



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Jonathan Karn, Fire Training Officer
Brad Patton, County Fire Coordinator/Centre Wellington Fire Chief
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2014
Subject: **Wellington County Fire Training Officer's 2013 Annual Activity Report PD 2014-10**

Background:

In 2013 a number of Ontario Fire College courses were delivered locally for Firefighters and Company Officers. There continues to be a high participation rate among the departments which has led to a number of Officers and Firefighters receiving "Certification" in various areas.

A new course delivery format was attempted in 2013 in which courses were offered in a "night school" format. Traditionally courses would take place on weekends, however with the move to weeknights we were able to provide "Provincially" recognized courses without adding a tremendous amount of weekend training sessions.

The following is a list of Ontario Fire College courses which were held locally in Wellington County in 2013:

Course Name	Participants	Delivery Method
Company Officer 101	21	Night School
Company Officer 401	21	Night School
Introduction to Incident Management System (IMS)	13	Night School
Pump Operations	21	Weekends

We are often able to host local training courses now instead of having groups of firefighters from the county traveling to the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst or to registered fire training school in Blyth. There are many benefits to hosting the training events locally:

- Considerable less travel time for the firefighters, which reduce costs and increases their availability to respond to emergencies;
- There is less strain being away from family and work;
- The training can be specific to issues and types of emergency operations in Wellington County;
- Further benefits are gained by having Wellington County firefighters training together to improve their collective responses to mutual aid and automatic aid calls within the county; and
- There is often a cost reduction or no cost to locally held courses as the local fire stations can be used as the training facilities and local certified instructors are used which further reduces costs.

The Ontario Fire Marshall, Ministry of Labour and NFPA standards all recognized the need to appoint an "Incident Safety Officer" during emergency calls. A Provincial exam was developed based on Ontario Fire College courses that had to be completed prior to writing the exam. In February, Wellington County was the first area in Ontario to provide the opportunity for their Officers and Firefighters to participate in the exam. The pre-requisite courses were delivered locally which resulted in a high participation rate among our Municipal Fire Departments. A total of 51 Officers and Firefighters wrote the exam and received their "Incident Safety Officer" Designation.

As the County Training Officer I have responded to over 15 emergency calls throughout Wellington County to assist the Municipal Fire Departments in the role of Incident Safety Officer. This daytime response has enabled the local Fire Chiefs to use their often limited on-scene resources more effectively and efficiently while meeting Ministry of Labour guidelines in respect to "firefighter safety"

Firefighters working on obtaining their Ontario Firefighter Certification has continued throughout the year. Certification involves Firefighters participating in regular station training sessions following the Ontario Firefighter Curriculum, demonstrating practical skills in training as well as during emergency calls and participating in a series of Provincial exams. By offering Provincial Exams locally it has resulted in a number of firefighters working towards their Certification. There was a total of 54 Firefighters whom took part in the exams offered in March and October of 2013. (Certification will continue into 2014 with additional exams booked for early 2014.)

Currently our Firefighters follow the Ontario Firefighter Curriculum, however we will see a change in that approach as the Ontario Fire Service transitions to the new National Fire & Protection Association Standards (NFPA) for Firefighters and Company Officers. The shift to NFPA standards will change the way we evaluate the performance of Firefighters and Company Officers. In order to remain current with the new changes which will take place in April of 2014, the County Training Officer as well as four (4) other Officers from various Municipal Fire Departments attended training sessions to receive their Provincial Evaluator Designation. This "Designation" will allow our municipal Firefighters and Officers to continue to be tested and evaluated at the local level without having to travel to larger centres to participate in the Firefighter Certification process. By obtaining the Provincial Evaluator Designation prior to the implementation of the NFPA Training Standards it has positioned the Municipal Departments within Wellington County to seamlessly transfer to the new training standards and continue to offer the opportunity for Firefighters and Officers to receive training locally and receive nationally recognized certifications.

A need to deliver "Standardized" training for the Recruit Firefighters in Wellington County has been recognized. A Recruit Program is currently being developed and beginning in April of 2014 we will see for the first time a "Wellington County Fire Recruit School". The Municipal Fire Departments within the County will be sending their recruit firefighters to this recruit school. The projected class size will be over 30 new firefighters. Recruit school will see a blended learning environment with a mix of on-line learning and practical training sessions delivered over a series of approximately 12 weeks. Practical training sessions will be delivered by utilizing various locations throughout Wellington County. Recruit Firefighters will graduate "Recruit School" by having completed the necessary training to become successful Firefighters at their respective Municipal Departments.

