



Come Together



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: THE ROLE OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN HEALTH SYSTEMS

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Executive Director, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs



Land Acknowledgement

Pjila'si (welcome)!

For more than 13,000 years the Mi'kmaq have called this beautiful land home, enriching Nova Scotia with legends, art, music, spirituality, history, and language.



Kejimkujik Mi'kmaq Drummer (courtesy Tourism Nova Scotia)

[HOME](#) / [LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT](#)

Halifax (Kjipuktuk) is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726.

The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources but in fact, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

As a part of this friendship, when planning your event in Halifax, Discover Halifax can help connect your group with the people of the Mi'kmaq, or help find authentic, enriching ways, to add their culture to your event.





The Role of Fire Departments in Health Systems



Presentation Overview

Introductions

Emergency Medical Response

What's the Issue?

Why is it happening?

What are the implications?

What can be done about it?

Greetings from Board and National Advisory Council





What city has the oldest fire department in Canada?

TRIVIA
time

**Halifax, Union Fire Department,
1754!**

TRIVIA
time

Why does Engagement of the Fire Service in Emergency Medical Matter Now?



about the state of our sector



Fire Chief Ken McMullen
CAFC President, Red Deer AB
Chef Ken McMullen
Président de l'ACCP, Red Deer AB

Results of the Great Canadian Fire Census 2023

Résultats du Grand recensement des services d'incendie

3rd Annual Great Canadian Fire Census 2023
3e année du Grand recensement canadien des services d'incendie

Thank you to all who volunteered data
Merci à tous ceux qui ont fourni des données

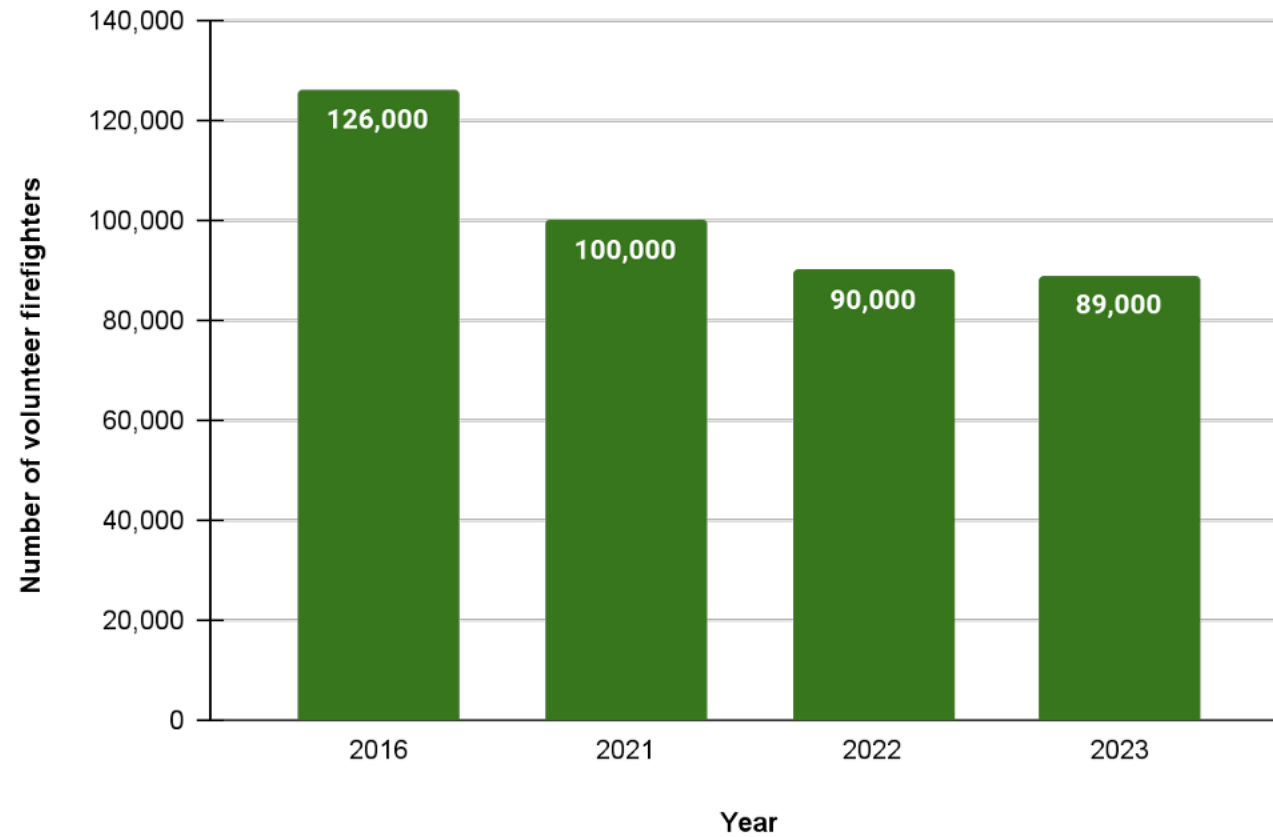
Methods at www.cafc.ca
Méthode à www.cafc.ca



