

Toronto Fire Services 2022 Annual Report

Date: November 8, 2023

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The Toronto Fire Services (TFS) 2022 Annual Report provides an overview of the fire protection services provided to Toronto's residents and visitors, along with a clear and transparent reporting of outcomes and service level performance. TFS provides Toronto residents, visitors, and businesses with world-class fire protection services, through public education, fire prevention and all-hazards emergency response services.

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 79, Fire Services, requires the Fire Chief to prepare and present an annual report to Council. This report fulfills that requirement and provides Council with an update on fire protection service levels, service level performance, and an overview of the numerous achievements and accomplishments in 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no identified financial impact associated with the recommendation in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 79, Fire Services, requires the Fire Chief to prepare an annual report on the Service and present it to City Council.

https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_079.pdf

COMMENTS

Fire protection services in Ontario are governed by the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA). The FPPA enables the City of Toronto to establish a fire department, to appoint a Fire Chief, and to both establish, and set, fire protection service levels in accordance with the unique needs and circumstances in the City of Toronto. Only City Council is authorized to set fire protection service levels. In accordance with the FPPA, the Fire Chief is accountable to City Council for the delivery of fire protection services.

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 79, Fire Services, sets out the framework for the delivery of fire protection services in the City of Toronto, establishes Toronto Fire Services, and requires the Fire Chief to prepare and present the annual report of the fire service to the Economic and Community Development Committee and City Council (79-8.10). This staff report, and the 2022 Annual Report, found in Attachment 1, respond to the requirement of the by-law.

TFS provides Toronto residents, visitors, and businesses with world-class fire protection services, through public education, fire prevention, Ontario Fire Code enforcement and, provides 24/7, all-hazards emergency response services.

In 2022, TFS responded to 168,695 emergency incidents resulting in 303,964 emergency responses by TFS crews, conducted inspections of 8,515 addresses, and delivered more than 1,600 fire safety presentations.

In February 2022, TFS opened Fire Station 144 in Ward 6 - York Centre, to support the growth and development in the Downsview Park area. This is the 84th fire station in Toronto and is also the home to the TFS Fire Investigations team.

TFS also introduced a new, state-of-the-art, high-density urban aerial fire truck, Tower 1. Being the first in Canada, this 70-metre articulating firefighting aerial tower enables TFS to effectively address the unique operational challenges that are associated with fighting fires and performing rescues in Toronto's high-density, urban environment. Tower 1 is capable of reaching twice as high as the next tallest TFS aerial truck.

Our Staff

TFS is a team of 3,206 dedicated team members, who deliver fire protection services to Toronto residents every day. In 2022, TFS successfully recruited 227 new team members, replacing personnel who retired from various roles including Operations Firefighters, Fire Inspectors, Emergency Vehicle Technicians, and Call-takers/Dispatchers. TFS also promoted 114 staff to leadership positions, including two Division Commanders, four Platoon Chiefs, 15 District Chiefs, and 84 Captains.

Operations, Training and Technical Operations

The TFS Operations, Training and Technical Operations portfolio is under the command Deputy Fire Chief Jim Jessop.

Operations crews respond to emergencies that include fires, rescues, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, structural collapse incidents, road and industrial accidents, and other disasters and emergencies.

In 2022, TFS experienced a 26% increase in the number of emergency calls, with call volume increases experienced in all but one (Carbon Monoxide emergencies) response categories. The largest increases were experienced in the emergency medical call category, with TFS being dispatched to additional medical call types in support of Toronto Paramedic Services. A detailed breakdown of TFS service volumes are found on pages 34-35 of the Annual Report.

Emergency response time performance is constantly being assessed and monitored by the TFS Command Team and is reported publicly in the Annual Report. Data from the report is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Emergency Response Time Performance, TFS 2022 Annual Report

			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
All Emergency Events	Call Processing Time 1:04min	90th Percentile	00:50	00:47	00:48	00:52	00:53
		% of Standard Achieved	95%	96%	95%	94%	94%
Response Times	Turnout Time 1:20min	90th Percentile	02:31	02:16	02:16	01:55	01:54
		% of Standard Achieved	46%	51%	50%	68%	70%
	Travel Time 4:00min	90th Percentile	05:07	05:18	05:25	05:51	06:00
		% of Standard Achieved	76%	72%	70%	62%	60%
	Total Response Time 6:24min	90th Percentile	07:17	07:17	07:25	07:37	07:47
		% of Standard Achieved	82%	81%	79%	76%	75%
Effective Firefighting	Total Response	90th Percentile	10:39	10:50	10:44	10:40	10:28

			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Force Response	Time 10:24min	% of Standard Achieved	88%	87%	88%	89%	90%

A more detailed breakdown of city-wide emergency response time performance, as well as response time performance on a ward-by-ward level, can be found on pages 37-43 of Attachment 1.

