reserve	2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Duty	First Line Duty
20 – 25 Years <sup>1</sup>	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading Or <i>Reserve</i> <sup>2</sup>	No Credit in Grading Or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Duty <sup>2</sup>
26 – 29 Years <sup>1</sup>	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading Or <i>Reserve</i> <sup>2</sup>	No Credit in Grading Or <i>Reserve</i> <sup>2</sup>
30 Years +	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading

<sup>1</sup> All listed fire apparatus 20 years of age and older are required to be service tested by a recognized testing agency on an annual basis to be eligible for grading recognition (NFPA 1071).

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions to age status may be considered in small to medium-sized communities and rural centres conditionally when the apparatus condition is acceptable and the apparatus successfully passes required testing.

<sup>3</sup> Major Cities are defined as an incorporated or unincorporated community that has:

- a populated area (or multiple areas) with a density of at least 400 people per square kilometre; AND
- a total population of 100,000 or greater.

<sup>4</sup> Medium Communities are defined as an incorporated or unincorporated community that has:

- a populated area (or multiple areas) with a density of at least 200 people per square kilometre, AND
- a total population of 1,000 or greater.

<sup>5</sup> Small Communities are defined as an incorporated or unincorporated community that has:

- no populated areas with densities that exceed 200 people per square kilometre, AND
- does not have a total population in excess of 1,000.

Fire Underwriters Survey's definition of First Line Duty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Duty, and Reserve is:

- 1<sup>st</sup> line is the first fire truck utilized for response at the fire station
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> line is the next truck used if the 1<sup>st</sup> line unit is long-term at a call, and
- Reserve is the vehicle kept in the fleet to be put into service if a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> line vehicle is out of service.

Insurance companies review the FUS. The department will maintain its fire grading for vehicle replacement if emergency services adhere to the recommended replacement timelines outlined in an approved capital replacement schedule. The Town would show due diligence in keeping a reliable response fleet for emergency services and the community it serves through a regular vehicle replacement schedule.

#### ***4.4.2 National Fire Protection Association – Vehicle Replacement Recommendations***

The ULC Standard for Fire Trucks is an essential document for ensuring the safety and effectiveness of fire apparatus throughout Canada. The CAN/ULC-S515 standard specifies the minimum requirements for the design, performance, acceptance criteria, and testing of new automotive fire apparatus, including fire trucks. This standard is based on the latest NFPA 1900 and is regularly updated to ensure alignment with current safety and performance standards. Fire departments must ensure their fire trucks meet these standards to uphold safety and effectiveness during emergencies.

The NFPA 1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus also advocates for a regular replacement schedule for fire vehicles. This standard guides the retirement criteria for fire apparatus. NFPA 1911 suggests replacing all front-line apparatus every 15 to 20 years, depending on the community size.

For emergency services considering refurbishing their vehicles to extend their in-service lifespan, refer to NFPA 1912, Standard for Apparatus Refurbishing. Note that although the FUS considers refurbishing vehicles, it does not assign a credit rating to apparatuses over 30 years old.

#### ***4.4.3 IFRS– Vehicle Replacement***

Fire trucks must be fully equipped to ensure the safety and effectiveness of firefighters during emergencies. The NFPA 1900 standard specifies that emergency response vehicles must be designed and built to withstand high-speed reactions, sudden stops, and impacts, ensuring they are structurally sound and safe. Additionally, the standard requires that vehicles include safety

features such as roll-over protection and be fitted with the necessary tools and technology to operate under extreme conditions. By following these standards, fire trucks can protect the health and safety of emergency responders and enhance operational efficiency during critical rescue operations. The IFRS operates with pumpers (engines), tankers, rescues, and support vehicles needed for primary responses to calls within the Town.

According to the NFPA replacement recommendations, industry standards, and best practices, all front-line vehicles be replaced every 15 years, while second-line units are to be replaced at 20 years. Failure to follow FUS’s recommended replacement schedule may negatively impact the insurance rating of the Town, resulting in a lower rating and higher insurance rates. However, IFRS has no second-line pumpers or tankers. Therefore, the following replacement chart is based solely on the front-line cycle.

**TABLE #28: APPARATUS INVENTORY OF IFRS**

Station Assignment	Year	Type of Apparatus	Lifecycle	Year for Replacement
Station 1	2007	Sterling Pumper	15	2023
Station 1	2016	KME Pumper	15	2031
Station 1	2023	Rosenbauer Tanker	15	2038
Station 2	2006	Sterling Pumper	15	2023
Station 2	2011	Smeal Aerial	15	2026
Station 2	2019	Dependable Tanker	15	2033
Station 2	2024	Ferrara Engine	15	2039
Station 3	2000	Freightliner Pumper	15	2015
Station 3	2011	Spartan Pumper	15	2026
Station 3	2024	Freightliner Tanker	15	2039
Station 4	2014	International Tanker	15	2029
Station 4	2019	Spartan Pumper	15	2034
Station 4	2017	Ford PU Rescue	7	2024

Station Assignment	Year	Type of Apparatus	Lifecycle	Year for Replacement
<b>Apparatus on Order</b>				
Station 1	2025	Rosenbauer Pumper	15	2040
Station 3	2026	Rosenbauer Pumper	15	2041
TBD	2025	Rosenbauer Aerial	15	2040

Replacement of any apparatus should begin three years prior to its scheduled removal date to ensure the timely arrival of the replacement. The IFRS fleet of fire apparatus adheres to the FUS/NFPA replacement cycles .

Some municipalities are currently examining options to lease support vehicles, such as Chief’s cars and utility vehicles, including pickup trucks. During the lease period, typically three years, major repairs are covered by the vehicle’s warranty, apart from regular maintenance. At the end of the lease, the municipality can choose to purchase the vehicle or return it to lease a new one, restarting the cycle. An advantage of leasing over purchasing is that the tax is included in the monthly payment, whereas with buying, all the tax is paid upfront. The Town should assess the pros and cons of leasing versus buying all its service vehicles, including cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks.

**4.4.4 Aerials**

The traditional "old school" rule for when a municipality needs an aerial device is that if portable ground ladders within a fire department can no longer reach the upper windows or roofs of buildings in the community, then an aerial device is required. This rule is often overlooked as a justification for purchasing, but it remains valid. While this can be a sufficient reason, there are other justifications and options to consider. To compensate for the lack of an aerial, a more affordable alternative is to acquire a 10.6 m (35-foot) ladder to access higher roofs. To IFRS’s credit, they already have an aerial with its replacement due to arrive sometime in 2026.

The department does not have an aerial device in service at Station 4 - Cookstown, its furthest west station. It must rely on the unit coming from Station 2 - Lefroy, which is brought by a recalled crew of full-time firefighters, potentially causing a delay before it arrives. It is recommended that the department consider purchasing an aerial device with a 16 to 22 m (55 to 75') aerial. Multiple residential occupancies are three-storey high.

The unit should be a single-axle vehicle to navigate laneways easily and must have a pump capacity of at least 6,000 L/min (1,200 GPM). It should operate as the front-line pumper from Station 4 - Cookstown.

★ **Recommendation #34** – IFRS procures an aerial device for Station 4 – Cookstown to operate as its primary pumper.



**Aerial Device**

**22m (75 foot)**

Many smaller departments with limited funding for apparatus may choose to purchase an apparatus like the ones illustrated below as this smaller unit will cost thousands less. While they may have a purpose in a smaller department with occupancies with fewer storeys, this may be a very versatile option for them. In communities that are going to have a more robust high-rise development, the larger type of aerial can provide a more stable platform for higher buildings.



#### 4.4.5 Spare Fire Vehicles

According to the Fire Underwriters' recommendations, there should be a spare pumper truck for every eight vehicles. Therefore, a department with eight or fewer pumper trucks should have one spare in its fleet. If the department has more than eight pumper trucks, it should include two spare trucks. IFRS complies with FUS by having a spare pumper but should also have a spare aerial. All spare apparatus should be fully equipped, with no need for many pieces to be taken from the apparatus to stock it fully.

Presently, IFRS has one spare pumper truck in its fleet. The key here is to ensure the replacement is not older than the FUS recommended age, as noted in the previous FUS chart. One key stipulation that may help the IFRS maintain a spare truck in its fleet is that it is beyond the recommended replacement age. The following excerpt is from the FUS replacement chart (Table #27):

*<sup>2</sup> Exceptions to age status may be considered in small to medium-sized communities and rural centres conditionally, when apparatus condition is acceptable, and the apparatus successfully passes required testing.*

✦ **Recommendation #35** – IFRS to ensure the availability of at least one spare pumper and a spare aerial that is fully equipped.

#### 4.4.6 Vehicle Maintenance

The IFRS manages over 30 pieces of equipment, including fire apparatus, support vehicles, boats, and a UTV. IFRS does not have a dedicated mechanical division; instead, a third-party handles all major repairs, while the Town's Fleet Division manages most other repairs.

According to IFRS's administration, opinions are mixed on how successful this arrangement is. Nonetheless, costs are increasing, and the department requires a proactive preventive maintenance program for its fleet of fire trucks. This currently includes visits from a third-party Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) at least twice a month, instead of once a month. For some time, the fleet department has been trying to keep a certified EVT on staff, but this is challenging due to the higher salaries paid by outside businesses.

✦ **Recommendation #36** – That two EVTs be hired to take responsibility for budgeting and maintaining IFRS's fleet of vehicles, with a competitive salary comparable to the private sector.

A common concern across IFRS was the scheduling of removing apparatus from service for repairs. Typically, a vehicle is taken out of service to complete repairs. After a few days or weeks, it is removed again for additional maintenance or its annual safety inspection. When a vehicle is taken out of service, a detailed list of all necessary repairs, including a safety inspection if required, should be prepared to avoid repeatedly removing the vehicle from service. There is a need to improve the scheduling of apparatus removal for repairs.

#### 4.4.7 Ancillary Equipment

Monitoring the completion of annual testing should be a priority for an organization to ensure that equipment functions properly for the front lines. This allows the fire department to confirm that apparatus and equipment testing are scheduled efficiently to minimize the unavailability of apparatus.

During the review, a program was in place for testing and evaluating small equipment. However, it lacked structured policies and procedures that aligned with testing, inspections, and maintenance to ensure personnel safety and keep equipment operational. All items, such as ladders, breathing apparatus, small engines, ropes, and hoses, are tested annually or according to manufacturers' recommendations.

Monitoring the completion of annual testing in the asset management program should be a fire department's priority to ensure equipment functions properly on the front lines. Monitoring helps the fire department verify that apparatus and equipment testing schedules are adhered to while reducing the downtime of frontline apparatus.

One area that emerged as a significant concern is the lack of equipment on the apparatus or spare gear. For example, the aerial, purchased in 2011, has virtually no equipment on it. There is also a noticeable absence of spare hose at every station. Fire trucks must be fully equipped. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and CAN/ULC-S515 standards, fire apparatus must be equipped with essential items such as hoses, nozzles, and extinguishers before they are placed in service. Additionally, fire departments are responsible for ensuring that all required equipment is on the vehicle to avoid liability in case of operational failures. The lack of equipment on the apparatus renders it non-compliant, which could also impact the Town's FUS Grading for fire protection services.

★ **Recommendation #37** – An inventory of ancillary equipment for each apparatus must be compiled, including hoses onboard and in the stations. Additionally, every apparatus, including spare units, should be fully equipped with ancillary equipment and hoses that meet NFPA and ULC standards.

#### *4.4.8 Asset Management Program*

Fire Administration has a well-established asset management program and a comprehensive equipment life-cycle plan to ensure timely replacement of equipment. It is common practice to connect this equipment to the parent apparatus. All department equipment should be included in the inventory and managed within this program. The IFRS has adopted a new platform, First Due, which will greatly aid in this task once all entries are completed.

Many pieces of equipment have a fixed lifespan as outlined in the NFPA Standards and/or the OH&S Sections 21 Guidance Notes. When this lifespan ends, the items must be decommissioned, replaced with new equipment, and disposed of to prevent outside interests from using them due to liability concerns. The asset management program should be designed to send notifications when an item is nearing the end of its lifespan, and plans should be in place for replacement (i.e., included in the budget). Some asset management systems do not alert the department when maintenance or testing is required.

## **4.5 Bunker Gear**

Every year, an increasing number of firefighters are diagnosed with cancer. A major factor contributing to their illness is the contaminants that adhere to their structural firefighting gear during operations. After a fire, the gear should be packaged and sent for cleaning to reduce this risk. The IFRS has several small-capacity commercial extraction washing machines capable of

cleaning gear at all stations except Station 3. In cases of severe contamination, the gear can be sent to a third party for cleaning and inspection before being returned to the Department.

While structural firefighting gear is being cleaned, firefighters need a replacement set, so they are not without clean gear to wear. Prioritizing gear cleaning after fires and ensuring firefighters have access to properly fitting bunker gear during cleaning will help the Department meet its decontamination and hygiene program objectives. The IFRS does not issue a second set of bunker gear to each firefighter but has a small inventory of spare gear for short-term use, which is replenished when the original gear returns from cleaning and inspection.

When used for interior structural firefighting, bunker gear has a lifespan of 10 years, as outlined in NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting*. The IFRS follows this replacement standard if the gear is compromised and includes bunker gear replacement in the capital budget each year.

Finally, as a precaution, fire departments are actively monitoring concerns about Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of fluorinated chemicals commonly called “forever chemicals,” which are linked to cancer and other serious health issues. Possible sources of occupational exposure to PFAS include turnout gear, aqueous film-forming foam, and the air and dust at both fire scenes and fire stations. Since 1976, PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) have been used in firefighter turnout gear to improve safety and performance. These chemicals are present in all three layers of the gear, with the highest concentrations found in the outer layers and moisture barriers. Recent research by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has shown that PFAS levels vary significantly among manufacturers and can increase with wear and tear, highlighting the importance of switching to safer alternatives in firefighter gear. IFRS should develop a policy to only purchase bunker gear that is free of PFAS.

