

Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Fire Services Administration Policy



1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish key administration practices between the Municipality and municipally registered volunteer fire departments.

2. Authority

The Municipality takes its authority for this policy under the provisions set out in Part 10, Section 293 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* which states a municipality may maintain and provide fire and emergency services by providing the service, assisting others to provide the service, working with others to provide the service or a combination of means.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the Municipality and fire departments that service the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. *Dwelling Unit* – means living quarters that are accessible from a private entrance, either outside the building or in a common area within the building, are occupied or, if unoccupied, are reasonably fit for occupancy, contain kitchen facilities within the unit, and have toilet facilities that are not shared with the occupants of other dwelling units.
- 4.2. *Fire Chief* – the senior official within and in charge of the fire department.
- 4.3. *Fire Department* – a fire department that has registered with the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's to provide fire-suppression or emergency services pursuant to section 294 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*.
- 4.4. *Fire Marshall* - means the person appointed as the Fire Marshal by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing pursuant to the *Fire Safety Act*;
- 4.5. *Local Assistant* – a person who is a local assistant is appointed by the Fire Marshall pursuant to the Fire Safety Act and further that is typically the Fire Chief or a designate of a fire department.
- 4.6. *Members* – members of a municipally registered fire department.
- 4.7. *Property Valuation Services* - an independent, not-for-profit organization under the terms of the *Property Valuation Services Corporation Act*.
- 4.8. *Structure* – something that is constructed on a piece of property.
- 4.9. *The Municipality* – the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.

5. Municipal Registration Process

All Volunteer Fire Departments must register with St. Mary's Municipality every five years using ***Form A: "Application for Registration as a Fire Department or Emergency Services Provider"***

under the *Municipal Government Act*. The objective is to ensure emergency services and providers meet registration requirements and to let the Municipality know what emergency services are available. As per the *MGA* a municipally registered fire department shall provide the Municipality with a list of specific emergency services it will endeavour to provide and the area in which the services will be provided. Not every department must provide all services.

6. Mutual Aid Agreement

The Mutual Aid Fire and Emergency Agreement shall be reviewed by municipal Fire Services Committee every 5 years; including the procedures, equipment, and support schedules. The Agreement is to be signed by all parties involved and filed at Municipal Office with the Municipal Clerk.

7. Fire Tax Levy

The Municipality collects fire protection rates on behalf of volunteer fire departments.

- 7.1. The rate is determined by each of the volunteer fire departments after holding a Rate Payers Meeting on an annual basis and may be calculated as one of the following options:
 - a. a uniform charge on each property assessed as residential and commercial by Property Valuation Services; or
 - b. a percentage of the dollar assessment value of residential and commercial property with a threshold greater than \$2,500 assessment value; or
 - c. a uniform charge on each property classified as residential with a dwelling unit and all commercially assessed properties; or
 - d. as a uniform charge to be applied to residential properties with dwellings and commercial properties with a structure.
- 7.2. An advertisement for departments Rate Payers Meetings must be submitted to the Municipal Clerk at least 30 days prior to the meeting. The advertisement must include the date, time, address of the location of the meeting, and the current fire levy rate. The Municipality will advertise the meeting in the municipal newsletter.
- 7.3. The method and levy amount determined from the Rate Payers Meetings shall be submitted annually to the Municipal Clerk, along with **Form B- "Standard Financial Statement"** by May 1st. If no submission is received, there will be no changes to rates from prior year.
- 7.4. The fire departments must submit their annual rate payers meeting minutes, and rate information to the Municipal Clerk and the Municipality will advertise the new information in the municipal newsletter for rate payers.

- 7.5. The rate is a first lien on the real property and may be collected in the same manner as property taxes.
- 7.6. All tax levied through fire area rates will be paid out directly to corresponding fire departments in two installments: September and March of each fiscal year.

8. Fire Department Annual Municipal Grant

The Municipality will provide a grant to help offset insurance costs incurred for fire stations.

