



**Quality of Life Standing Committee Meeting
Additional Information**

**Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 4:30 p.m.
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium**

Pages

7. Reports of Administration

7.4 Revised Emergency Response Plan

***7.4.1 Revised Emergency Response Plan**

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Report 025-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue seeking endorsement from the Quality of Life Standing Committee of the revised Emergency Response Plan which will guide municipal emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Distributed separately on Thursday, January 22, 2026.

WITH RESPECT to Report 025-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, we request endorsement of the Standing Committee to forward the following recommendations to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council approve the attached new City of Thunder Bay Emergency Management Strategy and attached revised Emergency Response Plan;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

7.5 Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law Report

***7.5.1 Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law Report**

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Report 025-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue seeking endorsement of the updated Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law which aligns with legislation, operational practices and Council

approved service levels. Distributed separately on Thursday, January 22, 2026.

WITH RESPECT to Report 027-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, we request endorsement of the Quality of Life Standing Committee to forward the following recommendations to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council approve the Draft Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law as attached to this report (Attachment A) to establish and regulate the Fire Department, its mandated services, authority structure, and fees for additional emergency services;
AND THAT By-law 50-1984, as amended be repealed;

AND THAT Chapter 890, titled Fire Service – Regulation of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code be repealed;

AND THAT City Council enacts the new Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

Standing Committee Report

REPORT NUMBER 025-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

DATE

PREPARED

December 15, 2025

FILE

STANDING

COMMITTEE

January 27, 2026

MEETING DATE

SUBJECT

Revised Emergency Response Plan

PURPOSE

To seek endorsement from the Quality of Life Standing Committee of the revised Emergency Response Plan which will guide municipal emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

WITH RESPECT to Report 025-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, we request endorsement of the Standing Committee to forward the following recommendations to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council approve the attached new City of Thunder Bay Emergency Management Strategy and attached revised Emergency Response Plan;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Emergency Management Strategy (EMS) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) are to provide the governance framework and operational structure for managing emergencies within the City of Thunder Bay. The Emergency Management Strategy provides a framework and direction guiding the ongoing work of the City of Thunder Bay Emergency Management Program. The ERP establishes roles and responsibilities, decision-making processes, coordination mechanisms, and response principles to support effective municipal action during emergency events.

The Emergency Management Strategy embeds both climate resilience principles and a commitment to social equity acknowledging the increasing impacts of climate change on Northwestern Ontario and the amplification of these impacts on vulnerable populations. The ERP has been comprehensively reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation, best practices in emergency management, lessons learned from recent large-scale and prolonged emergencies, including the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the move to embracing

Ontario's Incident Management System (IMS) in the City's emergency response. The revised Plan is a living document and is intended to be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect evolving risks, organizational changes, and emerging best practices.

A key input into the ERP update was the City of Thunder Bay COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review, which assessed the City's preparedness, response, governance structure, and recovery considerations. While the review concluded that the City managed the overall pandemic response effectively, it identified opportunities to strengthen preparedness, coordination, training, and corporate resilience.

Adoption of the EMS and revised ERP will provide a modernized, scalable framework to guide emergency management activities and support the safety and resilience of the community.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* requires municipalities to develop, implement, and maintain an emergency management program, and adopt it with a by-law. In accordance with Section 3(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, the City of Thunder Bay has enacted By-law 76/2021 and By-law 81/2021. Ontario Regulation 380/04 describes emergency management standards for municipal emergency management programs.

Based on best practices in emergency management, and lessons learned from recent large-scale and prolonged emergencies, including the COVID-19 Pandemic, Administration has created an Emergency Management Strategy (EMS) and revised the existing Emergency Response Plan (ERP). Creating the EMS has taken information about the City's emergency response framework, like membership of the Municipal Emergency Program Committee, public education, training and emergency exercises out of the Emergency Response Plan and allows the ERP to be a document that focuses on how to respond to an emergency. The Emergency Response Plan identifies emergency response goals and establishes roles and responsibilities for individuals and agencies which may become involved in a municipal emergency response. The Plan is approved by City Council with supporting information that requires regular updates like contact lists, hazard-specific plans, and operational procedures being included in appendices that do not require Council approval. Both documents reflect the City's move to incorporate the province's Incident Management System (IMS) into emergency response to provide a standardized, scalable, coordinated response especially when requiring outside agency support.

Emergency Response Vision

The Emergency Management Strategy and revised Emergency Response Plan support a coordinated, scalable, and risk-informed approach to emergency management that

enables the City of Thunder Bay to respond effectively to a wide range of emergency scenarios while maintaining continuity of essential services.

The EMS and ERP support community resilience in the following key ways:

Governance and Decision-Making

- Clear roles, responsibilities, and escalation processes during emergency activations
- Defined authority and coordination structures to support timely and effective decision-making

Operational Coordination

- Alignment with the Incident Management System and Emergency Operations Centre functions
- Improved coordination across departments and with external partners

Preparedness and Capacity

- Emphasis on training, exercises, and continuous improvement
- Integration of hazard-specific plans and supporting procedures

Recovery and Resilience

- Consideration of recovery and mitigation as integral components of emergency management
- Institutionalization of lessons learned from past emergency events

Alignment with the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review

The Emergency Management Strategy and revised Emergency Response Plan have been developed to directly respond to the findings and recommendations identified in the City of Thunder Bay COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review completed in November of 2023.

While the Review concluded that the City managed the overall pandemic response effectively, it identified several areas where corporate emergency management capacity and resilience could be further strengthened to better support complex and prolonged emergencies.

In particular, the EMS and revised ERP address the following recommendations and areas for improvement identified in the Review:

Integration of Pandemic and Hazard-Specific Emergency Plans

The COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review recommended that pandemic response planning be formally integrated within the City's Emergency Response Plan to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment during large-scale emergencies requiring activation of the Emergency Operations Centre.

- The current outdated Corporate Pandemic Plan will be revised based on the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review and attached as an appendix to the ERP to inform future pandemic response.
- Future appendices will be developed and integrated into the Emergency Response Plan to provide clear, hazard-specific direction consistent with current legislation, best practices, and lessons learned. For example, appendices will be developed for evacuation, snow/ice storm, flooding, and wildfire emergencies.

Emergency Management and Incident Management System Training

The COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review identified the importance of ensuring that members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG), Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), and designated alternates receive role-appropriate emergency management and Incident Management System (IMS) training to support effective coordination during emergency activations

- IMS training plans have been initiated to fill gaps and will continue as a core component of the City's emergency preparedness program, with a specific focus on ensuring that all members of the MECG, EOC, and identified alternates are trained and proficient in their assigned roles and responsibilities.
- The revised Emergency Management Strategy reinforces the requirement for ongoing training and exercises aligned with emergency management and IMS principles. The City's internal capacity to deliver IMS training has been an important factor in strengthening staff preparedness, supporting consistency in instruction, and enabling timely and scalable training delivery across the Corporation.
- Continued emphasis on internal IMS training and exercises will support operational clarity, effective decision-making, and sustained readiness for both short-duration and prolonged emergency events.

Corporate Readiness and Coordination During Prolonged Emergencies

The Pandemic Response Review identified challenges associated with sustaining operations, coordination, and communication over extended emergency periods.

- The Emergency Management Strategy and revised Emergency Response Plan strengthen the City's framework for prolonged emergency activations by emphasizing continuity of operations, information sharing, and coordinated support across departments and external partners.
- The Emergency Management Strategy identifies duty time and rest time cycles for responders and EOC members to support their health, safety and ability to respond to the emergency.

Strengthening Emergency Management Planning Capacity

The COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review identified the need for enhanced, dedicated emergency planning capacity within the Corporation, recognizing the scope,

duration, and complexity of modern emergency events. Specifically, the Review recommended the creation of a full-time Emergency Planner position to support the City's emergency management program and reduce reliance on part-time or collateral-duty resources.

- While the revised Emergency Response Plan strengthens governance, clarifies emergency management roles and responsibilities, and improves the overall planning structure, the addition of a dedicated Emergency Planner position has not yet been implemented. The need for this role remains recognized and validated based on operational experience, lessons learned from prolonged emergency activations, and the increasing demands placed on municipal emergency management functions.
- Implementation of this recommendation would require a financial commitment to add one (1) full-time equivalent position. Consideration of this resource requirement will be subject to future budget deliberations and Council approval.

Implementation

Implementation will be supported through:

- Development and maintenance of supporting appendices and hazard-specific plans
- Training and exercises aligned with roles and responsibilities
- Ongoing review and continuous improvement based on exercises, real-world events, and evolving best practices

Adoption of the Strategy and Plan will strengthen corporate readiness, improve coordination across departments and partner agencies, and help reflect lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and other emergency events in future response efforts.

