



# LaSalle Fire Service Annual Report 2019



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LaSalle, ON N9H 1P8

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# MISSION STATEMENT



**Our Mission is guided by commitment to our core values:**

**RESPECT**

**INTEGRITY**

**TEAMWORK**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The launch of several significant initiatives made 2019 a particularly active year for LaSalle Fire Service administratively, in addition to our public facing activity levels involving emergency response, public education, fire prevention & safety initiatives, and community engagement.

Calls for service continued to trend upward, with a total annual call volume of 433 responses. This total represents a year-over-year increase of approximately 6%, which is consistent with the recent annual trend, and the continued increase in development and activity levels in the municipality generally. In terms of structure fires and associated dollar loss resulting from fires, there were 19 fires with reported dollar loss totaling approximately \$879,000. Most of the property loss is attributable to ten fires that occurred in single-family residential homes. There were also four vehicle fires and two outdoor fires that resulted in reported loss, as well as minor loss fires in one mercantile and two industrial occupancies. There were no fire fatalities in 2019; however, there was one fire-related burn injury resulting from a vehicle fire.

A large measure of the credit for consistently maintaining relatively low instances of structure fires is attributable to our aggressive and proactive approach to public fire safety education, and fire safety inspection programs, with a focus on making residents and building owners aware of their obligations for family and fire 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.

In terms of human resources and professional development, the recently appointed full-time officers leading the fire prevention and training divisions continued to pursue further professional qualifications and training in their respective roles, and have established their leadership roles as part of our collaborative administrative team. For a variety of reasons that have become a common struggle for most volunteer and composite fire services, turnover among our volunteer firefighters continues to be a challenge. A recruitment cycle was conducted early in the year and nine vacant positions were filled in June, with those recruits beginning the initial standardized training program in

September. Six firefighters from the previous recruit class completed the basic level II firefighter certification program in June.

Firefighter training and staff professional development continues to be a departmental priority, particularly as numerous staff continue to transition into new roles throughout the department. In 2019, nearly 4200 staff-hours of training were conducted “in-house” within the departments’ resources. In addition, numerous external and out-sourced officer-level, and specialized training courses were attended by both full-time and volunteer staff, totaling 23 external courses taken and 9 professional development opportunities. These individual programs ranged in curriculum delivery from 2 days to 2 weeks, with most being accredited to recognized professional standards. As a result of continued high turnover rates among the volunteer (paid-on-call) firefighter ranks, and continued replacements and expansion among the full-time staff, both recruit training, and officer level training continue to increasingly challenge the training division. Options are being reviewed and initiatives are being prioritized to streamline and expedite traditional processes and timelines for the delivery of recruit level Firefighter I and Firefighter II programs to ensure sufficient qualified and experienced personnel are available when required for structural firefighting capabilities. Similarly, increased turnover and demand in Company Officer level positions is increasingly challenging availability and delivery of required training to meet competency standards for these positions in a timely fashion.

Overall, operating costs for service delivery remained consistent with previous years, with a slight budget increase to accommodate annual labour and inflationary increases. Also included in the annual operating budget was a pro-active buildup of funds in anticipation of necessary service level enhancements resulting from the recommendations of the Fire Protection Services Master Plan study. Approved capital expenditures in 2019 included the scheduled replacements of a pumper/rescue truck and the department’s heavy rescue tools, minor building updates, and the application of a non-slip surface in the apparatus bays.

The scheduled replacement of the pumper/rescue truck updates one of the department’s primary emergency response vehicle in the fleet. This unit is a dual purpose response vehicle that carries the majority of the rescue equipment and is the first responding apparatus for vehicle collisions and rescue calls. It also has the capability of a standard pumper truck and responds on large structure



fires as an additional pumper, and to provide additional equipment at structure fires. An in-house committee comprised of administrative, mechanical and fire suppression personnel conducted extensive research and devoted considerable time and effort to develop exacting specifications to custom design every aspect of the new vehicle to ensure it will meet the specific needs of our fire service over the expected lifespan of this apparatus. Based on those extensive specifications, a tender was issued and Council subsequently approved the award of the tender in August. Delivery of this new addition to our fleet is expected in fall of 2020.

As part of an ongoing initiative, progress continues to be made in adapting available technology into our routine operations. Working with the IT department, the scope has expanded into field operations, and emergency response operations, utilizing real-time tablet-based applications where applicable and reducing reliance on paper documentation.

Maintaining an effective service delivery model consistent with the sustained municipal growth and development has been of increasing concern. In 2018 Council commissioned a Fire Protection Services Master Plan study to be completed to guide future decision making for the provision of fire protection services. The final comprehensive report from the third-party consultant was approved by Council in August of 2019, and direction was given to fire administration to develop an implementation plan to strategically implement the numerous recommendations of the Master Plan Study over the intended 10 year horizon. Late in 2019, Council approved a significant initiative to enhance the current service delivery model by increasing minimum fire suppression staffing to two full-time firefighters on-duty at all times by 2021, pending annual budget approval. The first implementation phase of this objective included the recruitment process for three new full-time firefighter positions late in 2019, with the successful candidates being hired in February of 2020. Continued implementation of successive initiatives, based on a strategic implementation plan will continue to provide for effective delivery of fire protection services, supported by industry standards and best practices as recommended in the approved Fire Protection Services Master Plan.