## 4.6 Water Supply

### 4.6.1 Hydrant System

Within the Town of Innisfil, water services are managed by InnService. According to NFPA 25, a fire hydrant must be inspected annually and after each use. Flow tests are also required every year and are conducted accordingly. Regularly scheduling private fire hydrant maintenance is essential to ensure proper and effective operation, as well as to stay compliant with NFPA 25 fire code standards. The Ontario Fire Code also requires that fire hydrants be maintained in line with NFPA Standards. Flow testing can be carried out between 00:00 and 03:00 hours when flow and pressure are lower, but the water department, , prefers to perform it during the daytime when flow and pressure are higher. They have nearly 1,400 hydrants to maintain, with

the number steadily increasing due to residential, commercial, and industrial developments. A key indicator on a hydrant is the colour of its caps or the reflective collar attached to the ports, as these signify the flow, and it is important that these colours accurately reflect the hydrant's actual flow rate.

Innisfil's water supply primarily depends on three municipal groundwater wells and a lake-based system. The drinking water system is categorized as a large municipal residential system, delivering reliable water to about 6,500 residential and commercial units. Additionally, Innisfil plays a key role in supplying water to Bradford-West Gwillimbury. Some areas encounter development-related challenges in managing enough water for firefighting. Risks to the water system include social and economic factors, water conservation issues, concerns over both quality and quantity of groundwater, and unforeseen water demands from neighbouring communities.

Private fire hydrants are installed in business parks, apartment complexes, condominiums, and other areas. It may not always be clear what the regulations are for these hydrants. Regular inspections of private fire hydrants are essential for the safety of employees, tenants, and anyone else on the premises. Additionally, private fire hydrants require consistent maintenance and are just as important as fire sprinkler systems.

Although the specific colours used depend on the jurisdiction, NFPA 291 recommends a colour scheme. The scheme covers a wide range of flow rates, as other system requirements can cause water availability for firefighting to vary throughout the day. There is no minimum capacity requirement for an individual fire hydrant; however, standards exist for total fire flow, which help assess the water supply across the entire system. Fire flow is calculated based on a single building, with adjustments made for potential spread to nearby exposures; however, it does not account for multiple buildings fully involved or approaching wildfires.

### *Hydrant Marking Scheme*

Classification and Marking of Hydrants			
Hydrant Classification	Colour Scheme	Hydrant Capacity (gpm)	Hydrant Capacity (L/min)
AA	Light Blue	>1,500	>5,700
A	Green	1,000 to 1,499	3,800 to 5,699
B	Orange	500 to 999	1,900 to 3,799
C	Red	<500	<1,900

## 4.6.2 Dry Hydrants and Cisterns

For those living in rural areas without access to a pressurized fire hydrant system, dry hydrants can be essential. A dry hydrant allows firefighters to draw water from a reliable source, like a lake, pond, or stream, to combat fires without relying on a traditional fire hydrant. The ability to quickly access enough water often determines the success of putting out a blaze. Without this, firefighting becomes much more challenging. This is especially true in more remote areas, where the distance between the water source and the fire is often significant, and firefighters may find it hard to maintain a continuous water supply at the scene. Using a non-pressurized pipe system to draw water from a local source provides a reliable way to supply water to fire equipment. Unfortunately, the Town has no dry hydrants installed to assist residents in emergencies.

### Cisterns

A cistern is a waterproof container used for storing water, typically made from materials like concrete, steel, wood, or fibreglass. Cisterns differ from wells because they have waterproof linings. The NFPA 22 Standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection outlines the minimum requirements for designing, constructing, installing, and maintaining water tanks and their components. Most insurance providers tend to reduce rates for properties with either dry hydrants or cisterns that are accessible for water supply during a fire. There are at least three cisterns in the Town: one at the Multi-Use Recreational Facility, one at the South Shore Wood Subdivision, and one at IFRS's Station 2 – Lefroy. The Town's Planning and Building departments could support IFRS's water supply needs by recommending that cisterns be installed in new developments or on high-value homes and farms.

★ **Recommendation #38** - The IFRS should explore additional ways to improve water supply at structure fires, including securing funding to acquire more large-capacity tankers. These tankers should be strategically stationed to support areas with poor water access or those far from water sources. This approach will also increase the likelihood of achieving a higher score in the Superior Water Shuttle Supply Accreditation testing by enabling higher flows.

# Section 5

## Mutual Aid, Automatic Aid and Fire Protection Agreements



## SECTION 5 - MUTUAL AID, AUTOMATIC AID, AND FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENTS

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The *Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA), 1997*, established Ontario's Mutual Aid system, which allows municipalities to assist one another during emergencies when local resources are exceeded. Fire coordinators, appointed by the Fire Marshal, oversee these plans, which are authorized through municipal by-laws granting Fire Chiefs the authority to deploy resources outside local boundaries. Participation is reciprocal, with no direct costs, and all activations are formally documented and reported to the Office of the Fire Marshal.

### 5.1 Mutual Aid Plan and Fire Protection Agreements

Mutual aid, automatic aid, and fire protection agreements enhance a community's fire service by ensuring support when local resources are exceeded. These arrangements also enable faster responses in areas where a neighbouring department is closer than the host department.

#### 5.1.1 Mutual Aid Plan and By-law

Mutual Aid Plans (MAPS), established under Section 7 of the *FPPA, 1997*, provide reciprocal, coordinated support between fire departments during major incidents when local resources are exceeded. Authorized by local by-law and directed by Fire Marshal-appointed coordinators, MAPs ensure resource sharing within an Incident Management System (IMS) framework, while maintaining each municipality's responsibility for its own fire protection services.

The corporation of the Town of Innisfil's By-law No. 8-91 authorizes participation in the County of Simcoe Mutual Aid Plan and Program; however, the By-law predates the *FPPA, 1997*, and should be updated. During EMG's review, we were advised that the Mutual Aid Plan is currently under revision, and a current copy was not available.

In coordination with participating departments, the Fire Chief should encourage the Fire Coordinator to expedite completion of the updated Plan. Once finalized, Council should repeal and replace By-law No. 8-91 with a new authorizing by-law that references current legislation and the approved Plan.

### *5.1.2 Multidisciplinary, Highly Specialized Response – Provincial Chemical Biological Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE)/ Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams*

Many small paid-on-call or composite fire services lack the training and resources to manage large-scale hazardous materials or structural collapse events. To address this, the Office of the Fire Marshal administers Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with six municipal fire services that host specialized CBRNE/HazMat and USAR teams, which can be deployed province-wide through the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC). These teams provide coordinated support during complex natural or human-caused emergencies. These provincially funded assets are requested through the District Fire Coordinator. Fire departments should understand the assets' capabilities, the conditions for activation, the request process, and the on-scene requirements expected of the requesting department.

## **5.2 Fire Protection Agreements**

### *5.2.1 Agreement with the Town of New Tecumseth*

The fire protection agreement between Innisfil and the Town of New Tecumseth was renewed for a three-year term, expiring December 31, 2026. It establishes a defined fire protection area within New Tecumseth (Appendix "A"), where Innisfil Fire provides suppression, investigation, vehicle extrication, and medical assistance (excluding inspections). New Tecumseth pays an annual standby fee of \$16,779.62, increasing by 4% annually, plus costs for services and equipment. The agreement includes indemnification for Innisfil, cost recovery provisions, and a six-month termination clause. Mutual aid through the Simcoe County Mutual Aid Plan and Program may also be invoked.

While the agreement provides cost recovery and operational clarity, continued community growth, both in Innisfil and New Tecumseth, could increase call demand within the shared fire area. If growth is significant, this arrangement may strain Innisfil Fire's resources, potentially impacting response times or capacity within its own jurisdiction. Ongoing monitoring of call volumes and service demands is therefore recommended to ensure the agreement does not compromise Innisfil's ability to meet its core service levels.

### *5.2.2 Agreement with the Town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury*

The fire protection agreement between Innisfil and the Town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury (BWG) was renewed for a three-year term, effective January 1, 2024, and expiring December 31, 2026. Either party may terminate the agreement with six months' written notice, with

standby fees adjusted on a pro-rated basis. Execution may be completed electronically and in counterparts.

Innisfil Fire is responsible for responding to calls within a defined Fire Area in BWG. BWG Fire may provide additional apparatus and personnel, and broader assistance can be requested through the Simcoe County Mutual Aid Plan and Program. The agreement stipulates that Innisfil shall not incur liability if fire protection services or equipment cannot be supplied in response to a call.

This agreement provides financial cost recovery and operational clarity; however, continued residential and industrial growth in both BWG and Innisfil could increase call volumes and resource demand in the shared fire area. If growth is significant, Innisfil Fire may face challenges in maintaining service levels within its own jurisdiction while meeting the obligations of this agreement. Ongoing monitoring of service demand is recommended, with renegotiation of terms considered if operational pressures or disproportionate call demand emerge.

✦ **Recommendation #39** –IFRS should continue to monitor call volumes and service demands arising from the New Tecumseth and Bradford-West Gwillimbury agreements, and if significant growth or operational pressures emerge, initiate discussions to review or renegotiate the terms to ensure the agreement remains sustainable and does not compromise core service delivery in Innisfil.

### *5.2.3 Agreement for Specialized Rescue Services (Barrie Fire & Emergency Services)*

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Innisfil and the City of Barrie provides Innisfil access to Barrie Fire & Emergency Service (BFES) specialized rescue services. Activation occurs when Innisfil contacts BFES Communications by radio or telephone, with BFES response determined by the senior on-duty officer. The MOU is effective from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2027, with automatic five-year renewal unless terminated by either party with six months' notice.

Innisfil pays an annual stand-by fee starting at \$5,100 in 2023, increasing to \$5,500 in 2027, and covers deployment costs in accordance with Barrie's Fees By-law. Records must be maintained for seven years, and confidentiality provisions apply to the sharing of information and media communications

This agreement ensures Innisfil has access to technical rescue capabilities not available within its own fire service, such as specialized equipment and highly trained personnel. By clearly defining responsibilities, financial obligations, and processes for activation, the MOU provides a framework that enhances resident safety during complex emergencies.

The MOU strengthens Innisfil's emergency response capability without requiring the municipality to develop or fund its own specialized rescue team. However, reliance on an external provider introduces potential risks if Barrie's operational priorities or capacity limit their ability to respond. As Innisfil grows, call frequency and reliance on specialized services may increase, raising both costs and potential strain on the partnership.

★ **Recommendation #40** – IFSR should closely track utilization and costs associated with the Barrie MOU and assess future demand for specialized rescue services. If growth leads to frequent activations or increased financial burden, Innisfil should evaluate options for expanded in-house capacity or renegotiated regional agreements to ensure long-term sustainability.

#### *5.2.4 Wildland Firefighting Agreement*

The Town of Innisfil participates in a Wildland Firefighting Agreement with the County of Simcoe, effective April 24, 2019. The agreement has no fixed end date and continues on a year-to-year basis unless terminated by either party with 30 days' written notice. The arrangement establishes cost-sharing and operational procedures to support firefighting efforts in County Forest Tracts and other wildland fire situations.

Under the agreement, the County reimburses Innisfil for services based on the fee rate set by the Ministry of Transportation or the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), whichever is higher. Reimbursable costs include fire apparatus, off-road vehicles, MNRF land or air support, and equipment rented or purchased (if authorized by the Fire Chief). The County also funds specialized wildland training, covering up to \$2,500 annually for all participating and host municipalities, with priority given to host municipalities. In addition, the County provides wildland equipment caches for participating fire services, repairing and replacing items as required, and supplies updated maps of County Forest Tracts.

This agreement enhances Innisfil's wildland firefighting capability by providing access to equipment, training, and County-level support. It strengthens regional coordination and ensures costs are recoverable. However, the absence of explicit indemnification or liability provisions may expose Innisfil to risk should disputes or damages arise. Additionally, the agreement's date (2019) suggests it has been in place for several years without formal review. Given increased

awareness of wildland fire risks due to climate change and recent provincial/national wildfire activity, the terms and financial thresholds (e.g., \$2,500 training cap) may no longer reflect current or future demands. The Fire Chief should raise the issue of modernizing the Wildland Firefighting Agreement at the County level and consider asking the County to establish a working group to explore and update the agreement.

Regular reviews will help ensure the agreement continues to provide value, protect the municipality from risk, and align with evolving wildland fire challenges.

### *5.2.5 Simcoe County Emergency Medical Response Agreement*

Authorized through By-law No, 076-07, IFRS participates in the Simcoe County Emergency Response Agreement, which establishes a coordinated framework between municipal fire services and Simcoe County Paramedic Services. The agreement designates IFRS as both a Level A and Level B responder, enabling firefighters to provide support during a wide range of critical and non-critical medical emergencies. The agreement outlines activation criteria, responder roles, and infection prevention standards, serving as a strong foundation for interagency collaboration.

While the agreement has provided value, it is now outdated. The document does not reflect changes in community risk or service demand. Specifically, Innisfil's rapid population growth and urbanization have increased medical call volumes and added pressure to the staffing model. Modern challenges like opioid overdoses, mental health emergencies, and large-scale incidents are not well addressed by the current framework.

While the agreement calls for an annual review, it does not appear to have been consistently updated. The framework was developed prior to the implementation of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore does not fully capture current medical dispatch protocols or modern infection control standards. A modernization of the agreement is recommended to align with best practices, incorporate lessons learned from recent public health emergencies, and reflect Innisfil's evolving risk profile. Updates should specifically address medical response criteria, responder safety, and sustainability considerations in the context of continued community growth.