CONSULTATION

The review and update of the Emergency Response Plan was informed by current emergency management legislation and best practices, internal operational experience, post-incident reviews, and external assessment through the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review. The Review included staff surveys, focus groups, and public engagement, providing valuable insight into opportunities for improvement in emergency preparedness and response.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the adoption of the Emergency Management Strategy and revised Emergency Response Plan. Costs for improvements to the Emergency Operations Centre are included in the 2026 capital budget, but the Strategy and Plan are not contingent on the work being done. Any future resource requirements related to emergency response implementation, training,

or program enhancements will be addressed through existing budgets or brought forward to City Council for consideration, as required.

BACKGROUND

A By-Law (76/2021) to establish an Emergency Management Program and Emergency Plan was presented and approved by City Council on October 25th 2021.

By-law 81/2021 - An amendment to the By-Law (Corporate Report - R 150/2021) was approved on November 8th by City Council which included the designation of the Emergency Information Officer and authorities of the Acting Mayor.

This revision of the ERP includes a Plan Maintenance and Revisions section that formalizes the requirement for ongoing review and updates.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Thunder Bay Emergency Management Strategy – revised January 7, 2026

Attachment B – Thunder Bay Emergency Response Plan – revised January 7, 2026

REPORT PREPARED BY

Dave Tarini, Deputy Fire Chief – Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kayla Dixon, Commissioner – Infrastructure & Operations

January 20, 2026

2026

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

REVISED:

05/01/2026

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT NUMBER	SECTION(S) OR PAGE(S) AMENDED	DATE OF AMENDMENT
	Replace entire plan	2026-01

INTRODUCTION

Effective emergency management is essential to protecting the safety, resilience, and well-being of Thunder Bay's residents. As our city faces a growing array of threats, including extreme weather events, wildfires, flooding, cyber attacks, and public health emergencies, it is critical to adopt a coordinated, cooperative, and proactive approach to mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. This Emergency Management Strategy provides a framework and direction guiding the ongoing work of the City of Thunder Bay Emergency Management Program,

In recent years, the impacts of climate change have become increasingly evident in Northwestern Ontario. Thunder Bay is experiencing more frequent and intense storms, rising temperatures, and shifting precipitation patterns, all of which heighten the risk of flooding, infrastructure failure, and wildfire-related emergencies. This Strategy embeds climate resilience principles, ensuring that emergency management efforts are grounded in science, support adaptation, and enhance the community's long-term capacity to withstand and recover from climate-driven events as well as other community emergencies.

Equally important is the recognition that emergencies do not affect all residents equally. In Thunder Bay, social and economic disparities can amplify the impacts of disasters on vulnerable populations, including low-income households, seniors, people living with disabilities, Indigenous community members, newcomers to Canada, and those experiencing homelessness. A commitment to social equity is embedded throughout this plan, guiding how risks are assessed, how resources are deployed, and how communities are engaged and supported before, during, and after emergencies. By investing in climate-informed, equity-focused emergency management today, Thunder Bay is taking decisive steps toward a secure, adaptive, and just future for all its residents.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Thunder Bay is a single-tier municipality situated on the northwestern shore of Lake Superior and is the largest urban centre in Northwestern Ontario. The community has a census population of approximately 108,000 people with more than 130,000 in the metropolitan area. However, research suggests there may be over 20,000 additional residents not represented in these figures, particularly Indigenous populations¹. The City serves as a regional hub for healthcare, education, transportation, and commerce. The City boasts an abundance of natural environments in both the rural and urban areas of the city.

The region is subject to various hazards, with recent past events including severe flooding, severe weather events, and the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an extensive wildland urban interface region; putting significant areas of the community and key infrastructure at risk of forest fire impacts. Climate change is anticipated to increase the frequency of severe weather events, the number of fire spread days each summer, and increase the frequency of extreme heat events.

In addition to local threats, the community also plays a key role in supporting emergency response throughout the region; including regularly hosting communities across Northwestern Ontario evacuated for flood, wildfire, or infrastructure failures.

Hazards are exacerbated by local social inequities that contribute to community vulnerability; including relatively high rates of homelessness, food insecurity, and chronic illness including addiction; compounded by barriers to healthcare access and other critical supports.

Despite these challenges, Thunder Bay benefits from strong community networks, a capable emergency services sector, and a culture of collaboration between government, Indigenous partners, and local organizations. These strengths form the foundation for a resilient, coordinated emergency management system.

¹ McConkey, S., Brar, R., Blais G., Hardy, M., Smylie, J. (2022). Indigenous Population Estimates for the City of Thunder Bay.
January 5, 2026

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (the *Act*) is the legal authority for all municipal and ministry emergency response plans in Ontario.

The Act requires municipalities to develop, implement, and maintain an emergency management program, and adopt it with a by-law.

An emergency management program must consist of:

- An emergency plan;
- Training programs and exercises for employees of municipalities and other persons with respect to the provision of required services and procedures to be followed in emergency response and recovery activities. This includes an annual practice exercise for a simulated emergency incident in order to evaluate the municipality's emergency response plan and its own procedures;
- Public education on risks to public safety and on public preparedness for emergencies; and
- Any other element required for municipalities in standards of emergency management programs that may be developed by the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response

Specific statutory appointments exist for the various key roles to support the overall management during an emergency. Ontario Regulation 380/04 describes emergency management standards for municipal emergency management programs.

The required elements consist of:

- Establishment of an Emergency Management Program Committee, (EMPC).
- Establishment of a Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG)
- Development of an emergency response plan
- Implementation of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) with appropriate communications systems.
- Designation of an Emergency Information Officer (EIO); and
- Designation of a Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC).

In accordance with Section 3(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, the City of Thunder Bay has enacted By-law 76/2021.

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Overall leadership in the development and delivery of the community's emergency management program is provided by the Thunder Bay Emergency Management Program Committee. The Committee meets a minimum of twice a year and is chaired by the Community Emergency Management Coordinator or their alternate to provide overall leadership in the development and delivery of the community's emergency management program.

The purpose of this committee is to:

- Review the City's emergency management program annually
- Provide advice to the Community Emergency Management Coordinator in the development of the emergency management work plan
- Support the development and delivery of emergency management program objectives, including exercises and staff training
- Make recommendations to Council for the continued development of the emergency management program
- Assist the Community Emergency Management Coordinator in meeting the legislated level of emergency management as dictated by the Province of Ontario

Membership includes:

- Mayor (Head of Council)
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator
- City Manager
- Chief of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue
- Chief of Superior North Emergency Medical Services
- Chief of Thunder Bay Police Service
- Commissioner of Infrastructure and Operations

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Emergency Management Program is supported by the Emergency Management Working Group, which incorporates both internal and external stakeholders to guide the continued evolution of the Emergency Management Program and collaboration on emergency management throughout the community.

Meetings do not require all members to be present and include designates from the EMPC committee where appropriate.

HAZARD PRIORITIZATION

As part of the City's Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) process, the City of Thunder Bay has determined that the community is vulnerable to numerous hazards. These hazards are grouped into three major categories:

Natural Events: Events such as severe weather, floods, blizzards, tornadoes, food or human health emergencies.

Human-Caused Events and Accidental Hazards: Incidents intended to do harm to public safety and security, civil disorder, wars, bomb threats, improvised explosive devices and improvised dispersal devices. Chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear agents may be used on their own, or in combination with these devices.

Technological & Infrastructure Disruptions: Incidents involving hazardous materials, utility and power failures, transportation accidents, aircraft crashes, water supply failures, building or structural collapse, critical resource shortages, or computer-related incidents.

The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process incorporates Hazard Probability, Consequence, Vulnerabilities, and Response Capacity in order to estimate impact to the community.

Work will be ongoing to estimate key drivers of risk, such as climate change, community growth, and demographic shifts to anticipate how risks may evolve in the years to come.

The HIRA report, Critical Infrastructure List, and Municipal Essential Services document are valuable references for all stages of emergency management to understand the impacts of hazards on our community.

MITIGATION

Mitigation involves proactive actions taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risks posed by natural and human-made hazards.

In Thunder Bay, mitigation efforts are essential for enhancing community resilience by addressing vulnerabilities in infrastructure, land use, and environmental systems. These actions lay the foundation for a safer future by reducing the potential impact of emergencies before they occur.

Resilient Infrastructure

- Encourage climate-resilient building standards and retrofits for public facilities, emergency shelters, and vulnerable housing.
- Launch public education campaigns on household-level mitigation.
- Maintain prioritized critical infrastructure list, incorporating both municipally owned and external assets.
- Increase redundancy and spare inventory for critical infrastructure and components where feasible.
- Enhance vegetation management, fire breaks, and other protective measures around key infrastructure and residential zones.
- Promote nature-based solutions, such as green infrastructure, to absorb floodwaters and mitigate heat island effects.

Equity and Vulnerability Reduction

- Identify and map vulnerable populations for targeted mitigation support.
- Explore creation of a vulnerable population registry
- Support affordable housing retrofits to reduce risk from climate hazards.
- Partner with community organizations to engage vulnerable groups and co-develop mitigation strategies.