There are several advantages to creating a county recruit school program which include but are not limited to:

- Standardized level of training as per NFPA standards;
- Flexibility for completing on-line assignments prior to practical sessions;
- Combining the experience of local Training Officers to deliver practical sessions to all recruit Firefighters which will ensure recruits are receiving the best content available;
- Budget impacts for firefighter recruit training will significantly decrease with a single class approach as opposed to each municipality individually training their own recruits;
- Firefighters will graduate recruit class with a “Firefighter 1” Certification from NFPA and be positioned favorably to complete the firefighter certification process as they attend training and emergency calls with their own municipal department;
- An increased working relationship between firefighters from various departments; and
- Consideration for an annual recruit class will provide an opportunity for Municipal Departments to plan new hiring’s to coincide with the start of a County Recruit class.

On-line learning will be an important component of the recruit class and in turn will allow station training officers to continue the use of on-line programs to supplement weekly training sessions. An opportunity will be available to add on-line learning modules to deliver NFPA Firefighter and Company Officer courses.

The County Training Officer has provided completed lesson plans for the current Ontario Firefighter Curriculum. There are now over 30 different lesson plans completed and a series of nine (9) “Quick Drills” available for Station Training Officers to utilize. Lesson plans continue to be posted on the Wellington County Training Officers’ website as well as over 70 videos, 30 power point presentations, and on-line learning programs, all of which support the lesson plans and/or training topics and can be shown to firefighters during training sessions. Since implementation, our website has had 6000 views and continues to be a successful tool for sharing information and ensuring the Station Training Officers have the necessary resources available to deliver quality training sessions.

Educational materials continue to be purchased on a yearly basis. A series of books, training manuals, DVD’s and other training resource materials has been combined to create a “Training Library” for all Municipal Fire Departments to access and use during training sessions. In 2013 a total of \$2000.00 was spent on educational material purchases. Included in this was a purchase of an Incident Command program that allows the trainer to create realistic fire and emergency scenarios and simulations. This software creates realistic scenarios featuring buildings, highways, residential streets and homes as well as any other features from local response areas. This will be a tremendous asset to Company Officer training currently being provided as we prepare and educate firefighters to move into officer roles. This program was a significant purchase and is available to all Municipal Fire Departments in Wellington County.

In 2013, a total of 97 hours was spent outside of regular daytime working hours at Municipal Departments to assist with the development and delivery of specialized training sessions, assist Station Training Officers with training and attending meetings with the Fire Chiefs and Training Officers. Some of the specialized training sessions include:

- Land based ice rescue training;
- Practical swift water rescue training;
- Forcible entry training utilizing door and window props;
- Firefighter survival training with the use of wall and confined space props; and

- Ontario Fire College Company Officer courses.

Time outside of regular work hours will continue to take place in order to provide access to training that best accommodates the schedules of volunteer firefighters.

Looking ahead to 2014

The first quarter of 2014 will see:

- Firefighter curriculum exams continuing with scheduled exam times in January;
- In February a representative from the Ontario Fire Marshal will be delivering a Provincial Evaluator workshop locally to the Municipal Training Officers. This workshop will allow our fire departments to move forward with the new NFPA firefighter standards.
- March will see a hazardous materials course being offered to our Officers and Firefighters. This is a 3 day course that will be delivered locally by International Instructors at no charge.
- Our first County Recruit Class begins in April and will last approximately three- months from start to finish.
- During the first quarter I will be assisting local Fire Chiefs and Training Officers to prepare for the switch from the Ontario Standards to NFPA Standards as required. These changes will affect Officers and Firefighters at each department and our goal for 2014 is to re-evaluate the needs of our Officers and Firefighters based on NFPA requirements in order to provide the best, most relevant and useful training courses.

Recommendation:

That the Council of the County of Wellington accepts the Wellington County Fire Training Officer's 2013 annual Activity Report for information only.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Karn
Wellington County Fire Training Officer