à dire sur l'état de notre secteur et

Why does Engagement of the Fire Service in Emergency Medical Matter Now?

Graph 1: Number of volunteer firefighters through the years



CIATION OF FIRE C

just before wildfire season took effect.

A word about the summer's wildfires Un mot sur les incendies de forêt de l'été



Fire Chief Keven Lefebvre

Chair of CAFC Data Committee, Leduc County, AB

Chef Keven Lefebvre

Président du Comité des données de l'ACCP, Leduc County, AB

Sample = 534 fire departments serving 24M Canadians
across all Provinces and Territories

Échantillon = 534 services d'incendie desservant
24M de Canadiens dans toutes les P/T

soit juste avant le début de la saison

will worsen.



Fire Chief Keven Lefebvre

Chair of CAFC Data Committee, Leduc County, AB

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A word about the summer's wildfires Un mot sur les incendies de forêt de l'été

Trends will worsen, recommendations
will stay the same

Les tendances vont s'aggraver,
les recommandations resteront les mêmes



des tendances déjà présentes.

Most fire departments



Fire Chief Jeannine Caldbeck
Thetis Island BC
Chef Jeannine Caldbeck
Thetis Island BC

Fire Departments are not just about the flames.

Les services d'incendie ne se limitent pas à éteindre les flammes.

2 million calls per year

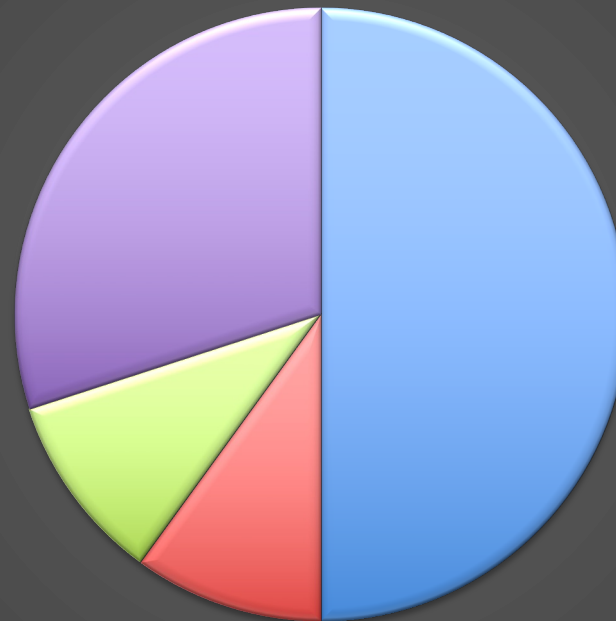
Fire departments
first on scene
all hazard emergency managers

Services d'incendie
premiers sur la scène
gestionnaires d'urgence
tous risques

La plupart des services d'incendie

Why does Engagement of the Fire Service in Emergency Medical Matter Now?

