

Community Services Report to
Community Development Committee
2025 April 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CD2025-0387

Calgary Fire Department Annual Report 2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the Calgary Fire Department's service delivery, highlights and risks from 2024.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

The Calgary Fire Department has a history of providing an annual report as a way of updating Council and the public on the past year's highlights.

RECOMMENDATION:
Administration recommends that Council receive this report for the Corporate record.
RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, 2025 APRIL 16:
That Council receive this report for the Corporate Record.

Excerpt from the Minutes of the 2025 April 16 Regular Meeting of the Community Development Committee:

"Revised Cover Report was distributed with respect to Report CD2025-0387."

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Katie Black concurs with the contents of this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Calgary Fire Department (CFD) is an all-hazards emergency response department, meaning that firefighters respond to many different types of emergencies. Non-emergency services such as fire and life safety education and fire safety code application and enforcement are also vital parts of CFD's service to Calgarians. In 2024, CFD:

- Experienced significant emergency call volume, responding to nearly 90,000 emergency incidents - approximately 250 calls per day. The overall call trend has increased almost 50 per cent since 2020.
- Responded to almost 45,000 critical medical interventions, representing 50 per cent of total incidents. Adopting High Performance CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) protocols has resulted in unprecedented survival rates. Since 2022, CFD has achieved a 500 per cent increase in ROSC (return of spontaneous circulation) saving five times more lives using this new method of CPR.
- Conducted over 25,000 safety inspections, including nearly 3,500 short term rental inspections, such as AirBnB or VRBO units. This represents over a 30 per cent rise in inspection demand compared to 2023 and an almost 15 per cent average annual increase since 2020, meaning that more properties are safer than ever.
- Community Safety Officers educated over 65,000 Calgarians on public safety, marking a near 20 per cent increase in engagement compared to 2023.

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DISCUSSION

CFD Foundations

CFD is guided by its' values, cultural evolution, strategic planning, and service excellence as recognized by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. CFD is the only Canadian fire department to have maintained its accredited status for six consecutive cycles over 25 years.

CFD's services are listed below. Collectively, these form the CFD service system, which is a dynamic and interconnected network that continually adapts and incorporates learnings for optimal performance and continuous improvement.

Fire & Emergency Response

CFD responds to fires, fire-related incidents, critical medical interventions, motor vehicle collisions, hazardous material releases, explosions, severe weather incidents, wildland fires, public service assistance calls and specialized rescues. CFD's nearly 1,700 employees play a crucial role in maintaining the safety and well-being of Calgarians and visitors. In addition to fire service operations, CFD delivers many supporting services such as training, recruitment, information technology, fire mechanics, fleet management, health and safety, and firefighter wellness programs.

Training & Recruitment

To succeed in a changing environment, expanded firefighter training is critical. In 2024, over 120,000 hours of multi-faceted training was completed by firefighters, increasing CFD's competency to better serve Calgarians. Training is a continuous process to ensure CFD members are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge across all service lines. Year-round training includes firefighting, medical, vehicle extrication, structural collapse, aquatic and confined space rescue, and leadership development. Training is tailored to specific outcomes ensuring members are ready to serve the community effectively. CFD also prepares firefighters for the intense demands of emergency response through regular health screenings, fitness programs, resiliency programming and mental health support.

Inclusive recruitment practices by CFD set high standards in the fire service industry through initiatives like the award-winning Indigenous Camp, which saw 1 in 5 participants subsequently apply to CFD for firefighter positions. In 2024, CFD received nearly 3,000 firefighter applications, up 30 per cent from 2023. CFD also continued its largest hiring drive to date, graduating 117 probationary firefighters through an advanced vetting and comprehensive training process to serve Calgary's growing community.

Fire Inspections and Enforcement

CFD provides inspection services to building and property owners to enhance public safety through safety codes compliance by minimizing fire-related risks to protect lives, property and the environment. CFD has a risk-based inspection model to ensure higher-risk buildings are the focus. CFD takes a proactive, collaborative approach to providing fire and life safety, fire prevention, education and response services. For example, CFD is a member of the Coordinated Safety Response Team which is a multi-agency initiative designed to address public safety issues related to vacant or derelict homes and commercial buildings.