Integration

- All departments consider identified hazards in their decisions, for land-use planning, infrastructure design, and program investment.
- Use a climate equity lens in corporate reports to communicate the community risk and vulnerability considerations of municipal decisions.

Partnerships and Funding

- Apply for federal and provincial mitigation funding and capacity programs
- Formalize and routinely update agreements with critical stakeholders, including utilities, NGOs, First Nations, and neighbouring municipalities.

PREPARATION

Preparedness focuses on ensuring that individuals, organizations, and the municipality are ready to respond effectively to emergencies. This includes planning, training, public education, and resource coordination.

In Thunder Bay, preparedness activities strengthen the capacity of emergency responders and the public alike, ensuring a coordinated and timely response when disasters strike.

Emergency Planning and Coordination

- Review and update the municipal Emergency Response Plan annually to reflect current risks and lessons learned from recent events.
- Develop hazard-specific annexes (e.g., for wildfires, floods, hazardous materials, pandemics, evacuations) to support rapid, tailored responses.
- Consider opportunities to expand existing contingency plans for responding to some community needs without EOC activation (e.g. Severe Weather Plan for Vulnerable Populations).
- Encourage departments to maintain updated continuity of operations plans; outlining essential services and critical infrastructure dependencies.
- Routinely update critical infrastructure list based on identified impacts and dependences.
- Enhance mutual aid and coordination protocols with community organizations surrounding First Nations, municipalities, and provincial agencies.

Municipal Evacuation Planning

- Develop risk-based evacuation scenarios for both local evacuations and hosting; with associated neighbourhood evacuation strategies for various sizes of evacuated populations
- Clear decision-making criteria for issuing evacuation advisories or orders
- Communication templates with clear guidance for households; incorporating considerations for children, pets, and other population specific needs
- Engage with evacuees previously hosted in Thunder Bay to improve processes.

Staff Training

- Conduct regular IMS training sessions for municipal staff, elected officials, and emergency responders on roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
- All MEEG members and alternates receive training on the emergency plan and on the IMS framework
- Support collaborative training opportunities with community partners and surrounding communities to increase regional capacity.
- Front line emergency responders conduct hazard-specific training in collaboration with provincial and federal agencies.
- Include municipal emergency management awareness training for administration, to improve awareness of the role of the MEEG and EOC, and what supports may be available in an emergency

Emergency Exercises

- Maintain emergency exercise program, guiding annual emergency exercises.
- Facilitate annual multi-agency emergency exercises, simulating complex emergencies and disasters.
- Incorporate climate and equity lenses into scenario planning to ensure inclusive and forward-looking preparedness.
- Conduct formal debriefs and after-action reports after each exercise or real incident, documenting lessons learned and updating plans and training accordingly.

Public Education and Outreach

- Develop and promote personal preparedness campaigns, encouraging households to have emergency kits, plans, and contact lists.
- Create targeted materials to support groups with elevated or unique risks, particularly those unable to maintain 72-hour preparedness kits.
- Partner with local NGOs, faith groups, and Indigenous organizations to co-design culturally relevant preparedness initiatives.
- Offer recurring training sessions for community volunteers
- Explore implementation of community supported resilience hubs
- Host preparedness training for community groups, schools, and businesses, focused on emergency kits, evacuation planning, and hazard awareness, leveraging Ontario Corps support where possible.

Emergency Alerting and Communication

- Enhance public alerting systems, including integration with Alert Ready, local media organizations, and social media.
- Establish communication protocols for vulnerable and remote populations, including those without internet or cell service.
- Prepare pre-scripted messages for priority hazards to ensure timely and consistent communication.

Resource Management and Logistics

- Maintain and regularly update inventories of emergency supplies (e.g., cots, water, PPE) for reception and evacuation centres.
- Establish agreements with suppliers and service providers for rapid access to food, fuel, transportation, and shelter.
- Develop plans for spontaneous donations and volunteer management during large-scale emergencies

Integration with Provincial and Federal Systems

- Ensure municipal training aligns with Federal and Provincial standards
- Take part in regional emergency exercises where feasible.
- Explore Federal and Provincial training, funding, and guidance documents where available.

Equity-Focused Preparedness

- Ensure preparedness materials and plans address barriers faced by marginalized populations.
- Create tailored outreach for high-risk groups, including people living in poverty, those experiencing homelessness, and Indigenous youth.
- Use an equity impact lens to evaluate preparedness policies and identify gaps.
- Introduce equity and cultural competency training for emergency management personnel

RESPONSE

The response phase encompasses immediate actions taken during and immediately after an emergency to protect life, property, and the environment.

In Thunder Bay, response efforts rely on coordinated operations, clear communication, and rapid deployment of resources; following Ontario IMS 2.0 guidance. This section outlines how the municipality will manage emergencies through efficient command structures and public safety strategies.

Incident Management System Response Goals

- 1. Protect the safety of all incident responders and those affected by the incident*
- 2. Save lives*
- 3. Treat the sick and injured*
- 4. Protect the health of those affected by the incident*
- 5. Safeguard the continuity of government and critical services*
- 6. Protect property and the environment*
- 7. Prevent and/or reduce economic and social losses*

Emergency Response Plan Procedures

- Follow operating procedures, including the Municipal Emergency Response Plan, to respond to community emergencies
- Activate the Emergency Operations Centre as required
- Variations from plan should be clearly communicated and recorded

Emergency Operations Centre Facility

- Should be dedicated area to maintain availability of critical resources, including food; personal rest supplies; as well as regularly updated copies of relevant plans, forms, and procedures.
- Facility selected with accessibility and resilience in mind
- Should have IMS best practice equipment, including position identification vests
- Should be able to support both in-person and virtual meeting attendees in a hybrid format
- Checklists for EOC roles, including technical specialists and external agency representatives

Emergency Communications

- Issue timely, accurate, and accessible public alerts and instructions targeting affected populations
- Coordinate with community organizations to support consistent messaging.
- Create a public facing section of municipal website where citizens can find the most recent emergency releases and specialized instructions
- Produce regular communications updating city council on response progress, as well as guidance on redirecting community members to appropriate resources and informing internal staff on any changes to responsibilities.
- Support access to telecommunications connectivity for affected populations to access information; including considerations for device charging and internet connections at reception centres.

Health, Safety, and Well-being

- Deploy emergency mental health and crisis support services, for affected populations, emergency responders, and emergency managers
- Enforce personnel cycling to manage responder and EOC capacity. Duty time in the EOC should not exceed 14 consecutive hours and be followed by a minimum of 8 uninterrupted hours of rest time.

Resource Management and Mutual Aid

- Track the deployment and status of all municipal and partner resources (personnel, equipment, supplies).
- Request provincial or federal support if local capacity is exceeded.
- Implement mutual aid agreements with neighbouring communities

Special Populations and Equity Considerations

- Support seniors, people with disabilities, Indigenous residents, and non-English speakers through targeted outreach and tailored services.
- Use pre-identified community liaisons or navigators to provide inclusive response.

Documentation and Information Management

- Maintain detailed incident records, including decisions, actions, and resource deployment using IMS compliant forms.
- Prepare situation reports for internal and external partners.
- Begin collecting data for financial recovery and reimbursement tracking.

RECOVERY

Recovery is the process of restoring and rebuilding after an emergency, with a focus on returning the community to safe and sustainable conditions.

In Thunder Bay, recovery efforts will be guided by principles of resilience, equity, and collaboration. This section outlines short- and long-term recovery actions that support healing, rebuilding infrastructure, and strengthening the community for the future.

Recovery Coordination and Leadership

- Following significant incidents, designate a Recovery Coordination Team with relevant cross-sector representation.
- Develop a Recovery Action Plan with clear timelines, roles, and resource needs.
- Coordinate with external stakeholders as appropriate

Transition from Response to Recovery

- Formally declare transition from response to recovery phase.
- Deactivate EOC when appropriate and shift coordination to the Recovery Coordination Team.
- Conduct initial impact and needs assessment across sectors (housing, infrastructure, economy, etc.).

Restoration of Essential Services

- Prioritize restoration of:
 - Power, water, natural gas, and sewer services
 - Transportation routes
 - Telecommunications
- Coordinate closely with service providers and contractors.
- Monitor service accessibility, especially for vulnerable populations.
- Rebuild damaged infrastructure, evaluating opportunities to “build back better” with climate resilient design

Community Support and Social Services

- Provide ongoing support for displaced individuals and families.
- Re-establish and expand access to:
 - Housing and shelter support
 - Food, clothing, and transportation
 - Mental health and trauma counselling
- Collaborate with community partners (e.g., NGOs, health units, Indigenous organizations).

Public Communication and Engagement

- Continue regular communication with the public on progress and restored services
- Consider hosting community meetings and feedback sessions.
- Use accessible and inclusive communication channels.

