

# CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Fire Chiefs on the Hill, December 2023



## 1. Who are we?

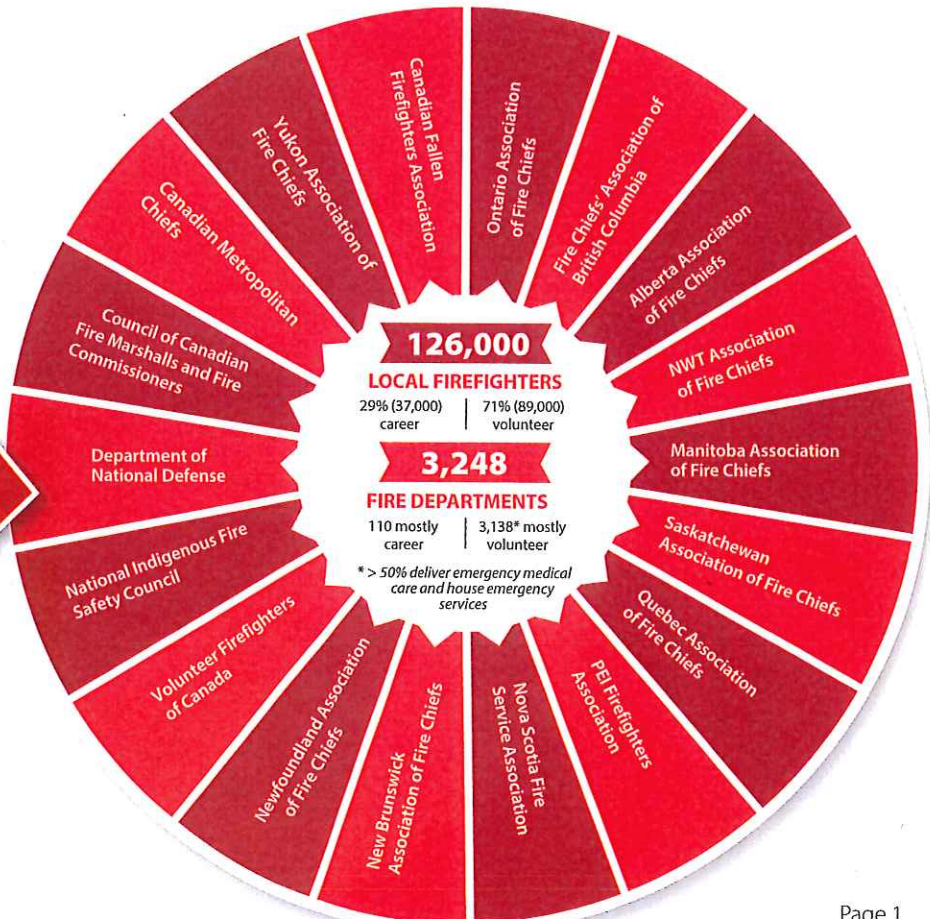
**Thank you for meeting with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs! Your office is an important part of the Fire Service in Canada.**

We have prepared this leave behind to help you and staff follow up and remember our meeting together. Here's the agenda:

1. Who are we?
2. What's needed?
3. How can you help?
4. Successes
5. Participants

Founded in 1909, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) is an independent, non-profit organization representing approximately 3,200 fire departments across Canada. CAFC's mission is to promote the highest standard of public safety in an ever changing and increasingly complex world to ensure the protection of the public through leadership, advocacy and active collaboration with key stakeholders.

**Better together**  
 CAFC's National Advisory Council brings together all provincial and territorial fire chief associations as well as all national affiliate organizations. The associations members are individual fire chiefs and company officers.







## 2. What's needed?



### A. Protect and Retain Canada's Firefighters and Response Capacity

1. Reinstate a modernized version of the former Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) for fire/emergency training and equipment, with net new monies.

**Consider ...** Supporting the inclusion of a modernized JEPP program in Federal Budget 2024. The former Joint Emergency Preparedness Program was a cost shared program with the Federal Government. The Federal Government is ideally positioned to provide leadership. The cost is more than municipal taxes and fees will bear.