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Fire Safety Education

CFD offers community-based fire and life safety education to Calgarians, focusing on increasing safety awareness and behaviour. Education is crucial for helping individuals and families stay safe during emergencies. Initiatives focus on reaching vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, new Canadians, and unhoused people. Specialized programs include virtual reality fire safety education, smoke alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing community, lithium-ion battery safety education, Fire Prevention Week, and the translation of resources into several languages common amongst newcomers.

CFD continues to make significant strides in collaboration and outreach programming to communities through partnerships such as the CFD Indigenous Camp, Camp Courage Calgary for young women and gender diverse youth, Fire Cadets and Engine 23 at the Fish Creek Public Library. CFD safety programs are also used at community events, offering safety demonstrations and educational materials.

Partnerships & Collaboration

CFD maintains collaborative relationships with internal and external partners to assess and address community risks. This collaboration engages various business units, neighbouring municipalities and provincial entities to coordinate efforts and share resources effectively.

CFD's current partnerships exist with organizations including Alpha House, the Calgary Drop-In Centre, the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Catholic School Board, the Calgary Public Library, ConocoPhillips, ATCO, and others to extend reach and provide support to help meet the diverse needs of Calgarians.

Service Excellence

CFD strategically plans actions to increase life, environment and property safety through evidence-based decision-making in large-scale plans such as new fire station placement, deployment strategies that allow for dynamic coverage, regular preventative maintenance of heavy apparatus, operational readiness and technology upgrades to enhance effectiveness are all part of CFD's continuous improvement focus.

CFD is responding to Calgary's exponential growth with the construction of new fire stations. Groundbreaking for Cornerstone Station (NE) occurred in 2024 along with a replacement station for Varsity (NW) and a permanent station in Walden (SE). Planning is also underway for temporary growth stations in Rockland Park (NW), Hotchkiss (SE) and Yorkville (SW). These stations are needed to maintain Council-approved response time targets of having the first engine arrive on scene of a fire within seven minutes, 90 per cent of the time, and an effective response force assembled on scene within 11 minutes, 90 per cent of the time. Effective Response Force consists of 12 firefighters with two engines and one aerial and is critical to successfully extinguish a large structure fire.

Looking Forward

CFD is committed to enhancing firefighter safety by removing PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) from foams and investigating PFAS-free personal protective equipment. CFD is improving performance through upstaffing aerials and funding new stations. Additionally, CFD is strategically planning for service sustainability as Calgary's population reaches two million and collaborating with neighboring municipalities through mutual aid agreements.

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EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

IMPLICATIONS

Social

CFD fosters a psychologically safe, resilient, respectful and inclusive workplace for members to perform their best to provide excellent service to a diverse community in a changing world.

Environmental

CFD aligns with Calgary's Climate Change Strategy. Key initiatives include piloting a Pierce Volterra electric fire engine to reduce emissions, adopting PFAS-free synthetic foam for fire suppression, and integrating sustainable practices like mobile electronic reporting and records management to reduce 90 per cent of the paper used for records keeping. These actions aim to protect the environment, firefighters' health, and the community.

Economic

Calgarians receive excellent value for their tax dollars from CFD. The annual fire service cost per person is approximately \$180, which is within a two-dollar variance of other major Canadian city fire services. With a fire suppression personnel ratio of approximately one firefighter for every 982 persons and an average of over 32,000 persons protected per station, CFD is closely aligned with other major Canadian cities. Additionally, CFD's value to citizens is reflected in its 100 per cent rating for overall importance and a 97 per cent satisfaction rating in the 2024 Spring Survey of Calgarians. CFD is grateful for the significant investments made by Council during the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budget process to meet demands.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

RISK

Calgary's rapid growth will require an expanding fire service to maintain current response levels. Right now, there are four main risks CFD faces:

- Operating investment and service sustainability: CFD faces ongoing sustainability challenges due to densification, rapid geographic and population growth of the city. Sustained investment in CFD proportional to city growth is crucial to maintain service levels over time.
- Timelines for procurement, station builds and renovations: Engine procurement timelines have been impacted by global supply chain disruptions. Additionally, there have been delays for some station builds as we shift towards integrated facilities.

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- Global inflation impacting costs: Rising project costs are a factor due to global inflation.
- Changing social, climate and technology environments: Climate change, socioeconomic inequalities, technological advancements, urban planning and community development changes may mean an increase in severity and frequency of emergency incidents.

ATTACHMENT

1. Calgary Fire Department 2024 Annual Report Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
N/A		

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