★ **Recommendation #41** – Update and modernize the Simcoe County Emergency Response Agreement to align with MPDS protocols, incorporate pandemic-related lessons, and address responder safety and sustainability considering Innisfil's rapid growth.

### *5.2.6 Fire Communication Service Agreement*

The Town of Innisfil and the City of Barrie, through Barrie Fire & Emergency Services (BFES) entered into a Fire Communication Services Agreement on January 1, 2024. The agreement meets recognized safety and dispatch standards by requiring communication staff to be trained to NFPA 1225 (consolidation of NFPA 1061 and NFPA1221), and to follow industry best practices. Operational reliability is strengthened through BFES's maintained backup communications centre, voice/media logging, and compliance with privacy legislation. The agreement also permits amendments to accommodate technological change, preserving service relevance as systems evolve.

Financially, the cost model is predictable but escalatory and includes additional seasonal charges to reflect population fluctuations. The agreement includes a minimum annual charge of \$3,870 in 2024 plus 7.5% per year on the calculated per-capita fee, whichever is greater, ensures a base payment. Optional add-ons for GIS mapping, enhanced station alerting, and RMS integrations can improve performance but will increase total costs.

The agreement clearly assigns responsibilities, includes a dispute resolution process, and termination language. Overall, the agreement balances safety standards, compliance, and reliability, but it demands careful financial and administrative management. Innisfil will need to ensure accurate population counts and mapping, budget for annual increases and technology-driven changes and weigh optional features against their operational value. With disciplined oversight, the agreement can remain sustainable while supporting IFRS's service objectives.

### *5.2.7 Regional Training Centre Agreement*

By-law 056-19 authorizes the Town of Innisfil to agree with the Ontario Fire College to operate a Regional Training Centre (IRTC) in Innisfil. This aligns with IFRS objectives by enabling local, NFPA-aligned training, reducing travel and overtime, and creating a platform for multi-agency courses that support annual competency sustainment and succession planning.

Under the terms of the Agreement, the OFC agrees to offer one or more courses from the list of courses contained in the OFC Annual Calendar at the IRTC. The criteria for establishing courses, which the OFC shall solely determine in consultation with the Town, are as follows:

- Which courses the OFC will offer at the Facility;
- Which instructor or instructors the OFC will use to offer the course;
- Who will be eligible to register for a course, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, whether non-firefighters and non-Town employees shall be eligible to register for a course;

- In which locations in, or parts of the Facility, a course will be offered;
- What equipment and materials will be used by the OFC during the course; and,
- At which times will a course be offered.

Through this agreement, the IRTC hosted 8 courses in 2025 and has 26 courses planned for delivery in 2026. This suggests a strong demand for fire service training. From a regional training centre perspective, IFRS should capitalize on this opportunity.

Schedule “D” Fire & Rescue Services of By-law No. 057-24 currently provides limited cost-recovery provisions associated with RTC courses delivered through the Ontario Fire College calendar.

As the IRTC continues to evolve and expand its regional role, IFRS should consider updating Schedule “D” to include a broader cost-recovery framework consistent with comparable regional training centres. In addition to OFC programming, fees could be established for classroom and training ground rentals, external agency use, specialty prop access, equipment rentals, and instructional support services.

Expanding the fee structure would support financial sustainability while reinforcing the IRTC’s role as a regional training hub. IFRS should also consider establishing a dedicated reserve fund to allocate surplus revenues toward facility upgrades, training props, technology investments, and future infrastructure enhancements such as a burn tower or integrated classroom space.

This approach aligns with practices observed in other Ontario jurisdictions, where diversified revenue streams reduce reliance on municipal funding while supporting NFPA-aligned training delivery and long-term operational readiness.



Section 6 – Finance

## SECTION 6 – FINANCE

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### 6.1 Finance

The municipal budget process is the Town of Innisfil’s key financial planning tool, ensuring the Council’s Strategic Plan is translated into actionable investments for IFRS. By aligning with the pillars of *Growing, Livable, Sustainable; Connected and Engaged; Prosperous and Innovative; and Resilient Infrastructure*, the budget directs resources toward safe growth, community engagement through prevention and education, modernized training and technology, and the renewal of facilities, vehicles, and equipment.

The process also balances current fire protection needs, such as staffing, training, and emergency response capacity, with long-term financial sustainability and asset management. This approach provides accountability and transparency while ensuring IFRS remains equipped to adapt to growth and evolving community risks. In doing so, the budget serves as both an operational roadmap and an investment strategy, reinforcing IFRS’s role as a cornerstone of community safety and resilience.

In preparation for reviewing and developing the section related to the financial operations and functions of IFRS, EMG analyzed several key reports and documents. These included:

- Town of Innisfil Strategic Plan 2030<sup>47</sup>
- Town of Innisfil 2025 Asset Management Plan<sup>48</sup>
- The 2025 Budget<sup>49</sup>
- The 2024 BMA Management Consulting Inc. Municipal Study<sup>50</sup>
- By-law No. 057-24, Fees and Charges<sup>51</sup>, as well as historical operating and capital budget documents provided for review.

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<sup>47</sup> Town of Innisfil: Strategic Plan 2023 Accessed August 24, 2025. <https://innisfil.ca/en/my-government/resources/Documents/Town-of-Innisfil---Strategic-Plan---DIGITAL.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> town of innisfil - Search Accessed August 24, 2025.

[https://www.bing.com/search?q=town+of+innisfil&gs\\_lcrp=EgRlZGdlKgclABBFGMIDMgclABBFGMIDMgclARBFGMIDMgclAhBFGMIDMgclAxBFGMIDMgclBBBFGMIDMgclBRBFGMIDMgclBhBFGMIDMgclBxBFGMID0gENMzI1MTA2MjY4ajBqNKgCCLACAQ&FORM=ANA B01&PC=HCTS](https://www.bing.com/search?q=town+of+innisfil&gs_lcrp=EgRlZGdlKgclABBFGMIDMgclABBFGMIDMgclARBFGMIDMgclAhBFGMIDMgclAxBFGMIDMgclBBBFGMIDMgclBRBFGMIDMgclBhBFGMIDMgclBxBFGMID0gENMzI1MTA2MjY4ajBqNKgCCLACAQ&FORM=ANA B01&PC=HCTS)

<sup>49</sup> 2024 BMA Municipal Study Final Accessed August 24, 2025. <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/CORPORATE-SERVICES/FINANCE/2024-BMA-Municipal-Study-final.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> 2024 BMA Municipal Study Final Accessed August 24, 2025. <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/CORPORATE-SERVICES/FINANCE/2024-BMA-Municipal-Study-final.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> User-fees.pdf Accessed August 24, 2025. <https://innisfil.ca/en/my-government/resources/Documents/user-fees.pdf>

In January 2025, the Council approved the 2025–2026 budget, which includes a blended property tax rate increase of 5.5% in both 2025 and 2026. For the average household, this represents an annual municipal tax increase of \$276.88 in 2025 and \$292.29 in 2026.

The Town’s operating budget (excluding Police) allocates \$40.7 million in 2025 and \$44.0 million in 2026 to support the delivery of day-to-day services. In addition, a Capital Levy of \$13.8 million in 2025 and \$16.0 million in 2026 has been established to fund the repair and replacement of assets.

The capital budget totals \$88.0 million in 2025 and \$55.3 million in 2026, providing the resources required to maintain existing infrastructure and invest in new assets.

The 2025 fire protection operating budget is set at \$10,218,704, representing a 21.1% increase over 2024. For 2026, the budget is projected at \$10,793,007, a further 5.6% increase over 2025. Overall, the IFRS operating budget represents approximately 25% of the Town’s total operating budget.

Additional detail is presented later in this section; however, Table #29 presents the approved IFRS capital budget for 2025 and 2026, as well as the forecasted capital requirements for the period 2027 – 2034.

**TABLE #29: APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET**

	Approved 2025	Approved 2026	Total 2025 & 2026	Forecast 2027 - 2034	Total 2025 - 2034
Fire Protection	\$9,311,881	\$531,904	\$9,843,785	\$17,425,405	\$27,269,190

## 6.2 The Fire Chief’s Role in Municipal Budgeting Under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act

Under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 (FPPA), the Fire Chief serves as the primary advisor to Council on fire protection services, particularly during the budget process. While the Act does not set out financial procedures, it assigns the Fire Chief responsibility for the administration of the fire department and for ensuring Council has the information needed to make informed decisions.

The Fire Chief must ensure the municipality meets its legal obligation to provide “adequate and effective fire protection services” (FPPA, Sections 2 and 6). This includes advocating for the

staffing, training, equipment, and infrastructure required to maintain service delivery and public safety.

During budget development, the Fire Chief prepares and presents both operating and capital plans, aligning departmental needs with Council's priorities. Data such as incident trends, response times, and risk assessments are used to justify expenditures, highlight cost drivers, and support long-term planning.

The Fire Chief must also balance fiscal responsibility with public safety by identifying efficiencies, evaluating spending priorities, and clearly communicating the risks of underfunding. Multi-year planning for fleet, facilities, and emerging risks associated with rapid municipal growth, as an example, is a key part of this role.

The Fire Chief must ensure Council understands the resources needed to maintain a compliant, effective, and sustainable fire service, while exercising prudent financial stewardship on behalf of both Council and taxpayers.

### **6.3 Economic and Inflationary Impacts on Fire Department Budgets**

The goal of any municipal budget process is to develop a budget document that aligns with established mandates, and a variety of factors are considered during the budget planning process. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Canadian Inflation Rate
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Transfers from other orders of government
- Current Value Assessment (CVA)
- Municipal priorities
- Infrastructure needs and deficit
- Municipal growth
- Legislative requirements
- Risk to the community

### **6.4 Consumer Price Index and Inflation**

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a key factor in municipal budget development, as it measures inflation and directly impacts the cost of goods, services, fuel, utilities, and construction

materials. CPI also influences staff compensation, with many municipal contracts tied to inflation through the negotiation process, driving higher wage and benefit costs that must be reflected in operating budgets.

In capital planning, CPI affects the cost of infrastructure projects and contractor services, often influencing the timing and scope of investments. On the revenue side, municipalities may adjust user fees, permits, or property taxes to keep pace with inflation. Overall, CPI is a vital tool for anticipating inflationary pressures and ensuring financial sustainability. While inflation rates in Canada are beginning to stabilize, CPI continues to trend upward (Table #30).

Inflation is pushing costs up, and to manage the impact, fire departments should match purchases to the right index – CPI for general contracts, a construction index for new fire stations, and manufacturer index for apparatus – and cap annual escalators in multi-year agreements. Build a small contingency, phase larger projects, pre-order long-lead apparatus, and use cooperative purchasing to stabilize pricing. Maintain a 10 -15-year, inflation-updated capital replacement plan, and indexed reserve contributions to preserve buying power.

**TABLE #30: CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) AND INFLATION RATE**

Year	CPI	Annual Inflation Rate
2018	133.4	2.27%
2019	136	1.95%
2020	137	0.72%
2021	141.6	3.39%
2022	151.2	6.80%
2023	157.1	3.89%
2024	160.4	2.44%

**6.5 Tariffs**

At the time of writing, tariffs imposed by the United States of America (USA), as well as any retaliatory measures enacted by the Government of Canada, remain subject to change. Emergency Management Group Inc. acknowledges the potential for considerable adverse impacts on the Canadian economy and, by extension, on municipal budgets resulting from an ongoing or escalating trade dispute with the United States.

In particular, increased tariffs on both sides of the border may place additional financial strain on Canadian fire departments. These impacts are likely to manifest indirectly but significantly, especially through increased costs associated with equipment procurement, materials, and general operational expenditures. The following outlines key areas in which U.S.-imposed tariffs may affect the financial planning and resource allocation of Canadian fire services:

### Increased Equipment Costs

Fire departments frequently import critical items such as fire trucks, personal protective gear, and specialized tools. The new surtax increases the cost of these imports, which may strain budgets and delay necessary purchases. Although complete fire apparatus may be exempt from standard customs duties, individual components or accessories imported separately may not qualify for exemptions and could be subject to the surtax.

### Infrastructure Project Delays

Tariffs on construction materials, including steel and aluminum, can raise the cost of building or renovating fire stations and training facilities. These higher costs may result in postponed or downsized projects, requiring municipalities to allocate additional funds to meet capital needs.

### Maintenance and Operational Challenges

Fire apparatus and components sourced from the U.S. may also face increased acquisition and maintenance costs due to tariffs. Additionally, temporary trade measures, anti-dumping policies, or compliance checks by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) can create administrative delays, even when the items themselves are ultimately duty-free.

### Mitigation Strategies

Fire departments can mitigate these risks by ensuring proper classification of equipment and parts, maintaining complete import documentation, and working closely with suppliers familiar with Canadian import regulations. Budget planning should include a contingency allowance to address potential cost increases or delays associated with imported components, which may involve setting aside funds for tariffs, customs brokerage fees, expedited shipping, or temporary operational adjustments.

The imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from China presents clear financial challenges for Canadian fire departments. Proactive planning, flexible budgeting, and risk management are essential to maintain operational readiness and manage procurement uncertainties effectively.

## 6.6 2024 BMA Study

Since 2000, BMA Management Consulting Inc. has produced an annual municipal comparative study for participating Ontario municipalities. The study provides key quantitative indicators and contextual environmental factors to support a thorough assessment of a municipality's financial health. By analyzing these indicators over time, municipalities can track trends and evaluate their financial performance on a year-over-year basis.

Table #31 illustrates the net cost per capita for fire services among municipalities with populations between 30,000 and 99,000.

