



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

Date	June 3, 2019	Report No:	Fire 19-09
Directed To:	Mayor and Members of Council	Attachments:	2018 Annual Report
Department:	Fire Service	Policy References:	
Prepared By:	D. Sutton, Fire Chief		
Subject:	2018 Annual Report		

RECOMMENDATION:

Report to be received for information purposes

REPORT:

The attached report provides a summary of emergency response statistics and administrative activity conducted by the LaSalle Fire Service in 2018.

Respectfully,

Dave Sutton
Fire Chief / C.E.M.C

Reviewed by:							
CAO 	Treasury	Clerks	Public Works	Planning	Culture & Rec	Building	Fire



LASALLE FIRE SERVICE
Annual Report 2018

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Our mission is guided by commitment to our core values:

RESPECT, INTEGRITY, TEAMWORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LaSalle Fire Service experienced a typical and somewhat predictable year in 2018 with regard to emergency response activity. Calls for service continued to trend upward, with a total call volume of 409 responses. In terms of structure fires and associated dollar loss resulting from fires, 2018 was a relatively fire-safe year for the Town of LaSalle. There were thirteen fires with reported dollar loss in 2018. Four property loss fires occurred in single-family residential structures, and two in multi unit residential buildings. There were also four vehicle fires, three outdoor fire resulting in reported loss. The total reported fire loss in the municipality for 2018 was \$314,700.00. There were no fire fatalities, however there were six recorded fire-related injuries resulting from one unfortunate outdoor fire incident.

A large measure of the credit for consistently maintaining favourable performance benchmarks is attributable to our aggressive and proactive approach to public education and inspection programs, with a focus on making residents and building owners aware of their obligations for family and public safety, and assisting them in preventing preventable fires. The importance of these programs aimed at influencing public behavior and awareness in relation to fire safety cannot be overstated, or overlooked. It is a vital on-going primary initiative and a critical factor not only for public safety, but also in maintaining a sustainable level of required emergency response activity.

Overall actual operating costs for service delivery increased slightly primarily due to labour and inflationary increases, however in order to responsibly plan for service level enhancements that may be required in the future, Council also approved an increase in the annual contribution to reserve funds. In terms of human resources and staff development, significant transition in the leadership of both major support divisions occurred in 2018. As result of the retirements of two long serving full-time personnel, new officer positions were promoted to lead both the Fire Prevention Division and the Training Division. Both of these positions are also key leadership positions within the department, reporting directly to the chief officers.

A number of operational projects were undertaken in 2018. A collaborative committee of fire service and IT staff continued to implement initial phases of an ongoing project to utilize mobile technology and tablets to enhance record keeping and improve efficiency in daily station duties. Most day-to-day functions, checklists, and required follow-up documentation have been transitioned to an electronic format using tablets. The committee continues to work toward implementation of further applications for field use including pre-incident planning and interactive mapping capabilities. As directed by Council, a request for proposals was issued in June for a Fire Master Plan. The comprehensive project including a Community Risk Assessment and Master Plan was subsequently awarded to the successful consultant with the process commencing in August. The final report is expected to be presented to Council in the summer of 2019.

A radio communications study was also approved by Council to facilitate better awareness and prudent long-term planning among all radio communications users in the municipality. The study is expected to provide recommendations and options for future required upgrades and radio replacements as required by each user group. An RFP for the project was issued in August and a steering committee was established among all municipal departments with radio communications needs. The selected consultant launched the project in November and the final report and recommendations are expected by summer of 2019.

Firefighter training continues to be a significant area of activity to ensure adequate emergency response. Despite the transition of personnel in the training division, a total of eighty (80) in-house training sessions were delivered our training staff, in addition to numerous on-line programs, officer level and specialized out-sourced courses, and courses taken by staff at the Ontario Fire College, all coordinated by our Training Officers and staff. The availability of locally delivered officer level training for volunteer officers and qualified senior firefighters continues to be a challenge. Through on-going collaboration among Windsor & Essex County chief officers and training officers, as well as some anticipated technology enhancements for testing through the Ontario Fire College, potential solutions to current availability challenges are being sought.

Increasing call volumes and turnover of volunteer staff continue to increase the strain on the effectiveness of the current paid-on-call response model. Following a large recruit hiring of eight new firefighters in 2017, an additional five new recruits were hired in February, to fill vacancies that had occurred over the previous year, and another 3 were taken on in September to fill additional vacancies. By the end of 2018 there were six additional vacant positions, and another recruitment process was required. The resulting infusion of youth and enthusiasm, although positive in moderation, particularly in the long-term perspective, also presents a number of challenges and pressures on our relatively small organization in the short term. As we continue to attempt to adapt our structure and operations to be responsive to the growing and changing fire protection needs of the community by maintaining adequate staffing levels, and attempting to develop opportunities for practical experience, there is also an increasingly proportionate additional demand for required training at all levels of the organization.

