

JOINT MUNICIPAL FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE BULLETIN

FIRE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

In Nova Scotia, there are many models relating to the administration of fire services. Possible models include: Fire Service Coordinator staff positions, Fire Advisory Committees, Fire Service Associations, direct contact with fire chiefs (especially in towns), etc.

Fire Services are within the scope of municipalities as laid out in the *Municipal Government Act*. As such, municipalities need to find a model suited to maintain fire services that meet community needs safely, financially, and sustainably.

At the end of the day, the fire service is a service that is provided and funded by residents and is no different from policing, waste management, planning or recreation. Open communication for strategic plans, major purchases, performance models, etc. are necessities so all parties involved can enhance the fire service and hold true to the Municipal Modernization platform. Selecting a model is a start to achieving this objective.

The Fire Services Stakeholder Committee is comprised of representatives from the following organizations:

- Association of Municipal Administrators, NS;
- Department of Municipal Affairs;
- Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia;
- Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities; and
- Office of the Fire Marshal.

For more information regarding fire service administration or the work of the Fire Services Stakeholder Committee please contact: fireservices@amans.ca

More information can be found in the *Municipal Government Act - Guide Respecting Fire and Emergency Services*

Why is Fire Service Administration/Coordination so Important?

Coordination helps enable:

- Efficient fire services by coordinating resources, purchases, policies, and a liaison between municipalities and the fire service.
- A united fire service to allow for progress and adaption with the ever-evolving world of firefighting by embracing modernization.
- Long term planning to ensure a safe, effective and sustainable fire services geared towards the changing needs of your communities.

Risk Management:

- Helps in the reduction of liabilities with agreements, tendering procedures, record keeping, etc.
- Provide resources to understand and interpret legislation, policies, guidelines, requirements and so forth.
- Assist with Risk Management Planning and Mitigation Strategies.

As a representative of your municipality or village, do you know?

- Coordination will allow for better information exchange between the municipality and the fire service.
- Administration may relieve stress on the fire chief to allow them to focus more on operations and training.
- There is a group of nine (9) fire service coordinators currently operating in Nova Scotia who could act as a resource to help you and answer some questions. (Chester, West Hants, Guysborough, Colchester, Richmond, Barrington, Cumberland, Lunenburg, and Victoria currently have positions filled)
- A Coordinator may assist in development of recommendations related to service delivery standards, funding formulas, infrastructure and capital planning, policy structure, and long-range plans for fire services within the Municipality.

As a representative of a fire department do you know?

- A municipality may make policies pertaining to fire and emergency services.
- Nine (9) fire coordinators currently work for municipalities in Nova Scotia as listed above.
- Administration could reduce some of your administrative workload.
- Fire Service Administration will assist in allowing your department to move forward with new and innovative models.
- A fire coordinator is a municipal employee who could assist with value added services such as GIS Mapping, by-law development, records management, guideline development, etc.
- Administration allows for timely, coordinated and consistent messaging to local fire departments.
- A fire coordinator may assist you in organization of training.
- That a fire coordinator could help you with purchasing equipment to save your department money.