**TABLE #31: FIRE SERVICE NET COST PER CAPITA OPERATING COSTS IN 2024**

Municipality	Net Costs per Capita Excluding Amortization in \$	Net Costs per Capita, Including Amortization in \$
Centre Wellington	53	63
New Tecumseth	75	84
Haldimand	63	85
Grimsby	71	87
Fort Erie	81	101
Norfolk	97	112
Brant County	89	113
Orangeville	124	131
King	117	135
Quinte Wet	119	137
Whitchurch – Stouffville	138	150
East Gwillimbury	150	169
Newmarket	182	191

Municipality	Net Costs per Capita Excluding Amortization in \$	Net Costs per Capita, Including Amortization in \$
Aurora	189	194
Caledon	178	200
Halton Hills	194	210
Peterborough	207	213
Innisfil	195	214
Georgina	211	227
Orillia	223	237
Bellville	224	239
Sault Ste. Marie	237	244
St. Thomas	247	255
North Bay	252	259
Welland	248	262
Sarnia	297	307
<b>Population 30,000 – 99,999</b>		
Average	164	178
Median	180	193

Based on the BMA study data, IFRS has a net cost per capita of \$195 excluding amortization and \$214 including amortization, placing it in the upper-middle range compared with other Ontario municipalities with populations between 30,000 and 99,000. IFRS is more expensive per capita than most smaller municipalities, but lower than higher-cost municipalities. There are several factors to consider when assessing IFRS cost per capita:

**Service Delivery Model** – IFRS is a full-service, composite department, integrating both career and paid-on-call firefighters. Hybrid staffing models generally increase per capita costs compared with smaller paid-on-call only departments.

**Population Growth and Density** – Innisfil has experienced rapid population growth and urbanization, which requires more resources for fire protection, additional stations, and enhanced emergency response capacity.

**Operational Readiness and Infrastructure** – Through the years 2022 – 2024, the Town’s capital investment in IFRS was approximately \$17,700,000. Such investment contributes to higher per capita costs but ensures service reliability and community safety.

**Regulatory Compliance** – Compliance with legislated requirements such as O. Reg. 343/22 Firefighter Certification, and mandated fire prevention regulations, as examples, drives training costs and operational expenditures.

IFRS’s per capita costs are higher than smaller or less urbanized municipalities due to its comprehensive service model, growth pressures, regulatory compliance, and investment in operational readiness. At the same time, its costs remain moderate compared with some of the largest or rapidly growing municipalities in the province, reflecting a balance between community safety, service levels, and financial sustainability.

## 6.7 Operating Budget

A detailed review of the operating budget provides critical insight into the financial pressures and service realities facing the fire department. By examining year-over-year results and comparing actual expenditures and revenues against approved budgets, clear trends emerge in the areas of labour costs, fleet maintenance, facilities, and support services. This analysis highlights both the strengths in financial management and the recurring challenges that drive budget variances, offering a transparent foundation for long-term planning and the Council making informed decisions.

**TABLE #32: 2022 – 2025 BUDGET INCREASE VS. CANADIAN INFLATION RATE**

Year	Budget Increase	% Increase	Canadian Inflation Rate
2022	\$299,611	0.2%	6.80%
2023	\$502,552	6.5%	3.89%
2024	\$227,173	2.8%	2.44%
2025	\$1,779,452	21.1%	*2.4%
2026	\$522,803	5.1%	*2.0%

*Note: The 2025 and 2026 inflation rates reflect Bank of Canada projections.<sup>52</sup>*

**TABLE #33: 2022 – 2025 APPROVED BUDGET/YEAR-END ACTUAL EXPENDITURES/VARIANCE**

Year	Approved Budget	Year-End Actual	Variance
2022	\$7,709,526	\$8,448,720	<b>-\$739,194</b>
2023	\$8,212,078	\$9,043,929	<b>-\$831,851</b>
2024	\$8,439,251	\$9,439,912	<b>-\$739,194</b>
2025	\$10,218,704	TBD	TBD
2026	\$10,741,506	TBD	TBD

According to Table #33, IFRS exceeded its approved operating budget in each year from 2022 through 2024, reflecting ongoing structural cost pressures and budget assumptions that did not fully keep pace with actual operating demands. Year-end variances ranged from approximately \$739,000 to \$832,000, suggesting that inflationary impacts, service growth, and evolving operational requirements outpaced approved funding levels. When viewed alongside Table #32, overall budget growth between 2022 and 2026 represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 8.6% – 8.8%, which remains significantly higher than the

<sup>52</sup> Projections - Bank of Canada Accessed September 22, 2025. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/publications/mpr/mpr-2024-10-23/projections/>

average Canadian inflation rate of roughly 3.5% over the same period. Notably, the minimal 0.2% budget increase in 2022, compared to inflation of 6.8%, likely contributed to the sustained operating pressures observed in subsequent years and helps explain the substantial funding adjustment implemented in 2025.

### *6.7.1 Variance Drivers*

Through its analysis, EMG has identified the following unfavourable (over-budget/under-revenue) drivers for the years 2022 – 2024, which are as follows:

- **Labour Cost Pressures (2022 – 2024):** Full-time salaries, paid and banked overtime, and employer benefit costs consistently represent the primary drivers of expenditure growth.
- **Fleet Recoveries and Internal Transfers:** Charges associated with fleet recoveries and other internal allocations are persistently above plan, with pronounced impacts in 2022 and 2023.
- **Facilities and Core Operating Inputs:** Expenditures for facility maintenance, dispatch fees, insurance, utilities, and fuel routinely exceed budget and/or show year-over-year escalation.
- **Purchased Services:** a material increase is observed in 2024, warranting further verification.
- **Revenue Variability:**
  - **2022:** An unfavourable variance appears to have resulted from a budgeted reserve/development charge transfer that did not materialize while debt service costs were incurred.
  - **2024:** Elevated fire call-out revenues partially offset weaker inter-municipal and miscellaneous revenue lines.

### *6.7.2 Opportunities for Improvement*

#### *Labour and Overtime*

- Review and implement tighter backfill and overtime thresholds tied to incident type.
- Separate incident overtime from training overtime to improve tracking and accountability.
- Review banked overtime practices for cap and carry-forward to control future liabilities.
- Assess vacancy coverage requiring overtime vs. hiring additional full-time staff.

### *Fleet Recoveries (Internal Charges)*

- Request a line-item summary of shop labour, parts, and fuel for the top 10 costed units (2022 – 2024).
- Identify miscoded items for correction and assess whether major repairs should be capitalized rather than charged to operating.

### *Facilities*

- Transfer responsibility for the facility envelope, including budgeting, maintenance oversight, and capital upgrades, to the Facilities Department.

### *Purchased Services*

- Reclassify project-style work to capital when it extends asset life or increases capacity.

### *Dispatch, Insurance, Utilities, and Fuel*

- Confirm rate increases against budget assumptions ahead of updating budget submissions.

### *Equipment Maintenance*

- Increase Equipment Maintenance based on a five-year rolling average, and incrementally as new apparatus and equipment enter into service.

### *Revenue Management*

- Expedite inter-municipal billings and strengthen invoice follow-up for miscellaneous revenue.

Overall, the operating budget analysis demonstrates that while revenues remain relatively stable, expenditures continue to increase due to rising costs for wages and benefits, fleet recoveries, facility maintenance, and contracted services. These structural pressures, coupled with variability in reserve transfers and inter-municipal revenues, emphasize the need for ongoing financial planning. Aligning operating budgets with actual service demand, establishing

✦ **Recommendation #42** – That the Fire Chief, in collaboration with the Finance Division, evaluate the Section 6.7.2 opportunities, and selectively implement those that best address structural under-budgeting in the 2027 – 2028 operating budget.

stronger cost-control measures, and refining reserve strategies will position Innisfil to maintain sustainable fire protection services while adapting to future community growth and risk.

## 6.8 Asset Management and Long-Range Capital Forecast

### 6.8.1 Asset Management Plan (AMP)

Innisfil's AMP framework is structured to meet Ontario's O. Reg. 588/17 under the Infrastructure for Jobs Prosperity Act, 2015. Fire assets, including stations, fleet, and specialized equipment, are included as non-core assets, with requirements to document inventory, condition, lifecycle strategies, and costs (core assets by July 1, 2022; all assets by July 1, 2024; and fully financial strategy/levels of service by July 1, 2025). This gives IFRS a compliant platform to plan renewals and manage risks across facilities, apparatus, and critical equipment.

The Council should see a direct link between what is expected from the fire service as detailed in the E&R By-law, and what is being funded. Establishing clear, measurable targets such as apparatus in-service percentage, Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) ready-for-use rates, and hose/ladder test pass rates, as examples, supports how each capital request helps to meet service level targets. A 10-year lifecycle review for major assets such as fire stations, apparatus, SCBA and extrication equipment, including the number owned, replacement cost, useful life, and replacement dates, with built-in inflation and a small contingency, should be developed.

Growth-driven needs, eligible for Development Charges, should be separated from renewals that benefit the existing community (such as taxes/reserves/debt) to create a transparent funding outlook. Consistency between the priorities approved in this FMP and the AMP should be established so that the Council can form a coherent, defensible capital plan for the next decade.

✦ **Recommendation #43** – That Council direct staff to align the AMP's fire assets with the E&R By-law by setting measurable service-level targets, publishing a 10-year lifecycle and financial plan, separating growth-eligible costs for Development Charges from renewal costs, and mirroring these priorities in the FMP to deliver one coherent, defensible capital program for the next decade.

### 6.8.2 Long-Range Capital Forecast

The revised 10-year capital program adequately covers core lifecycle items, including SCBA, bunker gear, extrication equipment, gas detection, extractors, and major fleet renewals. Still, it,

leaves modest near-term spending in 2026 and concentrated peaks in 2030 – 2034. To keep the plan executable, contributions to capital reserves should be balanced toward the long-run average (plus inflation), with draws in the peak years. The forecast should be formally integrated with the municipal AMP by tying every asset to an identification, condition rating, remaining service life, risk/criticality score, and defined replacement trigger. The costs should include escalation and be cross-referenced to the funding source (taxes, reserves, DC for growth share, grants). Annual AMP updates should be reflected in the long-range forecast, so timing and dollars adjust as condition information changes.

The Fire Equipment Renewal line of \$15,000/year is inadequate and, as currently undefined, functions as a placeholder rather than a managed program. In many composite departments, this bucket typically covers small but capital-eligible items and safety-critical replacements. (i.e., saws, fans, battery tools, hose appliances, etc.), and it is unlikely to support necessary cyclical replacements on its own. It should be broken down into named, scheduled sub-programs, with quantities, unit costs, service life assumptions, and escalation. In particular, the plan is missing explicit forecasts for thermal imaging cameras (TICs), replacement of water rescue equipment, and fire hoses, nozzles, and appliances. Establishing dedicated program lines for each of these categories will make the forecast more defensible and AMP consistent.

The research conducted by EMG indicates a very low inventory of hose, which is an immediate operational risk. This should be corrected by opening the 2026 capital budget and adding a one-time hose catch-up program that reflects a standard hose-based inventory as determined by the Fire Chief. NFPA 1901: *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* establishes the minimum requirement for hose and equipment on fire apparatus.

After the catch-up, IFRS should establish an annual hose/nozzle/appliance program to maintain minimums and replace test failures in accordance with NFPA 1962: *Standard for the Care, Use, Inspection, Service Testing, and Replacement of Fire Hose, Couplings, Nozzles, and Fire Hose Appliances*, without having to rely on operating funds.

★ **Recommendation #44** – That Innisfil implement the following measures related to the Capital Budget and Long-Range Capital Forecast:

- Adopt a reserve-balance approach that funds the fire capital plan at the long-run average each year (indexed to inflation) with planned drawdowns in peak years.
- Integrate the long-range capital forecast with the AMP by linking every asset to an ID, condition, remaining service life, risk/criticality, defined replacement trigger, escalated cost, and funding source.
- Replace the \$15,000 Fire Equipment Renewal placeholder with named, scheduled, sub-programs, as determined by the Fire Chief, that specify quantities, unit cost, and funding source. (i.e., TICs, water rescue equipment, ventilation fans, etc.)
- Amend the 2026 capital budget to fund a one-time hose, nozzles, and appliances catch-up program to achieve NFPA 1901 minimum inventories per apparatus and station.
- After the catch-up, implement an annual hose/nozzle/appliance replacement program driven by inspections and service test results in accordance with NFPA 1962.

## 6.9 User Fees

Fire service user fees provide municipalities with a mechanism to recover costs for services that extend beyond standard emergency response. While the core functions of fire protection are funded through property taxes, certain activities, such as fire inspections, false alarm responses, file searches, and permits, are more appropriately financed by those who directly use or benefit from the service. This approach ensures fairness by reducing the burden on the general taxpayer.

User fees also serve as a tool to manage demand and encourage responsible practices. For example, fees for repeated false alarms can help reduce unnecessary emergency responses, while charges for development-related services such as plan reviews or fire safety clearances ensure that existing residents do not subsidize growth-related costs.

Ultimately, user fees enhance financial sustainability by providing an additional revenue stream that supports fire prevention, education, and operational needs. By aligning costs with service use, municipalities can maintain accountability and ensure that fire departments remain equipped to deliver effective and reliable services.

EMG assessed Schedule “D” – Fire & Rescue Services of By-Law No. 057-24 against IFRS’s 2025-2026 fees against nearby/peer municipalities where public schedules are available, and with a focus on common items such as reports, licensing/inspections, burning permits, breathing apparatus cylinder refills, and staff rates.