**Consider ...** Not all fire departments need the same equipment, so we encourage maximum flexibility with the establishment of programs.

2. Increase the Volunteer Firefighter and Search and Rescue Volunteer Tax Credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000 and modernize the CRA definition of volunteer firefighter to help retain firefighters.

**Consider ...** including an increase in the tax credit in Budget 2024 (per content of Bill C-310). Volunteer firefighting is not like volunteering at a library or coaching hockey. It is inherently dangerous and disruptive.

**Consider ...** With the increase in wildfires over the summer, volunteer firefighters are being recruited into wildland agencies, meaning that more volunteer firefighters are required to help communities with the regular call volume.

3. Support Bill C-321: An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against health care professionals and first responders).



### B. Reduce Risk of Fire and Emergency in Communities Nationally and Prepare for the next wildfire season

1. Spread and scale the FireSmart™ program in all communities through fire department leadership and key partners.

**Consider ...** FireSmart™ works. This is the message that fire chiefs send to their communities. With some resource, Fire Departments working in collaboration with partners can help get the work done.

2. Support the recommendations of National Indigenous Fire Safety Council to ensure that working smoke alarms are in every home in Indigenous communities

**Consider ...** Ask ISC to stabilize funding for 75 field staff through the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council; implement the ISC Fire Prevention Strategy; have ISC focus on policy management and support.

3. Implement a National Test Your Smoke Alarm Campaign

**Consider ...** The Federal Government already hosts a Fire Safety Week in October.



#### Did you know?

54% of Canada's Fire Departments (1,740) have deferred training and equipment needs for more than two years due to financial pressures.



#### Did you know?

29% of fire departments (935) are using Self Contained Breathing Apparatus or Personal Protective Equipment that is more than 10-15 year old and 21% of fire departments (678) have no dedicated washing machine or extractor for washing gear at the station.



#### Did you know?

700+ departments need new communication systems, fire trucks or equipment.



#### Did you know?

33% of departments (1,087) are using tankers that are more than 20 years old.



#### Did you know?

30% of volunteer firefighters pay out of pocket for volunteer firefighting?



#### Did you know?

89,000 of Canada's 126,000 firefighters are volunteer firefighters.



#### Did you know?

Canada lost 9,500 experienced firefighters in 2023 who took with them 102,000 years of experience.



#### Did you know?

Petition e-4594 has about 15,000 signatures supporting an increase in the volunteer firefighter and search and rescue tax credit.



#### Did you know?

Did you know 22% of all fire departments, and 57% of metro departments report that their firefighters have experienced violence or harassment against them during a call.



#### Did you know?

3,000 volunteer fire departments use only about 15% of the \$5.9B in fire service expenditures in Canada.



#### Did you know?

The FireSmart™ program works, but it is not free. Funding is required for implementation.



#### Did you know?

Risk of death from Fire in Indigenous communities 10X that of the risk nationally.





#### Did you know?

More than 14 federal departments develop policies that impact fire and emergency services.



#### Did you know?

Each of the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand have the equivalent of a National Fire Administration.

A Note from the Fire Chiefs:

### Communities hit heavily by wildfires in the summer of 2023 may need to

#### ... Monitor snowfall and rainfall over the winter and spring

- If snow and rain are sparse, take safety precautions with burn bans and prepare for wildfires.
- If snow and rain are heavy, prepare for flood and mudslides, the ground may not absorb water

#### ... Prepare for wildfire season 2024

- Maximize recruitment
  - Current concerns about burn out
  - Treat firefighters equitably
  - Coordinate between local needs and provincial wildland needs
- Implement FireSmart™ principles
- Be ready to maximize fire safety precautions

Learn more at [www.cafc.ca](http://www.cafc.ca)



### C. Install a National Fire Administration

1. Under the auspices of the Minister of Emergency Preparedness create a National Fire Administration

**Consider ...** Canada has a large number of policy files where there are "hidden" fire and emergency management policy considerations. . . .

