

Council Memorandum

Date:	August 26, 2025
To:	Council
From:	Councillor Richardson
Re:	Firefighter Certifications

Recommendation

That the Memorandum from Councillor Richardson, **regarding Firefighter Certifications**, be received; and

That the Office of the Fire Marshall and the Ministry of the Solicitor General be requested to consider the following recommendations in light of changes to O. Reg. 343/22:

- Defer full implementation of the certification regulation for communities that rely heavily on volunteer firefighters, such as rural municipalities;
- Provide exemptions or alternative compliance pathways tailored to the needs and limitations of small and/or remote fire services, especially those serviced by volunteers; and
- Increase funding and training supports for municipalities outside major urban centres.

Rationale

I am supporting the motion and letter from the Council of the Township of Black River-Matheson, who are opposed to the implementation of the firefighter certification requirements in O. Reg. 343/22.

While they are in full support of training and safety requirements, the one-size-fits-all approach taken in the legislation does not adequately reflect the realities of smaller fire services, those in remote areas, and those that rely heavily on volunteers. While we have a centralized group of professional firefighters, we also rely heavily on volunteers in most of our fire stations and, like Black River-Matheson, we are also facing similar pressures:

- Geographic barriers and long travel distances to accredited training centres
- Inconsistent access to instructors and scheduling options
- Limited budgets and competing capital demands
- Difficulty in retaining and replacing volunteers due to increased regulatory pressures.

Without additional support, flexibility, or exemption mechanisms, the implementation requirements will compromise the ability of many municipalities to provide consistent, timely, and effective fire protection. Fire services in other neighbouring municipalities are equally as affected by these regulations, and any insufficiencies elsewhere can have a negative impact here, since fires may not stay within one municipality only. This is not just for us, but for all the municipalities disproportionately affected by these changes.



Firefighter
Certification Opposi