



THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KINCARDINE

FYI REPORT

Subject: F.P.P.A. - Mandatory Firefighter Certification

FYI Report Number: Emergency Services-2023-04

Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Purpose of Report:

To inform Council of recent changes to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act and how it impacts fire services within the Municipality of Kincardine.

Report:

On January 28th, 2022, the Solicitor General's Office (SOLGEN) released a draft regulation under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) that proposed to make 3rd party skills certification mandatory for all firefighters in Ontario. On April 14th, 2022, Ontario Regulation 343/22 (O.Reg 343/22) was filed and came into effect July 1st, 2022.

O.Reg 343/22 makes National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards the performance requirement for tasks assigned to Ontario Firefighters. Task specific performance testing is conducted by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Academic Standards & Evaluations branch. Testing is conducted in both written exam and observed performance formats. Successful participants are then issued accreditation by the International Fire Safety Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). The tasks performed by firefighters are determined by the level of service provided by their department. The levels of service provided should be clearly set out in the municipality's Fire Department Establishing & Regulating (E&R) by-law.

O.Reg 343/22 also sets out the required timelines for certification completion. Most disciplines require certification completion by July 1, 2026, with a few specialized rescue disciplines having until July 1, 2028. After those dates uncertified individuals will not be able to work as a firefighter, or the department will no longer be able to offer those services. All new hires from July 1, 2022, must be certified to the appropriate NFPA standards within 36 months of hire.

The regulation provides for the opportunity for the Fire Marshal to issue a letter of compliance to an experienced firefighter in certain instances, but they do not apply to Kincardine's department as they are firefighters that are "full-service firefighters" as defined by the regulation, and the services the Municipality have historically provided.

This regulation mandates certification for the following fire department services that we currently provide:

- Interior fire attack and rescue;
- Auto extrication;
- Hazmat awareness;
- Team leads interior attack, rescue, auto extrication, hazmat operations (Captains and Incident Commanders);
- Apparatus driver/pump operator (new hires only);
- Fire Prevention / Inspections;
- Fire Prevention / Inspections re: flammable/combustible liquids;
- Fire Investigations;
- Fire and Life Safety Educator;
- Fire Training Officer;
- Fire Training Officer re: Live fire evolutions;
- Incident Safety Officer;
- Hazmat Response operations mission specific (product control only);
- Surface water rescue;
- Swift water rescue; and
- Ice water rescue.

Required course hours for these specific training programs vary by the delivery method. Some are available by a combination of on-line and in class (blended) or in class only. Example timelines are as follows:

NFPA 1001 Firefighter I – On-line pre-class + 14 days in-class

NFPA 1001 Firefighter II – On-line pre-class + 7 days in-class

NFPA 1002 Pump Ops - On-line pre-class + 5 days in-class

NFPA 1021 Fire Officer I - Blended format on-line self-directed learning + 3 days in class over 8 weeks

NFPA 1021 Fire Officer III – Blended format 40hrs on-line + 5 days in-class

NFPA 1072 Hazmat Operations – 5 days in-class

NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer – On-line self-learning + 3 days in-class

NFPA 1041 Instructor I – Blended format on-line self-directed + 3 days in-class

Currently the Municipality can send firefighters to one of several Regional Training Centre's (RTC) to complete a program if it is offered by the RTC. Offerings are limited to specific course schedules and the availability of qualified instructors. The cost of one learner space in an RTC administered course varies from \$350 to \$1200 plus accommodations, wage, meals, & mileage.

We can also provide some of these programs in-house through a learning contract from the Ontario Fire College. The Municipality must meet specific criteria to do this. The

facilitators are vetted by the college, and are bound by the college's schedule and course timelines.

The third option is called the Assessment Checklist Method. This is where the Municipality uses a recognized 3rd party course curriculum, or develops one of our own, and upon completion firefighters can “challenge” the testing requirements. Although time-consuming for administration, it has several advantages. First, the firefighters enjoy greater flexibility in scheduling, and are not competing for limited student spaces at RTC’s, and we have less need to send our people outside of the municipality to attend training opportunities.

For 2023, KFES purchased a fire specific on-line learning platform that allows firefighters to complete the theory portion of their required learning with a degree of scheduling flexibility. It also provides records of participation and completion that contribute to each student’s training records. This on-line platform has been used with 2 groups of learners to date. The goal is to be as self-sufficient as possible when it comes to achieving certification of our firefighters.

In July of this year, firefighters completed the Academic Standards & Evaluation testing process for 3 different disciplines.

The introduction of Ontario Regulation 343/22 has many impacts on Kincardine Fire & Emergency Services. Staff identifies several challenges that require continued additional effort by all members to achieve compliance.

- Certification of existing members in various skills within the set timelines, or replacement of those members
- Stresses to succession planning as pre-requisites control course advancement
- Existing training program re-configuration (underway)
- Added time commitments from current firefighters/prospective firefighters.
- Negative impacts to firefighter recruitment and firefighter retention
- Budgetary impacts – this will require additional training budget funding moving forward.

Staff will continue to update Council of any potential additional changes as they arise. The cost of these additional requirements will be highlighted in the 2024 budget deliberations.

Attachments: O.Reg 343/22

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