178 recruit firefighters were trained in two recruit classes during 2022. The TFS Recruit Training Program is a rigorous 18-week training program, with each Recruit Firefighter graduating with formal National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) professional qualifications as Firefighters (NFPA 1001), Fire Inspectors (NFPA 1031), and Fire and Life Safety Educators (NFPA 1035).

TFS continues to operate the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) team and Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) team, both of which also operate under agreement with the Province of Ontario, whereby these specialized teams are available for Provincial deployment, on a full cost-recovery basis, as authorized by the Ontario Fire Marshal.

TFS also operates a marine firefighting / rescue unit, operating two specialized boats - the William Lyon Mackenzie and the William Thornton. The TFS marine unit responds to emergencies across Toronto's waterfront, including the Toronto islands, and has high-volume water pumping capabilities to assist with on land operations. The TFS William Lyon Mackenzie fire boat also breaks ice and maintains the ferry route between Toronto and Toronto Island, during the winter months.

Community Risk Reduction

The Community Risk Reduction portfolio is under the command of Deputy Fire Chief Larry Cocco.

The TFS Community Risk Reduction portfolio includes the enforcement of the Ontario Fire Code, providing public fire safety education to residents of Toronto, investigating the cause and origin of fires, delivering expert fire protection engineering services, and working in collaboration with legal services on all matters pertaining to prosecutions under the FPPA and the Ontario Fire Code.

In 2022, TFS fire inspectors conducted 8,515 fire inspections, inspecting 99% of all vulnerable occupancies within Toronto, and 95% of all residential high-rise buildings in Toronto.

Since the introduction of the 2017, City Council mandated, annual high-rise inspection fire protection service level, fire fatalities in high-rise buildings with a Fire Code violation, have been reduced by 66%.

In the six-year period from 2010-2016, there were 9 such fatal fires. However, in the five-year period following the introduction of this enhanced fire protection service level in 2017, the number of these fatal fires have been reduced to 3. A ward-level breakdown of fire prevention inspection activity is on page 25-26 of the 2022 Annual Report.

TFS Public Educators delivered 773 high-rise fire safety presentations and attended 952 elementary level school classrooms to deliver presentations on fire safety.

TFS also launched a smoke alarm campaign in 2022 to raise awareness of the importance of having working smoke alarms on every level and outside each sleeping area in residential homes. TFS fire investigations data proved that 59% of residential fires in Toronto, over the last five years, occurred in residential homes where working smoke alarms were not present, despite being legally required.

The TFS Fire Investigations team completed 130 comprehensive investigations into the origin, cause, and circumstances of fires in Toronto. This team works in direct collaboration with Toronto Police Service and the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal.

Administrative Services and Mechanical Maintenance

The Administrative Services and Mechanical Maintenance portfolio is under the command of Deputy Fire Chief Debbie Higgins.

The TFS Finance and Administration division includes the TFS budget administration, payroll and complement management units. This team works in direct collaboration with Corporate Finance and Treasury Services to manage and administer the TFS operating and capital budgets, and all aspects of complement management.

The TFS Staff Services division includes the TFS Labour Relations unit, oversight of the TFS Medical Office, direct liaison with the TFS Chief Medical Officer, and all aspects of disability, return to work and attendance management. This team functions as a small in-house professional standards unit, leading numerous internal investigations and working in direct collaboration with the Corporate Labour Relations, Legal Services and Disability Management teams.

The TFS Quartermaster division operates the TFS warehouse, distributes and manages personal protective equipment for all staff including bunker gear, protective clothing, uniforms, and medical supplies. This team works in collaboration with Corporate Purchasing and Materials Management.

The TFS Mechanical Maintenance and Asset / Equipment Management division operates the TFS mechanical maintenance shop and mobile service trucks, which provide both preventative maintenance and on-demand repairs for the 198 heavy vehicles and 230 small vehicles that comprise the TFS fleet.

In 2022, 3,605 mechanical maintenance orders were completed. Additionally, 5,200 fire hose tests were conducted to ensure equipment was in good working order for crews.

