

Update on Mandatory Firefighter NFPA Certification and 2025 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment – June 2025

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Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the status of volunteer recruitment, retention activities and the City’s progress in meeting firefighter certification requirements found within O. Reg 343/22 Fire Fighter Certification.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

Part 1 - Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention

Fire Services undertakes volunteer recruitment annually and has accepted volunteer firefighter (VFF) recruitment applications year-round for several years. Since the closure of the 2024/2025 VFF recruitment intake on April 15, 2025, 229 applications were received and vetted to ensure they met the minimum position requirements, with the following results:

Category	Number of Applicants
Did not reside in a volunteer district	115
Withdrew or did not respond to phone calls	22
Scheduled for physical testing	92
Attended physical testing	77

The physical fitness test was revised in 2024 to align with certification testing, and the majority of applicants were able to pass the test within the allotted time. All candidates were emailed the physical testing requirements as part of the recruitment information guide. This information assists new recruits in preparing for the physical testing component of the recruitment process.

Physical testing was divided into two groups over two days, with a third date scheduled as a makeup date. There were 28 active volunteer firefighters and officers who participated and assisted with the physical testing process, which included providing information, guidance, evaluation and encouragement to each of the candidates.

To ensure the health and safety of each participant, paramedics measured each candidate's blood pressure and heart rate both before and after the physical testing, in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. All participants were required to have a blood pressure below 160/110 mmHg and a heart rate below 110 bpm. Every candidate met these criteria and was cleared to proceed with the physical testing.

A total of 77 candidates successfully completed the physical testing.

45 candidates were invited to participate in the interview stage of the recruitment process. Candidate selection for this stage prioritized stations with the lowest volunteer firefighter enrollment, followed by individuals who achieved the highest scores in the physical testing. Fire Services anticipates hiring up to 25 new volunteer firefighter recruits. Applicants who successfully completed the interview process but did not receive an offer of employment will be placed on a waitlist for potential inclusion in an additional recruitment course in 2026, contingent upon the yet-to-be-determined 2026 training calendar.

The interview panel consisted of an Assistant Deputy Fire Chief, Business Services Coordinator, Human Resources Talent Acquisition Specialist, and Volunteer Captain. Interviews were conducted in person with a virtual option over a two-week period. Some Volunteer Captains have been trained in conducting interviews and actively involved in the process.

The following are the number of candidates invited to the interview station based on station location:

Station Name	Total # of Candidates
Azilda	6
Capreol	5
Chelmsford	4
Coniston	3
Dowling	3
Garson	4
Hanmer	1
Levack	3
Lively	11
Val Therese	3
Wahnapiatae	1
Whitefish	1

Please refer to Appendix A for a current summary of VFFs per station compliment.

Volunteer Recruitment Period

To improve efficiency and better manage applicant engagement, we have transitioned to accepting volunteer firefighter applications only during a defined recruitment window from March 1 to April 15. This change was guided by recent data showing that 114 out of 146 applicants (78.1%) from our catchment area applied during the advertised recruitment period. In contrast, of the 32 applicants who submitted outside of this window, only 13 (40.6%) remained interested in proceeding with the recruitment process. This demonstrates that most serious candidates apply during the official period, supporting our decision to streamline the process and focus resources where they are most effective.

Volunteer Recruitment Efforts

This year, we experienced a 20% increase in volunteer firefighter applications compared to the previous recruitment cycle. This growth is mainly attributed to our expanded outreach efforts, particularly through social media and targeted advertising. We focused on connecting with a younger demographic by increasing our activity on platforms like Facebook and the City's website, and by partnering with a local radio station that has a strong youth following. These efforts greatly enhanced our outreach and played a key role in drawing in a larger pool of motivated applicants who want to join the fire services to make a difference in their community.

Part 2: Mandatory Certification

Certification Overview for Volunteer Firefighters

The chart below provides a summary of Greater Sudbury Fire Services' progress toward achieving firefighter certification by July 01, 2026, as per O. Reg 343/22.

NFPA Standard	Career Firefighters		Volunteer Firefighters		
	Certified	Require Certification	Certified	Enrolled in Training	Require Certification
1001 - Firefighter Level I	132	2	151	23	26
1001 - Firefighter Level II	132	2	98	29	82
1002 - Firefighter Apparatus/Driver	8	124	8	88	192
1072 - Hazmat Awareness	134	0	94	29	77
1072 - Hazmat Operations	103	31	60	29	111
No Certification Path to 2026					26

Please note the reasons and the number of FF noted in the column for "Require Certification":

- 3 VFF informed Administration are resigning as of July 01, 2026, and are not interested in achieving NFPA certification.
- 6 VFF registered to attend certification training course but did not attend or dropped out and did not complete majority of required training days.
- 10 VFF have not registered to attend any of the NFPA certification training sessions offered by GSFS.
- 7 VFF Currently on an approved Leave of Absence and unable to attend and complete training.

