Chapter 79

FIRE SERVICES

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[History: Adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto April 16, 1998 by By-law 132-1998. Amendments noted where applicable.]

General References

Emergency planning - See Ch. 59.
False alarms - See Ch. 433.
Fees for fire services and inspections - See Ch. 441.
City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 1) - See S.O. 1997, c. 2.

§ 79-1. Definitions.

In this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

BUDGET COMMITTEE - The Budget Committee established by the Council.

CHARGES - In relation to § 79-14, include any interest payable pursuant to § 79-14J and any costs incurred by the City pursuant to § 79-14M.

CITY MANAGER - The person appointed by Council as the City's chief administrative officer under section 229 of the Municipal Act, 2001. [Added 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]


DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF - A person appointed as a Deputy Fire Chief by the City Manager under this chapter. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

DIVISION - A Division of the Fire Department as provided for in this chapter.

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1 Editor's Note: This by-law was passed under the authority of paragraph 31 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45. This by-law also repealed former by-laws, as follows: (1) By-law 4-88 of The Corporation of the Borough of East York, By-laws 222, 1981-125 and 1981-126 of The Corporation of the City of Etobicoke, By-law 31662 of The Corporation of the City of North York, By-law 22098 of The Corporation of the City of Scarborough, By-law 1994-0715 of The Corporation of the former City of Toronto, By-law 1222-87 of The Corporation of the City of York, and any amendments thereto, all of which were passed by the councils of the old area municipalities of the former Metropolitan Toronto and all of which were in force immediately before the coming into force of the City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 1) and, by virtue of section 2(7) of the Act, are deemed to be by-laws of the Council and remain in force in respect of the part of the urban area to which they applied immediately before the coming into force of the Act, are repealed. (2) Any other by-law (or part of it) and any resolution of any of the six old area municipalities of the former Metropolitan Toronto relating to the establishment of a fire department (and any amendments thereto) and not expressly mentioned in subsection (1) are also repealed. (3) This by-law does not repeal Metropolitan Toronto By-law 31-96, which remains in force until expressly repealed or replaced by the Council. (4) This by-law supersedes By-law 6-1998 of the City of Toronto adopted by the Council on January 6, 1998.

2 Editor's Note: The definition of "Chief Administrative Officer," which previously preceded this definition, was repealed May 4, 2005 by By-law 338-2005.
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - The City's Economic and Community Development Committee or any successor committee responsible for fire services issues. [Added 2019-01-31 by By-law 255-2019]

FEE or FEE FOR SERVICES - In relation to § 79-14, means any fee imposed for services under and billed pursuant to § 79-14E.

FIRE CHIEF - The person appointed by Council (on the recommendation of the City Manager) as the Fire Chief under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

FIRE DEPARTMENT - The City's Fire Services division that is the City's "fire department" under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and includes the fire-fighters and administrative support staff that comprise it, but, in §§ 79-12 to 79-21 and § 79-23, "Fire Department" does not include administrative support staff. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

FIRE-FIGHTER - A person employed in, or appointed to, the Fire Department and assigned to undertake fire protection services and includes an officer, but does not include a volunteer fire-fighter and administrative support staff.


FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES - Include fire suppression, fire prevention, fire safety education, communication, training of persons involved in the provision of fire protection services, rescue and emergency services and the delivery of all those services.

MEMBER - A fire-fighter other than an officer.


OFFICER - The Fire Chief, a Deputy Fire Chief, division chief, senior divisional chief, platoon chief, district chief, captain and such other person as may be designated as an officer from time to time by the Council.

OWNER - In relation to § 79-14, means a person who is shown as the assessed owner or tenant of the building or yard in the assessment rolls for the City and includes the registered owner or mortgagee in possession of such property and includes a person in actual occupation of the land on which the building is situated or that constitutes the yard:

A. Under an agreement with the assessed owner for the purchase of it; or

B. Sold by the Director in accordance with the Veterans' Land Act (Canada), R.S.C. 1970, c. V-4 (as may be amended or replaced from time to time); but

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3 Editor's Note: By-law 255-2019 also deleted a previous definition for "Community Services Committee". By-law 255-2019 is deemed to have come into effect on December 13, 2018.

4 Editor's Note: The definition of "Emergency and Protective Services Committee," which previously preceded this definition, was repealed May 4, 2005 by By-law 338-2005.
C. In the case of a condominium building, means the condominium corporation having control of the common elements of the building.