- 8.1. Annual municipal grants are determined by Council and will be paid to volunteer departments based on the number of Fire Stations/Building to maintain, served by the department.
- 8.2. The annual grant may be released in September. Fire departments must submit their financial statements for the previous year to the Municipal Clerk to release the grant.
- 8.3. All fire departments shall be required to levy an area rate to become eligible for a grant from Council.
- 8.4. The amount for the Fire Department Annual Municipal Grant will be considered as part of the Municipal annual budget process. Council may allocate funds over and above the amount approved in the budget process when request for grants of an emergency or pressing nature are received that exceed the budget.
- 8.5. Council reserves the right to grant or reject any application for funding that may or may not qualify in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy.

9. Fire Department Annual Training Grant

The Municipality offers a grant to assist volunteer fire department members in receiving sufficient training to serve the Municipality.

- 9.1. Annual Training grants are determined by Council and will be paid to volunteer departments based on training received by members from an outside source related to fire protection.
- 9.2. Receipts from previous years training must be provided to Municipal Clerk by each department before a training grant is released for the upcoming fiscal year.
- 9.3. All fire departments shall be required to levy an area rate to become eligible for the training grant from Council.

- 9.4. The amount for Fire Department Annual Training Grant will be considered as part of the Municipality's annual budget process. Council reserves the right to grant or reject any application for funding that may or may not qualify in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy.

10. Workers Compensation Coverage

The Municipality provides workers compensation coverage to all volunteer fire department members in the District of St. Mary's. It is mandatory for fire departments to participate. Members are entitled to normal compensation benefits if they suffer an injury during their engagement as a volunteer fire fighter.

- 10.1. An annual letter must be filed with the Municipal Clerk by March 31st from each volunteer fire department that states the number of current members, and their names.
- 10.2. The Municipality will remit workers compensation on quarterly basis on behalf of members at a rate determined by the Workers Compensation Board.
- 10.3. If a fire department serves more than one Municipality, it's Workers Compensation will be paid by the Municipality in which the most dwellings within their fire district is serviced by the department.

11. Workers Compensation Claim

To make a claim to the Workers Compensation Board follow the steps below:

- 11.1. The fire fighter should notify their Chief as soon as possible and seek immediate health care, ask their health care provider to prepare a report for the WCB. The member must inquire if they are cleared to return to work in regular or transitional duties.
- 11.2. If the individual must be off work due to an injury, work with your employer, healthcare provider, and the WCB to return to work as soon as you're able.
- 11.3. The injured fire fighter will work with their Chief to complete the **Form C: "WCB Injury Form"** and submit it to the Municipal Clerk at the Municipal Office for the signing by the employer to be completed.
- 11.4. The Municipal Clerk will submit the *Form B: WCB Injury Form* to the Workers Compensation Board.
- 11.5. It is the responsibility of the fire department's fire chief to ensure that their members are aware of their Workers Compensation coverage and how to make a report if injured during duty.

12. Dry Hydrant Site Selection

The Municipality recognizes the importance of placing dry hydrants strategically throughout the Municipality to ensure an available supply of water should the need occur. The Municipality will install dry hydrants based on the need as determined by Council in consultation with fire departments and the Fire Services Committee.

- 12.1. Dry hydrants shall be placed in a location of a reliable natural water source that is easily accessible and meet engineered design specifications and have a universal adaptor.
- 12.2. If a fire department wishes to install a dry hydrant, they must submit a request to the Fire Services Committee using the **Form D: "Dry Hydrant for Consideration Form"**. Requests must be received by November 15th and will be considered for the following fiscal year.
- 12.3. The Fire Services Committee will review and score each request using the Dry Hydrant Site Selection Scoring Matrix. The request which demonstrates the highest need will be selected. If there are multiple requests that demonstrate a high need, the Committee may recommend to Council for consideration the selection of two requests to be completed in two consecutive years and forgo the selection process for the next year.
- 12.4. Once a dry hydrant is installed, on-going maintenance is the responsibility of the fire departments.