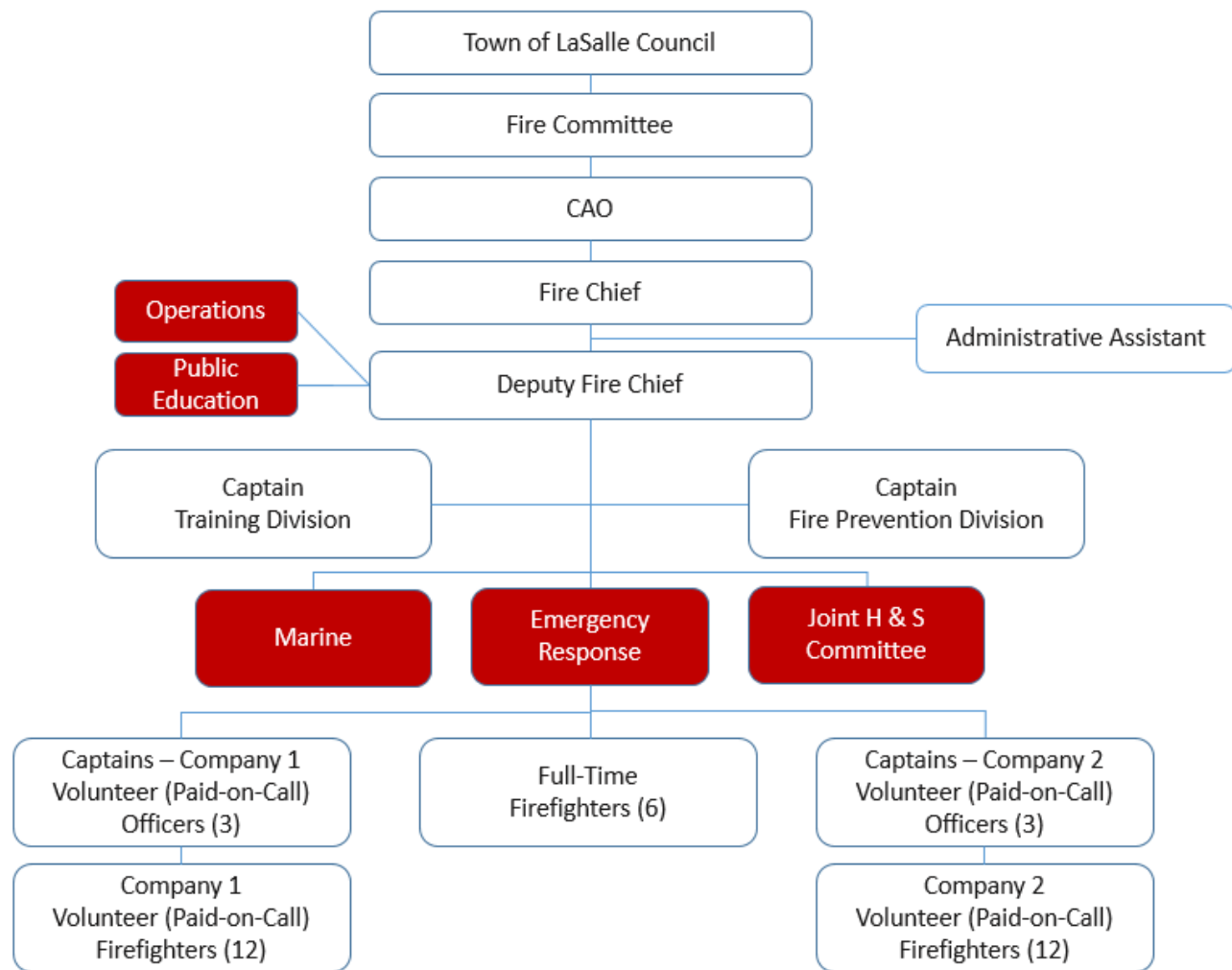
# LFS STAFF ORGANIZATION

**FIRE CHIEF - D. SUTTON**  
**DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF - E. THIESSEN**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - S. NANTAIS**  
**CAPTAIN / FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER - M. WILEY**  
**TRAINING INSTRUCTOR - J. PRICE**

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTERS	
K. SEMANDE	C. LUSSIER
R. MOORE	C. THIBERT
R. CURTIS	J. TOUSIGNANT

VOLUNTEER /PAID-ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS (32) - list as of end of 2019	
COMPANY 1	COMPANY 2
CAPTAIN M. SEGUIN	CAPTAIN J. GRIFFITH
CAPTAIN B. BARTLETT	CAPTAIN L. THIESSEN
CAPTAIN J. SHINKAR	CAPTAIN M. BONDY
J. CHAUVIN	G. LEGOOD
C. SEGUIN	T. CLARKE
P. HOMENICK	M. CARLONE
C. CARR	B. THOMAN
M. O'BRIGHT	B. TAYOR
C. FECTEAU	L. MELOCHE
R. O'NEILL	M. DAY
J. MACNEIL	J. HARRIS
J. BLANCHETTE	K. CANT
A. HANSEN	L. PANEK
K. DUFOUR	C. CARR
B. DOAN	P. JANIKOWSKI
B. RAE	VACANT

# LaSalle Fire Service – Organizational Chart 2019





## PERSONNEL CHANGES

- 2 Volunteer (paid-on-call) firefighters promoted to Captain – J. Shinkar and M. Bondy
- 5 Volunteer (paid-on-call) Firefighter resigned
- 9 Volunteer (paid-on-call) Firefighters hired

## CONTINUING EDUCATION INITIATIVES & CONFERENCES

<b>D. Sutton</b>	OAFIC Conference – May 2019 Fire Rescue Canada Conference – September 2019
<b>E. Thiessen</b>	OAFIC Labour Relations Conference – January 2019 OFMEM Public Education Training Session – February 2019 CMHC Roadmap to Resiliency Conference – May 2019 Commanding Presence, The Personal Group – October 2019 Western University – Graduate Diploma in Public Administration
<b>S. Nantais</b>	Ontario Fire Chiefs' Administrative Assistants Association Conference University of Victoria, Public Relations Diploma
<b>M. Wiley</b>	OFC Fire Code Div B PT 4-91-1 – January 2019 OFC Part 3 & 5 – May 2019 OMFPOA Training & Education Symposium – June 2019 Certified Plans Examiner Program – September 2019
<b>Justin Price</b>	OAFIC – May 2019 MED A3 – Transport Canada – July 2019 OFC NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Level 1 – September 2019 NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer – August 2019
<b>Ryan Moore</b>	OFC NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer April 24-27, 2019 NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector Level I – September 2019
<b>Randy Curtis</b>	OFC NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector Level I – November 2019
<b>Matt Bondy</b>	

<b>Len Thiessen</b>	NFPA 1041 Fire Service Instructor – November 2019
<b>Jason Shinkar</b>	
<b>Brian Bartlett</b>	
<b>Jason Griffith</b>	
<b>Randy Curtis</b>	NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer – Fall 2019
<b>John Macneil</b>	
<b>Josh Tousignant</b>	
<b>Josh Tousignant</b>	NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Level 1 – August 2019

# PUBLIC EDUCATION

2019 PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS			
Event Type	Audience	Subject Matter	Approximate Attendance
Community Event	Adults	LaSalle Emergency Services Job Fair	100
Community Event	Families	Car Seat Clinic – family fire safety	50
Provincial Campaign	Adults	Summer Fire Safety Partnership with Beer Stores	100
Day Camp Visits	Children	Age appropriate child & family fire safety	300
Fire Prevention Week School Program	Primary Grade Children	Age appropriate fire safe behaviours & hazards - home escape planning	700

Public fire safety education continues to be an important focus of the LaSalle Fire Service.