Financial Recovery and Reimbursement

- Track and document all eligible costs related to emergency response and recovery.
- Apply for provincial (e.g., Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance) and federal funding.
- Support residents and businesses in accessing relief funds and insurance claim

After-Action Review and Improvement Planning

- Hold one or more critical action debriefs following significant response actions to inform continual improvement.
- Publish mandatory After-Action Reviews (AAR) following exercises or EOC activation.
- Gather input from all responding agencies, stakeholders, and community members.
- Identify lessons learned and update emergency and recovery plans accordingly.
- Provide training and briefings based on AAR findings.

PROGRAM MAINTENANCE, REVISION, AND TESTING

The City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Management Program is developed and maintained by the Emergency Management Program Committee and Emergency Management Working Group under the authority of Municipal By-law 76/2021 and in accordance with the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Ontario IMS Guidance 2.0
- Emergency Response Plan
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Report (*anticipated 2026*)
- Critical Infrastructure List
- Municipal Essential Services
- Contingency Plans
- Evacuation Plan
- Recovery Plan
- Severe Weather Plan for Vulnerable Populations
- Emergency Food Plan (*external*)

2026

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

REVIEWED:

07/01/2026

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT NUMBER	SECTION(S) OR PAGE(S) AMENDED	DATE OF AMENDMENT
	Replace entire plan	2026-01

This document is considered expired and should be destroyed thirteen (13) months following the most recent listed review or revision.

INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Response Plan (ERP) outlines a centralized controlled and coordinated response to support responders and safeguard property, the environment and the health, safety and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Thunder.

Based on the Incident Management System (IMS), the ERP is designed to support individuals and agencies, both internal and external, which may become involved in a municipal emergency response to become aware of their respective roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

The ERP scope addresses incidents that warrant the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre, not addressing emergencies that are handled on site by appropriate first responding agencies. The ERP is intended to complement existing contingencies, standard operating procedures, and other emergency prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery initiatives that make up the municipal emergency management program.

The following response goals are applied to all emergency situations:

1. Protect the safety of all incident responders and those affected by the incident
2. Save lives
3. Treat the sick and injured
4. Protect the health of those affected by the incident
5. Safeguard the continuity of government and critical services
6. Protect property and the environment
7. Prevent and/or reduce economic and social losses

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The legislation, regulations, related standards, and By-Laws under which the municipality and its employees are authorized to respond to an emergency are:

- The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, RSO 1990, c.E.9, as amended (the *Act*); and Ontario Regulation 380/04;
- Ontario Incident Management System (IMS) 2.0
- The City of Thunder Bay By-law 76/2021

The *Act* requires municipalities to develop, implement, and maintain an emergency management program, and adopt it with a by-law.

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY CONTROL GROUP

In the case of an emergency, the Emergency Operations Centre will be activated and operated by the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) and support staff as needed.

The acting City Manager will assume the EOC Commander role and chair the MECG.

The City of Thunder Bay's MECG consists of the following members or their designates:

- City Manager
- Fire Chief
- Police Chief
- EMS Chief
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC)
- Commissioner Infrastructure and Operations
- Commissioner Community Services
- Commissioner Corporate Services
- Commissioner Growth
- Emergency Information Officer
- Community Support Table Liaison

The City of Thunder Bay's Manager, Communications & Public Relations, is appointed as the Emergency Information Officer.

The City of Thunder Bay's Director, Strategic Initiatives & Engagement is appointed as the Community Support Table Liaison

When activated, the MECG is additionally supported by the Scribe, Safety Officer, and relevant Technical Specialists.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, external agencies and organizations not normally part of the MECG may be asked to send a representative to join the MECG.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is a central hub for the MCEG and support personnel to carry out the functions of managing the emergency at the strategic level.

During an emergency, EOC personnel will meet at regular intervals or as required to provide and receive situation updates relating to the emergency. The EOC will consider strategic objectives and develop an action plan for a defined operational period. This interval will be known as the EOC operational period.

All members of the MCEG shall assign designates to attend the EOC and act for them in their absence as required.

ACTIVATION

The Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Operations Centre may be partially or fully activated when there is an identified need for significant coordination. This can include active or imminent hazards threatening the community; support of other communities' emergency responses; or to manage risks during a planned event.

Response Level	Description	Criteria
Normal Operations	Activities that are normal for the EOC when no incident or specific risk or hazard has been identified The CEMC will coordinate routine watch and warning activities as they emerge.	Routine operations, including emergency responses within the scope of first responders
Partial Activation	Select EOC team members/organizations are activated to monitor a credible threat, risk, or hazard and/or support risk management during a planned event.	Significant potential impact to citizens, property and environment. Significant media attention Significant demand on resources
Full Activation	The EOC team is activated, including personnel from assisting agencies, to support response to a major incident or credible threat.	Major impact on citizens, property and environment Major public interest Major demand for resources impacting business continuity

ACTIVATION OF THE PLAN

The City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Response Plan can be activated:

- Directly by any member or acting designate of the MCEG directly **and/or**
- By request to a member of the MCEG by the municipal department, community partner, or emergency responder most directly involved in the response and/or mitigation of an emergency. The request for activation will be considered based on the size, seriousness, or complexity of the emergency and the response capability of that agency.

On receipt of instructions from a member of the MCEG, the POLICE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (684-1555) will call out the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MCEG), MCEG alternates if the primary member is unavailable, and named Support Positions by telephone or the most effective means. The member of the group giving the call-out instruction will decide if this is to be a call-out or standby.

The primary Emergency Operations Centre is:

- Superior North EMS, 105 Junot Avenue South

Alternate Emergency Operations Centres are:

- Thunder Bay City Hall, 500 Donald Street
- Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Station #3, 60 S. Water Street

Depending on the nature of the incident, a virtual Emergency Operations Centre may be established in lieu of a physical Emergency Operations Centre.

DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY

Emergency declarations will only be made if the Mayor or acting head of council, after reviewing the ERP and consulting with the MCEG, deems it to be warranted. They may make such orders as they consider necessary and are not contrary to law to implement the emergency plan of the municipality and to protect property and the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the emergency area

Should circumstances warrant an emergency declaration, the Mayor or acting head of council must complete and submit a formal written "Declaration of Emergency" to Emergency Management Ontario.

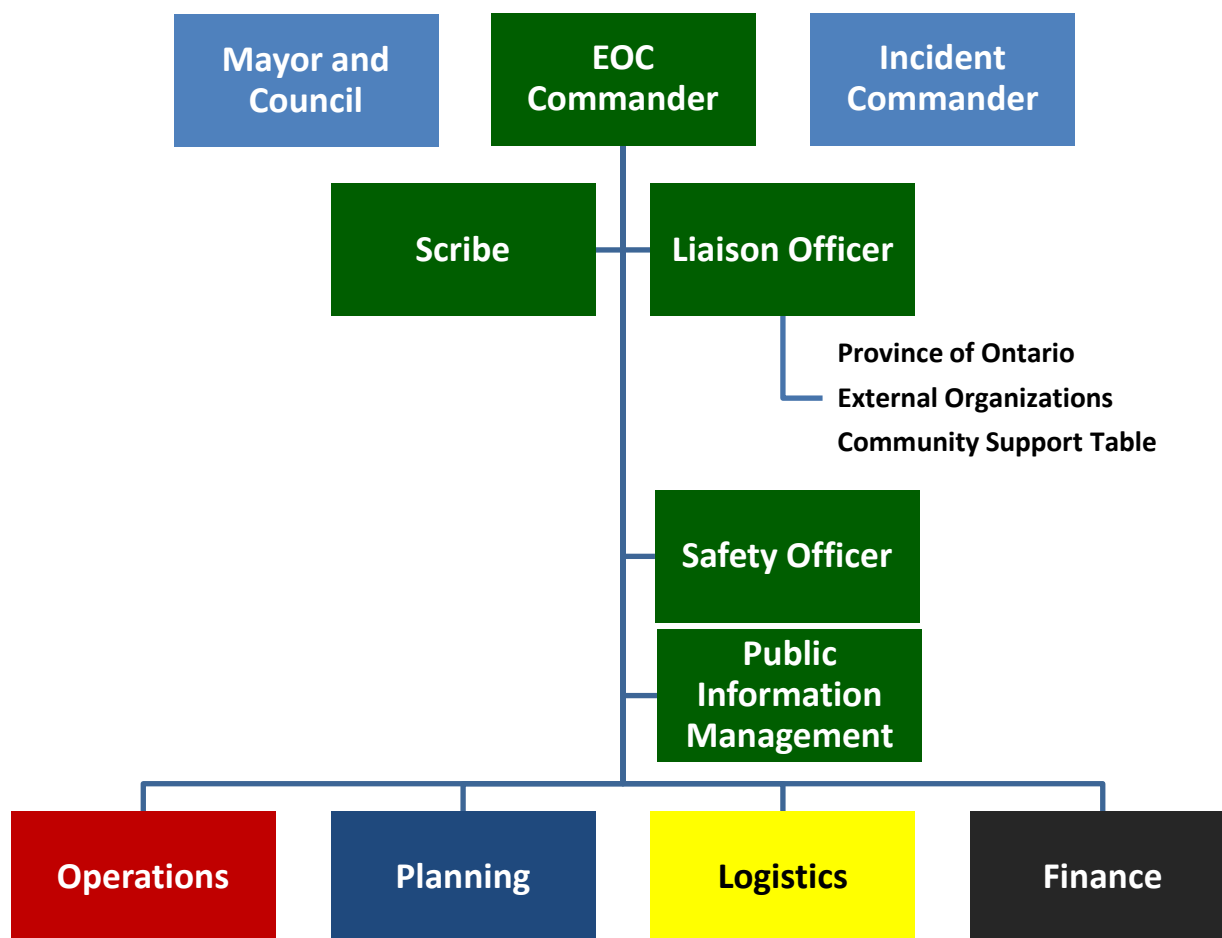
A municipal emergency may be declared terminated at any time by the Head of Council or the Council of a municipality, and/or by the Premier of Ontario through submission of a written "Termination of a Declared Emergency" to Emergency Management Ontario.