The analysis indicates that Innisfil’s fee schedule shows several areas where costs are noticeably higher than those of comparator municipalities, particularly for flat-fee services related to paperwork and licensing. For example, charges for Ontario Fire Marshal incident reports (\$149), mortgage or ownership letters (\$203–\$355), daycare and licensing inspections (\$355), short-term rental inspections (\$389), and general requested inspections (\$390–\$693 depending on size) are two to three times higher than Barrie’s flat fees. They also exceed Niagara-on-the-Lake’s hourly model, where the same type of straightforward visit often results in a much lower total cost.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, Innisfil’s pricing is highly competitive in certain operational areas. Training and health-related services such as SCBA refills (\$6–\$7) and respirator fit testing (\$12 per person) are well below the fees charged in Orillia (\$20 and \$55, respectively). Similarly, the annual open-air burning permit (\$23.50–\$24.20) is modest compared to some peers, particularly where municipalities instead rely on fines for non-compliance rather than annual permit fees.<sup>54</sup>

Staff billing rates also position Innisfil near the lower end of the comparator range. Officer and career firefighter hourly rates are below those charged in Bradford-West Gwillimbury, while senior officer rates are slightly lower as well. Paid-on-call firefighter rates are roughly in line with regional norms.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, some differences in fee structures across municipalities contribute to the apparent gaps. Niagara-on-the-Lake, for example, applies an hourly rate (\$69.54/hour) rather than high flat fees. This model means that routine inspections, such as daycare or short-term rental checks,

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<sup>53</sup> Innisfil, user-fees.pdf Accessed October 9, 2025. <https://innisfil.ca/en/my-government/resources/Documents/user-fees.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> 453---User-Fees---Fire.pdf Accessed October 9, 2025. <https://www.orillia.ca/en/living-here/resources/Fire/453---User-Fees---Fire.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> 2025-Fees-and-Charges-Schedule-A---06-03-2025-Amendment.pdf Accessed October 9, 2025. [https://www.townofbwg.com/Website-Documents/4\\_Town-Hall/By-laws/2025-Fees-and-Charges-Schedule-A---06-03-2025-Amendment.pdf](https://www.townofbwg.com/Website-Documents/4_Town-Hall/By-laws/2025-Fees-and-Charges-Schedule-A---06-03-2025-Amendment.pdf)

which typically require about an hour, are considerably less expensive for the property owner compared to Innisfil’s flat-rate approach.<sup>56</sup>

✦ **Recommendation #45** – That the Fire Chief assess the IFRS fee structure, particularly flat-rate inspections and licensing charges, for alignment with peer municipalities to ensure a fair, transparent, and cost-recoverable model.

✦ **Recommendation #46** – That IFRS benchmark peer Regional Training Centres and draft amendments to By-law 057-24, Schedule "D", establishing a dedicated RTC fee schedule to enable cost recovery concurrent with the burn tower and classroom expansion.

## 6.10 Development Charges

Innisfil’s Development Charges (DC) By-law (By-law No. 096-23) provides comparatively strong fire service revenue. Current DC rates for single (detached) and semi-detached units are materially higher than comparator municipalities, and broadly in line with fast-growing Greater Toronto Area (GTA) peers that levy dedicated fire charges. This positioning reflects a larger growth-related fire capital program and supports IFRS’s short-term needs if kept current. The following is 2025 comparator information for single and semi-detached units:

Innisfil	\$3,246
New Tecumseth	\$2,135
East Gwillimbury	\$2,787
Bradford West Gwillimbury	\$1,344
Collingwood	\$1,319
Oro-Medonte	\$2,743
Essa	\$1,873

<sup>56</sup> Niagara On The Lake, 3112-97 Accessed October 9, 2025. <https://www.notl.com/sites/default/files/2022-05/Fire%20Fees%202022.pdf>

For IFRS, the implication is positive but conditional: there is capacity to fund growth if the capital plan remains development charges ready, with growth allocations and projects that meet the increase in need due to development tests, such as a new fire station, apparatus, and training site enhancements.

## **6.11 Estimated Financial Implications for Proposed Staffing and New Station 6, Integrated Classroom, & Class A/B Burn Tower**

### **6.11.1**      *Estimated Financial Implications for Proposed Staffing*

Below is a phased staffing roadmap that translates the report’s recommendations into estimated annual costs. It aligns with the operational deployment, station plan, fire prevention and community risk reduction, training and professional development, organizational structure and administrative support, and long-range growth planning. Immediate and short-term additions address near-term pressures and operational readiness. Mid-term actions add leadership and specialist capacity. Long-term increments of staff and additional apparatus as development intensifies. Cost ranges reflect current position pay bands and benefits, providing Council a clear, sequenced plan tied to the rationale detailed in the corresponding sections of this Fire Master Plan.

The projected assignment and deployment of additional full-time personnel outlined in this report are based on the operational analysis, growth projections, response data, and best available evidence at the time of writing. These projections are intended to provide a strategic planning framework to support staffing justification and long-term resource forecasting.

Final decisions regarding the placement, station assignment, and deployment configuration of future crews remain at the discretion of the Fire Chief and may be adjusted in response to evolving call volumes, growth patterns, risk profiles, operational performance data, and Council direction. Nothing within this report is intended to prescribe specific station assignments or limit the Fire Chief’s authority to allocate personnel in a manner that best meets future service demands.

**TABLE #34: ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PROPOSED STAFFING**

Timeline	Position Description	FTEs	Estimated Annual Cost (Lower)	Estimated Annual Cost (Upper)	Notes / Basis
Immediate	Firefighters – assign to Stn. 3 (Aerial → transfer to Stn. 6)	20	\$1.98M	\$3.04M	Range: Probation → 1st Class (2026)
Short (1–3 yrs)	Admin Assistant	1	\$97K	\$97K	Admin Support Rate (2025)
Immediate to Mid	Assistant Deputy Chiefs	2	TBD	TBD	To be determined based on established compression rate
Mid (4 -6 yrs)	Reclassify the Business Manager to a Division Chief, Administration and Business Services	0	\$25K	\$25K	Difference between Business Manager & Deputy Fire Chief
Short–Mid (1–6)	Additional Paid-on-Call Firefighters (10 each for Stns. (1,2,3,5))	40	\$415K	\$450K	Avg. POC pay (2025)
Short–Mid (1–6)	Fire Prevention Staff (Reclassify the FPO to CFPO & add 1 FPI)	1	\$165KK	\$178K	Difference between FPO and CFPO at 125% of 1 <sup>st</sup> Class + 1 FPI
Short–Mid (1–6)	Public Fire Life Safety Educator	1	\$152K	\$166K	
Short-Mid (1–6 yrs)	Platoon Chiefs – Stn. 6 (Innisfil Heights)	4	\$862K	\$862K	130% of 1st Class + 9% retention

Timeline	Position Description	FTEs	Estimated Annual Cost (Lower)	Estimated Annual Cost (Upper)	Notes / Basis
Mid (4–6 yrs)	Chief Training Officer & Training Officer	2	\$423K	\$423K	CTO at 125% of TO with recognition pay
Mid (4-6 yrs)	Firefighters – staff second apparatus at Stn.3 (Lefroy)	20	\$1.98M	\$3.04M	Range: Probation → 1st Class (2026)
Future (10–15)	Firefighters – staff second apparatus at Stns. 5 & 6	40	\$3.95M	\$6.08M	Range: Probation → 1st Class (2026)

### 6.11.2 *Estimated Financial Implications for New Station 6, Integrated Classroom, & Class A/B Burn Tower*

Station 6 is needed to close a growing coverage gap in Innisfil Heights. Calls for service and asset values are rising west of Hwy 400, while average POC turnout is well below NFPA's effective response force (EFR) needs. A full-service station will improve first apparatus arrival and EFR times in this district and relieve pressure on neighbouring zones.

Building on modern hub for suppression, administration, prevention, training, and logistics replaces the current scattered footprint. Co-location cuts travel and fleet wear streamlines utilities and maintenance, and speeds day-to-day decision making with a clear chain of command.

An integrated multi-storey Class A/B burn tower, designed and operated in accordance with NFPA 1403, would lead to a Training Division that is highly effective and with standardized capability. On-site live fire and classroom delivery reduces overtime, travel, and external fees, while increasing repetitions and mixed-crew interoperability. Financially, the project enables permanent capability, cost avoidance, and provides opportunity for revenue generation through the RTC, Funding can blend growth and non-growth sources: development charges for growth share of the program, and tax/reserves/debt for renewal and common areas.

The EMG is estimating a total program budget of \$35,000,000 to \$40,000,000 for a new fire station complex that includes an integrated classroom, and NFPA 1403 compliant burn tower, Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) apparatus bays, complete with storage areas, price escalation and contingency costs.

According to the Altus Group, 2025 Canadian Cost Guide, a new Ontario fire station, without specialty 911 operations spaces, suggests an order-of-magnitude cost of ~\$600 - \$900 per ft<sup>2</sup> hard cost depending on market complexity.<sup>57</sup> The November 2024, revised estimated cost of the Town of Orangeville's new fire headquarters (~29,600 sq. ft) is \$31,600,000.<sup>58</sup> Although the procurement and design package was not finalized during the writing of this report, the Town of Amherst, Nova Scotia recently approved (June 4, 2025) a Capital Budget Amendment for the construction of a Live Fire Training Facility estimated to cost \$2,000,000. The construction project is a partnership between the Amherst Fire Fighters Association and the Town.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Altus Group, 2025 Canadian Cost Guide, accessed October 20, 2025. <https://www.altusgroup.com/featured-insights/canadian-cost-guide/>

<sup>58</sup> Orangeville Citizen, Council looks at lowering costs for new Orangeville Fire Hall as initial estimate nearly quadruples, accessed October 20, 2025. <https://citizen.on.ca/council-looks-at-lowering-costs-for-new-orangeville-fire-hall-as-initial-estimate-nearly-quadruples/>

<sup>59</sup> Firefighting in Canada, Amherst approves new live burn training facility - Fire Fighting in Canada, accessed October 20, 2025. <https://www.firefightingincanada.com/town-of-amherst-to-build-2-million-live-fire-training-facility/>

# Section 7

## Fire Underwriters Survey



## SECTION 7 - FIRE UNDERWRITERS SURVEY

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The Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) is a national organization that provides data on public fire protection for statistical analysis and underwriting purposes for subscribing insurance companies. Subscribers to the FUS network account for about 90% of private sector property and casualty insurers in Canada.

A key element of a FUS evaluation is managing fire safety within a community. FUS Certified Fire Protection Specialists carry out detailed field surveys of fire risks and fire defences maintained in developed communities, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas across Canada. The results of these surveys establish a Public Fire Protection Classification (PFPC) for each community. Although the FUS does not determine insurance rates, the information from the Fire Insurance Grading Index is essential for developing rates for commercial property insurance. Underwriters also use the PFPC to assess the level of risk they are willing to accept in each community or within parts of a community.

The FUS also utilizes PFPC information to develop the Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG), which personal lines insurers rely on to set property insurance rates for detached dwellings with no more than two units. The DPG gauges a community's ability to prevent and manage structure fires in detached dwellings by evaluating the adequacy, reliability, strength, and efficiency of protective facilities, and compares the protection level to the fire risk typically associated with a dwelling.

As their website explains, FUS identifies Alternative Water Supplies for Public Fire Protection, including water sources beyond those classified as pressurized, municipal-type systems. Firefighting operations usually rely on water, and in areas lacking municipal water supplies, firefighting becomes significantly more challenging. Modern fire trucks designed to carry and pump large amounts of water have greatly improved firefighting efforts where municipal supplies are unavailable. The use of tanker trucks to transport water in a shuttle system is a common practice among many rural fire departments across Canada.

### 7.1 FUS Portal

Canadian fire departments can use the FUS portal to update their information. They can view data related to new fire apparatus replacements, new fire halls, new construction, and hydrants in new sectors. This portal enables municipalities to easily access and share information about fire protection data and FUS Fire Insurance Grades within their communities. It is the only national fire protection database that allows municipalities to quickly view and share information about fire protection data and FUS Fire Insurance Grades in their community. The IFRS has maintained access to this portal and provides updates as circumstances change within

the department and the Town. Doing so ensures that the most current information is available to FUS to continually monitor the activities of the Town of Innisfil in improving its water supply infrastructure, fire service assets, and operational changes implemented by IFRS, and adjust its gradings accordingly.

Many advantages come to light when maintaining accurate records in the portal, including:

- Easily view current FUS Fire Insurance Grades and protection data relevant to the community as seen by the Insurance Industry across Canada
- Provide regular updates on fire protection and connect with their Grade details.
- Transmit and upload documents related to any updates or revisions to the data on the overall fire safety of the territory served that may affect the FUS Grade.
- Access a geographical map that enables easy navigation and analysis of FUS grades for each sector of the municipality.
- Keep fire protection current within their community with a more efficient and streamlined data exchange process, enabling FUS specialists to quickly process, analyze, and transmit improved FUS Grades back to the insurance industry.
- Streamline time by improving communication with FUS specialists.

## **7.2 Accredited Superior Tanker Shuttle Service**

To be recognized as an Accredited Superior Tanker Shuttle Service, the water supply delivery system must be well-designed and thoroughly documented. The delivery system must meet all the requirements of the Standard Tanker Shuttle Service and exceed them in key areas, such as providing higher flow rates for initial arrival and setup, covering both personal and commercial insurance lines, and maintaining specific flow rates for a specified period.

Property owners in communities with an accredited Superior Tanker Shuttle Service qualify for more favourable property insurance rates, similar to those with municipal water supply systems.

In 2023, IFRS successfully obtained its Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation to FUS standards. This status remains valid for five years and must be re-evaluated in 2028, when the current accreditation expires, if the department wishes to maintain this accreditation. The five stations are currently certified to provide a Personal Line Fire Insurance Classification – with a DPG rating of 3B(S) – and have a flow rate of 2,123 litres per minute (467 IGPM).

As FUS is an accredited agency, residents within IFRS-serviced areas of the Town who own detached dwellings and live within an 8-kilometre radius of the responding fire station, as well as those who own semi-detached homes and buildings such as multi-family residential,

commercial, industrial, institutional, and developments under construction within a 5-kilometre radius, are eligible for significant reductions in their fire insurance rates from most insurers across Canada.