Given the fact that approximately 2-3 years of training and experience are required to ensure a firefighter is fully qualified to competently perform all expected duties, the recent higher levels of turnover effectively reduces the available compliment of responders that are qualified for full firefighting duties, including the operation of required emergency response vehicles. Combined with minimal levels of on-duty full-time staff for emergency response, and continued growth in the community with increasing numbers of larger single and multi-residential buildings, the resulting impact on the effectiveness of the current emergency response model is of increasing concern.

Proactive public fire safety education continues to be a primary area of focus. In 2018 LaSalle Fire Service was active with on-going seasonal messaging over multiple media formats including social media channels, with tips and advice aimed at educating and encouraging residents to take proactive measures to ensure their safety. A public open-house was conducted at the fire station with interactive demonstrations and displays for all age levels. Other events were held throughout the year in partnerships with various businesses and community events, to promote fire safety awareness.

LASALLE FIRE SERVICE STAFF ORGANIZATION

FIRE CHIEF

D. SUTTON

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

E. THIESSEN

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

S. NANTAIS

CAPTAIN / FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER

M. MAYEA (Retired early 2018)

M. WILEY (As of February 2018)

CAPTAIN / TRAINING OFFICER

C. THIBERT

J. PRICE (Training Instructor as of November 26, 2018)

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTERS

R. BONDY

K. SEMANDE

C. LUSSIER

R. MOORE

R. CURTIS

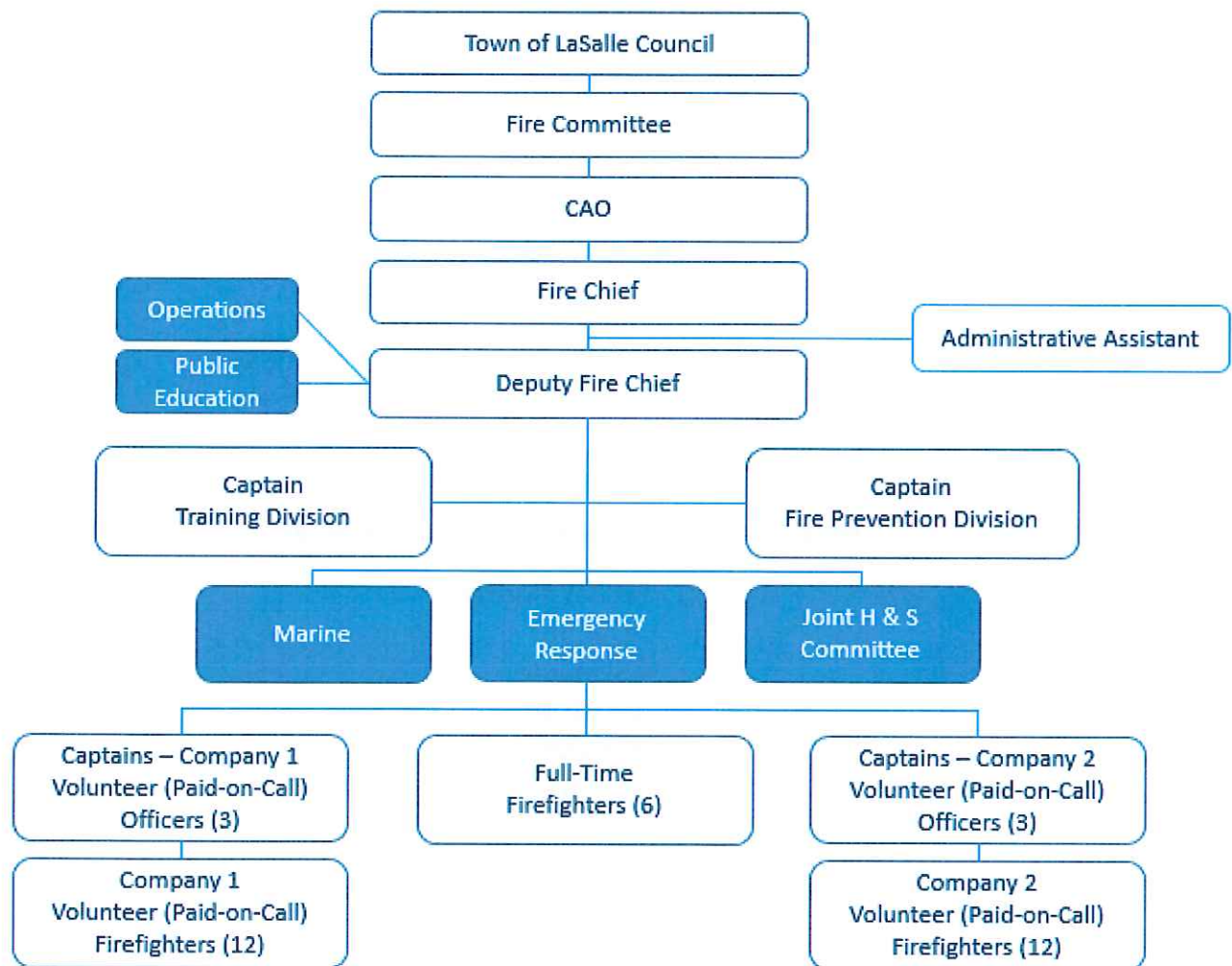
J. TOUSIGNANT (February 2018)