2 Million Fire Department Calls Per Year



■ Emergency Medical ■ Fire Suppression ■ Unexpected Climate ■ Other All Hazard

Why does Engagement of the Fire Service in Emergency Medical Matter Now?

| Services | Total for Volunteer Departments N=2705 | | Total for Composite Departments N=438 | | Total for career Departments N=94 | | Total Metro Departments N=23 | | Total for Canada N=3248 | |
|---|---|---------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Assist EMS (No relocation) | 91 (3%) | 1818 (67%) | 309 (7 1%) (68%) | 297 (68%) | 30 (31%) | 60 (64%) | 17 (74%) | 15 (65%) | 417 (13%) | 2190 (67%) |
| Emergency Medical Fire First Responder | 1438 (53%) | 1494 (55%) | 286 (65%) | 285 (65%) | 59 (61%) | 60 (64%) | 18 (78%) | 17 (74%) | 1800 (55%) | 1663 (51%) |
| Patient transport using cross-trained firefighter-paramedic | 36 (1%) | 174 (1%) | 0 (0%) | 42 (10%) | 4 (4%) | 21 (22%) | 1 (4%) | 4 (17%) | 41 (1%) | 241 (7%) |

Why does Engagement of the Fire Service in Emergency Medical Matter Now?

Table 20: Call volumes and impacts (May 1, 2022-April 30, 2023, or last 12-month reporting cycle)

| Type of call | Total for Volunteer Departments N=2705 | | Total for Composite Departments N=438 | | Total for career Departments N=94 | | Total Metro Departments N=23 | | Total for Canada N=3248 | |
|--|---|------------|--|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|------------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Number of incidents or calls for service to which departments responded | 429,766 | 324,198 | 473,154 | 487,287 | 332,897 | 277,564 | 785,401 | 870,548 | 2.02M | 1.96M |
| Percentage of calls related extreme weather events not usual to their region | 7% | 9% | 9% | 7% | 5% | 4% | 13% | 13% | 9% | 10% |
| Percentage of calls that are medical-related. | 30% | 32% | 39% | 43% | 52% | 48% | 47% | 58% | 44% | 48% |
| Percentage that are related to active suppression calls (excluding false alarms) | 14% | 20% | 12% | 8% | 7% | 10% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 10% |
| Number of departments that experienced over-capacity | . | 241 (9%) | . | 102 (23%) | . | 32 (34%) | . | 10 (43%) | . | 385 (12%) |
| Number of departments not compensated for medical calls | . | 1909 (71%) | . | 321 (73%) | . | 60 (64%) | . | 18 (78%) | . | 2307 (71%) |

Close to 30% of volunteer firefighters



Fire Chief Vince MacKenzie
Grand Falls Windsor, Nfld
Chef Vince MacKenzie
Grand Falls Windsor, Nfld

Près de 30 % des pompiers volontaires

Number of Firefighters Nombre de pompiers

Firefighters = 126 000 = pompiers

Career = 30% = professionnels

Volunteer = 70% = volontaires



Women = 11% = femmes

Over 50 = 30% = plus de 50 ans

Vacancies = 15 000 = Postes vacants

experienced volunteer firefighters



Fire Chief Greg Jones
Amherst, Nova Scotia
Chef Greg Jones
Amherst, Nova Scotia

pompiers volontaires expérimentés,

When experienced firefighters leave
Lorsque des pompiers expérimentés partent



This year we lost 9000 experienced
volunteer firefighters

Cette année: - 9000 pompiers
volontaires expérimentés

and to recruit.



Fire Chief Greg Jones
Amherst, Nova Scotia
Chef Greg Jones
Amherst, Nova Scotia

et de recruter.

When experienced firefighters leave
Lorsque des pompiers expérimentés partent



Each one had 10-12 years of experience which
equals 102, 000 years of fire knowledge
X 10-12 années d'expériences = - 102,000
années de connaissances

15% of this is used



Fire Chief Mark Wyatt

Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

Chef Mark Wyatt

Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

When pancake breakfasts are not enough Quand les petits-déjeuners aux crêpes ne suffisent plus

\$

Many volunteer departments use a small amount of total expenditures

\$

De nombreux départements bénévoles n'utilisent qu'une petite partie des dépenses totales

Very old equipment = needs to be replaced
Équipement très ancien = doit être remplacé

Seulement 15 % de ce montant est

former joint emergency



Fire Chief Mark Wyatt

Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

Chef Mark Wyatt

Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

When pancake breakfasts are not enough Quand les petits-déjeuners aux crêpes ne suffisent plus

- %** 83% of departments = 15% of expenditures
83% des départements = 15% des dépenses
- %** 54% deferred needed equipment for 2+ years
54 % ont reporté l'équipement nécessaire pendant plus de 2 ans
- %** 29% of departments SCBA/PPE > 15 years old
29% ARI/EPI des départements > 15 ans
- %** No washing machine or extractor to clean chemicals
Pas de machine à laver ni d'extracteur pour nettoyer les produits chimiques
- %** Bring back the JEPP
Rapporter le PCPC

programme conjoint de protection civile,

what we saw in July.