RESCUE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES - Include any life- or property-saving activity that is unrelated to fire suppression and fire prevention.

§ 79-2. Establishment.

The Fire Department is established under the direction of the Fire Chief to provide fire protection services for the City and replaces the Fire Departments of the old area municipalities of the former Metropolitan Toronto, to wit, The Corporation of the Borough of East York, The Corporation of the City of Etobicoke, The Corporation of the City of North York, The Corporation of the City of Scarborough, The Corporation of the City of Toronto and The Corporation of the City of York.

§ 79-3. Composition.

[Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

The Fire Department shall consist of the Fire Chief and such number of Deputy Fire Chiefs, senior divisional chiefs, platoon chiefs, division chiefs, district chiefs, captains and other officers, members and clerical staff, including an executive assistant to the Fire Chief, as may be authorized or considered necessary from time to time by the Council or by the City Manager, for the Fire Department to perform fire protection services for the City efficiently and effectively.

§ 79-4. Recommendation for employment.

[Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

The Fire Chief may recommend to the City Manager the employment in, or the appointment to, the Fire Department, as the case may be, of any person, as an officer or member or as administrative support staff, who meets the qualifications and, if applicable, completes successfully criteria (including without limitation training courses and physical, skills and other examinations) and otherwise satisfies any hiring policies, practices or procedures established or approved by the Council for such employment or appointment.

§ 79-5. Terms and conditions of employment.

[Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]

Subject to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, the remuneration and other terms and conditions of employment or appointment of the officers, members and administrative support staff that comprise the Fire Department shall be determined by the Council or by the City Manager acting in accordance with policies and programs established or approved by the Council.
§ 79-6. Organization.
A. The Fire Department shall be organized into Divisions such as:
   (1) Fire Prevention and Public Safety.
   (2) Fire Suppression.
   (3) Training.
   (4) Mechanical and Maintenance.
   (5) Communications.
   (6) Administrative Services.
B. The Fire Chief, with the prior approval of the City Manager, may reorganize or eliminate divisions or establish other divisions or may do all or any of these things or any combination of them as may be required to ensure the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of fire protection services for the City. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005]
C. The Fire Chief may assign or reassign such officers to a division to assist him or her in the administration and operation of that division.

§ 79-7. Reporting.
The Fire Chief shall report to the Economic and Community Development Committee on matters pertaining to the Fire Department unless otherwise directed by the Council or provided for in this chapter.

§ 79-8. Responsibilities and authority of Fire Chief.
A. The Fire Chief shall be the head of the Fire Department and shall be responsible for its proper administration and efficient operation.
B. The Fire Chief shall be authorized to make such general orders, policies, procedures, rules and regulations and to take such other measures as the Fire Chief may consider necessary for the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of the fire protection services for the City and for the prevention, control and extinguishment of fires, the protection of life and property and the management of emergencies within the territorial jurisdiction of the City, provided that such general orders, policies, procedures, rules, regulations and other measures do not conflict with the provisions of this chapter or any other by-law of the City, including without limitation those requiring the prior approval of or prior notice to the Council or the satisfaction of certain conditions (general or otherwise) specified by the Council before such measures can be implemented, or with the provisions of the Fire Protection

^5 Editor’s Note: By-law 255-2019 is deemed to have come into effect on December 13, 2018.
and Prevention Act, 1997 or with the provisions of any collective agreement or other written agreement that may be applicable, and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing: [Amended 2000-10-05 by By-law 869-2000]

(1) For the care and protection of all property belonging to the Fire Department.

(2) For arranging for the provision of necessary and proper facilities, apparatus, equipment, materials, services and supplies for the Fire Department.

(3) For determining and establishing the qualifications and criteria for employment or appointment and the duties of all officers, members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department.

(4) For the conduct and the discipline of officers, members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department.

(5) For preparing and, upon approval by the Council, implementing and maintaining an emergency fire service plan and program for the City.

(6) For co-ordinating any emergency fire service plan and program adopted or to be adopted by the Council with (and assisting in the preparation, implementation and maintenance of) any emergency plans, organizations, services or measures established or to be established by the City, alone or with others, and, if so requested or required, any emergency plan established or to be established by the Province of Ontario or the Government of Canada and for co-ordinating with and assisting any other public official in an emergency declared by the Mayor of the City, the Premier of Ontario or the Governor in Council.