VOLUNTEER /PAID-ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS (30)

(list as of end of 2018)

COMPANY 1	COMPANY 2
VACANT	VACANT
CAPTAIN M. SEGUIN	CAPTAIN J. GRIFFITH
CAPTAIN B. BARTLETT	CAPTAIN J. PRICE
J. CHAUVIN	J. SHINKAR
C. SEGUIN	M. BONDY
P. HOMENICK	N. FIELDS
C. CARR	G. LEGOOD
M. O'BRIGHT	T. CLARKE
C. FECTEAU	M. CARLONE
R. O'NEILL	B. THOMAN
J. MACNEIL	R. O'NEILL
R. LEE	B. TAYLOR
J. BLANCHETTE	M. DAY
VACANT	J. HARRIS
VACANT	VACANT

LaSalle Fire Service – Organizational Chart 2018



PERSONNEL CHANGES

- 1 Full-time firefighter retired – R. Bondy
- 2 Full-time firefighters hired Feb. 2018 – J. Tousignant
- 1 Full-time firefighter left Training Officer position for Full-time Firefighter position, Dec. 2018
- 1 Full-time FPO retired
- 1 Full-time firefighter promoted to Fire Prevention Officer, Feb. – M. Wiley
- 1 Volunteer (paid-on-call) Captain promoted to Full-Time Training Instructor – J. Price
- 7 Volunteer (paid-on-call) personnel resigned (2 Captains and 5 Firefighters)
- 9 Volunteer (paid-on-call) Firefighter positions were filled

CONTINUING EDUCATION INITIATIVES & CONFERENCES

D. Sutton	O AFC Conference – Labour Relations O AFC Conference – Suburban/Rural O AFC Conference & Annual General Meeting
E. Thiessen	Fire Department Instructors International Conference Public Policy course – Western University OFMEM CO & Smoke Alarm Program Training Session A.M.O. Conference The Supervisor's Role as Trainer and Coach Seminar OFC NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer course
S. Nantais	Ontario Fire Chiefs' Administrative Assistants Association Conference
C. Thibert	OFM NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer course Fire Department Instructors International Conference High Angle Rescue Training
M. Wiley	OMFPOA Training & Education Symposium OFC Vulnerable Occupancy Seminar OFC Fire Code Division B, Part 9 course OFC NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer course OFC Commercial Cooking & Fire Code Div B, Part 4 course BCIN, Legal Process course OBC Fire Protection Course
R. Curtis	OFC NFPA 1002 Pump Ops course OFC NFPA 1021 Fire Officer II course

C. Lussier	OFC Fire Investigation course
R. Moore	High Angle Rescue Training

PUBLIC EDUCATION

A wide variety of public education programs were delivered to a total aggregate audience of over 1600 persons in 2018. These interactive programs included targeted presentations to all the area elementary schools with education programs for specific age levels of students, as well as hosting numerous various groups of children for visits and educational programs at the fire station. Public education displays were also conducted at public venues such as events at the Vollmer Recreation Complex, the public library, and the Strawberry Festival, as well as in partnership with various business and community partners such as retirement homes, daycare facilities. Adult education opportunities were also conducted such as a smoke alarm & carbon monoxide alarm campaign at a local hardware store, and fire safety programs specifically designed for seniors, older adults and adults with mobility limitations, living in multi-residential buildings have been developed and delivered by appointment. Public education materials and displays include public fire safety tips and



information, as well as emergency preparedness and emergency planning information for families and residents to encourage personal resiliency in the event of large-scale municipal emergencies.

Proactive public fire safety education continues to be a primary area of focus. In 2018 LaSalle Fire Service was active with on-going seasonal messaging over multiple media formats including social media channels, with tips and advice aimed at educating and encouraging residents to take proactive measures to ensure their safety. Through frequent interactions with our residents via social media, these platforms also provide a direct means of rapidly reaching nearly 2500 followers with any important relevant emergency information. The hallmark of our public education program continues to be our Fire Prevention Week activities. In 2018, a targeted program was delivered to all senior elementary Grade 7 and 8 students in all our elementary schools. This program focuses on

kitchen and cooking safety, as well as storage & safe use of products appropriate for pre-teens and teenager age groups. Our efforts in educating elementary school students is validated in part by testimonials and examples of children influencing the fire safety behaviors of parents, and reacting appropriately to potential emergency situations. In 2018 an Open House was conducted at the fire station as part of our annual fall Fire Prevention activities. Staff collaborated to provide a number of interactive as well as static displays and activities for all ages of participants. The event was very well received and attracted



approximately 500 residents over 3 days. Positive feedback and follow-up requests for information confirmed the success of the event.