Insurers depend on information from the Fire Underwriters Survey to determine property insurance rates across Canada. They are informed that Superior Tanker Shuttle Service (STSS) Accredited fire protection districts qualify for hydrant-protected equivalency status and can be considered as protected. Note that this equivalency applies solely to residential and commercial buildings without other exposures.

It is also worth noting that insurers are not required to accept this equivalency; however, the Fire Underwriters Survey recommends that they do so.

### **7.3 Grading as of 2025**

In 2025, IFRS received a grading update that led to improvements in several areas, primarily due to changes and upgrades to the infrastructure and the completion of the tanker shuttle accreditation, enhancing its Public Fire Protection Classification. At the same time, the Town's Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG) also improved in several areas of the Town, again partly thanks to the tanker shuttle accreditation.

To maintain an FUS grading, each station must have an active roster of at least 15 firefighters. Failure to do so may result in a significant downgrade of the grade, such as a Grade 5, which is akin to having an unprotected community and is likely to lead to negative outcomes, including higher insurance rates.

To maintain its current grading, the IFRS must ensure a minimum of 15 POC firefighters are always assigned to each station and that its fleet is replaced according to NFPA and FUS recommendations.

An area of significant interest to FUS is water supply. Although IFRS has achieved its Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation, it could enhance its rating by increasing the water capacity of its tankers and the number of tankers to maintain a steady supply of larger water volumes. Another key focus for FUS is alternative water sources, including the installation of dry hydrants and/or cisterns, as well as expanding/upgrading the town's water supply system, all of which can be documented on the portal.

It needs to update the portal with changes to its operations, such as improvements to its fire prevention and public education programs.

# Section 8

Recommendations, Timelines and  
Associated Costs



Emergency  
Management  
Group\*

## SECTION 8 - RECOMMENDATIONS, TIMELINES, AND ASSOCIATED COSTS

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### 8.1 Conclusion

Throughout this review, the IFRS administrative team, career firefighters, and paid-on-call firefighters demonstrated clear dedication to the community, and Council showed a genuine commitment to protecting residents and responders. Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services strives to deliver efficient, effective service within current staffing, equipment, and station configurations: commissioning this Fire Master Plan signals the Town's intention to further strengthen service delivery.

All costs and timelines referenced are order-of-magnitude estimates and will be refined through implementation planning and prioritization by the Fire Chief, CAO and Council. As a long-range planning document, the Fire Master Plan should be updated annually, with a comprehensive review at the five-year mark, or sooner if growth, legislation, or risk factors change materially.