(7) For reporting to the appropriate crown attorney or other prosecutor or law enforcement or other officer the facts upon the evidence in any case in which there is reason to believe that a fire has been the result of criminal intent or negligence or in which there is reason to believe an offence has been committed under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

(8) For keeping an accurate record, in convenient form for reference, of all fires, rescues and emergencies responded to by the Fire Department.

(9) For keeping a record to be available to the general public concerning the Fire Department's inspection and enforcement activities with respect to fire safety containing such particulars of the Fire Department's inspection and enforcement activities as the Fire Chief believes suitable for the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of the fire protection services for the City, along with such other records as may be required by the Council. [Added 2020-01-29 by By-law 104-2020]

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6 Editor’s Note: By-law 104-2020 came into effect June 30, 2020.
(10) For preparing and presenting the annual report of the Fire Department to the Economic and Community Development Committee and the Council. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005; 2019-01-31 by By-law 255-2019]

(11) For preparing and presenting the annual estimates of the Fire Department to the Economic and Community Development Committee, the Budget Committee and the Council and for exercising control over the budget approved by the Council for the Fire Department. [Amended 2005-05-04 by By-law 338-2005; 2019-01-31 by By-law 255-2019]

C. The Fire Chief shall be responsible for the enforcement of this chapter and all general orders, policies, procedures, rules and regulations made under this chapter and for the enforcement of any other by-laws of the City respecting fire protection services, and shall review periodically such laws [and may, for this purpose, establish an advisory committee consisting of such officers and other persons (including members of the general public) as the Fire Chief may determine from time to time to assist him or her in the discharge of this duty] and, in the case of such by-laws (including this chapter), recommend to the Council such amendments as the Fire Chief considers appropriate and, in the case of general orders, policies, procedures, rules and regulations made under this chapter, revise or terminate any of them if the Fire Chief considers it appropriate.

D. The Fire Chief shall have all powers, rights and duties assigned to a fire chief under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, including without limitation the authority to enforce compliance with the fire code made under the Act.9

E. The Fire Chief shall provide liaison with any union representing officers, members or administrative support staff of the Fire Department or any of them.

F. The Fire Chief shall provide liaison with the Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario and any other office or organization as required by the Council or as considered necessary or advisable by the Fire Chief for the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of the fire protection services for the City.

G. The Fire Chief may utilize such officers, members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department as the Fire Chief may determine, from time to time, to assist in the performance of his or her duties.

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7 Editor’s Note: By-law 255-2019 is deemed to have come into effect on December 13, 2018.
8 Editor’s Note: By-law 255-2019 is deemed to have come into effect on December 13, 2018.
9 Editor's Note: Original Subsection (5), which followed this subsection, regarding the duties of the Metropolitan Toronto Fire Co-ordinator under Metropolitan Toronto By-law 31-96, was deleted October 5, 2000 by By-law 869-2000, as By-law 31-96 was repealed March 6, 1998 by By-law 47-1998.

A. The Deputy Fire Chief shall be the second ranking officer of the Fire Department and shall be subject to and shall obey all orders of the Fire Chief and shall perform such duties as are assigned to him or her by the Fire Chief and shall, when the Fire Chief is not on duty, have the powers and perform the duties of the Fire Chief.

B. Where more than one Deputy Fire Chief has been appointed, when the Fire Chief is not on duty, the duties of the Fire Chief shall be performed by each of the Deputy Fire Chiefs from time to time on a rotating basis or such other basis as may be determined by the Fire Chief.

§ 79-10. Supervision.

The officers, members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department while on duty shall be under the direction and control of the Fire Chief or the next ranking officer present in any place.


Every officer, member and administrative support staff person shall conduct himself or herself in accordance with general orders, policies, procedures, rules and regulations made by the Fire Chief under § 79-8B and shall give his or her other whole and undivided attention while on duty to the efficient operation of the Fire Department (and, in particular, shall use best efforts to see that all fires are extinguished with the least possible injury to persons and damage to property and to prevent unnecessary damage to property by water and other fire suppression methods) and shall diligently, cheerfully and faithfully perform the duties assigned to him or her to the best of his or her ability and in accordance with the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and any collective agreement or other written agreement that may be applicable.

§ 79-12. Property of Fire Department.\footnote{Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraphs 31 and 48 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.}

A. No person shall apply any apparatus, equipment or other property of the Fire Department to any personal or private use.