Encouraging and promoting fire safe behaviors and an awareness of potential fire hazards is a proven method of reducing the incidence of accidental fires, particularly in homes and residential buildings that all too often result in burn injuries and fire-related fatalities.

A wide variety of public education programs continue to be delivered throughout the community by our emergency response personnel. These interactive programs include presentations at organized events to various targeted audiences, as indicated in the chart above, as well as hosting numerous various groups of children for visits and educational programs at the fire station. Public education displays featuring various brochures and fire safety advice and guidance are also conducted at municipal venues such as events at the Vollmer Recreation Complex, the public library branch, and community festivals, as well as in partnership with various business and community partners such as retirement homes, daycare facilities, etc. Fire safety programs specifically designed for seniors, older adults and adults with mobility limitations, and/or 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. LaSalle Fire Service continues to be 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 3,000 followers with any important relevant emergency information. The hallmark of our public education program continues to be our Fire Prevention Week activities. In 2019, a targeted program was delivered to all primary elementary Grade 1 and 2 students in all our elementary schools. This program features firefighters reading to children from a relatable storybook

highlighting fire safety and firefighters as community helpers that children can trust in emergencies. Firefighters also demonstrate their protective clothing and equipment to reduce the fears of young children. Age appropriate messages such as when to dial 911, and home escape



planning are delivered in an interactive setting. Our efforts in educating elementary school students are validated in part by testimonials and examples of children influencing the fire safety behaviors of parents, and reacting appropriately to potential emergency situations. 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

## 2019 FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITY SUMMARY

ACTIVITY TYPE	FREQUENCY
Routine Inspection	67
Complaint/Request Inspection	25
Licencing/Legislative Inspection	2
Occupancy Inspection	10
Re-Inspection for Compliance	52
Fireworks Permit	5
In-service inspection for Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm Compliance (Suppression)	144
Fire Investigations	6
New Construction Plans Review	12
Fire Safety Plan Review & Approval	6
File Search Requests	8
Training & Professional Development Course/Symposium	4
Court Prosecution/Appeal	0
Fire Marshal Orders Issued	3
Provincial Offence Notices Issued	5

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. As part of the Fire Protection

Services Master Plan project, an updated comprehensive Community Risk Assessment was completed by the consultant and approved by Council in 2019. This updated risk assessment is intended to guide decision making regarding appropriate fire protection service levels based on identified risks over the next several years. It is important that the community risk assessment be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to remain current as relevant factors such as development, traffic patterns, & demographics in the municipality change and evolve over time.



All fire department staff contribute to 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 2019, 435 smoke alarms were inspected in 144 homes, resulting in the replacement or installation of 52 smoke alarms, and the replacement of 53 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 121 fire safety inspections in 2019. 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 building owners and occupants, provide fire safety advice, 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. Steadily increasing development and diversity in additional building stock, continually expanding regulatory requirements, and increasing demand for services, continues to challenge the ability to maintain the previous level of effectiveness. 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.

These pressures on the Fire Prevention Division were recognized in the recently completed Fire Protection Services Master Plan, and recommendations were made to sustain current service levels and provide additional capacity to keep pace with growth and recommended service levels and programs, consistent with recognized industry standards. In the short term, modest increases in full-

time firefighter staffing levels will provide some additional capacity to assist with basic level fire prevention duties. In the longer term, the implementation plan for the Fire Protection Services Master Plan provides for an additional fire prevention officer as well as clerical support.

# TRAINING ACTIVITY

## DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING ACTIVITY - 2019

LEVEL OF TRAINING	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	ACTIVITY	CUMULATIVE HOURS
<b>Recruit</b>	15	NFPA Firefighter I & Firefighter II certification Basic firefighting, rescue, medical assist skills	404
<b>General</b>	61	Skills maintenance, advanced skills, legislative requirements, annual certifications/re-certifications	2106
<b>Officers</b>	12	Incident Command, leadership, pre-plan familiarizations, departmental planning & administration	444
<b>OFM NFPA</b>	17	Provincially certified Officer Level Courses	Courses vary from 2 days to 2 weeks duration per course

Firefighter training continues to be a critical element of competent service delivery for LaSalle Fire Service. A total of eighty-eight (88) training sessions were conducted “in-house” within the department at various levels in 2019, totaling nearly 4200 hours devoted to training by our personnel to improve their knowledge and skills. While training requirements vary among staff depending on positions and established levels, the average firefighter receives approximately 120 hours of internally delivered training annually, in addition to external courses.

In addition to this training delivered by our own staff, the training division also coordinates and facilitates course availability and registrations for various officers and full-time staff in numerous on-line programs, officer level, and specialized courses by qualified third-party providers; as well as, courses taken by staff at the Ontario Fire College.

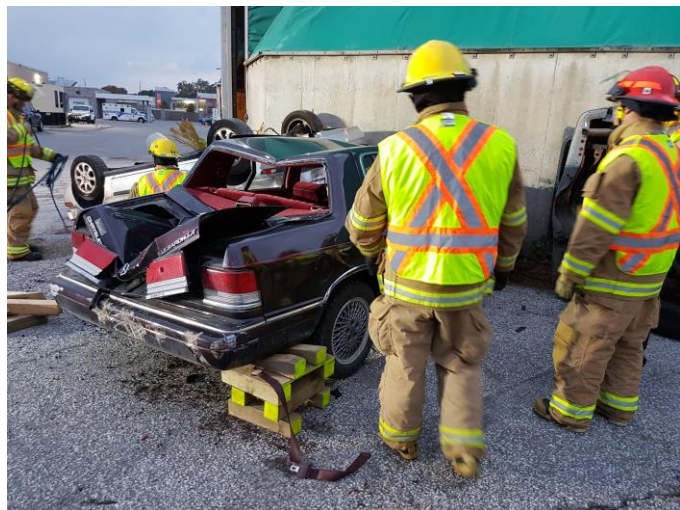
Through the regional collaboration of local fire services and training divisions, opportunities are routinely sought to share resources and enhance the ability to provide officer level training programs locally.



