

2022 Update on Fire and Life Safety Compliance at the City of Toronto

Date: May 15, 2023

To: General Government Committee

From: Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides the annual status update on fire and life safety compliance at the City of Toronto ("the City"), as directed by City Council ([AU13.11](#)). The report reviews the 2021 and 2022 compliance rates against the 2018, 2019 and 2020 baseline data. Both record completion and compliance rates have continued to improve since the implementation of the Fire and Life Safety Program Office.

Throughout 2022, Corporate Real Estate Management (C.R.E.M.) continued to centralize and standardize fire and life safety services in City-owned buildings. Despite the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, C.R.E.M. has made significant progress implementing the Master Fire Program, awarded new competitive procurements for inspections, tested and maintained services, and recruited new staff to enable the hybrid service model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, recommends that:

1. The General Government Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications to the City of Toronto as a result of this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on December 15, 2021, City Council adopted GL27.27 "Update on Fire and Life Safety Compliance at the City of Toronto," which provided an update on the City's work to address the Council-adopted recommendations put forth by the Auditor General in AU13.11 "Raising the Alarm: Fraud Investigation of a Vendor Providing Life Safety Inspection Services to the City of Toronto."

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.GL27.27>

At its meeting on December 16, 2020, City Council adopted GL19.10 "Update on Fire and Life Safety Compliance at the City of Toronto," which provided an update on the City's work to address the Council-adopted recommendations put forth by the Auditor General in AU13.11 "Raising the Alarm: Fraud Investigation of a Vendor Providing Life Safety Inspection Services to the City of Toronto."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.GL19.10>

At its meeting on March 9, 2020, the General Government and Licensing Committee adopted GL12.15 "Status of the Auditor General's Recommendations Pertaining to Fire and Life Safety at the City of Toronto," which provided an update on the City's work to address the Council-adopted recommendations put forth by the Auditor General. C.R.E.M. presented a one-page progress matrix that responded to the Auditor General's findings, and provided an update on the operationalization of the Fire and Life Safety Program Office and centralization of fire and life safety functions City-wide.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.GL12.15>

At its meeting on October 29, 2019, City Council adopted GL8.8 "Update on Fire and Life Safety at the City of Toronto and Non-Competitive Agreement with Building Reports Canada for the Provision of Fire and Life Safety Tracking and Compliance Software" and issued multiple directions to the Executive Director, C.R.E.M. and other City staff to report annually to the General Government and Licensing Committee with a one-page progress matrix that responds to the Auditor General's findings.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.GL8.8>

At its meeting on May 21, 2019, the General Government and Licensing Committee adopted GL5.14 "Interim Status Report on Fire and Life Safety," which provided an update on the City's work to address the Council-adopted recommendations put forth by the Auditor General, including the establishment of a City-wide Fire and Life Safety Program Office.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.GL5.14>

At its meeting on July 23, 2018, City Council adopted AU13.11 "Raising the Alarm: Fraud Investigation of a Vendor Providing Life Safety Inspection Services to the City of Toronto," and issued multiple directions to the General Manager, Facilities Management and other City staff to improve the management and delivery of fire and life safety service at City buildings. In adopting the item, City Council directed the General Manager, Facilities Management to report back to City Council annually on the level of fire and life safety compliance.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.AU13.11>

COMMENTS

2021-2022 Fire and Life Safety Compliance in City Facilities

In 2023, the Fire and Life Safety Program Office at C.R.E.M. conducted a comprehensive review of fire and life safety inspection records from 2021 and 2022 across a sample of divisions and agencies. The Auditor General's 2018 findings ([AU13.11](#)) served as the baseline for the review, requiring 248 buildings be assessed in 2021 and 2022.

Reports are considered compliant if the scheduled work was completed and the applicable requirements of the Ontario Fire Code, National Fire Protection Association and Underwriters Laboratories of Canada were met. Throughout 2021 and 2022, divisional responsibility to manage fire and life safety were centralized to the Fire and Life Safety Program Office. The improvement in compliance rates within City divisions outlined in Table 1 and 2 can be attributed to the centralization of service delivery and increased quality assurance oversight. Since 2022, a comprehensive preventative maintenance program and electronic record management system ensures all legislated reports are completed and tracked.

A few divisions, denoted as 'Transitional Divisions' in Table 2, required additional support prior to transfer their fire protection maintenance responsibilities due to unique operational and legislative needs. While this delay in transfer resulted in lower compliance rates, as onboarding continues, these divisions are expected to significantly improve their compliance rates in 2023.

