

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

April 13, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.

Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W

Good afternoon.

Today, I will provide an update on the status of operations within our Emergency Operations Centre as well as an update on emergency first response across Toronto.

Our Emergency Operations Centre continues to be fully activated and is operating at Level 3, which is our highest level of activation. There are representatives from each City division and agency engaged in the EOC, and all aspects of COVID-19 planning and response are being coordinated effectively.

The COVID-19 Planning Task Force, which forms part of our overall Incident Management System structure, is focused on the following areas:

- City-wide business continuity;
- Staff redeployment and labour availability planning; and
- The sustainability of City service delivery.

Under the leadership of the City Manager's Office, we are significantly expanding the focus and resource allocation, within the EOC, dedicated to the social and economic recovery in Toronto. This is important work that is focused entirely on restarting the economy and returning the city, as best as possible, to a state of normal, once COVID-19 is behind us.

Other key areas of focus within the EOC include:

- The comprehensive management of personal protective equipment;
- Social services planning and operations; and of course
- The uninterrupted delivery of essential and critical services, including emergency services.

I will provide a more detailed update on Personal Protective Equipment later this week.

The provision of emergency services in Toronto continues without interruption and without any reduction in frontline emergency service levels.

With respect to Paramedic Services, emergency medical call volumes are down approximately 8% year to date, as compared to the same time last year.

In general, lower acuity call volumes are down while higher acuity call volumes remain stable. Both frontline paramedic service levels and on-duty staffing levels are both stable and consistent. Our residents continue to receive world-class emergency prehospital care and paramedic services, in Toronto, each day.

With respect to Fire Services, Emergency call volumes are up 4.3% year to date, as compared to the same time last year. Most significantly, the number of working fires are up 17.6% year to date, as compared to the same time last year. The two leading causes of fire in Toronto are careless and unattended cooking and careless smoking.

In response to these alarming trends, Toronto Fire Services is running daily public education campaigns aimed at reducing the number of fires caused by cooking and smoking. Please, never leave your cooking unattended and please ensure that you safely dispose of cigarette butts and other smoker's articles. Service levels and on-duty staffing levels within Fire Services are both stable and consistent.

With respect to Policing in Toronto, the Toronto Police Service continues to focus on community safety, investigating crimes and responding to high priority calls. There has been no change to frontline policing in Toronto. Toronto Police continues to enforce the law and is adapting to the current impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the city. Toronto Police continue to increase patrols and are increasing the visibility of officers across the City.

With the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto Police are experiencing an overall decrease in the number of calls for service. This is generally attributed to the reduced numbers of people working in the city, reductions in the numbers of people travelling in and out of the city during the day, and fewer people calling 9-1-1 to report the same incident. Our Police officers continue to respond to both the current and changing dynamic of the city and continue to educate, enforce and work hard to keep our communities safe.

In summary, we are truly fortunate to enjoy the levels of expertise, dedication and service that our emergency responders provide each day in Toronto.

I extend my sincere thanks for everything that each Paramedic, Police Officer and Firefighter does each day in service to our residents. In closing, I would like to acknowledge that today marks the start of 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week.

The dedicated women and men who answer and process incoming 9-1-1 and other emergency calls for help are on the very front lines of emergency response. These are the people who answer the very first call for help when someone is having their very worst day.

These professionals receive, process and dispatch these emergency calls for help, often in less than 60 seconds, and often under extreme stress and pressure.

On behalf of all of us, I extend my sincere thanks for all that each emergency call-taker and dispatcher does every day. You make us all very proud.

In closing, I also want to acknowledge and thank every resident, business owner and everyone in our city who is impacted as we do our very best to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are truly all in this together.

I remind everyone that the City's website continues to be updated hourly with new or revised information and I encourage you to check back regularly at [Toronto.ca/covid19](https://toronto.ca/covid19)

Thank you.

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