

2023 Update on Fire and Life Safety Compliance at the City of Toronto

Date: November 5, 2024

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 presents the 2023 compliance rates against the 2018 to 2022 baseline data. The completion and compliance rates have continued to improve since the implementation of the Safety and Compliance team (formerly the Fire and Life Safety Program Office) within Corporate Real Estate Management ("C.R.E.M.").

Throughout 2023, C.R.E.M. finalized the centralization of all City Divisions into our program. 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 the report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications to the City 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 May 30, 2023, General Government Committee adopted GG4.30 "2022 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=2023.GG4.30>

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

2023 Fire and Life Safety Compliance in City Facilities

In 2024, Safety and Compliance, under Corporate Real Estate Management ("C.R.E.M."), conducted a comprehensive review of fire and life safety inspection records from 2023 across a sample of City Divisions and Agencies. The Auditor General's 2018 findings (AU13.11) served as the baseline for the review, requiring 248 buildings be assessed annually.

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. All City fire and life safety responsibilities have been centralized to the Safety and Compliance team within C.R.E.M. as part of the City's ongoing effort to centralize real estate and facilities management activities across the City. The improvement in compliance rates within City Divisions outlined in Tables 1 and 2 can be attributed to the centralization of service delivery and increased quality assurance oversight. The establishment of a comprehensive preventative maintenance program and electronic record management system ensures all legislated reports are completed and tracked.

Fire and life safety inspection, testing and maintenance responsibilities for all City Divisions have successfully transitioned to Safety and Compliance, including Toronto Water and Solid Waste Management Services in 2023. Their results are represented in the results for the program. The only City facilities which have not fully transitioned under the oversight of Safety and Compliance are third-party organizations who occupy City facilities. These third-party tenants have a legal agreement in place which requires the tenant to provide fire and life safety services at their own expense. City staff are actively reviewing these leases to ensure compliance with the Ontario Fire Code.

In 2024, C.R.E.M. awarded a new Request for Proposal ("R.F.P.") which specifically includes scope of work to transition third-party occupied facilities into the City program and ensure that compliance continues to improve. Tables 1 and 2 below show the continued improvement trend towards full compliance.

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

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021/ 2022	2023
Report Compliance	27%	36%	56%	68%	83%	93%

Table 2 - Ontario Fire Code Compliance Rates in 2023

Program Owner	
Safety and Compliance, Corporate Real Estate Management	93%
Third-Party Occupied Facilities	67%
City Agencies and Corporations	94%
Combined Divisions	92%

2023 Achievements

Centralizing Service Delivery

In 2023, Safety and Compliance completed the documentation of all City-wide fire and life safety devices. This exercise was conducted through the existing monthly and annual inspection process and documented in the Building Reports Canada electronic database, which is a holistic compliance system. The inventory of fire and life safety devices is fully digital and integrated into the monthly and annual preventative maintenance program. This permits the inventory to be continuously updated as maintenance is carried out and updated live in the field. Table 3 below identifies the inventory, and which is expected to continue to grow as the City onboards new buildings.

Table 3 - Fire and Life Safety ("FLS") Device Documentation

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total FLS devices documented	71,915	106,363	154,955	184,921
Total FLS devices inspected	5,029	97,539	359,887	535,589

In 2023, City-wide fire alarm monitoring services were also consolidated under Safety and Compliance. Safety and Compliance is currently modernizing and upgrading all fire alarm monitoring systems throughout the City.

A new subsurface emergency maintenance contract was also awarded which allows the City to receive enhanced pricing. The contract is in place for all fire hydrant failures and underground fire main leaks on City managed property.

Safety and Compliance also experienced continued success with 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 and 2023 are noted in Table 4.

Table 4 - Fire Operations On-Call Incident Statistics

Type of On-call Incident	Fire Alarm	System Offline	Trouble Calls
2022 On-Call incidents*	452	3,473	15,736
2023 On-Call Incidents	185	1,421	4,346

Table 4 demonstrates a positive trend resulting in a reduced focus on reactive and emergency management. Safety and Compliance has been focused on addressing the 15 years state of repair backlog on the City's fire and life safety systems. The reduction in emergency calls is a positive indicator that deferred maintenance is being addressed and the fire and life safety equipment within the City is being proactively maintained.

Additionally, the reduction in fire incidents is largely attributed to a significant expansion of the training and development program within Safety and Compliance.

Staff Training Initiatives

Safety and Compliance has expanded its training program to include five new modules. These new modules enhance City staff's understanding of the risks associated with fire and provide key skills to address those risks in the event of an emergency.

In 2023 and 2024 (to date), Safety and Compliance has trained an additional 23,560 City staff as noted in Table 5. Modules in fire drill training and fire safety for Building Operators have been completed and are being rolled out in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Table 5 - Training Completion Rates

Training Title	No. of Employees Completed the Training
City of Toronto Fire Warden/Supervisory Staff Training	3,266
Fire Safety at Work	19,478

Training Title	No. of Employees Completed the Training
Fire Extinguisher and Commercial Kitchen Training	816
Total	23,560

All training modules are available to City staff in the online ELI learning system.

Safety and Compliance is in the process of developing a Fire Warden refresher module and a prerequisite fire extinguisher course to enhance the existing fire extinguisher course. Both courses are expected to be available to staff in 2025.

Future Objectives

Service Enhancement

In 2024 and 2025, Safety and Compliance is focused on reviewing all established procedures and integrating all lessons learned to date. This review has resulted in new R.F.P. requirements with enhanced terms and conditions aimed to improve the City's integration with third party vendors.

The partnerships with our fire and life safety external suppliers continues to provide a positive path forward from the fraud experienced in the past. All suppliers that Safety and Compliance utilize have demonstrated a clear commitment to helping the City achieve its goals of being a leader in fire safety compliance.

Increasing Compliance Across City-owned Properties

In 2025, Safety and Compliance will focus on increasing City-wide compliance to above 95 per cent for all City-owned properties. The awarding of the new R.F.P. will allow third party tenants which occupy City-owned buildings to transition into the Safety and Compliance program. Third party tenants are the last program operating below City expectations.

Improve Efficiency

In 2025, Safety and Compliance will conduct a comprehensive review of our program model which includes the services currently outsourced and consideration to transitioning these services to be performed internally by staff. For example, the City currently outsources annual inspections in City facilities where only fire extinguishers and emergency lights exist. There is potential that the City could perform these inspections at a lower cost and with less administrative burden compared to external suppliers. A pilot of this process has been rolled out in 2024 with very positive results.

Capital Planning

In 2024, several large City facilities have or will undergo a modernization of their fire and life safety systems. Some of these facilities include City Hall, Metro Hall, Union Station and 703 Don Mills Road. Modernization of the fire and life safety systems will provide improvements to life safety as well as long term sustainability for some of our most critical and populated sites in the City's portfolio.

Conclusion

Safety and Compliance has completed the consolidation and standardization of the City's fire and life safety services. Safety and Compliance will continue to refine the program in 2025 to generate improved efficiencies and enhanced safety for occupants of City buildings.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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