In addition to fire safety programs provided by the department, our members and the LaSalle Firefighter's Association continue to be active in the community on a volunteer basis supporting numerous organizations & making positive contributions to the quality of life in the community.

FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITY

Basic public fire protection in Ontario is regulated by the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, as amended. The legislation establishes minimum requirements including a community risk assessment, a smoke alarm program with home escape planning, public education program, and fire safety inspections, to meet the needs and circumstances of the community. LaSalle Fire Service continues to meet, or at times exceed, the minimum requirements of the legislation with a proactive public education program, fire safety inspections, and code enforcement.



All fire department staff contribute in the success of our aggressive smoke alarm, and carbon monoxide alarm program. Compliance with requirements for smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm legislation is confirmed whenever practical in all residences attended by the fire service during emergency response activity and calls for service. In 2018, 401 smoke alarms were inspected in 141 homes, resulting in the replacement or installation of 54 smoke alarms, and the replacement of 43 batteries. In cases of faulty alarms, or non-compliance with smoke alarm and carbon monoxide legislation, options include installation of a loaner alarm until the required device can be replaced, invoicing for units that are

installed, and issuing Provincial Offence tickets, when required.

In buildings other than single family detached residences, our fire prevention officer completed a total of 194 fire safety inspections in 2018. These inspections are conducted in all relevant occupancy types including commercial, industrial, assembly, institutional, and multi-unit residential. All complaints and requests for inspections were completed as required. The objectives of our proactive inspection program are to educate and



provide fire safety advice to building owners and staff, and assist in successfully resolving various fire code violations to achieve compliance. Enforcement activity, including Fire Marshal Orders, Provincial Offence Notices, and charges in relation to Ontario Fire Code and municipal by-law violations, is

conducted when required. These fire safety inspections are critical to promote public safety in the community and to reduce the potential for fire-related injuries and deaths resulting from preventable fires.

The Fire Prevention division is also responsible for conducting investigations to determine the cause and origin of all reported fires. In addition to education, inspection and enforcement activities, and fire investigations, the Fire Prevention division is also responsible to review fire safety plans required by businesses and residential facilities and issue approval, conduct plans reviews for fire safety components of new buildings, coordinate pre-planning activities to familiarize emergency response personnel with risks and layout features of various buildings, process and approve permits for fireworks displays, and ensure compliance with annual legislative requirements for all care facilities, schools and licenced day care facilities. A fire prevention representative from the fire service also participates with other municipal officials on the Special Events Resource Team, to review plans for any festivals or events proposed to be hosted at municipal venues. This participation helps ensure compliance with established codes and standards for the safety of all participants, and also helps to ensure adequate emergency plans are in place for the proposed event. Routine duties also require the Fire Prevention Officer's attendance at numerous meetings, events and on-going professional development sessions.

LaSalle Fire Service has traditionally maintained a very effective and proactive overall fire prevention program. There are increasing concerns however, that previous levels of effectiveness cannot be sustained. The division continues to experience a steadily increasing workload, attributed largely to the positive growth that the community has sustained, as well as ever-expanding regulatory requirements. Steady growth in the community over time continues to expand the building stock of buildings requiring fire prevention services in the areas of plans review, inspections, and pre-planning activities. There has also been a corresponding increase in general fire prevention inquiries, complaints and requests for inspections. Serving in a dual role as a senior full-time officer for emergency response, increasing call volumes also continue to impact the time devoted to fire prevention activities. The department continues to meet the minimum legislated requirements for fire prevention activity, however we continue to struggle with the capacity to maintain important proactive programs recommended in our growing community, such as pre-incident planning, and routine or periodic fire safety inspections in residential and assembly buildings.

TRAINING ACTIVITY

A total of eighty-five (85) training sessions were conducted “in-house” within the department at various levels in 2018, with the average firefighter receiving approximately 120 hours of internally delivered training, in addition to external courses.

There are several concurrent levels of training provided within the department to meet the needs of personnel at various stages of experience and responsibility. As an establish policy approved by Council, LaSalle Fire Service has traditionally trained and certified all firefighters in accordance with the standards set out by the Office of the Fire Marshal using the NFPA Standard for Firefighter



Professional Qualifications and curriculum, as the basic foundation of our training program. The recruit or entry level program includes “Firefighter Level I and Level II” training, delivered in a blended format of on-line self-directed study, as well as classroom theory, and hands-on practical training sessions typically scheduled twice monthly. In addition the recruit program also includes driver training and fire pumper operations courses, and a basic hazardous material curriculum. Upon completion of each level of required training, independent written and skills testing are arranged through the Office of the Fire Marshal for verification and final certification. The period required to complete this basic level program



and achieve certification to Firefighter Level II is typically two to three years. This recruit training program cycles on an on-going basis with recently hired volunteer (paid-on-call) firefighters typically at various stages in the program.