Fire Chief Paul Boissonneault
Oakville, Ontario
Chef Paul Boissonneault
Oakville, Ontario

ce que nous avons vu en juillet.

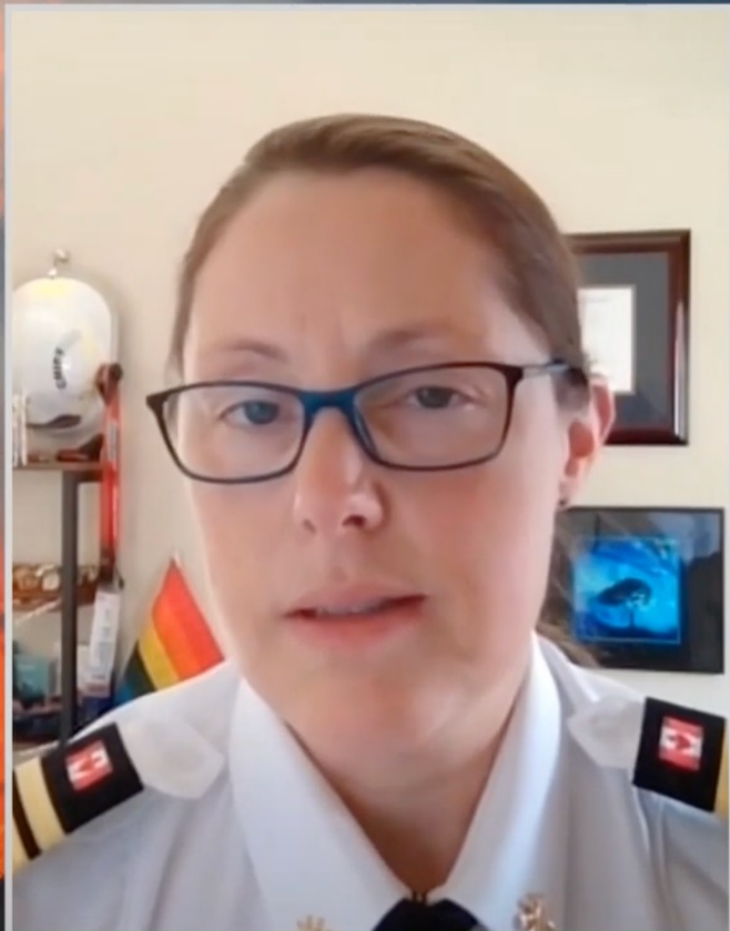
Choosing wisely...reducing community risk
Choisir judicieusement...réduire les risques
pour la communauté

No consumer fireworks
Pas de feux d'artifice pour consommateurs

Sprinklers in new homes
Gicleurs dans les nouvelles maisons

Implement Firesmart™
Mettre en œuvre Intelli-feuMC

and continue to make wise choices.



Deputy Chief Keri Martens
CAFC Vice President, Banff Alberta
Chef député Keri Martens
CAFC vice-président, Banff Alberta

In closing Pour conclure

- ✓ Install a National Fire Administration
La mise en place d'une administration nationale des incendies
- ✓ Increase tax credit for volunteer firefighters
Augmenter le crédit d'impôt pour les pompiers volontaires
- ✓ Restore the cache of equipment directly to fire departments
Rétablir directement le cache d'équipement aux services d'incendie

et en continuant à faire des choix judicieux.



**What percentage of Canada's
fire departments are volunteer?**

TRIVIA
time

**80% of Canada's Fire Departments
are volunteer**

TRIVIA
time

What's the Issue?



Case Studies

PRINCE GEORGE BC- paramedic shortage and the toxic drug crisis increase demands on the municipal fire department to assist ambulance services during medical emergencies

B.C. should cover costs when local fire services provide medical emergency care, Prince George council says

'We are just asking for our fair share,' says councillor as city tables resolution at UBCM convention

CBC News · Posted: Sep 19, 2023 5:27 PM ADT | Last Updated: September 20, 2023



ERIN, ON — When ambulances are stuck at the hospital unloading patients, the local fire fighters are attending medical assist calls.

