



**TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** February 1, 2018

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Chris Harrow

**SUBJECT:** New Proposed FPPA Regulations

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**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

6.4 Maintain and enhance the local volunteer fire fighter model in Minto, and take a leadership role in setting standards for municipalities this size by ensuring training, equipment and vehicles available to volunteers compares with a full time fire service.

**BACKGROUND:**

Beginning January 2017, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services undertook a review of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) with the mandate to modernize fire service delivery. They formed a technical table and invited groups from all aspects of the fire service to provide recommendations to the Ministry. The Firefighter's union, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, and many Fire Chiefs were randomly selected to sit at the technical table.

The group was tasked with coming up with some recommendations for updating the FPPA since it has not had significant updates since it was written in 1997. The group was eventually directed to focus on two particular areas, the need for community risk assessments and mandatory training requirements.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) released the attached position paper on the regulations. Comments on the regulations are welcomed until March 11, 2018.

**COMMENTS:**

The draft regulations are a drastic change in the way the Fire Service operates, specifically the mandatory training and certification regulation. If the regulation is approved any Firefighter in the Province of Ontario will have to be certified to the specific standard adopted by the Province, NFPA.

The regulation outlines the need for any Firefighters performing specific duties to be certified. For example, a Firefighter running a Pumper truck at a scene needs to be certified in Pumper Operations. As well, future members of our specialty rescue teams, water and confined space, will need to be certified to the NFPA standards.

The idea of mandatory certification is a good idea provided there is a standard for Firefighters to be trained to and a mechanism in place to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. However, there is going to be a great deal of demand placed on new Firefighters

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coming into the service. As a volunteer department, Minto Fire does not have the luxury of specialists dedicated to one area. Firefighters perform a variety of roles (Firefighters, Pump Operators, Public Educators, Trainers, etc). The new regulations will require them to obtain certifications in each area they are involved in.

The new regulations are quite clear, any Firefighter hired before January 1, 2019 is exempt from the new regulations. This means existing Firefighters will not need to obtain certifications for the duties they currently perform. However, the question is does a firefighter looking to upgrade their position in the fire service need to obtain the relevant certification first? This will require Minto Fire to ensure we have a vibrant succession plan in place for all positions.

Since the regulations are on a “go forward” basis, all new recruits in the future will face a challenging road to becoming a Firefighter. In the recruiting process, mandatory certifications will have to be specifically laid out for each new recruit. They will need to understand the process and the time commitment required to complete the process. This will ensure the recruiting process for new Firefighters becomes much tougher in the future. Candidates may shy away from applying because of the requirements to take exams and skill testing.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) position paper outlines concerns with liability on the municipality if they do not certify all of their Firefighters, even those who have been grandfathered if a bad event were to happen to the Department. *“If municipal fire services do not make sure that everyone is certified to the new mandatory standard for all categories of fire operations, there remains a great liability risk if anything unfortunate occurs.”* They have formed the opinion the Province should extend indemnification to the municipalities for fire department functions. Staff supports this recommendation.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Minto Fire is unable at this time to calculate the cost associated with the proposed regulations, although there will most likely be an increase in training costs in the future if the regulations come into effect as written.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Mayor and Council accept the Fire Chief’s report regarding new proposed FFPA Regulations and the January 30, 2018 AMO memo on the same topic, and that Council supports the recommended response outlined by AMO and that these comments be sent prior to March 11, 2018.

Chris Harrow  
Fire Chief