Upon completion of the basic Firefighter I & II recruit level, firefighters continue regular, on-going “general” level training twice monthly, including more advanced proficiency of firefighting skills, and specialized or technical training in areas such as auto extrication, hazardous materials, ice & water rescue, medical first responder, confined space, marine operations, etc. They are also eligible for officer level courses as required by the department. The officer level training program includes NFPA Instructor I, Fire Officer Level I and II certification, and Incident Command courses provided externally through the Ontario Fire College, partnerships with third party providers, as well as monthly sessions within the department.

Implementation of a recently established company officer development program is ongoing for current and new volunteer Captains, subject to annual course availability and budget considerations. The program is consistent with recognized provincial standards and department needs. Area departments continue to be challenged in the ability to provide local access to NFPA accredited officer level courses. On-going collaboration with area partners is assisting in the availability of officer level training programs. A joint training committee has been established among Windsor & Essex County fire services to assess common needs, and coordinate resources for delivery of common training where practical. The model will use a blended format, which combines on-line self-directed study, assignments and classroom sessions, practical sessions, and finally testing and certification scheduled locally, conducted by the OFMEM testing unit. Particularly for paid-on-call personnel, this format makes officer level training and certification far more practical and accessible than the alternative of having to travel to the Ontario Fire College to attend one or two week courses.



Collaborative partnerships also allowed our personnel to take advantage of realistic training facilities in the region. Several area partners have purchased and share the use of a mobile live-fire training unit. In 2018 our own live-fire training program was implemented. The ability to conduct live-fire training at our own facility on an on-going basis greatly enhances the proficiency of our personnel at all levels, and is a major component of our training programs.

In another example of collaborative partnerships, the LaSalle Fire and Police Services assisted the local Navy Reserve unit in the

planning and delivery of a training day for reserve members from across this region of the province designed to familiarize military personnel with municipal emergency planning processes and procedures. A portion of the training day was hosted in LaSalle with activities intended to expose members to interaction with a typical municipal emergency management structure in the event of a deployment to assist municipalities on a large-scale emergency incident.

Some specialized, externally provided training was also made possible during the period covered by this report. Leveraging the availability of specialized grant funding allowed for the provision of an NFPA Hazardous Materials Operations course at our facility for all department personnel over two weekends.

IN-HOUSE ONGOING TRAINING CONDUCTED

- Recruit training – on-line study, FF I and FF II practical sessions & instructor sign-offs, exam preparation & exams
- Live Fire training
- Fire-ground operations
- Wildland operations
- Auto Extrication
- Forcible Entry
- Search & Rescue operations
- SCBA endurance drills
- Health & Wellness training
- Personal protective equipment, physical agility with SCBA (bi-annual), respiratory program - mask fit testing
- Emergency Vehicle Operator driver course
- Officer Level Training – pre-planning, incident command, building familiarization, scene assessment
- Health & safety training, policies and Operational Guideline training and on-line training through LaSalle Systems 24/7 and Target Solutions