An emergency declaration is not necessary to activate the plan, convene the MCEG, or request assistance from outside agencies, surrounding communities, or higher levels of government.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Incident Management System (IMS) is a standardized command and control approach to emergency management encompassing personnel, facilities, equipment, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. Standardized processes and terminology allow incident responders to formulate a unified plan to manage the situation. The standardized terminology reduces the risk of miscommunication among the many responders.

The position summaries to follow are intended to guide collaboration and complement IMS training and position checklists.



ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE (EOC)	<p>The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is where the MEOG carries out the functions of managing the emergency at the strategic level.</p> <p>The functions performed in the EOC include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting on-site incident response • Collecting, gathering and analyzing data • Making decisions that protect life and property • Maintaining continuity of municipal operations • Disseminating decisions to response agencies and the public <p>EOC functions do not include tactical decisions for on-site responders or resources. That responsibility lies with the Incident Commander.</p> <p>Not all IMS positions are required to be filled in an emergency, but all IMS functions must be assigned. One person may be assigned to multiple IMS roles.</p> <p>All personnel should reference relevant contingency plans and procedures, use established templates and resources such as the Critical Infrastructure List, and be aware of their responsibilities listed in this plan, the IMS Common Responsibilities Checklist and the Position Checklist for their assigned role(s).</p>
MAYOR ACTING HEAD OF COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare and terminate an emergency as necessary • Ensure members of Council are notified of the emergency and updated on response. • Notifying the Mayors of adjoining municipalities of the emergency if required and providing any status reports.

CITY COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May assist the Emergency Information Officer to relay information to community members • Liaise through acting head of council regarding any concerns from constituents
INCIDENT COMMANDER SITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain command of the incident site (when incident has specific location) • Coordinate with EOC for support, considering unified command where appropriate • Set the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities.
EOC COMMANDER CITY MANAGER	<p>Overall authority and responsibility for the activities of the EOC.</p> <p>Until otherwise delegated, all EOC functions are the responsibility of the EOC Commander.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets priorities and objectives for operational periods and ensures they are carried out. • Approves EOC Incident Action Plan (IAP) • Liaises with the Incident Command and Mayor • Approves emergency information releases. • Determine what sections are needed, assign section chiefs as appropriate
SCRIBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all critical decisions, actions, briefings, and resource requests in real time • Support clear and traceable information for continuity, accountability, and after-action review
PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT EMERGENCY INFORMATION OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects and disseminates accurate and timely emergency information both during and following an emergency • Develops and shares messages to the public, through the media, and through other trusted community sources • Activates Emergency Information Centre • Tracks media reports including social media feeds for trends or misinformation • Liaises with other organizations' communication leads

SAFETY OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors physical and mental safety of EOC and response personnel • Recommends safety modifications to operations • Assesses and monitors response risks and halts operations if necessary
LIASON OFFICER CEMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites required or requested agencies and stakeholders to the EOC • Provides orientation to agencies and stakeholders entering the EOC • Supports coordination with engaged local, provincial, and/or federal partners
COMMUNITY SUPPORT TABLE LIAISON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communication and coordination between the EOC and Community Support Table member organizations • Primary contact will be Liaison Officer, may be redirected as appropriate
OPERATIONS SECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the incident objectives and priorities stated in the IAP • Manages tactical operations. • Develops the operations portion of the IAP • Maintains contact with Incident Commander, subordinate Operations personnel, and other agencies involved in the incident.
PLANNING SECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects, confirms, analyzes and shares incident information gathered from incident responders • Develops EOC IAP in coordination with other IMS functions. • Conducts advance planning activities • Plans for EOC demobilization
LOGISTICS SECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranges and provides services and supports including personnel, supplies, facilities and other resources to an incident • Provides other support services such as arranging for food and lodging for workers within the EOC and other sites.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION SECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages incident-specific finance and administration activities including payroll, vendor contracts and incident cost tracking. • Coordinates claims and compensation. • Tracks and reports on personnel time.
TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical observations, recommendations, and other support as needed to incident staff • Report to Planning Section chief by default, may be reassigned as appropriate
EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the essential needs of individuals, households, and communities affected by disaster. • Report to Operations Section chief by default, may be reassigned as appropriate
ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent partner organization to support coordination of incident response • Primary contact will be Liaison Officer, may be redirected as appropriate

Municipal Emergency Control Group and Designates must be aware of the contents of the Emergency Response Plan and must be trained on how to carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities as outlined in the plan.

EMERGENCY DOCUMENTATION

It is extremely important to accurately document all major decisions, individuals contacted, instructions issued, and actions taken in an emergency. Emergency record keeping should utilise Incident Management System forms from Emergency Management Ontario or other NIMS compatible formats.

All EOC positions are required to keep an activity log during events and completed forms must include contact information for the individual completing the document and other individuals involved in response efforts.

All documentation developed during an event is to be submitted, retained, and managed by the Planning Section. Staff are required to submit completed forms regardless of their usage in the IAP or other formal document planning.

DEACTIVATION AND RECOVERY

Deactivation of the EOC will be performed once all objectives associated with the developed demobilization plan have been achieved.

Criteria considered for EOC deactivation is, but not limited to:

- The incident is resolved
- All resources assigned to the incident have been released and returned to their home base
- The EOC is/are no longer required as the incident has been stabilized
- On-going recovery operations are to be managed from a separate entity such as normal municipal operations.

The deactivation will be announced to all personnel including any assisting or cooperating agencies during the final briefing. If the general public was informed of facility activation, deactivation will also be communicated.

A critical incident debrief shall be held following EOC activations, and an after-action report shall be created following exercises, full EOC activations, and emergency declarations to inform corrective actions and continual improvements to emergency management procedures.

For significant incidents, a Recovery Coordination Team should be designated to support recover actions.

A report summarizing the event, actions taken, and evaluation of responsibilities, including any recommended changes to the Emergency Response Plan and its associated documents, should be produced after the event concludes.

PLAN MAINTENANCE, REVISION, AND TESTING

The City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Response Plan is developed and maintained by the Emergency Management Program Committee under the authority of Municipal By-law 76/2021 and in accordance with the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

The group is chaired by the Community Emergency Management Coordinator, and membership includes:

- Mayor (Head of Council)
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator
- City Manager
- Chief of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue
- Chief of Superior North Emergency Medical Services
- Chief of Thunder Bay Police Service
- Commissioner of Infrastructure & Operations

The plan is reviewed and revised on an annual basis by the Emergency Management Program Committee and circulated to all plan holders.

The Emergency Management Program Committee is supported by the Emergency Management Program working group, which includes both internal and external representatives and subject matter experts.

Annual exercises are conducted in order to test the overall effectiveness of the City's Emergency Response Plan and provide training to emergency response and recovery stakeholders in the City of Thunder Bay. Recommendations stemming from these exercises are incorporated into the plan where necessary.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRONYMS

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

EOC Forms
IMS 201 – Incident Briefing
IMS 202 – Incident Objectives
IMS 209-G – Incident Status Summary
IMS 211 – Check-In List
IMS 214 – Activity Log

APPENDICES

IMS Position Checklists
Meeting Agenda Templates
Communication Templates
Contact lists
HIRA
Critical Infrastructure List
Hazard-Specific Contingencies
Evacuation Plan
Recovery Plan

Standing Committee Report

REPORT NUMBER 027-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue		
DATE		FILE
PREPARED	December 11, 2025	
STANDING		
COMMITTEE		
January 27, 2026		
MEETING DATE		
<hr/>		
SUBJECT	Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating Bylaw – Repeal and Replace	

PURPOSE

To request endorsement of the updated Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law which aligns with legislation, operational practices and Council approved service levels.