**Consider ...** Federal policy case examples where a National Fire Administration will be helpful. . .

**Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR):** Currently, HUSAR teams are not easily deployable across Canadian Jurisdictions because of business and operational considerations.

**Wildland Urban Interface:** There are unintended consequences of treating different groups of firefighters differently on wildfire deployment. A national fire administration can help with interoperability, equity and depoliticizing the process.

**Emergency Management Operations:** Most fire departments are accorded local emergency management authority for their regions. Policy development at the federal development frequently excludes fire departments and results in blind spots in FPT discussions.

**Rapid Housing Development:** Worthy federal goals around rapid housing development are exceeding the pace at which fire departments respond. Coordination and problem solving with local fire departments nationally can help solve this.

**Zero Emissions Technology:** Canada has made commitments to high levels of electric vehicles, but the fire service doesn't yet have the knowledge or capability to deal with adverse events.

**Climate Adaptation:** The US Fire Administration put out a series of recommendations to fire departments to prepare them for climate change and support firefighter and equipment grants. Can Canada do something similar?

**Humanitarian Workforce:** Investments in a Humanitarian Workforce need to be coordinated with local resources typically managed by fire departments. A national fire administration would help to coordinate this from the get-go.

**Communications in Emergencies:** Most fire departments will need to upgrade communications systems and meet Next Generation 911 requirements. Funding and guidance is needed.

**Explosive Regulations:** Current explosive regulations are based on criteria that result in decisions that are at cross purposes to wildfire policy.

**Building Codes:** New building materials are being introduced without sufficient consideration of the extent to which the fire sector is ready to respond, ex., Encapsulated Mass Timber Construction.

### 3. How can you help?

- ✓ Circulate and sign the e-petition e-4594 (available until December 10, 2023)
- ✓ Champion an increase in the Volunteer Firefighter Tax Credit
- ✓ Encourage the inclusion of a National Fire Administration in party platforms as well as return of the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program
- ✓ Recognize that funding provided to provinces and municipalities is fungible and ensure there are criteria and conditions tied to fiscal frameworks that ensure gaps in fire and emergency are met.
- ✓ Ensure that fire chiefs are consulted and included in committee consultations
- ✓ Ask questions at committees, i.e., what fire and emergency management considerations does this innovation entail?
- ✓ Read Great Canadian Fire Census 2023 and Towards a National Fire Administration to learn more





#### 4. Canada's MPs are Getting it Right! Successes ...

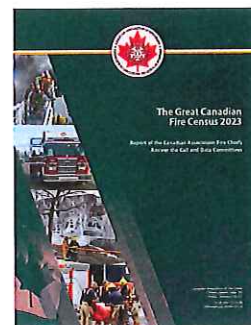
- Bill C-224 Firefighter Cancer
- Advancing Bill C-310 Volunteer Firefighter Tax Credit
- Advancing Bill C-321 An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Assaults Against Health Care Professionals and First Responders)
- Canada Community-Building Fund
- Memorial Grant Program
- Office of Emergency Preparedness
- First Ministers Wildfire Roundtables
- Commitment to Firefighter Safety Objective in the Code
- National Climate Adaptation Strategy
- PTSD Framework and Action Plan
- Mandate letters for various Ministers and other initiatives