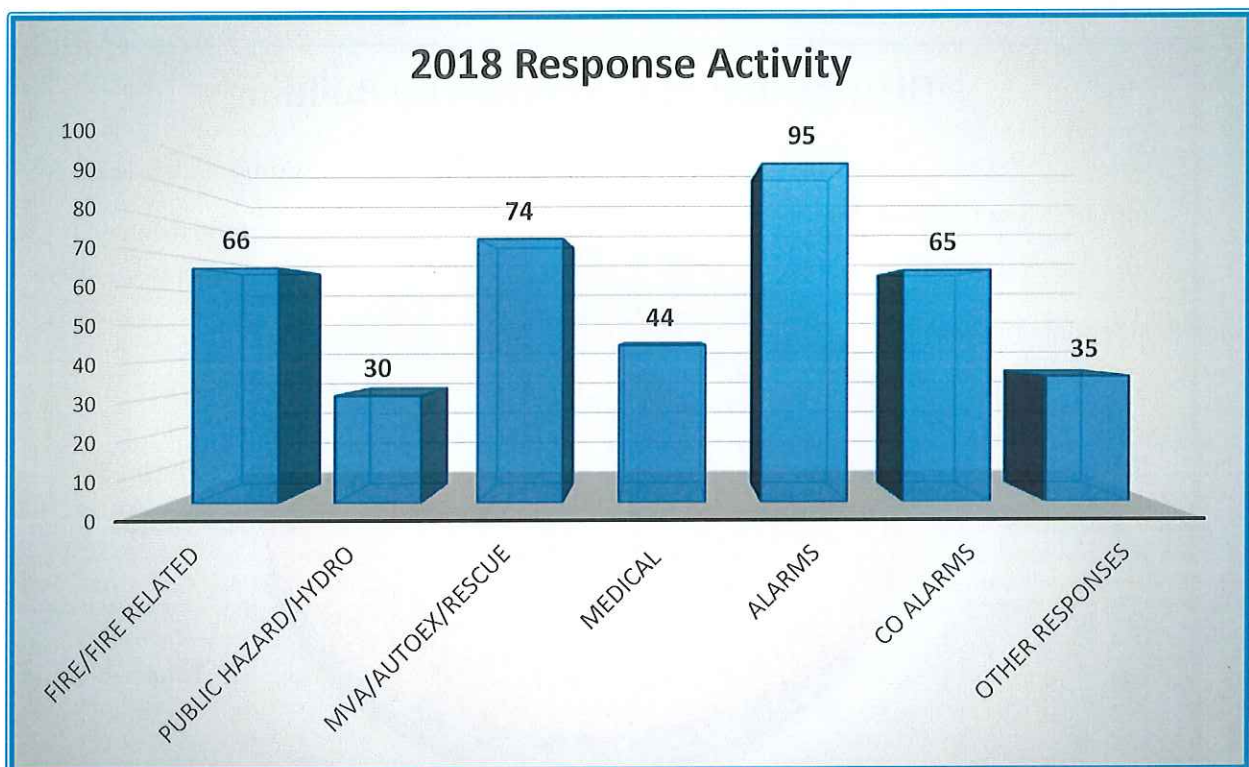
SPECIALIZED TRAINING CONDUCTED

- Base Hospital program Train the trainer – CPR/Defib. Annual training
- Mental health Peer Support training provided by regional coalition
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Aerial tower operation training – tower crew
- Blue Card Incident Command training - for newly promoted Company Officers
- Various Officer level NFPA courses
- Marine Operations

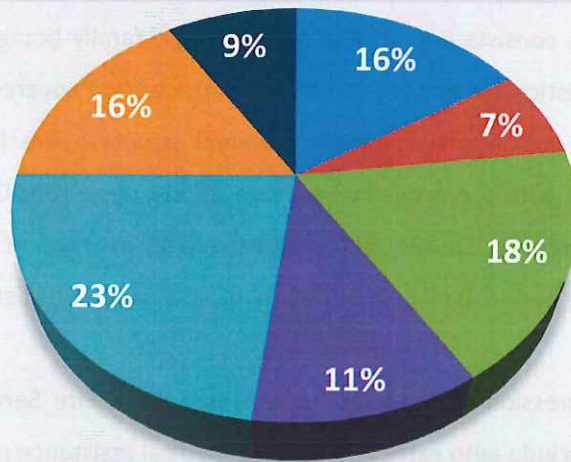
RESPONSE ACTIVITY

LaSalle Fire Service responded to 409 calls for service in 2018, which resulted in approximately \$315,000 in fire loss. The fire loss consists primarily of fires in single-family homes, as well as several vehicles. Although provincial statistics are not yet available for the period covered by this report, the five-year average for 2013-2017 indicates that LaSalle's annual structure fire loss, at \$24 per \$100,000 of assessment is consistent with the provincial average of \$23 per \$100,000. In terms of the number or frequency of fire occurrences, LaSalle has experienced an average of 6 structure fires per 10,000 structures over the same period, well below the provincial average of 11 structure fires per 10,000.

In addition to fire suppression and related responses, LaSalle Fire Service also provides emergency response services that include auto extrication, tiered medical assistance response, ice and water rescue, hazardous materials response, and limited technical rescue capabilities such as confined space, and elevator rescues. A breakdown of response activity by general response category is provided below.