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 established 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. Following the completion of the basic Firefighter Level I training, recruits are honored with a graduation ceremony where the department proudly comes together to acknowledge their achievements in completing the probationary period of attaining the most basic skills, and welcome our newest members to the team. In March of 2019, we were proud to host a graduation ceremony to honor and welcome those members who joined our ranks in the previous year.

In addition, the second phase of 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 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.

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 allow our personnel, and our fire service, to provide access to advanced and/or specialized training programs at a local level. One example of this collaboration is the jointly purchased Mobile Live Fire Training Unit which allows several area users the ability to conduct live-fire training at our own facility on an on-going basis, greatly enhancing the proficiency of our personnel at all levels, and is a major component of our training program. Other examples in 2019 include a credentialed NFPA Incident Safety Officer course hosted by a neighbouring department that allowed

members from several departments to attend locally without the need for travel or time off from full-time employers. Similarly, LaSalle Fire Service hosted an NFPA certified Ice Rescue course conducted by a qualified third-party provider for members of our department as well as other departments in the region. Additionally, LaSalle has collaborated with another local fire service to augment their specialized high angle rescue team with three members from LaSalle Fire Service. As a necessary low frequency/high risk rescue capability, LaSalle benefits by having a nucleus of trained members, while also supporting the viability and regional availability of a valuable rescue team resource.

## **EXAMPLES OF 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
- Ice Rescue
- Equipment familiarization
- Communications
- Pump Operations
- Fire-ground operations
- RIT/Self Rescue
- Auto Extrication
- Search & Rescue operations
- SCBA endurance drills
- 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**

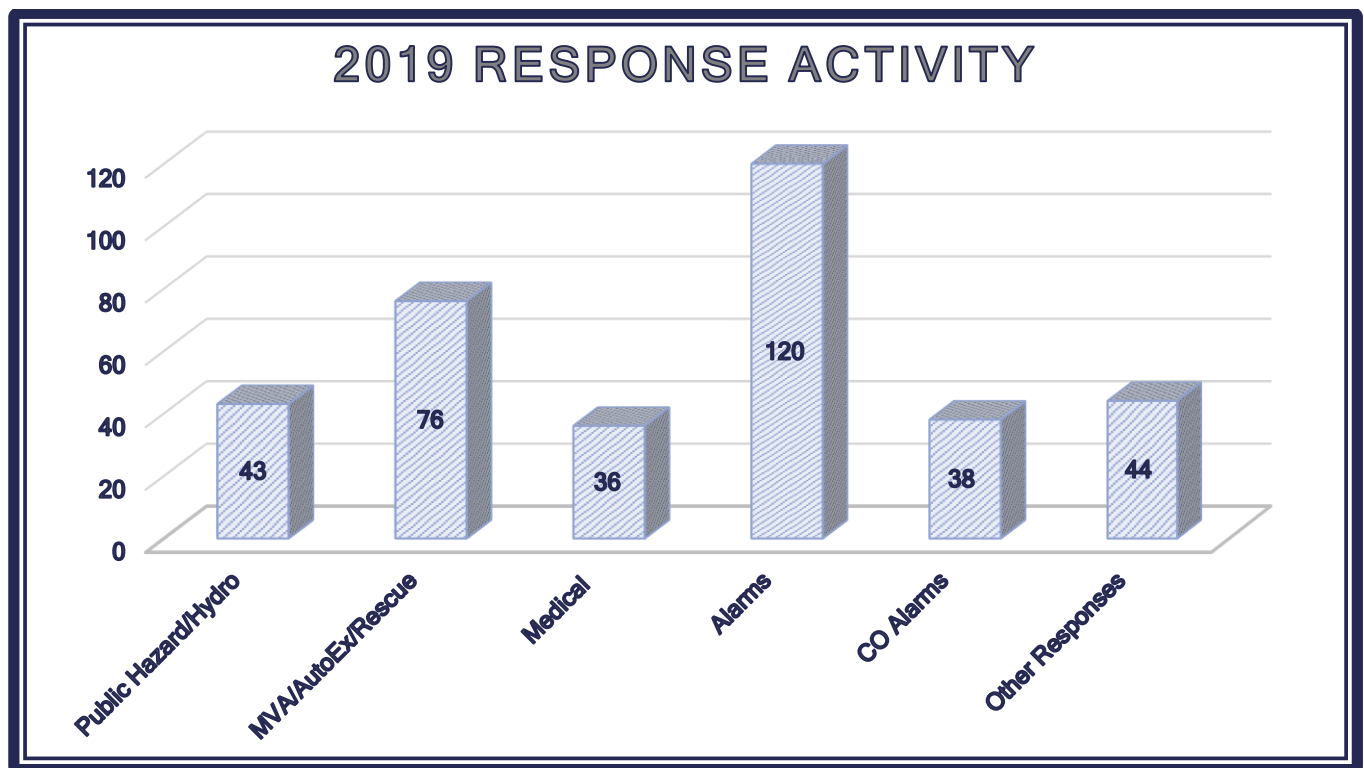
- Base Hospital program Train the trainer – CPR/Defib. Annual training
- Mental health Peer Support training provided by regional coalition
- High Angle Rescue
- NFPA 1006 – Ice Rescue Technician Level
- Aerial tower operation training – tower crew
- Various Officer level NFPA courses
- Marine Operations



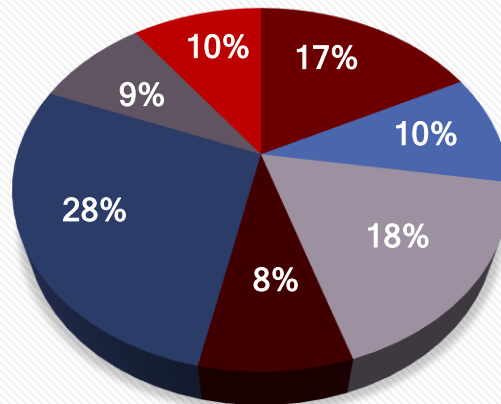
# RESPONSE ACTIVITY

LaSalle Fire Service responded to 433 calls for service in 2019, which resulted in approximately \$878,900 in fire loss. Although calls for service are distributed across all property types, the majority of activity, and the majority of dollar loss due to structure fires continues to be in single family homes.

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. A breakdown of response activity by general response category, and geographical area of the municipality, is provided below.