WITH RESPECT to Report 027-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, we request endorsement of the Quality of Life Standing Committee to forward the following recommendations to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council approve the Draft Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law as attached to this report (Attachment A) to establish and regulate the Fire Department, its mandated services, authority structure, and fees for additional emergency services;

AND THAT By-law 50-1984, as amended be repealed;

AND THAT Chapter 890, titled Fire Service – Regulation of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code be repealed;

AND THAT City Council enacts the new Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Thunder Bay's current Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law (50-1984) no longer reflects modern legislative requirements under the Fire Protection

and Prevention Act (FPPA) or current operational practices, service levels, and organizational structure of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue (TBFR).

A comprehensive update has been completed to:

- Align the by-law with the FPPA, Municipal Act, and current regulatory requirements;
- Clearly define TBFR's Divisional structure, roles, and responsibilities;
- Set out mandated core services as required by legislation;
- Establish clear authority for the Fire Chief to manage and administer Fire Protection Services;
- Introduce provisions for recovery of costs when Additional Resources are deployed.

Administration seeks feedback on the recommendation of the repeal of the 1984 by-law and adoption of the new 2025 Establishing and Regulating By-law.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law is the primary legislative instrument governing the organization, authority, and delivery of fire protection services in the City of Thunder Bay. The existing by-law (By-law 50-1984, as amended) was enacted over forty years ago and reflects an operational, organizational, and legislative environment that has changed significantly since its adoption. While the by-law has been amended over time, its structure and content no longer align with current legislation, service delivery models, or Council-approved strategic direction.

In August 2020, City Council received and accepted the **Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Strategic Master Fire Plan (SMFP)** and subsequently approved its Implementation Plan in December 2020. The SMFP identified the need to update and modernize the Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law as a foundational recommendation, noting that the existing by-law did not accurately reflect current services, governance structure, or legislative requirements under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* (FPPA). The SMFP specifically recommended that an updated by-law be developed and presented to Council for approval to support modern, risk-based fire protection services.

In parallel, Thunder Bay Fire Rescue completed a **Community Risk Assessment (CRA)** in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 378/18*. The CRA identifies local risks across mandatory profiles, including building stock, demographics, geographic characteristics, infrastructure, and historical incident data. These findings confirm the expanded and evolving role of TBFR beyond traditional fire suppression, including specialized rescue, emergency medical response, public education, inspections, and emergency management. Aligning the Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law with the CRA ensures that the City's legislative framework accurately supports the risk-based delivery of fire protection services.

Further supporting this work, the **Level of Service Survey conducted by the Asset Management Section in late 2024** gathered public input on awareness, satisfaction, response time expectations, professionalism, preparedness, and future service priorities related to Thunder Bay Fire Rescue. Survey results demonstrate strong community awareness of TBFR's broad service mandate and reinforce public expectations for effective emergency response, adequate staffing, modern equipment, and ongoing investment in training and facilities. These findings underscore the importance of a clear and contemporary by-law that defines and authorizes the services currently being delivered on behalf of Council to the community.

Key Changes

The proposed Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law repeals and replaces By-law 50-1984 and introduces the following substantive changes to modernize the City's legislative framework for fire protection services.

Legislative Alignment and Authority

The By-law updates all legislative references to align with the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* and the *Municipal Act* replacing outdated references to predecessor legislation contained in the 1984 by-law. The Fire Chief is clearly established as the statutory authority responsible to Council for the administration, operation, and delivery of fire protection services, consistent with current provincial legislation. It clarifies City Council's role in establishing service levels and approving budgets, while confirming the Fire Chief's operational independence within those approved parameters.

Modernized Organizational Structure

The By-law presents a modern divisional framework that reflects current Thunder Bay Fire Rescue operations with contemporary divisions such as Fire Prevention and Investigation, Training, Apparatus and Equipment, Administration, and Operations, rather than the outdated 1984 structure focused primarily on suppression and mechanical functions. It also provides flexibility for the Fire Chief to reorganize, establish, or eliminate divisions as operational needs evolve, subject to City policies and collective agreements.

Defined Fire Protection Services and Programs

"Fire Protection Services" are clearly identified in the by-law, reflecting the full scope of services currently delivered, including fire suppression, rescue services, emergency medical response, hazardous materials response, inspections and enforcement, public education, training, and emergency management. These programs and services align the By-law with the Strategic Master Fire Plan and the most recent Community Risk Assessment.

Risk-Based and Service-Level Approach

The By-law introduces provisions acknowledging that service levels may be limited due to factors such as simultaneous incidents, geography, staff training, environmental conditions, and infrastructure limitations, consistent with modern risk-based fire protection planning.

Expanded and Clarified Fire Chief Authorities

The By-law consolidates and modernizes the Fire Chief's authority to issue general orders, policies, procedures, and rules governing operations, training, discipline, staffing, and deployment. It explicitly authorizes the Fire Chief to prepare and implement Community Risk Assessments, Strategic Master Fire Plans, and related planning documents on behalf of Council and identifies the Fire Chief's reporting function to Council.

Cost Recovery for Extraordinary Responses

The By-law introduces new authority for the City to recover costs associated with the use of Additional Resources during extraordinary emergency responses, where permitted by legislation.

Streamlined Compliance and Enforcement Provisions

The By-law updates offence, interference, and enforcement provisions to align with current Provincial Offences Act and Municipal Act penalty frameworks. It also removes obsolete operational prohibitions and replaces them with enforceable, contemporary provisions focused on public safety and operational effectiveness.

Summary

Overall, the new Establishing and Regulating By-law does not change the services currently provided by Thunder Bay Fire Rescue but formally modernizes the legislative authority supporting those services. It aligns the City's by-law with current legislation, Council-approved service levels, and modern fire protection practices, while providing clarity, accountability, and flexibility to respond to evolving community risks.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There is no direct financial impact associated with the adoption of the updated Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law. The proposed by-law does not introduce new services, alter existing service levels, or change current operational practices. All services and authorities outlined in the by-law reflect activities already being delivered within approved Council service levels and existing operating and capital budgets.

The purpose of this update is administrative and legislative in nature, bringing the Establishing and Regulating By-law into alignment with current legislation, organizational structure, and modern fire protection practices, without resulting in additional financial pressures.

BACKGROUND

On June 20, 2022, City Council approved the Strategic Master Fire Plan with Report No. R105/2022 - Strategic Master Fire Plan Administrative Update 2022.

On December 12, 2020, City Council approved the Implementation Plan for the with Report No. R146/2020.

The Strategic Master Fire Plan 2020 was received by City Council on August 24, 2020 with Report No. R102/2020.

Chapter 890, titled Fire Service – Regulation of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code was approved by City Council on November 12, 1996.

The City of Thunder Bay's current Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law, By-law 50-1984 was enacted in 1984.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Draft Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating By-law 028-2026 (including Schedule A)

REPORT PREPARED BY

Dave Paxton, Fire Chief – Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kayla Dixon – Commissioner Infrastructure & Operations

January 20, 2026

Memorandum

Corporate By-law Number: 028-2026-Infrastructure & Operations - Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

TO: Office of the City Clerk

FROM: Dave Paxton, Fire Chief
Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

DATE PREPARED: December 8, 2025

SUBJECT: By-law 28-2026 – A by-law to Establish and Regulate the Thunder Bay Fire Rescue and to repeal By-law 50-1984 and Chapter 890 of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code.

MEETING DATE: City Council – February 3, 2026

By-law Description: A By-law to establish and regulate Thunder Bay Fire Rescue and to repeal By-law 50-1984, as amended and to repeal Chapter 890 of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code.

Authorization: Report 066-2026 (Infrastructure & Operations – Thunder Bay Fire Rescue) – City Council – February 3, 2026

By-law Explanation: The purpose of this by-law is to repeal the outdated 1984 by-law and adopt the new Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating By-law, ensuring alignment with legislation, operational practices, and Council-approved service levels. This by-law will also repeal Chapter 890 – Fire Service – Regulation, of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code.