## 8.2 Recommendations, Estimated Costs, & Rationale

The following table summarizes the report’s recommendations, 46 in total, including suggested implementation timelines, order-of-magnitude costs, and the rationale for each action.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
<b>Section 1 – Community and Fire Department Overview</b>				
There are no recommendations associated with Section 1.				
<b>Section 2a – Risk Assessment</b>				
1	Allocate funding for training to improve investigation techniques for structure and vehicle fires to determine the fire’s cause, origin, and circumstances.	\$5,000 to \$10,000	Short to Mid-Term (1 to 6 years)	<p>Determining the origin and cause of fires is crucial for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Safety</li> <li>• Legal Implications</li> <li>• Fire Prevention</li> <li>• Investigation and Analysis</li> <li>• Community Awareness</li> </ul> <p>By systematically investigating fires, investigators can offer valuable insights that enhance public safety and help prevent future fire-related incidents.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
2	With the Community Risk Assessment and this Fire Master Plan now complete, EMG recommends that the Fire Chief incorporate elements from both documents to develop and implement the Community Risk Reduction Plan that takes into consideration the three lines of defence and an inclusion of the IFRS' Emergency Response Matrix.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Developing a CRR Plan that incorporates the suggestions found in NFPA 1300 will help IFRS in setting a course to reduce risks to the Town.  Once a plan is developed, it should be discussed with the Town's CAO and the Council.
<b>Section 2b – Overview of Interviews Conducted</b>				
There are no recommendations associated with Section 2b.				
<b>Section 3 – Fire Department Divisions</b>				
3	Add 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant to support departmental administrative functions, with specific duties and workload distribution to be assigned at the discretion of the Fire Chief based on operational priorities, (Further addressed in Section 3.3.5 and 3.2.7.2)	\$97,405	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Adding 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant will provide flexible administrative support across the department, reducing clerical and logistical demands on specialized divisions and enabling the Fire Chief to allocate assistance where it is most needed. This will allow Training, Prevention, and other functional areas to remain focused on their core mandates and operational priorities.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
4	<p>Establish Assistant Deputy Chief Positions for the Support and Operations portfolios as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Deputy Chief Operations (Immediate)</li> <li>Assistant Deputy Chief Support Services (Mid Term)</li> </ul>	TBD based on compression rate.	<p>Immediate (0 to 1 year) to Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)</p>	<p>IFRS's current workload, regulatory obligations, and program complexity require additional leadership capacity to ensure timely decision-making, consistent supervision, and operational resilience. Implementing ADC roles immediately distributes managerial responsibilities more appropriately, reduces bottlenecks for the Fire Chief and Deputy Chiefs, and aligns the department's leadership structure with its operational and administrative demands.</p>
5	<p>Reclassify the Business Manager position to Division Chief, Administration &amp; Business Services to reflect the scope and strategic importance of this portfolio within IFRS.</p>	\$25,000	<p>Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)</p>	<p>The Business Manager currently oversees key administrative functions, including human resources coordination, finance, procurement, records management, FOI processes, governance systems, grants, council reporting, and billing. Reclassifying this role to a Division Chief appropriately elevates its authority and accountability, supports administrative governance, and ensures processes and systems evolve in step with organizational growth, while maintaining alignment with the established ADC leadership model.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
6	That IFRS hires one Fire Prevention Inspector within two years.	\$150,000	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	IFRS is adopting a risk-based inspection scheduling system, as outlined in NFPA 1730. While a good starting point, implementing a more structured inspection rate-based occupancy classification, such as that is supported by FUS, would be ideal.
7	That IFRS hires a Chief Fire Prevention Officer within six years	\$175,000	Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)	<p>As the building stock increases, so does the need for additional fire inspections, which will add pressure on the Fire Prevention Division. Within six years, IFRS will require a Chief Fire Prevention Officer (CFPO) to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of fire safety regulations and codes. The CFPO plays a crucial role in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseeing all aspects of fire prevention, code compliance, investigations, public education, and media relations within the department.</li> <li>• Providing strategic leadership in enforcing the Ontario Fire Code and Fire Protection and Prevention Act.</li> </ul>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting and supervising inspections and fire cause investigations.</li> <li>• Leading community efforts to reduce risks that safeguard residents, businesses, and visitors.</li> <li>• Serving as a departmental spokesperson to ensure clear and consistent public communication while fostering strong inter-agency partnerships.</li> <li>• The CFPO's leadership and technical expertise enhance the safety, resilience, and well-being of the community, making the role essential for the FD's success in fire prevention and safety efforts.</li> </ul>
8	That IFRS hire a dedicated Public Fire and Life Safety Educator.	\$150,000	Short to Mid Term (1 to 6 years)	As time progresses and Innisfil's demographics increase substantially, the risk of fires also increases. To prevent these from occurring, a more structured program with someone overseeing the CRRO is necessary.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
9	Each IFRS fire station establishes a station PFLSE , along with all other IFRS firefighters, completes NFPA 1035 to support the delivery of the CRRO programs.	\$65.00 For the course, plus the time to complete it	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	It would be advantageous if each station had a dedicated person to assist with organizing CRRO programs within their station's response area, under the direction of the Fire Prevention Division. This would include gathering materials and organizing station members' participation. All firefighters need to complete NFPA 1035.
10	That IFRS's Fire Prevention Division develop a proactive hybrid fire inspection frequency chart that incorporates aspects of NFPA 1730's and FUS's recommended schedules, best practices, and meets the Town's best practices.	Staff Time	Short to mid Term (1 to 6 years)	<p>Developing a hybrid inspection frequency for fire prevention divisions offers several advantages:</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> It enables the use of remote inspection technologies while maintaining regular in-person site visits, thereby optimizing resource utilization and streamlining the inspection process.</p> <p><b>Flexibility:</b> The model can adapt to changing circumstances, ensuring that inspections can be conducted, when necessary, even in the face of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Robust Framework:</b> It helps maintain a robust inspection framework, which is essential for fire prevention and safety compliance.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
				<p><b>Risk-Based Approach:</b> The model can be risk-based, prioritizing areas where remote assessments are feasible and beneficial, resulting in more effective and efficient inspections.</p> <p>These advantages contribute to a more effective and efficient fire prevention division, ensuring that safety standards are met and that the division can respond to changing conditions and risks.</p>
11	Enhance joint training between career and paid-on-call firefighters by expanding shared multi-company evolutions, aligning skill expectations, and strengthening common performance objectives to support consistent fireground operations.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Strengthening joint training between career and paid-on-call firefighters enhances interoperability, builds a shared operational approach, and reduces variability on the fireground. Expanding multi-company evolutions and aligning performance expectations support consistent skill application, improve coordination, and reinforce a unified standard of readiness across both groups.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
12	That IFRS review and update its current officer development plan to ensure it aligns with Council-approved service levels, NFPA standards, and the IPFFA collective agreement, and clearly defines prerequisites, competencies, and progression expectations for all officer ranks.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	A comprehensive review and update of the officer development plan will ensure a transparent, competency-based progression pathway that aligns training, qualifications, and promotion expectations with Council-approved service levels, NFPA standards, and collective agreement provisions. Strengthening the plan supports succession readiness and ensures the department develops a capable leadership pipeline equipped to meet evolving organizational needs.
13	Transfer the Fire Prevention Division's training responsibility and budget to the Training Division.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Centralizing prevention training and its budget under the Training Division creates one governance model for curriculum/scheduling, consistent certification & JPR tracking, and defensible records while eliminating duplicate spending. It also frees inspectors to focus on field work and community risk reduction, improving service timeliness and compliance.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
14	Investigate adding on shift instructors to support medical and technical rescue training programs.	TBD\$423,000 (upper)	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Adding on-shift instructors would provide dedicated capacity to support medical and technical rescue training programs, ensuring these high-risk, high-frequency skills are delivered consistently and to standard. This approach strengthens operational readiness, reduces training bottlenecks, and allows core instructional responsibilities to be integrated into daily staffing, improving both proficiency and service reliability..
15	Establish a Division Chief of Training position.	\$196,000	Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)	As community growth and operational complexity increase, establishing a Chief Training Officer provides the dedicated leadership and instructional oversight needed to sustain NFPA-aligned, scenario-based training at scale. This role ensures consistent program development, supports competency management, and helps maintain service levels outlined in the Establishment & Regulating By-law.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
16	Establish an additional Training Officer position.	\$187,000	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Adding an additional Training Officer increases capacity to deliver consistent, high-quality training, supports compliance with NFPA and provincial standards, and ensures the department can meet rising training demands.
17	Concurrent with municipal growth, Innisfil proceeds with design and construction of a multi-story, NFPA 1403 compliant Class A/B burn tower, at an appropriate location, and with an integrated classroom.	\$35M to \$40M (Included in the cost of new Station 6 – see Recommendation #33)	Short to Mid-Term (0 to 6 Years)	Adding a NFPA 1403 Class A/B burn tower with classroom at Station 6 would expand the IFRS’s live-fire capability—enabling standpipe/high-rise, large-flow, EV, and complex commercial scenarios on site. The RTC could broaden its course catalogue, increase seat throughput, and host multi-agency exercises. It also reduces travel/backfill and external facility fees, improves scheduling control and documentation for accreditation, supports instructor development, and creates fee revenue to help offset RTC operating and prop maintenance costs.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
18	That IFRS establish a fully equipped dedicated training pumper and centrally located cache of training props and equipment and implement an inventory-control process. In addition, establish a budget dedicated to training props and equipment to protect operational readiness and increase efficiency and effectiveness.	Cost will vary depending on the needs assessment.	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	A fully equipped dedicated training pumper and centralized cache prevent cannibalizing frontline apparatus, reduce setup time, and protect operational readiness while delivering consistent, NFPA-aligned training. An inventory-control process and dedicated budget add accountability and lifecycle management, improving safety, efficiency, and training effectiveness.
19	That IFRS adopt a department-wide NFPA 1401 compliant training records protocol and institute an audit process that withholds training credit until the Training Division reviews and approves training records.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	An NFPA 1401-compliant records protocol, enforced by an audit process before credit is issued, ensures complete, standardized, JPR-referenced documentation tied to instructor credentials. This improves due diligence and certification readiness, reduces legal risk, and gives the Training Division reliable data to target gaps and plan staffing.
20	IFRS continues its commitment to meet effective response times by including response time expectations within the E&R By-law. Based on NFPA 1710 and 1720.	Staff Time	Short- to Mid-Term (1 to 6 years)	Achieving this goal timeline will bring the IFRS in line with NFPA standards.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
21	The Town of Innisfil to increase its number of POC firefighters at all the Stations to 25.	\$400,000 to \$450,000 in total	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	<p>A POC fire department should consider increasing staffing to 25 firefighters due to several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased Demand:</b> As the volume of calls increases, more personnel are needed to manage the workload effectively.</li> <li>• <b>Budget and Funding:</b> Adequate funding is essential to support the additional staffing, which may not always be available.</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment and Retention:</b> Ensuring a healthy recruitment and retention rate is crucial for long-term success, which may require more staff to manage.</li> <li>• <b>Efficiency:</b> More staff can improve efficiency in response times and overall service quality.</li> </ul> <p>By addressing these factors, IFRS can better manage its operations and enhance community safety.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
22	Until the staffing levels of responding POC members increase, two POC stations should be automatically dispatched to all structure fires.	Staff Time	Immediate (0 to 1 year)	Due to the decreased number of responding POC firefighters, the department should initiate two full-time and two POC station responses to all structure fires. The aerial should also respond to all reported structure fires.
23	Review NFPA Standards 1582 and 1583 to develop a fitness assessment program for both recruits and current members.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years) ongoing	<p>Fire departments should promote firefighter fitness for various reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safety:</b> Regular exercise helps maintain the physical fitness necessary to perform firefighting tasks safely and effectively.</li> <li>• <b>Performance:</b> Fitness enhances overall effectiveness, including stamina and endurance, which are vital for firefighting operations.</li> <li>• <b>Health:</b> Regular physical activity lowers the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other health issues, supporting the overall well-being of firefighters.</li> <li>• <b>Resilience:</b> Fitness boosts mental and physical resilience, which is vital for handling the stress and demands of firefighting.</li> </ul>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Teamwork:</b> Fitness encourages teamwork and camaraderie among firefighters, creating a positive and supportive work environment.</li> </ul> <p>By supporting firefighter fitness, fire departments can ensure that their personnel are well-prepared to handle the challenges of firefighting.</p>
24	<p>Hire 20 full-time firefighters immediately to staff a third full-time apparatus (aerial). Following the onboarding of this initial group, hire an additional 20 full-time firefighters according to the phased timeline below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 full-time firefighters in Year 1</li> <li>5 full-time firefighters in Year 2</li> <li>5 full-time firefighters in Year 3</li> <li>5 full-time firefighters in Year 4</li> </ul>	\$1.98M to \$3.04M	<p><b>Immediate to Mid-Term</b> (0 to 6 years)</p>	<p>IFRS lacks POC firefighters to respond to fire calls, and the immediate hiring of 20 firefighters will lessen the risk but not mitigate it.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
25	Renovate Station 1 – Alcona to house 20 full-time firefighters.	\$750,000 to \$1 M	Immediate (0 to 1 year)	Data indicates that IFRS requires more personnel to handle calls, as current response levels do not meet industry standards and best practices. It is very challenging for the department to respond to two structure fires simultaneously.
26	<p>That IFRS hires four Platoon Chiefs based on the following schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire 1 Platoon Chief in sequence with the additional five firefighters hired in year 1 of Recommendation #25.</li> <li>• Hire 1 additional Platoon Chief in sequence with the additional firefighters hired in year 2 of Recommendation #25.</li> <li>• Hire 2 additional Platoon Chiefs in sequence with the additional firefighters hired in year 4 of Recommendation #25.</li> </ul>	\$862, 000	Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)	As IFRS increases its number of full-time firefighters, they will need additional supervision and administrative support for the Deputy Chief in charge of Operations.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
27	The IFRS establish a retention committee comprising personnel from every division, including both career and POC staff.	Dependent upon the number of times they meet and the number of hours it takes.	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	The IFRS lacks a formal retention program for its POC firefighter component. Having a committee that consists of firefighters, they can, in turn, develop and deliver the program once it is completed. This program will be a key component during the recruitment of POC firefighters.
28	The IFRS consider the opportunity to reorganize the rank structure among the paid-on-call members of the Stations, which includes Station Captains and Lieutenants.	Annual stipend to be determined.	Immediate (0 to 1 year)	<p>Reorganizing the rank structure of a volunteer fire department can be beneficial for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved Efficiency</li> <li>• Enhanced Accountability</li> <li>• Faster Decision-Making:</li> <li>• Better Span of Control</li> <li>• Career Development</li> </ul>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
29	The Town of Innisfil and IFRS should collaborate to assess the issue of ageism in the fire service and determine the risks it presents to the overall operation of the service.	Staff time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Fire departments should implement a mandatory retirement age to safeguard the safety and effectiveness of firefighters. The physical and mental challenges of firefighting can intensify with age, and older firefighters might not be able to carry out their duties efficiently. Mandatory retirement helps uphold a high standard of competence and ensures that community safety remains a priority.
<b>Section 4 - Facilities, Vehicles and Equipment, and Water Supply</b>				
30	The IFRS should explore opportunities to implement the modifications noted at the stations.	\$1M - \$2M	Short to Long - Term (1 to 10 years)	Innisfil Fire & Rescue Services (IFRS) should upgrade its fire stations to enhance safety and response efficiency. These upgrades are necessary to meet the increasing demand for fire services, especially in Innisfil Heights, where a new fire station is needed. These facilities will be essential for emergency response, training staff, and managing operations effectively in the growing community. The upgrades also support the town's broader goal to ensure fire services can meet community needs and expand alongside the town's population and infrastructure.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
31	The Town of Innisfil assesses current space availability for the department's future growth, which may include analyzing the housing arrangements with the County of Simcoe's Paramedic Services.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Space is quickly becoming a short fall in many of the stations, and in particular Stations 1 and 3, which also house paramedic units.
32	The responsibility for maintaining IFRS's fire stations be transferred to the Facilities Department of the Town of Innisfil, and that a preventative maintenance program be developed and initiated.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	The role of the facilities department is to optimize the use of and manage workplaces to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization. Enhance operational effectiveness while ensuring compliance with key legislation and ensuring the workplace adapts to the changing needs of the organization. The Facilities Department has the expertise and understanding of what is required to maintain key building assets of the Town.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
33	The Town of Innisfil builds Station 6 and considers consolidating all the Divisions of IFRS, which includes Administration, Fire Prevention, Operations and Training, at this location.	\$35 to \$40 M	Short to Mid-Term (0 to 6 years)	It has been identified that the Innisfil Heights area is experiencing growth in the commercial and industrial sectors, and IFRS is challenged with responding to and providing sufficient staffing to serve that area properly. A new station with a full-time crew will significantly help reduce this risk. Consolidating all IFRS divisions under one roof will enhance operational efficiency and save money in the long run.
34	IFRS to procure an aerial device for Station 4 – Cookstown to operate as its primary pumper.	Approximately \$3 M	Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)	The nearest aerial is at Station 3 – Lefroy, and it usually does not respond until a full-time firefighter crew is called back and arrives at the station to respond. Having an aerial on the west side of the Town will improve efficiency in that area and often save significant time by having one readily available if an incident calls for it.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
35	IFRS to ensure the availability of at least one spare pumper and a spare aerial that is fully equipped.	\$200,000 in total for ancillary equipment for both units.	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Having spare apparatus ensures that when one is out of service, another is available to replace it temporarily.
36	That two EVT's be hired to take responsibility for budgeting and maintaining IFRS's fleet of vehicles, with a competitive salary comparable to the private sector.	Staff time, in addition to the hiring of two EVT's, as part of the Fleet's budget for staffing	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	The advantages of a fleet services department of a Town looking after the fire apparatus repairs include improved operational efficiency, enhanced safety, and reduced lifecycle costs. These departments are equipped to handle the complex maintenance and repair tasks of fire apparatus, ensuring that the vehicles are always ready for emergencies.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
37	An inventory of ancillary equipment for each apparatus must be compiled, including hoses onboard and in the stations. Additionally, every apparatus, including spare units, should be fully equipped with ancillary equipment and hoses that meet NFPA and ULC standards.	Staff time to coordinate the inventories in addition to an initial cost of \$200,000 to outfit the aerial and a spare pumper, and \$100,000 annually in the future.	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	Currently, some apparatuses do not comply with NFPA and ULC Standards for equipping apparatus, and this could harm the Town's FUS Grading.
38	The IFRS should explore additional ways to improve water supply at structure fires, including securing funding to acquire more large-capacity tankers. These tankers should be strategically stationed to support areas with poor water access or those far from water sources. This approach will also increase the likelihood of achieving a higher score in the Superior Water Shuttle Supply Accreditation testing by enabling higher flows.	Staff time in addition to \$650,000 to \$800,000 per apparatus.	Short to Long - Term (1 to 10 years)	There are areas of the Town in which the water supply is not optimal, in addition to many areas not having any water service at all, requiring fire department tankers to haul water to the scene. Having additional tankers will ensure a constant water supply and could improve the IFRS Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation rating.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
<b>Section 5 – Mutual Aid, Automatic Aid, and Fire Protection Agreements</b>				
39	IFSR should continue to monitor call volumes and service demands arising from the New Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury agreements, and if significant growth or operational pressures emerge, initiate discussions to review or renegotiate the terms to ensure the agreement remains sustainable and does not compromise core service delivery in Innisfil.	<b>Staff Time</b>	<b>Immediate to Long-Term (0 to 10 years)</b>	Growth-driven shifts in call volumes and unit-hour utilization across the New Tecumseth and BWG areas may outpace current standby and per-call terms, eroding cost recovery and straining Innisfil’s capacity. Proactive monitoring, and renegotiation when warranted, protects fiscal sustainability and preserves Innisfil’s core service-level and response-time performance.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
40	IFRS should closely track utilization and costs associated with the Barrie MOU and assess future demand for specialized rescue services. If growth leads to frequent activations or increased financial burden, Innisfil should evaluate options for expanded in-house capacity or renegotiated regional agreements to ensure long-term sustainability.	Staff Time	Immediate to Long-Term (0 to 10 years)	Monitor activations and costs under the BFES specialized rescue MOU; if utilization or expense rises, assess in-house or regional alternatives, or renegotiate, to protect readiness and fiscal sustainability.
41	Update and modernize the Simcoe County Emergency Response Agreement to align with MPDS protocols, incorporate pandemic-related lessons, and address responder safety and sustainability in light of Innisfil's rapid growth.	Staff Time	Short-Term (1 to 3 years)	The agreement predates MPDS, pandemic-era infection control, and today's call profile; updating it will align activation criteria, medical scope, and interagency workflows with current best practice and lessons learned.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
<b>Section 6 - Finance</b>				
42	That the Fire Chief, in collaboration with the Finance Division, evaluate the Section 6.6.2 opportunities, and selectively implement those that best address structural under-budgeting in the 2027 – 2028 operating budget.	<b>To be Determined</b>	<b>Short-Term (1 to 3 years)</b>	2022–2024 variances show structural under-budgeting. Resetting the 2027–2028 budget to true cost of service, right-sizing labour, capping internal charges, centralizing facilities, capitalizing eligible work, validating key rates, and tightening revenue capture, will stabilize results and protect service levels.
43	That Council direct staff to align the AMP’s fire assets with the E&R By-law by setting measurable service-level targets, publishing a 10-year lifecycle and financial plan, separating growth-eligible costs for Development Charges from renewal costs, and mirroring these priorities in the FMP to deliver one coherent, defensible capital program for the next decade.	<b>Staff Time</b>	<b>Short-Term (1 to 3 years)</b>	Aligning AMP fire assets with the E&R By-law and publishing measurable service-level targets within a 10-year lifecycle/financial plan makes the program transparent, O. Reg. 588/17–compliant and explicitly tied to levels of service. Separating DC-eligible growth from renewal funding and mirroring priorities in the FMP improves cost recovery, reduces fiscal risk, and gives Council one coherent, defensible capital plan for the next decade.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
44	<p>That Innisfil implements the following measures related to the Capital Budget and Long-Range Capital Forecast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a reserve-balance approach that funds the fire capital plan at the long-run average each year (indexed to inflation) with planned drawdowns in peak years.</li> <li>• Integrate the long-range capital forecast with the AMP by linking every asset to an ID, condition, remaining service life, risk/criticality, defined replacement trigger, escalated cost, and funding source.</li> <li>• Replace the \$15,000 Fire Equipment Renewal placeholder with named, scheduled, sub-programs, as determined by the Fire Chief, that specify quantities, unit cost, and funding source. (i.e., TICs, water rescue equipment, ventilation fans, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cost to be determined based on the Fire Chief's assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate (0 to 1 year)</b></p>	<p>Reserve-smoothing and AMP-integrated asset planning prevent budget spikes and create a transparent, defensible 10-year program tied to condition, risk, triggers, and funding. Replacing the \$15k placeholder with named sub-programs and funding a 2026 hose catch-up to NFPA 1901, followed by an NFPA 1962-driven annual replacement cycle, addresses immediate operational risk and sustains readiness.</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the 2026 capital budget to fund a one-time hose, nozzles, and appliances catch-up program to achieve NFPA 1901 minimum inventories per apparatus and station.</li> <li>After the catch-up, implement an annual hose/nozzle/appliance replacement program driven by inspections and service test results in accordance with NFPA 1962.</li> </ul>			
45	That the Fire Chief assess the IFRS fee structure, particularly flat-rate inspections and licensing charges for alignment with peer municipalities to ensure a fair, transparent, and cost-recoverable model.	Staff Time	Immediate (0 to 1 year)	Benchmarking and recalibrating IFRS's flat-rate inspection/licensing fees against peers will correct outlier charges, improve equity through pay-for-use, and keep cost recovery defensible; where effort varies, shifting to time-based billing can prevent over/under-charging.

Rec #	Recommendation	Estimated Costs	Suggested Timeline for Implementation	Rationale
46	That IFRS benchmark peer Regional Training Centres and draft amendments to By-law 057-24, Schedule "D", establishing a dedicated RTC fee schedule to enable cost recovery concurrent with the burn tower and classroom expansion.	Staff Time	Mid-Term (4 to 6 years)	A dedicated RTC fee schedule for the burn tower/classroom enables full cost recovery (including overhead) with transparent, market-aligned rates, preventing tax-base subsidy while supporting sustainable training delivery and utilization.
<b>Section 7 – Review of Previous Master Fire Plans and FUS</b>				
There are no recommendations associated with Section 7.				