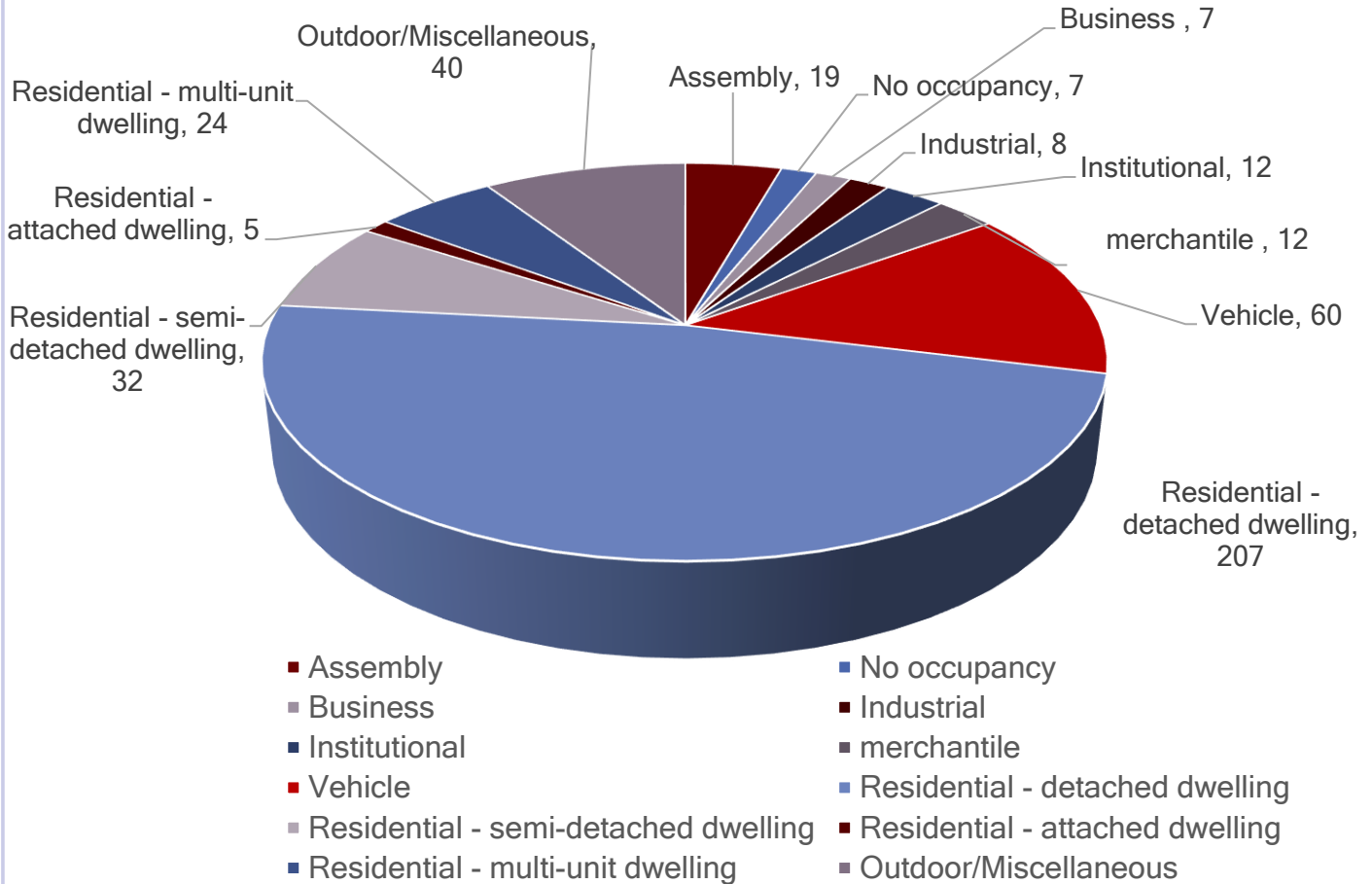


## Response Activity by Percentage - 2019



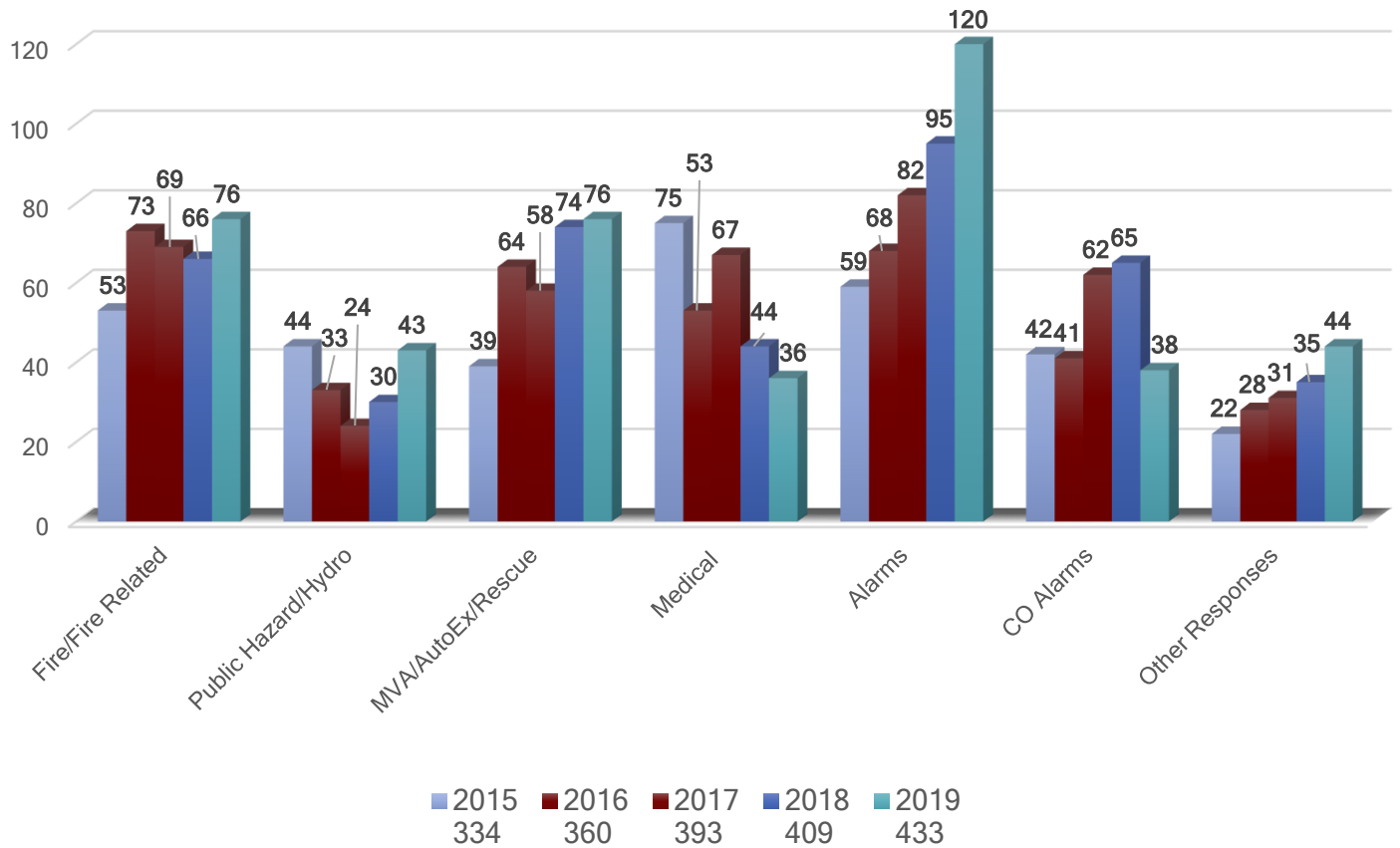
- Fire/Fire Related
- Public Hazard/Hydro
- MVA/AutoEx/Rescue
- Medical
- Alarms
- CO Alarms
- Other Responses