B. No person shall wilfully damage or render ineffective or inoperative any apparatus, equipment or other property belonging to the Fire Department.


A. The Fire Department may suppress any fire or other hazardous condition by extinguishing it or by other reasonable action and, for this purpose, may enter private property, if necessary, to do so.
B. The Fire Department may pull down or demolish any building or structure when considered necessary to prevent the spread of fire.\footnote{Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 47 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.}

C. The Fire Department may require other persons present at a fire to assist in:\footnote{Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 48 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.}

1. Extinguishing fires;

2. Pulling down or demolishing buildings or structures to prevent the spread of fire;

3. Crowd and traffic control; or

4. Other reasonable ways.

§ 79-14. Unsafe conditions; payment for services.

A. No person shall permit any building or yard to be kept in an unsafe condition that may result in fire or other dangerous risk or accident.\footnote{Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 44 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.}

B. Where the Fire Department finds that a building or a yard is in an unsafe condition as described in Subsection A, it may give the owner of the building or yard an order in writing specifying the unsafe condition and directing remedial action within such time as is specified in the order.

C. In the event of an emergency, the order under Subsection B may specify immediate compliance, and, where the owner is not available to receive the order, it shall be sufficient notice if the order is posted on the premises, but, in all other cases, notice of the order shall be sufficiently given to the owner by personal service on the owner or the occupant of the building or yard or by regular letter mail, in which event service shall be deemed to have been made on the third day after the day of mailing, or by electronic transmission or telephone transmission of a facsimile, in which event service shall be deemed to have been made on the first day after the day of transmission, or by some other method that allows proof of receipt.

D. Where the owner does not comply with the order made under Subsection B within the time specified in the order, or immediately in the event of an emergency, in addition to the City prosecuting the contravention of this order as an offence, the Fire Department on behalf of the City may take such action as may be considered necessary to guard against fire or other dangerous risk or accident, which may include without limitation the boarding up or barricading of the building or yard. \footnote{Amended 2000-10-05 by By-law 869-2000}.

E. Any expense incurred by the Fire Department for any action taken under Subsection D shall be considered a fee imposed for services provided or done by or on behalf of the
City under the Municipal Act and shall be billed as a fee for services to the owner of the building or yard, as the case may be.\footnote{Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of section 220.1 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.}

F. The methods of service provided for in Subsection C for "all other cases" have equal application to the service of invoices for services billed under Subsection E.

G. Where there is more than one owner, their liability for payment under Subsection E shall be joint and several.

H. Any invoice for services billed pursuant to Subsection E shall describe the service provided or done by the Fire Department, when and where the service was provided or done, the reason for the service, the fee for the service, the terms of payment of the fee prescribed in this section and the consequences of failing to pay the fee for the service as provided for in this section.

I. The fee for services shall be payable to the City, by cash, money order, cheque or credit card, no later than 30 days from the date of the invoice for the service.

J. Where the fee for services remains unpaid, in whole or in part, for a period in excess of 30 days from the date of the invoice for the service, the owner shall pay, in addition to the outstanding balance of the fee, interest on the outstanding balance, such interest to be calculated at a rate equal to the prime lending rate charged to the City by its banker from time to time plus 1 percent per annum.

K. The fee for services, plus any interest that may have accrued on the outstanding balance under Subsection J, shall constitute a debt of the owner to the City.

L. The City may take such action as it considers necessary and as is permitted by law to collect the debt constituted under Subsection K.

M. The owner shall be liable to pay to the City any costs incurred by the City in collecting the debt constituted under Subsection K; and such costs shall also constitute a debt of the owner to the City; and Subsection L shall apply to the recovery of such costs, with necessary modifications.

N. Without restricting the generality of Subsections L and M, where the fee for services or charges or all or any of them remains unpaid, in whole or in part, for a period in excess of 90 days, such fee or charges or all or any of them shall be added to the tax roll for any real property within the territorial limits of the City owned, in whole or in part, by the owner and shall be collected in a like manner as municipal taxes.

O. All of the owners of the real property to which tax roll the fee for services or charges or any or all of them were added pursuant to Subsection N shall be liable jointly and severally for paying such fee and charges, and such fee and charges shall be collected in a like manner as municipal taxes.

P. Subsections N and O do not apply to a fee or charge for services provided or done to a condominium building, which fee or charge may be recovered by action.
Q. Nothing in this section prevents the City from prosecuting a contravention of Subsection A or a contravention of an order made under Subsection B as an offence.