Emergency  
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Group<sup>+</sup>

# Appendices

Appendix 'A' – FUS Technical Bulletin

# APPENDIX 'A' – FUS TECHNICAL BULLETIN



**Fire Underwriters Survey™**

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

**FIRE UNDERWRITERS SURVEY™**

*A Service to Insurers and Municipalities*

### INSURANCE GRADING RECOGNITION OF USED OR REBUILT FIRE APPARATUS

The performance ability and overall acceptability of older apparatus has been debated between municipal administrations, the public fire service and many others for years. Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) has reviewed experiences across Canada and in other countries and has developed a standard for acceptance of apparatus as the apparatus becomes less reliable with age and use.

The public fire service is unique compared to other emergency services in that fire apparatus vehicles are not continuously in use. However, when in use, the apparatus is subject to considerable mechanical stress due to the nature of its function. This stress does not normally manifest itself on the exterior of the equipment. It is effectively masked in most departments by a higher standard of aesthetic care and maintenance. Lack of replacement parts further complicates long term use of apparatus. Truck and pump manufacturers maintain a parts inventory for each model year for a finite time. After that period, obtaining necessary parts may be difficult. This parts shortage is particularly acute with fire apparatus due to the narrow market for these devices.

Fire Underwriters Survey lengthy experience in evaluating fire apparatus indicates that apparatus should be designed to an acceptable standard. The standard that is accepted throughout Canada by Fire Underwriters Survey is the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada CAN/ULC-S515-13 titled, "Standard FOR Automobile Fire Fighting Apparatus," which has been adopted as a National Standard of Canada. Alternatively, NFPA 1901, the Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus is also accepted by Fire Underwriters Survey with respect to apparatus design. Fire apparatus should be built by recognized manufacturers and tested by a suitably accredited third party.

Fire apparatus should respond to first alarms for the first fifteen years of service. During this period, it has reasonably been shown that apparatus effectively responds and performs as designed without failure at least 95% of the time. For the next five years, it should be held in reserve status for use at major multi-alarm fires, or used as a replacement for temporarily out-of-service first line apparatus. Fire apparatus should be retired from service at twenty years of age. Present practice indicates the recommended service periods and protocols are usually followed by the first purchaser. However, at the end of that period, the apparatus is either traded in on new apparatus, or sold to another fire department. At this juncture, the unit may have one or more faults which preclude effective use for emergency service. These deficiencies include:

- a. Inadequate braking system,
- b. Slow pick-up and acceleration,
- c. Structurally weakened chassis due to constant load bearing and/or overloading,
- d. Pump wear,
- e. Etc.



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FUS has modified its application of the age requirement for used or rebuilt apparatus. Due to municipal budget constraints within small communities apparatus may continue to be recognized for fire insurance grading past twenty years of age, provided the apparatus successfully passes the recommended annual tests and has been deemed to be in excellent mechanical condition. The specified service tests are outlined below under the heading "Recommended Service Tests for Used or Modified Fire Apparatus". Testing and apparatus maintenance should only be completed by a technician who is certified to an appropriate level in accordance with NFPA 1071, *Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician Professional Qualifications*.

Insurance grading recognition may be extended for a limited period of time if documentation verifying that the apparatus has successfully passed the specified tests and other evidence of reliability are submitted and approved by FUS. However, if fire apparatus does not pass required tests or for any reason is deemed to be inadequately reliable for use in emergencies, the apparatus may be required to be replaced or refurbished to retain published fire insurance grades. If reliable apparatus is not in place, fire insurance grading recognition may be revoked which may adversely affect the fire insurance grades of the community. This can also affect the rates of insurance for property owners throughout the community.

**Table 1 Service Schedule for Fire Apparatus For Fire Insurance Grading Purposes**

Apparatus Age	Major Cities <sup>3</sup>	Medium Sized Cities <sup>4</sup>	Small Communities <sup>5,6</sup> and Rural Areas
0 – 15 Years	First Line Duty	First Line Duty	First Line Duty
16 – 20 Years	Reserve	2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Duty	First Line Duty
20 – 25 Years <sup>1</sup>	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading or Reserve <sup>2</sup>	No Credit in Grading or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Duty <sup>2</sup>
26 – 29 Years <sup>1</sup>	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading Or Reserve <sup>2</sup>	No Credit in Grading or Reserve <sup>2</sup>
30 Years +	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading	No Credit in Grading

<sup>1</sup> All listed fire apparatus 20 years of age and older are required to be service tested by recognized testing agency on an annual basis to be eligible for grading recognition. (NFPA 1071)

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions to age status may be considered in a small to medium sized communities and rural areas conditionally, when apparatus condition is acceptable and apparatus successfully passes required testing.

<sup>3</sup> Major Cities are defined as communities that have:

- a total population of 100,000 or greater within the fire protection jurisdiction

<sup>4</sup> Medium Communities are defined as communities that have:

- a total population of 30,000 – 99,9999 within the fire protection jurisdiction

<sup>5</sup> Small Communities are defined as incorporated or unincorporated communities that have:

- a total population of 1,000 – 29,999 within the fire protection jurisdiction

<sup>6</sup> Rural Areas are defined as incorporated or unincorporated communities that have:

- a total population of less than 1,000 within the fire protection jurisdiction





**Table 2 Frequency of Listed Fire Apparatus Acceptance and Service Tests**

	Frequency of Test					
	@ Time of Purchase New or Used	Annual Basis	@ 15 Years	@ 20 Years <i>See Note 4</i>	20 to 25 Years (annually)	After Extensive Repairs <i>See Note 5</i>
<b>Recommended For Fire Insurance Purposes</b>	Acceptance Test if new; Service Test if used & < 20 Years	Service Test	Acceptance Test	Acceptance Test	Acceptance Test	Acceptance or Service Test depending on extent of repair
<b>Required For Fire Insurance Purposes</b>	Acceptance Test if new; Service Test if used & < 20 Years	No Test Required	No Test Required	Acceptance Test	Acceptance Test	Acceptance or Service Test depending on extent of repair
<b>Factor in FUS Grading</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Required By Listing Agency</b>	Acceptance Test	No	No	No	N/A	Acceptance Test
<b>Required By NFPA <i>See Note 6</i></b>	Acceptance Test	Annual Service Test	Annual Service Test	Annual Service Test	Annual Service Test	Service Test

*Note 1: See: 'Service Tests for Used or Rebuilt Fire Apparatus' for description of applicable tests*  
*Note 2: Acceptance Tests consist of 60 minute capacity and 30 minute pressure tests*  
*Note 3: Service Tests consist of 20 minute capacity test and 10 minute pressure test in addition to other listed tests*  
**Note 4: Apparatus exceeding 20 years of age may not be considered to be eligible for insurance grading purposes regardless of testing. Application must be made in writing to Fire Underwriters Survey for an extension of the grade-able life of the apparatus.**  
*Note 5: Testing after extensive repairs should occur regardless of apparatus age within reason.*  
*Note 6: Acceptance Tests: See NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus*  
*Service Tests: See NFPA 1911, Standard for Service Tests of Fire Pump Systems on Fire Apparatus, Article 5.1*





## SERVICE TESTS FOR USED OR MODIFIED FIRE APPARATUS

The intent of this document is to ensure that all used or modified fire apparatus, equipped with a pump or used for tanker service, essentially meet the requirements of Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) "Standard for Automobile Fire Fighting Apparatus" S515-13 or subsequent (current) editions of the Standard. Full adherence with the following specified tests is recommended when purchasing used apparatus.

### 1.) *Weight Tests*

#### 1.1) **Load Balance Test:**

When fully laden (including a 460kg personnel weight, full fuel and water tanks, specified load of hose and miscellaneous equipment), the vehicle shall have a load balance of 22% to 50% of total vehicle mass on the front axle and 50% to 78% of this mass on the rear axle.

Distribution of mass of 33% and 67% respectively on the front and rear axles is preferable for a vehicle having dual rear tires or tandem rear axles.

For a vehicle having tandem rear axles and dual tires on each axle, a loading of between 18% and 25% on the front axle with the balance of mass on the rear axles is permissible.

### 2.) *Road Tests*

#### 2.1) **Acceleration Tests:**

2.1.1) From a standing start, the apparatus shall attain a true speed of 55 km/h within 25 seconds for Pumpers carrying up to 3,150 litres of water.

For apparatus carrying in excess of 3,150 litres or apparatus equipped with aerial ladders or elevating platforms, a true speed of 55 km/h in 30 seconds should be attained.

2.1.2) The vehicle should attain a top speed of at least 80 km/h.

#### 2.2) **Braking Test:**

The service brakes shall be capable of bringing the fully laden apparatus to a complete stop from an initial speed of 30 km/h in a distance not exceeding 9 metres by actual measurement. The test should be conducted on a dry, hard surfaced road that is free of loose material, oil and grease.



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### 3.) Pump Performance Tests

#### 3.1) Hydrostatic Test

Recent evidence of hydrostatic testing of the pump for 10 minutes at a minimum pressure of 3,400 kPa. APPLICABLE TO NEW OR REBUILT PUMPS ONLY (see 3.3).

#### 3.2) Priming and Suction Capability Tests

##### 3.2.1) Vacuum Test:

The pump priming device, with a capped suction at least 6 metres long, shall develop -75 kPa (22 inches of mercury) at altitudes up to 300 metres and hold the vacuum with a drop of not in excess of 34 kPa (10 inches of mercury) in 10 minutes.

For every 300 metres of elevation, the required vacuum shall be reduced 3.4 kPa (1 inch mercury).

The primer shall not be used after the 10-minute test period has been started. The test shall be made with discharge outlets uncapped.

##### 3.2.2) Suction Capability Test:

The pump (in parallel or series) when dry, shall be capable of taking suction and discharging water with a lift of not more than 3 metres through 6 of suction hose of appropriate size, in not more than 30 seconds and not over 45 seconds for 6000 L/min or larger capacity pumps. Where front or rear suction is provided on midship pumps, an additional 10 seconds priming time will be allowed. The test shall be conducted with all discharge caps removed.

#### 3.3) Pump Performance

##### 3.3.1) Capacity Test:

Consists of drafting water (preferably with a 3m lift) and pumping the rated capacity at 1000 kPa (150 psi) net pump pressure for a continuous period of at least 1 hour.

##### 3.3.2) Pressure Test:

Under the same conditions as in 3.3.1 above pumping 50% of the rated capacity at 1700 kPa net pump pressure for at least ½ hour





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For additional information on the above noted tests and test procedures, the following documents provide useful data:

- Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC) publication titled S515 Standard for Automobile Fire Fighting Apparatus, latest edition.
- Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) publication titled Fire Stream Tables and Testing Data latest edition.
- International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) publication titled Fire Department Pumping Apparatus, latest edition.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901 Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, latest edition.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus, latest edition.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1912 Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing, latest edition.

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For further information regarding the acceptability of emergency apparatus for fire insurance grading purposes, please contact Fire Underwriters Survey administrator at: [fireunderwriters-admin@verisk.com](mailto:fireunderwriters-admin@verisk.com)



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## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

### FIRE UNDERWRITERS SURVEY™

*A Service to Insurers and Municipalities*

#### APPARATUS ACCEPTANCE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FIRE INSURANCE GRADING AND PUBLIC FIRE PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION

Fire Underwriters Survey evaluates the capacity of the fire department to provide required fire flows through the apparatus within the fire department fleet.

- If apparatus is ULC listed<sup>1</sup> and of an appropriate age then it can receive full credit
- If apparatus is designed to meet all of the requirements of NFPA 1901, and has been tested and evaluated for its compliance with NFPA 1901, by an accredited agency<sup>2</sup>, then it can also receive full credit.
- If the apparatus does not meet one of the two above criteria, then some credit between 0-100% would be applied to the apparatus within the calculation of fire insurance grades.
  - This credit is based on an analysis of the reliability of the apparatus with respect to its capacity of continuously provide emergency response and all related intended purposes (as specified in ULC S515 and/or NFPA 1901):
    - Apparatus design standard and specifications;
    - Age of apparatus;
    - Results of apparatus acceptance and service testing (including, but not limited to, weight, road and pump performance tests);
    - Accident history;
    - Out of service history;
    - Frequency of testing and indications of apparatus reliability; and
    - Frequency of maintenance and indications of apparatus reliability.

<sup>1</sup> Listed by ULC means that the apparatus has been tested and certified through "listing" and a ULC plate (indicating listing number) has been applied to the apparatus. The testing and certifying organization must be a Standards Council of Canada accredited agency (ULC is an accredited agency). Listing of the apparatus implies the apparatus meets all of the requirements of the standard ULC S-515.

<sup>2</sup> NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, lists requirements for third party certification under section 4.7:

4.7 Third-Party Certification of Test Results. Where this standard requires the results of tests to be certified by an independent third-party certification organization, that organization shall meet the requirements of this section.

4.7.1 All certification shall be performed by a certification organization that is accredited for inspection and testing systems on fire apparatus in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020, General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection, or ISO/IEC 17065, Conformity Assessment: Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

4.7.2 The certification organization shall not be owned or controlled by manufacturers or vendors of the product that is being tested.

4.7.3 The certification organization shall be primarily engaged in certification work and shall not have a monetary interest in the product's ultimate profitability.

4.7.4\* The independent third-party organization shall witness all required tests by an in-person representative(s) at the test site or by use of verifiable automated data collection and image recording equipment. The third-party organization shall refuse to certify any test results for a system if all components of that system requiring testing do not pass the testing required by this standard.

4.7.5 There shall be no conditional, temporary, or partial certification of test results.

4.7.6\* Forms or data sheets shall be provided and used during the testing.

4.7.7 Programs shall be in place for training, proficiency testing, and performance verification of any staff involved with certification.

4.7.8 The certification organization's operating procedures shall provide a mechanism for the manufacturer to appeal decisions. The procedures shall include provisions for the presentation of information from representatives of both sides of a controversy to a designated appeals panel.