Communications, Technology and Organizational Performance

The Communications, Technology and Organizational Performance portfolio is under the command of Deputy Fire Chief Paul Fitzgerald.

The TFS communications centre answered and processed 470,612 incoming emergency and non-emergency telephone calls in 2022, achieving best in class emergency call processing time performance, of 1 minute and 4 seconds, 94% of the time. Our 90th percentile performance, in 2022, was 53 seconds.

TFS technology staff continue to work towards the implementation of Next Generation 911 systems to help transition TFS from analog to digital 9-1-1 call receiving, in accordance with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission requirements. Other ongoing major technology projects include upgrades to the TFS computer aided dispatch system and emergency services radio system that is used by TFS, the Toronto Police Service and Toronto Paramedic Services. The TFS Technology team works in direct collaboration with the City's Technology Services and CISO teams.

The TFS Data Analytics and Decision Support team is responsible for providing data and analytics support to TFS and the TFS Command Team, conducting 118 advanced analytics assessments in 2022, supporting evidence-based and data-informed decision making. The team works closely with all areas of TFS to identify data needs and reporting capabilities to support both day-to-day operations and specific requests. The team has developed a series of internal dashboards to provide the TFS Command Team with up-to-date information and also manage the publishing of TFS emergency response data to the City's Open Data portal.

Office of the Fire Chief

The Office of the Fire Chief is comprised of five staff, who champion policy development, public information, strategic planning, compliance, and continuous quality improvement functions, as well as all day-to-day operations within the Office of the Fire Chief. Office of the Fire Chief staff are responsible for managing the coordination of TFS reports to Council alongside the Deputy City Manager - Community and Social Services team and for conducting research to inform evidence-based decision making for senior decision makers.

TFS has one full-time Staff Psychologist, who offers short term counselling, advice, guidance and coaching to employees, and who develops and leads workshops and other training programs to promote employees' psychological well-being including the Road to Mental Readiness training curriculum. The TFS Staff Psychologist also provides oversight, support, and training for the TFS Peer Support Team and completes regular wellness checks for the members of this team.

The Public Information Section manages engagement with the public and media through various traditional and social media channels. This includes providing public information about emergencies, with TFS responding to 645 formal media requests in 2022. Additionally, through our social media channels, TFS was able to reach 172.5 thousand members of the public with its posts on Facebook and had 31.6 thousand

engagements on X (formerly Twitter). The TFS Public Information team works in daily collaboration with the City's Strategic Public and Employee Communications team.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at TFS

TFS is committed to building an increasingly inclusive and positive workplace culture that reflects the diversity of the population we serve. In 2022, TFS moved forward training initiatives supporting equity and inclusion with 96% of TFS staff having completed the Toronto for All curriculum, 92% of staff having completed a specialized training module on Sacred Fires to support understanding of this ceremony and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), and with over 100 staff having completed Confronting Anti-Black Racism training. TFS staff continue to support the Indigenous Affairs Office with their work on Action 15 - Indigenous Placekeeping of the RAP, to enhance access to Sacred Fires for Indigenous residents of Toronto, having our TFS Command Team proudly attend the launch of the City's introduction of designated Sacred Fire sites in the fall of 2022. TFS continues to be proud supporters of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, especially during Pride month, with special decals placed on all TFS trucks, as well as TFS participating in the Toronto Pride parade alongside staff, friends, and family.

Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)

Toronto is the largest city in North America with a CFAI Accredited Fire Service. TFS first received 5-year accreditation in 2019, affirming our robust processes for performance and outcome measurement and for continuous quality improvement. CFAI accreditation is an independent, third-party assessment of all aspects of TFS operations against 250 performance indicators. TFS is currently working towards re-accreditation under the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), having recently hosted a peer assessment team from CFAI to verify and validate our self assessment. TFS plans on appearing before the commission in the first quarter of 2024 to defend our application for continued Accredited Agency status. Being an accredited fire service, reaffirms our commitment and work towards continuous improvement and the delivery of world-class fire protection service to the residents of Toronto.

Looking Forward

As we look to 2024, TFS expects to experience continuing increases in emergency call volumes as the city continues to grow and evolve. TFS will continue to be directly involved in the development of fire prevention and control methodologies for fires that result from lithium-ion battery failures, which represent a unique and complicated public fire risk. TFS is actively engaged in this important public safety issues at the Provincial, National, and International level.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Matthew Pegg
Fire Chief and General Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Fire Services 2022 Annual Report