Erin/Hillsburgh fire department sees huge jump in medical assist calls

Erin/Hillsburgh fire department saw a huge spike in medical assist calls due to the fact ambulances are tied up with offload delays



[Jesse Gault, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter](#)

Feb 24, 2023 10:09 AM



The Erin fire department station number 10. | From Google Maps

Case Studies

WAINFLEET, ON with...many of its ambulances tied up waiting to unload patients at emergency departments, Alcock said 78 medical calls accounted for the largest share of 2022 calls, equalling 34 per cent of the total.

'Incredibly proud': Busy year for Wainfleet fire department

Volunteer-based service responded to hundreds of calls, saving property taxpayers an estimated \$350,000



By Paul Forsyth Port Colborne Leader

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 | 1 min to read



NORTH BAY, ON "We're seeing an increase in medical and mental health calls. We assist through tiered response through EMS (Emergency Medical Service).



News / Local News



North Bay fire responding to more mental health and medical calls

Fire budget up 1.61 per cent or \$225,000

Jennifer Hamilton-McCharles

Published Feb 28, 2023 • Last updated Feb 28, 2023 • 1 minute read

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Case Studies

WINNIPEG, MN: The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service may be the first in Canada to dispatch calls to non-EMS groups like the DCSP, but in Minneapolis, a similar model has been in place for years



MIKAELA MACKENZIE / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS FILES

Emergency staff are sometimes forced to skip breaks to keep up with calls for help as new statistics show long ambulance wait times continue to plague Winnipeg.

A common goal of care: Changes and partnerships at the WFPS



By Iris Dyck • Global News

Posted May 23, 2024 9:42 pm · Updated May 24, 2024 6:58 pm · 7 min read



“We’re seeing an increase in medical and mental health calls. We assist through tiered response through EMS (Emergency Medical Service).”



Case Studies

Pilot project aims to cut Regina and Saskatoon ambulance wait times



By **Brody Langer** • Global News

Posted April 3, 2024 12:02 pm · 1 min read





Case Studies

QUADRA ISLAND, BC: The lack of local paramedics and ferries to get people off-island to hospital in a timely manner is a persistent worry...especially in a community where nearly 40%...is 65 or older.

Home > Local News

Paramedic shortages still plague rural areas, but some remedies may be in the works

"I was in the middle of real pain, and that was stressful," said Quadra Island resident Carol Woolsey.

Rochelle Baker, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Canada's National Observer
May 10, 2023 5:00 AM



E-K, ON: Guilboard said the local EMS agreement hasn't been looked at since it first originated back in the 90s. It needs to be revisited, he said, and the parameters of who responds to what need to be clearly defined



Emergency dispatch system needs overhaul: E-K chief

Sabrina Bedford

Published Feb 22, 2023 · 3 minute read

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Case Studies

CALGARY, AB: CFD Chief Steve Dongworth said emergencies like cardiac arrests, overdoses and respiratory distress made up more than half of the fire department's total call volume, and the number of calls are also going up

Calgary Fire Department brings back medical SUVs to help with downtown emergency calls

[View image in full screen](#)



By **Adam Toy** • Global News

Posted February 13, 2024 3:50 pm · Updated February 13, 2024 7:27 pm · 3 min read



Calgary firefighter Mike Kopp displays the contents of the medical response unit, on Feb. 13, 2024. Global News



Of Canada's 126,000 firefighters
how many are women?

TRIVIA
time

14,000

TRIVIA
time

What are the solutions?



What are some possible solutions?

- Review EMS agreements
- Modernize dispatch systems
- Remunerate appropriate calls
- Conduct a pilot to look at appropriate levels of care
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Explore joint fire paramedic models
- Scope of practice
- Triage methods
- National Fire Administration

Conclusions

- The fire service is a hidden healthcare provider
- It is not remunerated for up to a million calls
- Call volumes for non EMS calls also going up
- Personnel is going down
- Complexity and severity of calls is going up
- Need to plan for a more sustainable future
- Consider the local fire department in health system planning



The Role of Fire Departments in Health Systems



Thank you...
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