

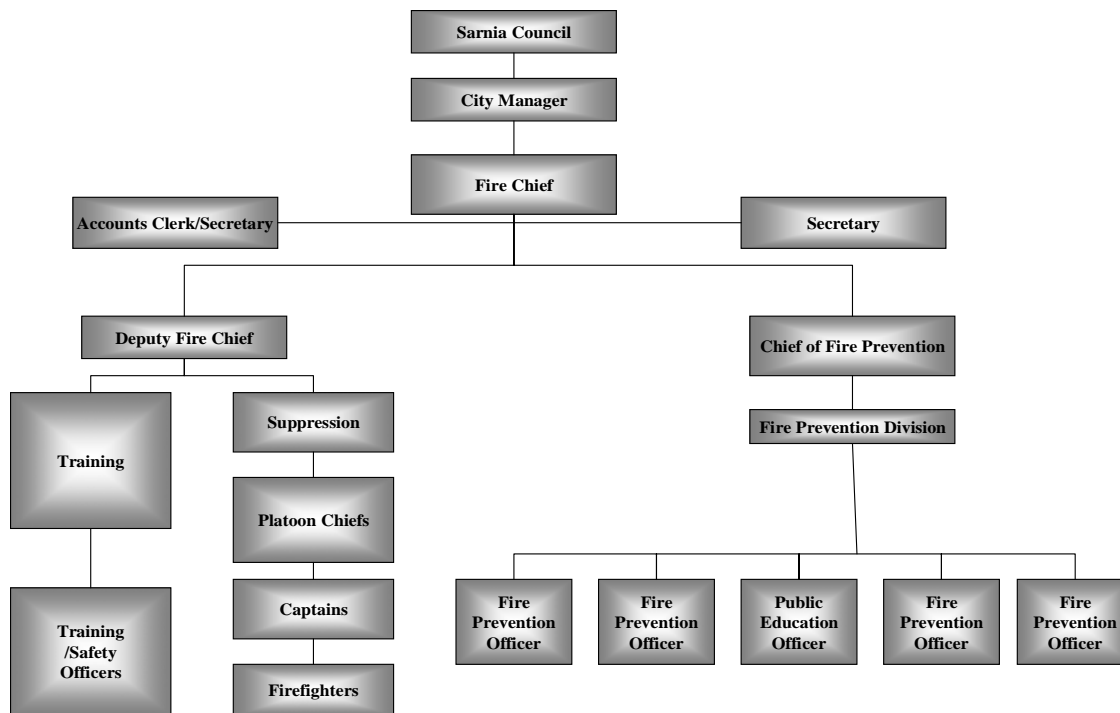


## 3.0 ADMINISTRATION

### 3.1 Overview

The Sarnia Fire Rescue Services department is organized into four divisions which include administration, suppression, training, and fire prevention. The management and administration of the department is made up of three senior management personnel: the Fire Chief; the Deputy Fire Chief; and the Chief of Fire Prevention. The division also includes two office staff, one full time accounts clerk secretary, and one part time secretary, as shown in the organization chart below.

**Sarnia Fire and Rescue Service Organization Chart**



The Fire Chief reports to Sarnia Council through the City Manager. With the introduction of the Emergency Management Act, the Fire Chief is involved in Sarnia's Community Emergency Management as a member of the planning team. This requires on-going involvement in maintaining the plan, as well as completing increasingly strenuous mandatory Emergency Management Act (EMA) compliance directives. The Fire Chief is the Lambton County Fire Mutual Aid Coordinator, as appointed by the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal. He is involved with providing input into provincial fire legislation, municipal by-laws, and standards, which affect fire protection services.



The goals and objectives of the administration division include:

- Providing advice and direction to Sarnia Council on fire protection, prevention, and education requirements;
- Managing the Fire Rescue Services' budget, collective agreements and safety issues;
- Participating in planning and maintaining the Sarnia Emergency Preparedness Plan; and
- Managing communication and dispatching services through the Sarnia Police Department.

### 3.2 Current Analysis

Based on a review of past evaluations, feedback from members of Sarnia Fire Rescue Services and a broad understanding of the administrative requirements of a Fire Service, the following elements have been noted for review.

#### Staffing

Until recently, the Sarnia Fire and Rescue Services had been functioning with two non-union management employees, including the Fire Chief and the Deputy Fire Chief. A Chief of Fire Prevention position was recently negotiated to be a management position however the position is not filled. With an annual budget of approximately \$11 million dollars, the Fire Chief is responsible for the management of 119 full time staff, as outlined in *Table 3.1*. The department responds to over 3,500 emergency calls per year.

In addition to human resources and administration issues, the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief manage and coordinate the Administration, Training, Suppression, and Fire Prevention divisions. They are also responsible for the department budget, purchasing, programs, equipment and apparatus, and facilities.

Fire Chief	1
Deputy Chief	1
Chief Fire Prevention Officer	1
Administration	2
Fire Prevention	5
Public Education	1
Training	2
Suppression	106
<b>Total Staffing:</b>	<b>119</b>

The current organizational structure requires that the two management staff share the duty of being on call 24 hours per day, seven days per week. This arrangement results in concerns with regards to delegation of authority when attempting to schedule vacations, education and training opportunities or if sick time is required.