13. Fire Scene Security

Under section 33(3) of the FSA, if a local assistant considers it necessary for a fire investigation, they must request assistance from the Office of the Fire Marshall. The local assistant may order the closure of the land or premise where a fire has occurred, prohibit persons from entering and post a fire security watch. The Municipality provides a fire chief or, their designate the authority to make an order directing the owner to pay the costs incurred for scene security.

- 13.1. To request assistance from the Office of the Fire Marshall, see **Form E: Request for Assistance from the Office of the Fire Marshall**. Where the Local Assistant deems it necessary for the purpose of an investigation, the Local Assistant may, by oral or written order:
 - a) close the land or premises
 - b) prohibit any entry, or lingering
 - c) post a security watch, using **Form F: Order to Post Security Watch at Fire Investigation**.

- 13.2. Orders for scene security will be posted at the fire scene to preserve chain of custody of evidence until a fire investigation can be undertaken.
- 13.3. A representative from the Fire Marshall's Office should be on scene prior to a fire department departure, however there may be incidents where a representative is unable to attend up to (24) twenty-four hours, whereby scene security is required. Security shall remain in place until the local assistant is relieved of their responsibility by Police or the Office of the Fire Marshall.
- 13.4. The Municipality will maintain an agreement with a security provider(s), which the local assistant may contact to obtain services. See **Schedule B – Security Providers for Use** for a listing of security providers the Municipality has a service agreement with and their contact information.
- 13.5. The Municipality will only cover the cost of security services provided by security provider(s) that the Municipality maintains a service agreement with.
- 13.6. If a Fire Department obtains security services from a security provider(s) that the Municipality maintains a service agreement with, the Local Assistant must direct the owner of a property to pay any costs to the Municipality of associated with carrying out the order, work, or action using **Form G – "Order Requiring Owner to Pay Costs of Security"**.
- 13.7. The order to pay costs will include:
 - a) a description of activity for which the costs were incurred
 - b) a statement of authority for conducting the activity
 - c) a detailed account of the costs incurred
 - d) a direction that the owner pays costs to the Local Assistant.
- 13.8. An order to pay under the *Fire Safety Act 30(3)* is limited to a maximum of \$1,000 unless the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approves a higher expenditure and the order to pay as per section *30(1) of the Fire Safety Act*.
- 13.9. The Local Assistant must file the **Form G- Order Requiring Owner to Pay Costs of Security** at the Municipal Office with the Municipal Clerk.
- 13.10. Where an order to pay costs referred to in section 13.6 remains unpaid after all rights of appeal under the Fire Safety Act are exhausted, the amount of the costs is subject to interest, calculated at the rate applicable to overdue municipal rates and taxes, from the

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date of the original order for payment of costs; and with any interest subsequently, constitutes a lien on the property that is the subject of the order.

13.11. The amount of the costs and any interest is, for the purpose of collection and recovery, a first lien on the property collectable by the municipality as municipal taxes pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*.

14. Related Policies, Procedures and Legislation

- Municipal Government Act
- Fire Safety Act
- Workers Compensation Act
- Office of the Fire Marshall (Nova Scotia) Fire Investigation and Fire Scene Security Guideline
- Property Valuation Services Corporation Act.

15. Revisions

The Municipality shall ensure that this policy is reviewed at least once every four years or as requested by the Fire Services Committee and, where necessary revised.

Mallory Fuoss
Municipal Clerk

May 15, 2023
Date of Approval



SCHEDULE A

“Policy Record”

The Municipality shall ensure this policy is reviewed at least once every four years or as requested by the Fire Services Committee and, where necessary revised upon approval of Council.