Schedules and Attachments:

Schedule “A” - Fire Protection Services and Programs

Amended/Repealed By-law Number(s):



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY BY-LAW NUMBER 028-2026

A By-law to establish and regulate Thunder Bay Fire
Rescue and to repeal Chapter 890 of the City of
Thunder Bay Municipal Code and to repeal
By-law 50-1984, as amended

Recitals

1. Subsection 2(1) of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, S.O. 1997, c 4, as amended (the "FPPA"), requires every municipality to establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention and the provision of fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances;
2. Subsection 2(2)(b) of the FPPA permits a municipality, in discharging the responsibilities under subsection 2(1), to establish a Fire Department;
3. Subsection 5(0.1) of the FPPA permits a Council of a municipality to establish, maintain and operate a Fire Department for all or any part of the municipality;
4. Subsection 5(1) of the FPPA requires a Fire Department to provide fire suppression services and permits the Fire Department to provide other Fire Protection Services in the municipality;
5. Subsection 8(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended ("*Municipal Act, 2001*"), provides that the powers of a municipality shall be interpreted broadly so as to confer broad authority on municipalities to enable them to govern their affairs as they consider appropriate, and to enhance their ability to respond to municipal issues;
6. Subsection 10(2) 6. of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that a municipality may pass by-laws for the health, safety and well being of persons;
7. Section 227 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that it is the role of officers and employees of the municipality to implement Council decisions and establish practices and procedures to implement those decisions; and
8. Subsection 391(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that a municipality may impose a fee or a charge for services provided by it.
9. City Council approved By-law 50-1984, to establish and regulate the City of Thunder Bay Fire Department on March 13, 1984.
10. By-law 50-1984 was subsequently adopted as Chapter 890 of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code, titled Fire Service – Regulation on November 12, 1996.

ACCORDINGLY, THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. General

1.1 Short Title: This By-law may be cited as "Thunder Bay Fire Rescue By-law".

1.2 Definitions:

- a) "Additional Expenses" means the cost to the City of any Additional Resources, including any applicable taxes and administrative fees;
- b) "Additional Resources" includes the use of:
 - (i) a private contractor,
 - (ii) special equipment that is rented or contracted by Thunder Bay Fire Rescue,
 - (iii) consumable materials not normally carried on a fire vehicle, or
 - (iv) consumable materials that are used in addition to the amount of those consumable materials normally carried on a fire vehicle;
- c) "City" means The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay;
- d) "Confined Space" means any space that has limited or restricted means for entry or exit (e.g. tanks, vessels, silos, storage bin, hoppers, vaults, trenches, excavations and pits) and that is not designed for continuous human occupancy;
- e) "Council" means the Council of The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay;
- f) "Deputy Fire Chief" means the person appointed by the Fire Chief who acts on behalf of the Fire Chief in the case of an absence or a vacancy of the Fire Chief; "Division" means a Division of the Thunder Bay Fire Rescue as provided for in this By-law;
- g) "Fire Chief" means the person appointed by Council to act as Fire Chief for the City and who is ultimately responsible to Council for the delivery of Fire Protection Services;
- h) "Fire Department" means Thunder Bay Fire Rescue ("TBFR");

- i) "FPPA" means the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act*, 1997, S.O., c 4, as may be amended from time to time, or any successor legislation, and any regulation made thereunder.
- j) "Fire Protection Services" includes fire suppression, rescue and emergency services response, fire and life safety code inspection and enforcement, fire investigation, fire and life safety public education, the management and maintenance of facilities, apparatus and equipment, and the training and professional development of persons involved in the provision of Fire Protection Services;
- k) "Hazmat" means Hazardous Materials;
- l) "High Angle" means an environment in which the load is predominately supported by a rope rescue system;
- m) "Limited Services" means a reduced number of fire fighters and/or equipment and/or apparatus, or a delay in response.
- n) "Member" means any person employed in or appointed to TBFR and assigned to undertake Fire Protection Services; and
- o) "Officer" includes the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chiefs, Division Chiefs, Platoon Chiefs, and all other supervisory positions within the Fire Department.
- p) "Trench" means Trench Rescue.
- q) "USAR" means Urban Search and Rescue.

2. Establishment and Composition

- 2.1 The Fire Department is continued under this By-law to provide Fire Protection Services for the City and shall continue to be known as Thunder Bay Fire Rescue ("TBFR").
- 2.2 The Fire Department shall consist of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chiefs, Division Chiefs, Platoon Chiefs, other Officers, Members and operational staff, administrative support staff and any other person as may be approved by Council for the Fire Department to perform fire, rescue and other emergency protection services.

3. Organization and Core Services

- 3.1 TBFR shall be organized into the following Divisions:
 - a) Operations Division – Suppression which provides fire fighting and emergency response.

- b) Fire Prevention and Investigation which also provides public education.
- c) Training
- d) Apparatus and Equipment.
- e) Administration.

3.2 The Divisions set out in Section 3.1 shall provide the programs and services as prescribed at Schedule "A", which forms part of this By-law.

4. Levels of Service

- 4.1 The Fire Department will provide all properties within the City Limits with an equal level of response of both equipment and firefighter personnel.
- 4.2 Limited Service may be provided by the Fire Department. Limited Service may result from those conditions such as responding to multiple emergencies, travel distance, training levels of personnel, limited water supply, environmental conditions, and structural integrity.

5. Authority and Responsibilities of the Fire Chief

- 5.1 The Fire Chief shall be the head of the Fire Department and is responsible to Council for the effective operation and administration of TBFR.
- 5.2 The Fire Chief is ultimately responsible to Council for the effective delivery of Fire Protection Services.
- 5.3 The Fire Chief, may re-organize or eliminate Divisions or establish other Divisions or may do all or any of these things or any combination of them as may be required to ensure the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of Fire Protection Services for the City, subject to City hiring practices, policies, procedures, by-laws, and collective agreements.
- 5.4 The Fire Chief may assign or re-assign such members to a Division as required for the effective operation and administration of that Division.
- 5.5 The Fire Chief shall be authorized to make such general orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations and to take such other measures as the Fire Chief may consider necessary for the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of the Fire Protection Services for the City and for the prevention, control and extinguishment of fires, the protection of life and property and the management of emergencies.

5.6 Without restricting the generality of subsection 5.5 the Fire Chief shall be authorized to make such general orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations and to take such other measures as the Fire Chief may consider necessary for the following:

- a) For the care and protection of all property belonging to the Fire Department;
- b) For arranging for the provision of necessary and proper facilities, apparatus, equipment, materials, services, and supplies for the Fire Department;
- c) For determining and establishing the qualifications and criteria for employment or appointment to all positions within the Fire Department, subject to City hiring practices, policies, procedures, by-laws, and collective agreements, and in accordance with provincial certification standards;
- d) For determining and establishing the duties of all Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department;
- e) For determining the number and assignment of staff required for operating the Fire Department in an efficient manner taking into consideration the level of core services and annual operating budget as determined by Council.
- f) For the conduct and the discipline of Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department.
- g) For the preparation of Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan, as required pursuant to O. Reg. 378/18, as amended.
- h) For preparing and upon approval by Council, implementing and maintaining such Fire Department strategic plans and Master Fire Plans as may be required by Council, on behalf of the City.
- i) For reporting to the appropriate crown attorney or other prosecutor or law enforcement officer or other officer the facts based on the evidence in any case in which there is reason to believe that a fire has been the result of criminal intent or negligence or in which there is reason to believe an offence has been committed under the FPPA;
- j) For keeping an accurate record, in convenient form for reference, of all fires, rescues and emergencies responded to by the Fire Department;
- k) For keeping such other records as may be required by Council and the FPPA;

- l) For preparing and presenting the reports of the Fire Department to Council;
 - m) For preparing and presenting the annual operating and capital budget of the Fire Department to Committee of the Whole and City Council; and
 - (n) For exercising control over the budget approved by Council for the Fire Department, provided that such general orders, policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and other measures do not conflict with the provisions of this By-law or any other By-law of the City, including without limitation those requiring the prior approval of or prior notice to Council or the satisfaction of certain conditions, general or otherwise, specified by Council before such measures can be implemented, or with the provisions of the FPPA or with the provisions of any collective agreement or other written agreement that may be applicable.
- 5.7 The Fire Chief shall be responsible for the administration and enforcement of this By-law and all general orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations made under this By-law and for the enforcement of any other City by-law respecting Fire Protection Services.
- 5.8 The Fire Chief shall periodically review the general orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations made under this By-law, and shall periodically review any City by-law respecting Fire Protection Services, including this By-law , and may for the purpose of any review establish an advisory committee consisting of such Members and other persons, including members of the general public as the Fire Chief may determine are necessary to assist him in the discharge of this duty.
- 5.9 The Fire Chief may recommend by-law amendments to Council that the Fire Chief considers appropriate after the completion of a review as set out in subsection 5.8.
- 5.10 The Fire Chief may revise or delete any general orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations made under this By-law that the Fire Chief considers appropriate after the completion of a review as set out in subsection 5.8.
- 5.11 The Fire Chief shall have all powers, rights and duties assigned to a Fire Chief under the FPPA including without limitation the authority to enforce compliance with the *Fire Code*.
- 5.12 The Fire Chief may liaise with the Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario and any other office or organization as required by Council or as considered necessary or advisable by the Fire Chief for the proper administration and efficient operation of the Fire Department and the effective management of Fire Protection Services for the City.