Table 1 – Fire and Life Safety Annual City-wide Compliance Rates

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021-2022
Report compliance	27%	36%	56%	68%	83%

Table 2: Ontario Fire Code Compliance Rates

Program Owner	2021 and 2022 Compliance Rate
Fire and Life Safety Program Office (Portfolio Managed Divisions)	90%
Transitional Divisions	65%
Agencies, Boards and Commissions	88%
Combined Average	83%

2021-2022 Achievements

Centralizing Service Delivery

In 2021, the Fire and Life Safety Program Office focused on implementing a standardized governance model identified in the Master Fire Program. This strategic document provides the authority and framework to centralize fire and life safety service delivery throughout all City buildings. Service level agreements were developed in

partnership with major property holding divisions to clarify roles, responsibilities, service standards and reporting requirements related to fire and life safety building compliance.

In addition, five (5) fire and life safety vendors were onboarded to launch a holistic approach to legislated inspection, testing and maintenance. This approach integrates all fire protection system maintenance and inspections to one vendor, improving the maintenance of each system. Following this model, several City agencies have integrated the same framework into their fire protection maintenance operations. City-wide fire alarm monitoring services were also consolidated under the Fire and Life Safety Program Office, and a new fire monitoring R.F.P. was awarded to install compliant monitoring systems in all City-owned buildings equipped with a fire alarm and/or fire sprinkler system.

Centralizing Reporting and Data Management

The Fire and Life Safety Program Office has fully integrated internal and external inspection reports into a holistic compliance system using the Building Reports Canada electronic database. As outlined in Table 3, asset inventory and documentation of 99% of all fire and life safety devices within City buildings are recorded in the database, ensuring legislated maintenance requirements are met for each device and comprehensive asset management programs are developed.

Table 3 – Fire and Life Safety Device Documentation

Year	2020	2021	2022
Total FLS Devices Documented	854	6,380	58,331
Total FLS Devices Inspected	5,029	97,539	359,887

The Fire and Life Safety Program Office team also launched an on-call process to establish a 24/7 response presence within the City. Launched in 2022, this new process reduces the need for third-party emergency service calls, and utilizes Fire Safety Officers to efficiently assess the situation prior to dispatching any emergency service calls or scheduled maintenance. The number of on-call incidents in 2022 are noted in Table 4.

Table 4 – 2022 Fire Operations On-Call Incident Statistics

Type of On-call Incident	Fire Alarm	System Offline	Trouble Calls
Amount of On-call of Incidents	1,269	2,957	13,115

Staff Training Initiatives

The Fire and Life Safety Program Office has developed a library of eighteen (18) targeted fire safety training programs for City staff, available through online and in person sessions. By the end of 2022, approximately 28,000 City of Toronto staff members had completed a fire safety training program.

In 2021 and 2022, 24 fire alarm technicians were hired, trained and certified in industry best practices. This training ensured legislated inspection, testing and maintenance

was completed in a standardized, code compliant manner throughout all City of Toronto owned buildings for the first time by internal staff.

2023 Objectives

Increasing Compliance Across City-owned Properties

In 2023, the Fire and Life Safety Program Office will focus on increasing City wide compliance to above 90 per cent for all City owned properties. Several centralized divisional properties located within City owned buildings will transition to full compliance in 2023. The fire protection systems at these properties will be fully inspected, deficiencies rectified and brought into full compliance, and will contribute to ensuring all City properties meet or exceed 90 per cent compliance by year end.

Standardizing Approach to Fire Safety Plan Management

In addition, the Fire and Life Safety Program Office will focus on the centralization and standardization of the City's Fire Safety Plans. Fire safety plans are a legislated requirement for buildings with industrial occupancies, special hazards and high occupant loads. These plans identify evacuation routes, incoming utilities or services, fire protection systems and other pertinent information for use by responding firefighters during an emergency. Currently, in a decentralized model, divisions occupying a building are responsible for developing, updating and submitting individual plans to Toronto Fire Service for review and approval. Each plan requires an annual review and must be updated when a building is modified by a capital project that impacts the approved plan.

Approximately 875 City buildings are mandated to have an approved fire safety plan, however decentralized ownership of fire safety plans has increased the risk of non-compliance issues across City divisions. To ensure divisions have the technical expertise to update and maintain fire safety plans, the Fire and Life Safety Program Office intends to begin centralizing management of the fire safety plans and provide the technical expertise needed to maintain them. This is in line with the centralization of the inspection, testing and maintenance of fire safety systems, which has proven effective in increasing compliance across City buildings.

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SIGNATURE

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