

# 2019-2020 Year in Review – Saskatoon Fire Department

## ISSUE

Information in this report is to highlight the work completed in 2019 and 2020 by the Saskatoon Fire Department (the SFD) and provide an overview of the structure, response, and service to the residents of Saskatoon.

## BACKGROUND

Over the last several years, the SFD has realized a great number of initiatives, successes, partnerships, and increased levels of response. Reporting to the community is an important component of communication to those we serve. Emergency service is unique, remains in a state of constant evolution, and it is valuable that residents understand the commitment of our staff to the community.

## CURRENT STATUS

The SFD is a 24-hour all-hazard respondent delivering service focused on public safety, risk reduction, and emergency management. During the ever-changing response to COVID-19, the SFD remained ready to respond while adapting to meeting the needs of the community with highly skilled resources in emergency response and emergency management.

Success has been achieved through relationship building and collaboration. Over the past two years, partnerships have strengthened with Provincial Ministries, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, and other key partners.

The SFD is privileged to support the safety and well-being of the community through collaborative efforts with the Safe Community Action Alliance and the Community Safety and Well-being Executive.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

There are 340 staff in total supporting the activities of five areas of focus. Today, the SFD has 280 Firefighters including 137 Firefighter/Primary Care Paramedics. Firefighter/Primary Care Paramedics now comprise half of the firefighting division.

*Community Relations* maintained positive relationships providing fire and life safety information, media, and community involvement. Programs and partnerships remained strong with building the Remembering When Program further through the Pandemic. This was achieved through virtual meetings and phone call follow ups with those we assisted. In 2019, over 1,025 lifts were performed and 1,150 in 2020.

*Fire Prevention and Investigation* provides proactive service to protect life and property with support, code enforcement, and follow up for Operations and Communications. Improved efficiency for average hours per inspection (12% improvement) and investigation (7.9% improvement) occurred from 2019 - 2020. Efficiencies were

realized with the Demolition and Property Remediation Process resulting in a safer and more effective utilization of services. Also, an initiative was created with Crocus Co-operative, to assist in neighbourhood clean ups which resulted in the collection of over 100,000 lbs of junk and garbage from back lanes.

*Maintenance, Mechanical, Information Technology, and Supply Chain Management* is an inward facing area of our business which ensures staff have what is required to respond with a high level of performance and safety for incidents and events.

*Operations and Communications* mitigates a wide scope of emergencies and is responsible for the front-line response to the residents of Saskatoon. This reactive component continues to have high a success rate in mitigating incidents due to training of staff and efficient use of the appropriate equipment for each situation. In 2019, call volumes increased by 12% to 16,029. Despite the pandemic in 2020 call volumes continued to increase to 16,471. This is, without question, exponential growth in call volumes far outpacing population growth.

*Staff Development and Safety* ensures staff have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to fulfill commitment to serve the residents of Saskatoon safely. Professional standards are followed in delivering service to residents through certification, recertification, skill reviews, and research and development. In addition to specialty programs like EMS, HazMat, Technical Rescue, and Water Rescue, a commitment remained to supporting employee growth, health, and wellness through programs such as Employee and Family Assistance and Critical Incident Stress Management. Commendable efforts of adaptation during COVID-19 included Emergency Medical Services training offered online exceeded 3,200 hours in 2020. The staff adjusted curriculum, created safety plans, and engaged staff to continue with important program training through 2020.

The *Emergency Management Organization (EMO)* provided emergency management service utilizing skilled staff and the mobile command unit. With the Pandemic the EMO initiated the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) with the direction of the Executive Leadership Team. Supporting the City of Saskatoon (the City) as an organization, to continue all services allowable under the Public Health Orders was the main focus through 2020. A whole-community approach was taken during the course of response with EMO working with over 75 critical infrastructure partners in Saskatoon and area. In 2020, a Regional Resiliency partnership was signed between 11 municipalities to establish an emergency planning program geared towards mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In 2020, Corporate Security moved within the City to EMO.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

## **NEXT STEPS**

There is no follow up required.

**APPENDICES**

1. 2019-2020 Year in Review

Report Approval

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