#### 5. Fire Chiefs on the Hill Participants

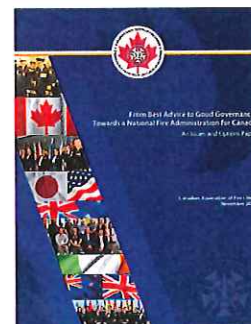
- Ken McMullen, President, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Red Deer Emergency Services, Red Deer, AB
- Abrey, Cameron (Cam), Fire Chief, ECFO, CCFI-C, Dauphin Fire Department, Dauphin, MB
- Adams, Nathan, Deputy Fire Chief, City of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON
- Antle, Duane, Fire Chief, Come By Chance Volunteer Fire Department, Come By Chance, NL
- Boissonneault, Paul, Secretary, Fire Chief, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Oakville Fire Department, Oakville, ON
- Boyle, Michael, Fire Chief, BIS, ECFO, Kennebecasis Valley Fire Department, Rothesay, NB
- Brice, Trevor Michael, Fire Chief, MBA MA ECFO CFO FireE CRSP, Okotoks Fire & Rescue, Okotoks, AB
- Brolund, Jason, Fire Chief, West Kelowna/ FCABC, West Kelowna, BC
- Grant, Trevor, Regional Fire Chief, County of Grande Prairie Regional Fire Services, Clarimont, AB
- Grey, Christopher, Directeur, Régie Incendie Windsor, Régie Incendie Région Windsor, QC
- Hoffmann, Samantha, Deputy Chief, Community Safety, Caledon Fire and Emergency Services, Caledon, ON
- Hunter, Brian, Chief, Simonds Fire Rescue, Fundy-St. Martins, NB
- Hutt, Paul, Fire Chief, Ottawa Fire Services, City of Ottawa, ON
- Irwin, Ivana, Deputy Fire Chief, SCO, BSc, BScN, Leduc County Fire Services, Leduc County, AB
- Jennings, Eric Wade, Vice President, Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia, Debert Fire Brigade, Debert (Colchester), NS
- Jones, Gregory Darrell, Director of Fire Services, ECFO, Amherst Fire Department, Amherst, NS
- Krawchuk, Alicia, Regional Deputy Chief, Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority, Bonnyville, AB
- LaMontagne, Shayne, Vice President, Volunteer Firefighters of Canada, Regina Beach Fire Department, Regina Beach, SK
- Lazare, Arnold, Deputy Chief of Operations, Indigenous Fire Marshal Service, National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, Kahnawake, QC
- Lefebvre, Keven, ECFO, Treasurer, Fire Chief, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Leduc County, Nisku, AB
- Lewis, Dean, Deputy Chief, Director PEI Firefighters Association, St. Peters Fire Department, St. Peters Bay, PEI
- Lockett, Michael, Director, Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, Lawrencetown, NS
- Mackenzie, Vince, Fire Chief, President, Maritime Fire Chiefs Association, Grand Falls - Windsor Fire, Grand Falls - Windsor, NL
- Martens, Keri, Vice-President, Deputy Chief, MA, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Banff Fire Rescue, Banff, AB
- McCarthy, Nina-Lynne, Deputy Chief, MPhil, MSc, ECFO, Fredericton Fire Department, Fredericton, NB
- Mohl, David, Fire Chief, Hanna Fire Department, Hanna, AB
- Moore, Anthony Jame, Fire Chief, Emergency Response Services Manager, Nisga'a Nation, New Aiyansh, BC
- Pitre, Roger, Fire Chief, 2nd Vice President, New Brunswick Association of Fire Chiefs, Rogersville Fire Department, Rogersville, NB
- Poupart, Scott, Assistant Deputy Chief, Saint Anne Regional Fire Department, Saint Anne, NB
- Robertson, Dave, Fire Chief, South Glengarry Fire Services, South Glengarry, ON
- Schroeder, Randy, Chief, Town of Mayerthorpe, Lac Ste Anne County Fire Service, Sangudo, AB
- Snook, Tony, Fire Chief, Grand Bank Fire Department, Grand Bank, NL
- Starkell, Brian, President, Volunteer Firefighters of Canada, Nipawin, SK
- Stuebing, Ken, Fire Chief, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, Halifax, NS
- Toews, Kelvin, Fire Chief, Steinbach Fire Department, Steinbach, MB
- Trecartin, Karen, Division Chief, ECFO, Kennebecasis Valley Fire Department, Rothesay, NB
- Wiggins, Blaine, Sr. Director & Chief, Indigenous Fire Marshal Service, National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, Williams Lake, BC

Check out more information on:

Petition e-4594 in support of  
Increasing the Volunteer Firefighter  
and Search and Rescue Tax Credit  
(per Bill C-310)



The Great Canadian  
Fire Census Report



Towards a National Fire  
Administration Report

[www.cafc.ca](http://www.cafc.ca)

#### More Information

For more information about the CAFC, the materials in this brief, or to reach any of us, please contact CAFC's Executive Director:

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