- 5.13 The Fire Chief may, from time to time, utilize such Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department as the Fire Chief considers appropriate to assist in the performance of the Fire Chief's duties.
6. Deputy Fire Chiefs
- 6.1 The Deputy Fire Chiefs shall be the second ranking Officers of the Fire Department and shall be subject to and shall obey all orders of the Fire Chief and shall perform such duties as are assigned to them by the Fire Chief.
- 6.2 Where the Fire Chief is absent one of the Deputy Fire Chiefs, as decided upon by the Fire Chief in advance, shall act on the Fire Chief's behalf.
- 6.3 Where the Fire Chief is absent and has not appointed one of the Deputies to act on his or her behalf, or there is a vacancy in the office of the Fire Chief, one of the Deputy Fire Chiefs shall be appointed as acting Fire Chief by the Commissioner with the responsibility over the Fire Department.
- 6.4 Where a Deputy Chief is acting as the Fire Chief, the Deputy Chief has all the powers and responsibilities as the Fire Chief provided under any City by-law, including this By-law, and any provincial statute or regulation.
7. Members and Administrative Support Staff
- 7.1 The Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department while on duty shall be under the direction and control of the Fire Chief or the highest ranking Officer present in any place.
- 7.2 Every Member and administrative support staff person shall conduct themselves in accordance with general orders, policies, procedures, rules and regulations made by the Fire Chief and shall give their whole and undivided attention while on duty to the efficient operation of the Fire Department and shall perform the duties assigned to them to the best of their ability in accordance with the FPPA and any collective agreement or other written agreement that may be applicable.
- 7.3 No person, other than duly appointed Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department, shall obtain, carry, wear, or use any Fire Department uniform clothing in a manner that would lead any reasonable member of the public to identify the person as a member of the Fire Department.
- 7.4 No person, other than duly appointed Members and administrative support staff of the Fire Department, shall in any way identify themselves as being a member of the Fire Department.

8. Use of Fire Department Property

- 8.1 No person shall use or permit to be used any apparatus, equipment, or other property of the Fire Department for any personal or private use, without the prior approval of the Fire Chief.
- 8.2 No person shall willfully damage or render ineffective or inoperative any apparatus, equipment or other property belonging to or used by the Fire Department.

9. Fire Suppression and Other Emergencies

- 9.1 The Fire Department may respond to and suppress any fire by extinguishing the fire and by taking any other reasonable action required to respond to the fire, and, for these purposes, may enter private property, if necessary, to do so.
- 9.2 For the purposes of this section "fire" shall include, with any necessary modifications, an emergency, rescue, or hazardous condition.
- 9.3 The Fire Department may pull down or demolish any building or structure when considered necessary to prevent the spread of fire.
- 9.4 Despite any other section of this By-law, no person present at a fire, shall refuse to leave the immediate vicinity when required to do so by the Fire Department.
- 9.5 During a fire, and for the time that is required to complete the operations, no person shall remove the equipment of the Fire Department
- 9.6 During a fire, and for the time that is required to complete the operations and render the location and vicinity safe, from fire, no person, either on foot or with a vehicle of any kind, shall enter or remain upon or within:
 - a) The portion of any street or lane upon which the site of the fire abuts or upon any street or lane for a distance of fifteen (15) metres on each side of the property damaged by fire; and
 - b) Any additional street or lane or part of a street or lane or any additional limits in the vicinity of the fire, as may be prescribed by the Fire Chief or the highest ranking Officer present at the fire.
- 9.7 The provisions of subsections 9.5 (a) and (b) shall not apply to a resident of any street or lane or within any prescribed additional limit or to any person so authorized to enter or remain by an Officer or by a police officer.

10. Emergency Responses Outside the Limits of the Municipality

- 10.1 The Fire Department shall not respond to a call with respect to a fire emergency, rescue or hazardous condition outside the territorial limits of the City except with respect to a fire or emergency:
- a) That, in the opinion of the Fire Chief, threatens property in the territorial limits of the City or property situated outside the territorial limits of the City that is owned or occupied by the City.
 - b) In a municipality with which an approved automatic aid or mutual aid agreement has been entered into to provide Fire Protection Services.
 - c) On property with which an approved agreement has been entered into with any person or corporation to provide Fire Protection Services.
 - d) At the discretion of the Fire Chief, to a municipality authorized to participate in any regional mutual aid plan established by a fire coordinator appointed by the Fire Marshal or any other similar reciprocal plan or program.
 - e) On property beyond the territorial limits of the City where the Fire Chief determines that immediate action is necessary to preserve life or property and the appropriate fire department is notified to respond and assume command or establish alternative measures, acceptable to the Fire Chief.
 - f) At the discretion of the Fire Chief, to an unincorporated area of Ontario that is not already protected by a fire service and where the City is entitled to reimbursement for the response from the Province.

11. Recovery of Additional Expenses

- 11.1 If, as a result of the Fire Department's response to a fire or other emergency, rescue or hazardous condition, the Fire Chief determines that it is necessary to use Additional Resources in order to suppress or extinguish a fire, preserve property, carry out required investigations, prevent a fire from spreading, control and eliminate an emergency, carry out or prevent damage to equipment owned by the City or otherwise carry out the duties and functions of the Fire Department, the owner of the property or motor vehicle requiring or causing the need for the Additional Resources shall be liable to pay the Additional Expenses to the City.
- 11.2 Any Additional Expenses shall be considered a fee or charge imposed for services provided or done by or on behalf of the City under the *Municipal Act*, 2001 and shall be billed as a fee for services to the owner of the property or vehicle as the case may be.

- 11.3 The Additional Expenses shall constitute a debt of the owner to the City.
- 11.4 The City may take such action as it considers necessary and as is permitted by law to collect the Additional Expenses.
- 11.5 The owner shall be liable to pay to the City any costs incurred by the City in collecting the Additional Expenses and these costs shall be deemed to be Additional Expenses under this section;
- 11.6 Without restricting the generality of the foregoing where the Additional Expenses, or any portion of them remain unpaid, for a period in excess of 90 days, the Additional Expenses, or any portion of them that are unpaid shall be added to the tax roll for any real property within the territorial limits of the City owned by the owner referred to subsection 11.1 and shall be collected in a like manner as municipal taxes.
12. Interference
- 12.1 No person shall impede, interfere with, hinder, or attempt to impede, interfere with, or hinder any Officer or Member of the Fire Department in the performance of their duties under this Bylaw.
- 12.2 No person shall prevent, obstruct, or interfere in any manner whatsoever with the communication of a fire alarm to the Fire Department or with the Fire Department responding to a fire alarm that has been activated.
13. Offences
- 13.1 Every person who contravenes any provision of this By-law or fails to comply with an order or directive issued under this By-law, is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding the maximum fines set out on the *Municipal Act*, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, and to such other penalties, as provided for in the *Provincial Offences Act*, R. S. O. 1990, c. P.33, as amended.
- 13.2 Where a person has been convicted of an offence under this by-law, the court in which the conviction is entered and any court competent jurisdiction thereafter may make an order prohibiting the continuation or repetition of the offence by the person convicted.
14. Conflict and Severability
- 14.1 If this By-law conflicts with any other City by-law, this By-law shall supersede and prevail over the other by-law to the extent of the conflict.
- 14.2 Should any provision of this By-law be declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall not affect the validity of the By-law as

a whole or any part thereof, other than the part which was declared to be invalid.

15. Repeal and Enactment

15.1 Chapter 890 of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code, titled Fire Service – Regulation is repealed.

15.2 By-law 50-1984, as amended, is hereby repealed.

15.3 This By-law shall come into effect upon the day it is passed.

Enacted and passed this 3rd day of February, A.D. 2026 as witnessed by the Seal of the Corporation and the hands of its proper Officers.

Andrew Foulds

Speaker

Krista Power

City Clerk

Thunder Bay Fire Rescue By-law Schedule "A"

The following Fire Protection Services and programs are prescribed for the purposes of Section 3.2 of this By-Law:

Operations

- Fire Suppression (Firefighting)
- Emergency Rescue
- Tiered Medical Response
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Wildland/Brush Firefighting
- Urban Search and Rescue
- Trench Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue

Fire Prevention Division, Investigation and Public Education

- Providing fire and life safety education to the public
- Enforcement of fire safety regulations and related fire codes
- Fire cause determination efforts including the preservation of evidence involving incendiary fires

Training and Professional Development

- Ensuring ongoing safety and compliance training of Members
- Site specific training to ensure the knowledge, skills and abilities of the Members are evaluated and skills are proficient

Apparatus, Equipment and Maintenance

- Maintaining the availability and safe operational condition of all fire department vehicles
- Ensuring life safety equipment attached to emergency equipment continually performs

Emergency Management and Response

- Maintaining the Corporation's Emergency Plan and Program
- Ensuring plans for business continuity and response readiness to HIRA

Administration

- Leading the strategic planning, reporting and administration requirements of the Fire department in an efficient manner