## Distribution of Responses by Property Classification 2019



- Assembly
- Business
- Institutional
- Vehicle
- Residential - semi-detached dwelling
- Residential - multi-unit dwelling
- No occupancy
- Industrial
- merchantile
- Residential - detached dwelling
- Residential - attached dwelling
- Outdoor/Miscellaneous

## Response Activity - % of Total Call Volume 5 Year Comparison



In terms of notable trends in call volumes and distribution of response activity, several comments may assist in data analysis. Consistent year-over-year increases in call volumes generally reflects the continued growth and development in the municipality, generating greater activity in most areas of service delivery.

Similarly, the notable annual increase in responses under the broad category of “Alarms” is partially attributable to relative increase in building activity in the municipality. Response to alarms includes both commercial alarms in assembly and multi-residential buildings such as condo buildings, as well as smoke alarm incidents in single family homes. As new commercial, assembly and multi-residential buildings continue to be added to the municipal building stock, corresponding responses for alarm activations continue to increase. Newer technology and building trends also has a corresponding impact on responses to smoke alarms and monitored alarm systems in single family homes. Periodic enhancements to code requirements continue to provide for increased levels of safety in new construction. New homes are required to have interconnected alarms in all sleeping areas and levels of the home. Combined with the trend locally toward larger homes, it is not uncommon to have

between 8 and 12 interconnected smoke alarms in a single family residence. The technology is designed to sound an alarm when any component of the system malfunctions; as well as, at end of life of each device. A portion of the call volume for Alarms is for non-emergency attendance at homes for malfunctioning alarms, to assist in restoring active fire protection of the interconnected system. The recently approved increase in full-time staffing will allow most of these responses to be attended by on-duty staff.

It must also be noted that although this response category is classified as “Alarms”, there should not be an assumption that these responses are all for “false alarms”. Occasionally unsubstantiated false alarms or nuisance alarms do occur; however, the Town’s False Alarm by-law provides an effective means to control nuisance false alarms. In many cases the alarm is activated by smoke or overheating caused by mechanical or accidental human sources. In these cases the end result is often a relatively minor outcome such as an overheated power bar, or motor, or a pot left unattended on a stove, so the incident is successfully resolved and recorded as an “Alarm” call. It is important to bear in mind that in these cases the alarm functioned exactly as intended and alerted residents and the fire service, thereby avoiding a potential structure fire.

For these reasons a modest year-over-year increase in alarm calls is both expected and ultimately beneficial.

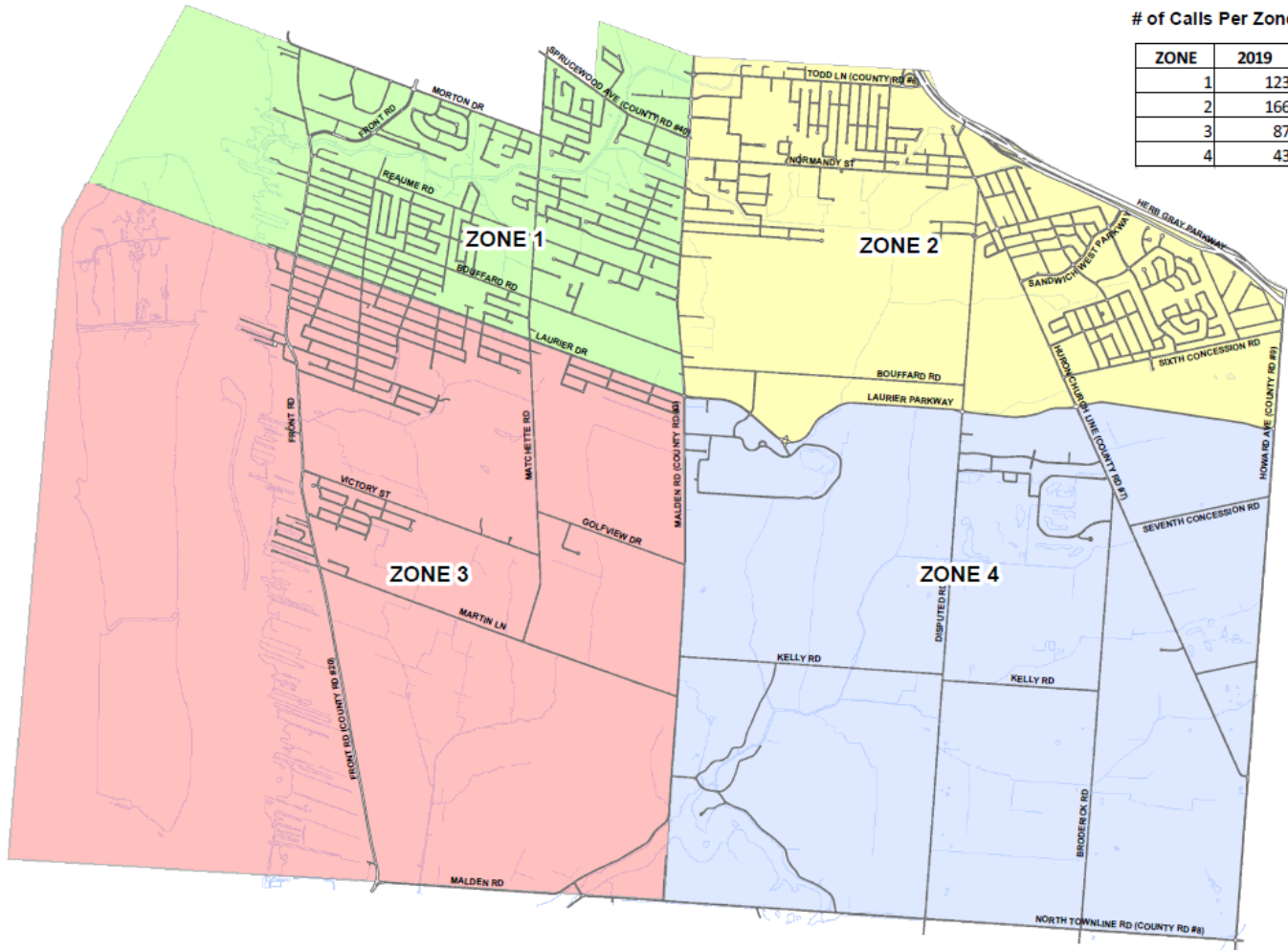
# 2019 CALLS FOR SERVICE DISTRIBUTION BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