R. Nothing in this section derogates from any powers, rights or duties of the Fire Chief or his or her delegate under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

§ 79-15. Refusal to assist.\textsuperscript{15}

[Amended 2000-10-05 by By-law 869-2000]

If required to do so by the Fire Department, no person present at a fire shall refuse to assist in:

A. Extinguishing fires;
B. Pulling down or demolishing buildings or structures to prevent the spread of fires;
C. Crowd and traffic control; or
D. Other reasonable ways.

§ 79-16. Refusal to leave scene of fire.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite § 79-17, no person present at a fire shall refuse to leave the immediate vicinity when required to do so by the Fire Department.

§ 79-17. Conduct at fires.

A. During a fire and for the time after it has been extinguished that is required to remove the apparatus and equipment of the Fire Department and render the location and vicinity safe from fire, no person, either on foot or with a vehicle of any kind, shall enter or remain upon or within:

(1) The portion of any street or lane upon which the site of the fire abuts or upon any street or lane for a distance of 15 metres on each side of the property damaged by fire; or

(2) Any additional street or lane or part of a street or lane or any additional limits in the vicinity of the fire as may be prescribed by the Fire Chief or the next ranking officer present at the fire.

B. The provisions of Subsection A shall not apply to a resident of any street or lane or within any prescribed additional limit or to any person so authorized to enter or remain by an officer of the Fire Department or by a police officer.

\textsuperscript{15} Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 48 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.

\textsuperscript{16} Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 48 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.
§ 79-18. Inspection of premises and by-law enforcement.¹⁷

Such officers and fire-fighters of the Fire Department who have been appointed for this purpose shall be authorized to enter at all reasonable times upon any property to ascertain whether this chapter or any other by-law of the City respecting fire protection services is being obeyed and to enforce or carry into effect such by-laws.

§ 79-19. Interference.¹⁸

No person shall impede or interfere with or hinder the Fire Department in the performance of its duties.

§ 79-20. Responding to rescues and emergencies.

A. The Fire Department may respond to rescues and emergencies other than fires with the approval of the Fire Chief or, when the Fire Chief is not on duty, the next ranking officer.

B. Where the Fire Department responds to rescues or emergencies as provided for under Subsection A, §§ 79-12 to 79-19, inclusive, apply with necessary modifications.

§ 79-21. Interference with fire alarm.¹⁹

No person shall prevent, obstruct or interfere in any manner whatsoever with the communication of a fire alarm to the Fire Department or with the Fire Department responding to a fire alarm that has been activated.²⁰

§ 79-22. Offences.²¹

Every person who contravenes any of §§ 79-12 and 79-13, 79-14A, 79-15 and 79-16, 79-17A and 79-19 to 79-21, inclusive, or who contravenes an order made under § 79-14B is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to the penalty established by the Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.33 (as may be amended or replaced from time to time), being on the date of enactment of this chapter, a fine not exceeding $5,000 exclusive of costs.

§ 79-23. Fires and emergencies outside city limits; services from outside fire departments.

Subject to any agreement entered into by the City of Toronto under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 or by any of the six old area municipalities of the former Metropolitan Toronto under this Act or any predecessor legislation and still in force, and subject to any mutual aid plan established under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 or any predecessor legislation and still in force, and subject to any procedures established by the Fire Chief to deal with such situations, the Fire Department may respond to fires and rescues and emergencies.

¹⁷ Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 46 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.
¹⁸ Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 48 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.
¹⁹ Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of paragraph 49 of section 210 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.
²⁰ Editor’s Note: See also Ch. 433, Art. I, Reward for Information Leading to False Fire Alarm Conviction.
²¹ Editor’s Note: This section was passed under the authority of section 320 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.
outside of the territorial limits of the City of Toronto or receive fire protection services from a
fire department situated outside of the territorial limits of the City of Toronto.

§ 79-24. Distinguished service. 22

A person who distinguishes himself or herself at a fire, rescue or emergency by performing a
gallant or heroic act shall be eligible to receive a medal or other reward as the Council may direct
on the recommendation of the Fire Chief.


Where this chapter may conflict with any other by-law setting out the powers and duties of a
municipal officer or a municipal department, this chapter shall supersede and prevail over that
other by-law to the extent of the conflict.

22 Editor's Note: This section was passed under the authority of section 114 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.45.