

## **License/Certification Audit of Toronto Ambulance**

*(City Council on December 14, 15 and 16, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)*

**The Community Services Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (November 22, 1999) from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services:**

### Purpose:

To inform Council that Toronto Ambulance successfully received a three-year certification to operate an ambulance service as defined under the Ambulance Act of Ontario (RSO 501/97) through full compliance with the ambulance services certification audit conducted by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

### Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council recognize the staff of Toronto Ambulance for achieving compliance in all areas of the certification audit;
- (2) City Council approve the request by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to have up to eight staff participate in similar such ambulance service audits across Ontario at full reimbursement of all associated costs;
- (3) City Council approve the request of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to authorize representatives of the Toronto Ambulance management team to assist Ministry officials in the management and maintenance of land ambulance operations of services that are unable to continue to provide service to their community. Interim management and operational responsibilities would be on a temporary basis until such time as an alternative service provider was put in place, and further that reimbursement for this service be at 100 percent of all associated costs; and
- (4) the appropriate City officials be given the authority to give effect thereto.

### Background:

Changes to the Ambulance Act of Ontario (RSO 501/97) brought into effect in 1997, required all licensed ambulance services in Ontario to be audited by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Emergency Health Services Branch. The audit or license certification process coincided with the Provincial decision to download ambulance service delivery responsibility to municipalities. This resulted in the Province taking on more of a regulatory and compliance role ensuring that all services met the standards of excellence in the management and delivery of land

ambulance services. The land ambulance audit process was to ensure that ambulance services within the Province operated within full compliance of all standards, protocols and procedures defined within the Ambulance Act, Regulations and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care operational and administrative directives.

The certification or audit process required land ambulance services to meet or exceed benchmark criteria established by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. A total of 14 major areas of service operation were reviewed and included over 275 sub-system audits overall. The major areas of review included:

- level and type of service;
- employee qualification and personnel administration;
- staffing;
- documentation and charting;
- training and certification;
- quality assurance and patient care;
- delivery and quality of patient care;
- vehicles;
- patient care equipment;
- policies and procedures;
- operational integrity;
- communications;
- health and safety; and
- facilities and accommodations.

The certification audit involved a series of independent reviews by professional and technical representatives of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ambulance Services Branch and service providers from across Ontario. Detailed reviews were conducted involving inspection of vehicles, facilities and equipment, observation ride-outs with paramedics, retrospective reviews of patient documentation and a review of all applicable manuals, policies and administrative procedures. Toronto Ambulance met or exceeded the requirements of all 14 categories and the over 275 sub-categories encompassing the review.

#### Licensure and Certification:

Having met the requirements of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, land ambulance service audit, Toronto Ambulance has been issued a certificate to operate a licensed ambulance service within the City of Toronto for a three-year period. Proposed changes to the Ambulance Act and its Regulations to be tabled before the Provincial Parliament will further amend the existing certification criteria with a subsequent audit expected in the year 2002. As the largest provider of emergency medical services in Canada, and one of the largest services within North America having achieved certification is a significant achievement for Toronto Ambulance and its staff.

Over the next three years, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ambulance Services Branch will be undertaking similar audits of all ambulance services within the Province of

Ontario. Audit teams are being established with representatives from various services throughout Ontario. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has made a request to Toronto Ambulance to provide eight representatives of management and front-line paramedics to form part of the audit team. The Ministry of Health has assured Toronto Ambulance that full reimbursement funding at 100 percent of the cost of staff participating in these audits will be covered.

In addition, the Director of Emergency Health Services Branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has made an additional request to Toronto Ambulance to establish a management team to be activated to oversee the management and continued operation of any land ambulance service within the Province that for whatever reason was unable to provide and/or maintain service to the community it serves. In the event that a service was unable to maintain its operation the management team comprised of officials from Toronto Ambulance would be activated to provide temporary management of the service until such time as alternative arrangements for operational responsibility was implemented. The Ministry of Health would be prepared to cover all costs associated with this arrangement on a full cost-recovery basis. This request is related to the ongoing transition of ambulance services across the entire Province.

#### Central Ambulance Communication Centre Certification Audit:

Toronto Ambulance currently operates a Central Ambulance Communications Centre on behalf of the Province of Ontario. Toronto CACC is the largest such EMS Communications Centre within Canada. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is currently undertaking a project to develop audit and certification guidelines to be implemented during the year 2000. Toronto Ambulance has been requested by the Ministry of Health to develop the certification criteria and processes necessary to achieve this objective. The Ministry of Health has agreed to fund Toronto Ambulance on a project specific basis to develop this criteria in concert with Ministry officials.

#### Conclusions:

Since its creation in 1975, Toronto Ambulance has strived to become a leader in the delivery of emergency medical services. The high standards of care provided to the citizens of the City of Toronto and the commitment of the services' paramedics, dispatchers, support staff and management personnel have enabled the service to be recognized as a leader in out-of-hospital care throughout Canada and North America. The achievement of this certification audit recognizes the commitment of the staff of Toronto Ambulance and its continued pursuit of excellence in providing emergency medical services to those in need.

#### Contact:

Ronald L. Kelusky,  
General Manager, Toronto Ambulance  
Tel: 397-9240/Fax: 392-2115