LaSalle Fire Service



# of Calls Per Zone

ZONE	2019
1	123
2	166
3	87
4	43



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS

The recently approved Fire Protection Master Plan proposed specific benchmarks for emergency response performance, based on relevant industry standards and best practices. Given the size and population distribution of the municipality and our composite response model, the recommended performance benchmarks that were adopted by Council as the service delivery target for the municipality, recognizes both an urban component for areas with a population density of 1000 persons per square mile, and a suburban component for areas with less than 1000 persons per square mile. The tables below provide summary of current response performance in comparison with intended targets. The information presented is based on the best available data; however, there are anomalies within the data collection capabilities that may have minor impacts on the accuracy of some data. Further commentary accompanies the tables to assist in interpretation. This data serves as an initial point-in-time benchmark, prior to the implementation of any of the Master Plan recommendations to improve service delivery.

**Table 1: Response Times Profile - 2019**

Adopted Response Standard Components	Target Criteria	LaSalle Average	Area 1 Average	Area 2 Average	Area 3 Average	Area 4 Average
Alarm Processing Time (Dispatch)	1:00 – 1:30	01:06	01:03	01:15	01:00	00:54
Turnout Time	1:20	01:01	01:03	01:03	00:54	01:03
Travel Time						
Initial Response - Urban	4:00	04:35	04:03	03:24	06:29	06:28
Depth of Response -Suburban (turnout + travel time)	8:00	05:36	05:06	04:27	07:23	07:31
Total Response Time (Apparatus & initial personnel)	9:00 urban 90% of calls 10:00 suburban 80% of calls	06:42	06:09	05:42	08:23	08:25
Initial Personnel (on arrival of first unit)	4 in 4 min. Urban 10 in 10 min. Suburban	2.9	2.7	2.4	3.5	2.9



**Table 1 – Data Interpretation Notes:**

- Data includes only emergency responses
- Response data represents **Average** (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) times, meaning that the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile target times of the adopted standard would be longer than the average
- The Urban designation applies to all of Area 1, and significant portions of Areas 2 and 3

**Table 2: Current Emergency Response Performance - Structure Fires and Fire-Related Responses**

Adopted Response Standard Performance Criteria	Compliance Criteria	LaSalle Average	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
<b>FIRST RESPONSE</b> First Unit <b>AND</b> 4 personnel on scene within 4 minutes	Urban (1000+/sq. mi.) 90%	10%	19%	19%	0%	0%
<b>DEPTH OF RESPONSE</b> First Unit <b>AND</b> 10 personnel on scene within 10 Minutes	Suburban (-1000/sq. mi) 80%	21%	24%	27%	32%	0%
Number of Emergency Calls		71	21	26	19	5

**Table 2 – Data Interpretation Notes:**

- Data includes only emergency responses
- Data does not include “Alarm” responses. While responses for activated fire alarm systems in residential, multi-residential, assembly and commercial buildings would typically be included in this analysis, the records management system currently in use also includes in this category numerous non-emergency responses for accidental or malfunctioning residential smoke alarms
- Data may include a few emergency responses that were downgraded by first arriving personnel on arrival and confirming non-emergency conditions or sufficient personnel for the incident. In these cases, subsequent personnel may have been cancelled prior to the applicable benchmark criteria being met. The instances where this occurred, while not significant would primarily affect areas 1 and 2, where the first arriving unit is on scene sooner. The records management system is not capable of filtering for these calls.

- This data demonstrates the unique inverse correlation, and combined impact, of our current two primary challenges of travel time for responding fire apparatus, and travel delays for paid-on-call personnel responding in personal vehicles. The performance criteria for compliance with the adopted Standards incorporates **both** the first apparatus and sufficient personnel, to arrive at the scene of an incident within accepted response times to facilitate an effective response to the emergency. As the data from Table 1 confirms, responses in areas 1 and 2 require less travel time for the responding fire apparatus, however paid-on-call staff are challenged in reaching the incident scene within the target benchmark times. In areas 3 and 4, the current station location challenges target travel times, although particularly in area 3, a somewhat greater percentage of paid-on-call responders are able to reach the incident within accepted target times. Implementation of the recommendations of the Fire Protection Services Master Plan pertaining to station locations and staffing are aimed at addressing these challenges to provide improved service delivery, and to achieve the target criteria of the adapted response performance benchmarks.

# ADMINISTRATION

## FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES MASTER PLAN

At the direction of Council, a consultant was retained in July to complete a comprehensive Community Risk Assessment and Fire Master Plan in 2018. The consultant's final report and recommendations were adopted by Council in August of 2019 as the strategic planning framework for the delivery of fire protection services within the Town of LaSalle the next ten-year community planning horizon. The findings and recommendations of the Fire Protection Services Master Plan are based on referenced applicable standard and best practices and have been informed by a Community Risk Assessment that was developed as a companion document to assess the existing fire risk within the community. Together, these documents present a comprehensive analysis of the existing fire risks within the community, and the existing fire protection capabilities of the LaSalle Fire Service.