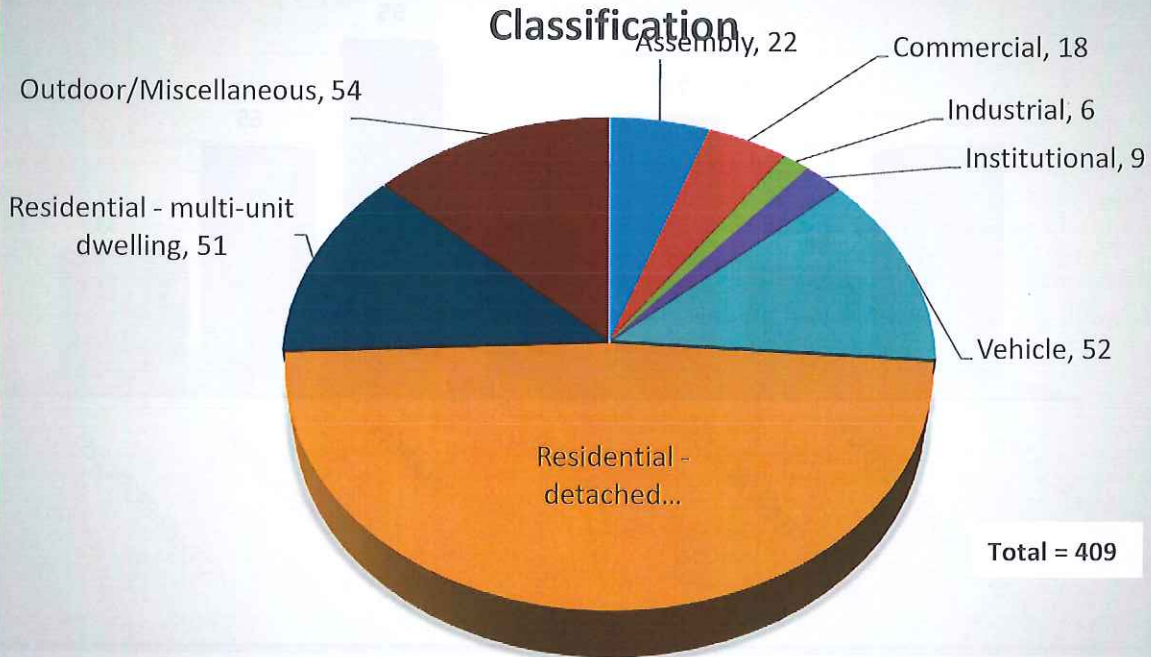


Response Activity by % - 2018



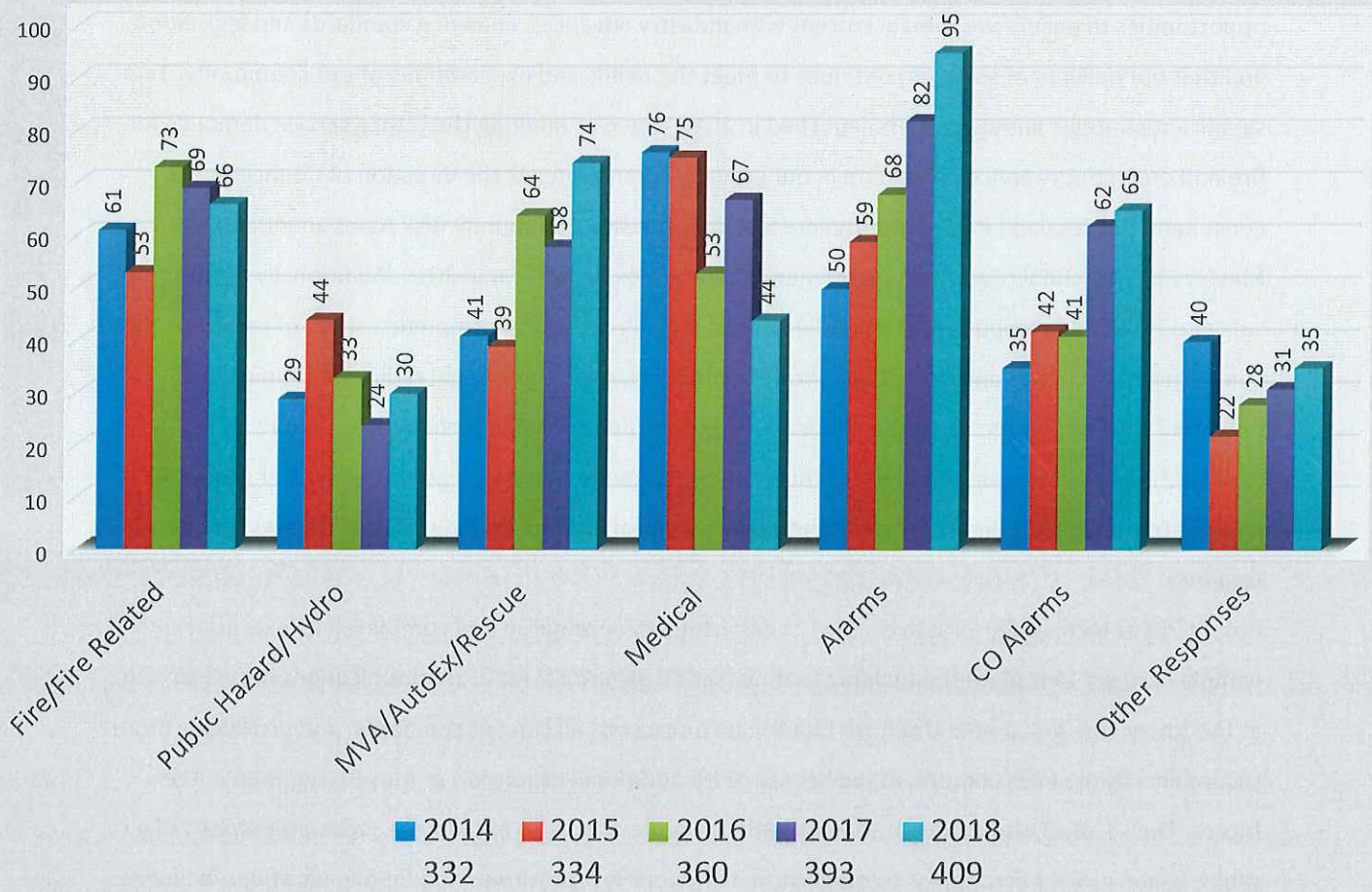
■ Fire/Fire Related ■ Public Hazard/Hydro ■ MVA/AutoEx/Rescue
■ Medical ■ Alarms ■ CO Alarms
■ Other Responses