2025 Volunteer Certification Training Calendar

The chart below provides an overview of the NFPA certification courses that are being delivered by the Training Division in 2025. The NFPA 1002 Firefighter Apparatus/Driver course, originally scheduled to begin in 2025, has been postponed to 2026 due to insufficient available apparatus. The course was designed to utilize three apparatus which have recently been removed from service to conduct the training. Unfortunately, one of the apparatuses had to be decommissioned due to irreparable mechanical issues, while the second apparatus was sent out for extensive repairs. Although NFPA 1002 certification is not mandatory by the July 1, 2025 deadline, it will be a Greater Sudbury Fire Service requirement as this certification qualifies firefighters to drive and operate the apparatus pump. The postponed NFPA 1002 course will commence in Q2 of 2026 in order to achieve certification prior to the July 01, 2026 deadline.

The postponement of the NFPA 1002 course provided an opportunity to provide additional NFPA training

programs to our volunteers in 2025. An additional NFPA 1041 – Fire Instructor Level 1 course and NFPA 1021 – Fire Officer Professional Qualification course was scheduled to accommodate the 21 VFFs who met the minimum requirements and registered to attend the NFPA 1041 training program. The NFPA 1041 certification provides firefighters with the ability to deliver training and instruction to other firefighters and is also a prerequisite to NFPA 1021 – Fire Officer Professional Development. Those 21 VFFs who have registered, participated and successfully passed the NFPA 1041. NFPA 1021 certification exams will be included in the VFF Captains process scheduled to commence in Q4 of 2025.

The 2025 volunteer firefighter recruitment training program was able to proceed on an accelerated timeline due to the postponement of the NFPA 1002 training. This will allow the new volunteer firefighter recruits to complete their training in 2025. Recruitment training will commence on August 23, 2025 and be completed by November 01, 2025.

Three NFPA 1072 - Hazmat Awareness and Operations training programs have been added to the 2025 training schedule to accommodate those volunteer firefighters who were grandfathered through the certification process but are required to obtain the NFPA 1072 to remain compliant with mandatory legislation.

2025 NFPA Training Academies (Volunteer)			
NFPA Certification Courses	# of Courses	# of Days/Hrs to Provide Specific Courses	# of Participants
1001 - Firefighter I	2	17 Training Days = 170hrs	43
1001 - Firefighter II	2	20 Training Days = 200 hrs	44 Registration for course #2 to occur in July
1041 - Fire Service Instructor Level 1	2	6 Training Days = 60 hrs	21
1021 - Fire Officer Professional Qualifications	2	8 Training Days = 80 hrs	Depends on the success rate of the NFPA 1041 program
1072 – Hazmat Awareness and Operations	3	6 Training Days = 60 hrs	45
Total for 2025	11	57 Training Days = 570 hrs	

Conclusion

This report highlights the continued progress of Fire Services in fulfilling the requirements of O.Reg. 343/22 - Firefighter Certification, as well as the successful execution of the 2025 volunteer firefighter recruitment program. The adoption of a defined recruitment window has enhanced operational efficiency and improved applicant engagement. Additionally, targeted outreach strategies contributed to a 20% increase in applications. The physical testing and interview stages were effectively supported by current volunteers, ensuring a comprehensive and supportive experience for all candidates.

Fire Services remains committed to ensuring all firefighters who participate in our training programs are able to meet the mandatory standards by July 01, 2026 deadline. Despite challenges such as equipment limitations delaying the NFPA 1002 course, the Training Division has maximized available resources by expanding other certification offerings. The dedication of both volunteer firefighters and the training officers has been instrumental in advancing firefighter certification goals.

Fire Services will continue to prioritize training opportunities and support systems to ensure all committed volunteers are equipped to meet certification requirements and serve the community with professionalism and confidence.

Resources Cited

[O. Reg. 343/22 Firefighter Certification](#)

[Update on Mandatory Firefighter NFPPA Certification and 2024 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment – December 2024](#)

[Update on Mandatory Firefighter NFPA Certification and 2024 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment – June 2024 \(escribemeeting.com\)](#)

[Update on Mandatory Firefighter NFPA Certification and 2023 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment \(escribemeetings.com\)](#)

[Greater Sudbury Fire Services – 2022 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Update \(escribemeetings.com\)](#)