The Fire Protection Services Master Plan provides options and recommendations to assist Council in developing both short-term and long-term planning strategies for the responsible delivery of fire protection and related services, based on the current and future needs of the community. Implementation of the recommendations will allow Council to clearly establish and communicate the level of fire protection services to be provided to the community, including, where applicable, proposed performance measures for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the services to be provided. A key theme of the report and recommendations is the continued implementation of proactive strategies that reduce fire risk through public education, and enhanced fire safety inspections and code enforcement; as well as, addressing adequate emergency response capability. The report provided 34 operational recommendations, including administrative processes and operational enhancements across all functional areas, largely within the scope of the fire chief and fire administration for implementation, and 12 Council Recommendations that require the consideration of Council, primarily in relation to the establishment of levels of service and associated staffing implications, and modernization of the current emergency response model.

Upon adopting the consultant's report and recommendations, Council directed the Fire Chief to develop an implementation plan for Council's approval. A comprehensive implementation plan and corresponding financial plan was presented to Fire Committee in December and subsequently approved by Council, subject to annual budget approval, early in 2020. The approved implementation

plan strategically prioritizes the recommendations as short-term, mid-term, or long-term initiatives, and provides for the implementation of all recommendations over a ten year cycle. A consistent annual funding contribution throughout the implementation period provides a sustainable funding model.

As a critical short-term priority of the implementation plan, Council also approved the transition to a staffing model of a minimum of two suppression firefighters on-duty at all times by 2021, pending budget approval. The first stage in the implementation of this transition was completed in 2019 with the recruitment and selection process for three additional full-time firefighters. The new positions were implemented early in 2020. This enhancement in full-time staff will assist to improve our *first response* capabilities at emergency incidents and provide additional support for ongoing fire prevention and public education initiatives.

Throughout our extensive processes to analyze existing emergency response effectiveness and responsibly plan for required service delivery improvements, reliable data for the response of paid-on-call personnel was difficult to track with any degree of accuracy. The current response model for LaSalle Fire Service relies on paid-on-call personnel responding in personal vehicles to emergency incidents rather than responding on fire apparatus. Only movements and response times for fire department vehicles were tracked and recorded for statistical purposes.

Following a successful pilot project in 2018, a vendor-supported platform was implemented in 2019 to better track arrival times of paid-on-call responders through small electronic devices stored in their turnout gear that are registered with the fire truck once on scene. This electronic system provides reliable data that will help inform on-going planning and decision-making regarding service delivery and response models.

## **RADIO COMMUNICATIONS STUDY**

Senior municipal staff also continued to work with professional consultants to facilitate a municipal radio communications study, previously approved by Council to facilitate better awareness and prudent long-term planning among all radio communications users in the municipality. This study, expected to be completed in spring of 2020, will identify anticipated needs and challenges related to

radio communications, and the planned integration of a data spectrum for first responder users. The final report is expected to provide recommendations and options for future required upgrades and radio replacements, as well as comparative budget implications, as required by each user group.

## **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER COMPENSATION POLICY**

The longstanding compensation policy for the compensation of volunteer firefighters was revised in 2019 to better align with current practices in the fire service as well as within the municipality. The previous policy for compensation of volunteer firefighters established by Council had been established well over 30 years prior, and no longer reflected the current roles and levels of responsibility that have evolved over time, particularly in the case of the supervisory role of the Captain positions; as well as, the extended training and graduated skills acquisition process for recruit firefighters. The new compensation policy redistributes compensation relative to experience and responsibility levels in a grid format more consistent with industry standards.

## **MENTAL WELLNESS AND PEER SUPPORT**

Staff wellness continues to be a priority in maintaining a healthy and resilient workplace. Occupational stress and related illnesses are disproportionately prevalent among first responders, and significant effort has been made across the emergency services spectrum in recent years to increase available supports for first responders to maintain a healthy level of resilience and reduce the debilitating effects of various types of stress injuries. LaSalle Fire Service has been active in supporting the needs of our personnel.

A structured Wellness Committee meets regularly to review various health & safety; as well as, general wellness initiatives, including exercise and nutrition programs, with a focus on the firefighter lifestyle and work routine. An internal Peer Support Team has been established with four members who have been trained in peer support intervention by a regionally recognized clinician. Our peer support team is further supported by numerous other similar regional teams among local emergency service agencies who have trained together.

In 2019 LaSalle Fire Service also formed an official partnership with Wounded Warriors Canada, a non-profit organization that provides a variety of programs and mental health care for Veterans, First Responders and their families using clinical best practices and evidence-based care.

LaSalle Fire Service is also an active participant in the Windsor Essex First Responder Coalition of emergency services from the region to support mental health among first responders by building resilience, reducing stigma, and promoting mental wellbeing. This regional group operates on grant funding by the Ministry of Labour and is operated through the local Canadian Mental Health Association. The coalition also supports and promotes other support services for mental health among first responder organizations.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The fire service administrative team is also responsible for leading the emergency management planning group for the municipality. Environmental changes related to the frequency of severe weather incidents, and steadily rising water levels in the great lakes region have increased the potential for the municipality to be impacted by flooding events. In addition to engaging in various specific flood planning and preparation activities, the Emergency Management Program Committee developed a comprehensive municipal Flood Response Plan, which was subsequently approved by Council forming an appendix to the Town's Emergency Response Plan.

The Town of LaSalle was impacted by flooding in the spring and summer of 2019. The senior management team initiated a sandbag program for affected residents and met regularly as required to address the issues and concerns related to flooding. The Flood Management Group maintained a Routine Monitoring status from early May until late July, and convened various emergency meetings in response to ongoing flooding conditions along the Detroit River, affecting properties and municipal infrastructure primarily along Front Rd and residential areas west of Front Rd.

Under the town's Emergency Response Plan, the Emergency Operations Center was activated over a weekend in early July, with the Municipal Control Group responding to emerging issues with road closures, and decisions and contingency planning for delayed emergency services and potential voluntary evacuations of properties threatened by flooding conditions.



At an administrative level, the emergency planning function for the fire service administration continues to expand. Increasing regulatory requirements; as well as, staff training to ensure an adequate level of preparedness, and the increasing frequency and duration of emergency incidents have all contributed to an increasing proportion of time devoted to emergency planning duties in addition to fire service administrative workload. Traditionally an additional related responsibility, municipal emergency management continues to evolve as an essential municipal administrative function.

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,



Fire Chief

Dave Sutton,  
Fire Chief / CEMC