Distribution of Responses by Building Classification



■ Assembly ■ Commercial
■ Industrial ■ Institutional
■ Vehicle ■ Residential - detached dwelling
■ Residential - multi-unit dwelling ■ Outdoor/Miscellaneous

Response Activity - % of Total Call Volume 5 Year Comparison



OTHER INITIATIVES

In addition to emergency response activity, and on-going or routine training, public education and fire prevention activities, LaSalle Fire Service maintains a focus on continuous improvement and planning opportunities to ensure we remain current with industry advances, changing standards and legislation, and that our delivery of services continues to meet the needs and expectations of our community. Two significant strategic initiatives were launched in 2018 aimed at meeting the future service demands for fire and emergency service protection in our growing community. At the direction of Council, a consultant was retained in July to complete a comprehensive Community Risk Assessment and Fire Master Plan. The final report and recommendations are expected in mid 2019. Additionally a consultant was also retained in response for a detailed Request for Proposals to complete a study of radio communications needs and potential options to provide a robust municipal radio communications network for all radio users, based on anticipated growth and available technology solutions. It is expected that the recommendations of this study will provide a common platform for user groups to migrate to over time as improvements and replacement of current individual radio systems are required.

Among other technology initiatives, the I.T. department coordinated and completed an extensive and complex project to replace the building that houses all the critical radio communications infrastructure at the tower site with a new structure that meets or exceeds all current standards, and provides a more secure and sterile environment, as well as space for additional expansion as may be required in the future. The I.T. staff also continue to work with our project team to implement successive phases of a tablet-based project in progress to modernize daily workflow processes and field applications including pre-incident planning, fire safety inspections and mapping for incidents.



Staff wellness has also become an area of additional focus. A structured Wellness Committee meets regularly to review various health & safety as well as general wellness initiatives. In a somewhat unique relationship LaSalle Fire Service partnered with the University of Windsor Nursing program to provide a co-op placement for 4th year nursing students. 2 students each

semester worked at the fire station to conduct research & provide advice on various subjects, such as nutrition, appropriate exercise and mental health, with a particular focus on the firefighter lifestyle and work routine, as directed by the Wellness Committee.

In addition to this health initiative, LaSalle Fire Service is also an active participant in a coalition of emergency services from the region to support mental health among first responders. This regional group operates on grant funding by the Ministry of Labour and is operated through the local Canadian Mental Health Association. Though this program several of our personnel have been professionally trained in the Peer Support role to provide assistance to our members and/or members of other first responder organizations following critical incidents or as may be needed on an individual basis. The coalition also supports and promotes other support services for mental health among first responder organizations.



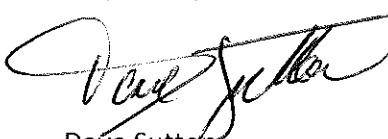
Administratively, initiatives to improve our current service delivery model continue to be an on-going priority. The recent transition in the Fire Prevention division has provided an opportunity to review and prioritize appropriate levels service delivery in that area, including fire safety inspection priorities and priorities, and pre-planning activity. As identified in the Fire Prevention section of this report, gaps have been identified where service delivery is not currently optimal, primarily due to workload and current staffing levels.

Additionally, efforts were made to determine an effective method of tracking response times for volunteer (paid-on-call) responders in personal vehicles. Many of the alternatives for improved service delivery of emergency response require a clear understand of response time challenges with the current emergency response model. To better support the data to be used

in the current Fire Master Plan study, a vendor with a potential tracking product was as sought to conduct a pilot project to track response of individual responders in their private vehicles relative to the arrival times of fire department apparatus. This pilot project will help to better inform the master plan study of the current state response model.

LaSalle Fire Service remains committed to responsible forward planning and continuous improvement in order to maintain an appropriate level of service, and to meet the changing needs of the community. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss our activities and services, and invite anyone to contact me with any questions, suggestions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Sutton", written over a horizontal line.

Dave Sutton,

Fire Chief / CEMC