The workloads for the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief have reached a point where efficiency and effectiveness are being compromised. An organizational structure with two deputies (or a deputy and an assistant deputy) would allow the Fire Chief more time for budget management as well as strategic and long range planning. This would also allow for delegation of authority should the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief be away at the same time (e.g. overlapping training or leave).

The Core Services Review and this new Master Fire Plan contain numerous recommendations that will be difficult to implement and maintain because of the current level of resources.

The increasing workload of the Fire Chief and the Deputy Chief is not specific to Sarnia, but to many municipalities. Fire departments of a similar size and/or demographic make-up as Sarnia have responded to this situation by adding an additional Deputy or Assistant Deputy position. The cities of Brantford and Whitby are two such municipalities with full time fire department staffing and populations in the 80,000 to 100,000 range. Based on Sarnia's workload and comparisons to similar communities, it is recommended that a second Deputy Fire Chief position be added.

Non-management administration staff completes data entry, correspondence, reception, telephone duties and numerous other support tasks that are required to effectively manage Sarnia Fire Rescue Services. The administration division operates with one accounts clerk/secretary and one part-time secretarial assistant. In this and other divisional interviews the need for additional administrative assistance was clearly a priority.

Department statistics are not being compiled in a timely manner; fire prevention staff must complete their own correspondence and filing, and at times take department telephone calls. In general, daytime staff is not able to delegate their clerical tasks since current staff already has a full workload. Additional clerical resources would allow management, fire prevention, public education and training staff to concentrate less time on administrative tasks and more time on their areas of expertise.

It is recommended that the Fire Chief prepare a report for council that reviews the need for additional administrative assistance in all divisions, which would include the options of increasing the part time position to full time and/or providing one more full time administrative employee.

### **By-laws and Agreements**

It has been identified in the Core Services Review, the OFM Municipal Fire Protection Information Survey and interviews by the consultant that there are a number of fire service by-laws that need to be reviewed or introduced. Preparation of by-laws for Council approval should be guided by the Ontario Fire Marshal Public Safety Guidelines and Sarnia Legal Services. They should include, but not be limited to:

- Fire Service regulating by-law;
- By-laws appointing Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and Chief Fire Prevention Officer;
- By-law to appoint Fire Prevention Officers as by-law enforcement officers; and
- Mutual Aid Agreements.



## Policies and Procedures

Standard operating guidelines (SOGs), policies and procedures are out of date or simply do not exist in many areas throughout Sarnia Fire Rescue Services. This is a serious concern with regards to risk management, training, as well as occupational health and safety. It is recommended that a process be put in place in order to ensure that current policies and procedures be immediately reviewed and brought up to date. Such a process should include a method of identifying the SOG, policies and procedures that have not been developed and a procedure and schedule to ensure that all of this is kept up to date. This process should be applied to all divisions of the Fire Service.

It should be noted that developing operating guidelines and procedures is an extremely time consuming activity which in some cases requires specialized expertise in order for legal or health and safety requirements to be addressed adequately. The Fire Chief and Deputy Chief have spent significant effort in the past eight months to update the most critical Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs). They concentrated on SOGs related to Fire Rescue Services Rules and Regulations and personnel safety (e.g. respiratory protection, hazardous materials). Updating and/or creating SOGs for all areas of the department could be a full time job. The Fire Chief should consider resource and funding options and requirements, which will be required to undertake this recommendation.

## Technology

It has been identified that productivity is hampered in all divisions of the Fire Service by the fact that FDM Software's computer package is not used to its full potential in areas such as records management and incident reporting procedures. This is mainly due to a lack of funding which is required to contract outside expertise to program the system upgrades which are available and to train staff in putting these features into everyday use. It has been noted that Sarnia's internal Information Technology support is already overburdened with day to day issues.

It is recommended that the Fire Chief form a committee to identify issues related to the FDM computer program and subsequently determine the required resources and funding for technological support and any employee training, which will be needed to bring use of the FDM software up to its full potential. This technology component is discussed further in **Section 8.0** - Communication Technology.

## Summary of Recommendations

Based on the management workload of the department and comparisons to similar sized communities it is recommended that a second position of Deputy Chief or Assistant Deputy be implemented.

In order to provide sufficient support to address the existing day-to-day functions of the department and the clerical support required for a growing department the part-time secretary position should be expanded to full-time. In addition, a full-time administrative assistant should be hired to assist staff in Fire Prevention and Public Education and Training.

The issue of adequate workspace for the administration and all divisions should be included in the Fire Station Location component of the Master Fire Plan. A comprehensive space needs assessment should be undertaken to determine the requirements and the ways to accommodate current and future needs.



A review should be completed to update fire service by-laws and agreements. The Fire Service should immediately begin the process of introducing and updating standard operating guidelines (SOGs), procedures and policies. A new analyst position (temporary, term, or contract) could be added to further the development and implementation of these SOGs. This will relieve management of much of the day-to-day duties related to this work while allowing the department to expand its policy structure and records management (e.g. track performance measures, produce Annual Report). This position could also assist with the training component of FDM upgrades and help implement enhanced information technology, while building capacity throughout the department.