Date of Review	Section(s) Updated	Council Approval Date
	Adoption of Policy	January 9, 2017
		December 11, 2017
	Section 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, S.B, F.A, F.C, F.D, F.E, F.F, F.G, A.A,	May 15, 2023



Schedule B

Security Providers for Use

Security Provider	Contact Number



Form A

Application for Registration as a Fire Department or Emergency Services Provider"

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Form B:

Financial Statement

(Insert Department Name)		
Fiscal Year		
	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year
	Prior Year Actual	Proposed Budget
Beginning Balance		
Revenue		
Tax Levies		
Pipeline Tax Levy		
Grants		
Donations		
Fundraising		
Fire Services		
Totals		
Expenses		
Building Maintenance		
Training		
Power / Utilities		
Insurance		
Office Supplies		
Vehicle Expenses		
Bank Service Fees		
Totals		
Ending Balances		
<i>Formula: Beginning Balance + Revenue – Expenses = Ending Balances</i>		



Form C

WCB Injury Report

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Form D

Request for Dry Hydrant

Fire Department: _____

Fire Chief: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Address of Proposed Dry Hydrant Location: _____

How many dry hydrants do you currently have within the fire departments boundary?	
How far is the closest dry hydrant from the proposed location?	
Is the proposed site accessible in all weather conditions?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
What is the depth of the water at the proposed location?	
What is the depth of the water at the proposed location during a drought?	
What is the bottom of the water source composed of?	
What is the distance from the end of the access road to the water source?	
What is the distance from the surface of the water source to the proposed dry hydrant?	
How many fires have occurred within your fire boundary within the past three years? Please list by year.	
Does the fire department have the appropriate equipment to support the use of the proposed dry hydrant? Please explain.	
Does the fire department have the personnel to support the use of the proposed dry hydrant? Please explain.	
Does the fire department have permission from the landowner to place a dry hydrant in the proposed location? Please provide contact information for the landowner.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner: Phone #: Email:
Additional Comments:	

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Form E

Request for Assistance from the Office of the Fire Marshall

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Form F

Order to Post Security Watch at Fire Investigation

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Form G

Order Requiring Owner to Pay Costs of Security

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Appendix A

Request for Dry Hydrant Scoring Matrix

Fire Department: _____

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

How many dry hydrants do you currently have within the fire departments boundary?	0-1: 5 points 2-3: 4 points 4-6: 3 points 7-9: 2 points 10 +: 1 point	/5
How far is the closest dry hydrant from the proposed location?	20 ² km+: 5 points 16-20 ² km: 4 points 11-15 ² km: 3 points 6-10 ² km: 2 points 0-5 ² km: 1 point	/5
Is the proposed site accessible in all weather conditions?	Yes: 1 point No: 0 points	/1
What is the depth of the water at the proposed location?	5 feet+: 4 points 4 feet: 3 points 3 feet: 2 points 2 feet: 1 points Less than 2 feet: 0 points	/4
What is the depth of the water at the proposed location during a drought?	5 feet+: 4 points 4 feet: 3 points 3 feet: 2 points 2 feet: 1 points Less than 2 feet: 0 points	/4
What is the bottom of the water source composed of?	Sand, Gravel or Rock: 2 points Sparsely Vegetated: 1 points Very vegetaated: 0 points	/2
What is the distance from the end of the access road to the water source?	50 metres: 5 points 100 metres: 4 points 150 metres: 3 points 200 metres: 2 points 250 metres +: 1 point	/5

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What is the population within your fire departments boundary?	270+: 6 points 216-269: 5 points 162-216: 4 points 108-161: 3 points 107-160: 2 points 0-160: 1 point	/6
How many fires have occurred within your fire boundary within the past three years? Please list by year.	10+: 5 6-9: 4 4-6: 3 2-4: 2 0-2: 1	/5
Does the fire department have the appropriate equipment to support the use of the proposed dry hydrant? Please explain.	Yes: 2 Most of the time: 1 No: 0	/2
Does the fire department have the personnel to support the use of the proposed dry hydrant? Please explain.	Yes: 2 Most of the time: 1 No: 0	/2
Does the fire department have permission from the landowner to place a dry hydrant in the proposed location? Please provide contact information for the landowner.	Yes: 1 No: 0	/1
Additional Comments:		/3
Total Points		/45