



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Community Safety

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Wade Bondy, Director Community Safety & Fire Chief

Date to Council: Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Report Number: CS-2025-02

Subject: Community Safety – 2024 Year In Review

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report CS-2025-02, entitled “Community Safety – 2024 Year In Review,” **be received.**

Background

Under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1997, S.O.1997, c. 4, the Fire Chief is ultimately responsible to Council for the delivery of fire protection services within the Town of Tecumseh. This report is presented to keep Council informed of the services provided by Community Safety during the calendar year 2024 and is intended to be brought forward annually.

Community Safety provides both fire protection services and by-law enforcement for the Town. The Department is composed of three Chief Officers, two Administrative Clerks (one shared with Development Services), two Fire Prevention Officers, one By-Law Enforcement Officer, and 34 Volunteer Firefighters lead by 8 Captains. One of the Captains is also appointed as the Department’s Training Officer.

Comments

Community Safety received 997 calls for service in 2024, consisting of 419 emergency calls and 578 by-law related calls. This total represents an increase of approximately 39% over the previous three-year average. Of this increase, emergency calls increased by 12% and by-law related calls increased by 68% over the three-year average.

The average of the previous three years, 2021-2023, was used for comparison throughout this report in order to eliminate the year 2020 from the data, as 2020 represents a significant anomaly. It is the intent going forward to build up to a five-year average for this comparison, which would represent a more statistically relevant data set.

Emergency Calls for Service

Community Safety responds to all hazards within the Town. Table 1 below shows the number of emergency calls received in 2024, broken down by type of call as well as a comparison to the three-year average.

Table 1: 2024 Emergency Responses by Incident Type

Type of Response	2024 Number of Responses	% Change vs 3-year Average
Alarms – false fire calls	115	+ 14%
Medical Resuscitation	68	+ 51%
Fires - pre-fire conditions, fires & explosions	61	+ 3%
Rescues & Public Hazards	145	+ 17%
Other Response	30	- 34%
Total	419	+ 12%

The total emergency calls for service received in 2024 was one of the highest on record, exceeded most recently in 2016 and 2017, largely related to the flooding during those years. The average number of calls historically for the Department is just under 400. However, the average number of calls for the previous three years is slightly lower at 375 calls.

The largest increase in 2024 was for medical emergencies, which increased by 51%. It is important to note that the increase in medical calls is not related to the challenges experienced by Essex-Windsor EMS, as the tiered response agreement between the County and Tecumseh dictates that we are only dispatched to certain types of calls.

The number of these calls is independent of the status of paramedic services in the County.

The total number of emergency calls in 2024 represents 18 calls per 1,000 residents. In comparison to the other Essex County volunteer / composite departments, Tecumseh is in line with our neighbours with Leamington at 20, Amherstburg, Essex, and LaSalle each at 19, Lakeshore at 17, and Kingsville at 16. For further comparison, Toronto Fire Service had 66 calls per 1,000 residents and Vancouver Fire Rescue Service had 102.

Some notable incidents that occurred locally in 2024 include:

- Livestock trailer fire on North Talbot Road
- False 911 call for a business on Outer Drive
- Corbi Lane house fire
- 11th Concession straw fire
- Lanoue Street temporary foreign worker house fire

We are happy to report no firefighters or civilians were injured as a result of these incidents.

Fire Prevention

Community Safety undertakes Fire Code compliance inspections to ensure fire and life safety systems are installed and maintained according to the Fire Code and other applicable legislation. Table 2 shows the compliance inspections completed in 2024, listed by occupancy type.

Table 2: 2024 Fire Code Compliance Inspections by Occupancy Type

Occupancy Type	Inspections
Assembly	37
Vulnerable Occupancy	10
Residential	26
Industrial	106
Low Hazard	48
Total	227

Greater than 91% of compliance inspections completed in 2024 revealed code violations at the time of inspection. Subsequently, 13 charges were laid under the Provincial Offences Act resulting in \$11,920 in fines imposed by the Court, with some of the matters remaining outstanding as of the end of the year. In addition, one business was ordered to close due to the severity of risks at the location.

Community Safety also issued 108 burn permits in 2024 which helps increase safety associated with those fires as well as reducing the related enforcement.

Public Education

Community Safety remains very active in the community, participating in an extensive public education program each year. In 2024, we took part in school and other community group events; hosted events at the fire stations; installed child car seats including hosting car seat clinics; supervised community fire drills; presented fire safety talks to temporary foreign workers; and completed smoke and CO alarm inspections. Table 3 below lists our event participation and the number of each type of event.

Table 3: 2024 Public Education Summary

Event Type	2024 Number of Events
School Events / Presentations	14
Other Community Events / Presentations	26
Station Tours / Hosted Events	19
Community Fire Drills	29
Child Car Seat Installation / Inspections (including 2 clinics)	70
Smoke and CO Alarm Inspections	99
Temporary Foreign Worker Fire Safety Presentations	6
Total Number of Events	263

Recruitment and Training

Community Safety unfortunately has continued to experience relatively high turnover, particularly at Fire Station #2, with 4 new recruits starting in 2024. The Department also saw 3 firefighters promoted to Captain (1 temporarily) and 5 firefighters successfully complete their probationary periods. Community Safety also employed 3 co-op students throughout the year, 2 from École Secondaire L'Essor and 1 from St. Clair College.

Community Safety continues to benefit from working with our community partners. In 2024, Banwell Towing began offering vehicles for auto extrication training which is an invaluable part of firefighter training. In addition, another resident allowed the use of their house for firefighter survival training which significantly improves the safety of firefighters.

Collaboration with our neighbouring departments has resulted in 29 members of Community Safety completing certification courses and 12 firefighters receiving certifications required by the Ontario Fire Marshal.

The Department was also fortunate enough to have 2 members attend the Michigan State Police Arson Investigation School, which is a premier institution for arson investigators in North America.

By-Law Enforcement

Since 2022, By-Law Enforcement has been part of Community Safety, with the sole By-Law Enforcement Officer reporting to the Deputy Chief – Compliance. Table 4 below shows the number of calls / complaints received in 2024, broken down by type of call.

Table 4: 2024 By-Law Calls / Complaints by Type

Type of Call / Complaint Received	2024 Number of Calls	% Change vs 3-year Average
Property Maintenance (Land Maintenance, Property Standards, Pools, Garbage, Snow Removal)	311	+ 65%
Zoning / Drainage (Zoning, Drainage, Fence, Trees, Grading, Ponding Water, Septic Systems, Signs)	187	+ 202%
Animals	42	+ 68%
Noise / Other	38	+ 62%
Total	578	+ 68%

Of the 578 by-law related calls, 307 required the issuance of an order to correct while 271 saw alternate compliance remedies. Alternate remedies include voluntary compliance after being made aware of the issue, items that were not restricted by by-laws, and unfounded complaints.

Of the 307 orders issued, voluntary compliance was achieved for 284 of those. Corrective action was taken by Community Safety for 23 of the orders issued. Subsequently, 16 charges were laid against 5 property owners under the Provincial Offences Act resulting in \$41,600 in fines imposed by the Court, with some of the matters remaining outstanding as of the end of the year.

The goal of Community Safety is to achieve compliance through education first for both By-Law and Fire Code Enforcement.

Emergency Preparedness

In the Spring of 2024, Community Safety mailed information postcards to 9,434 residences in Tecumseh encouraging registration with TecumsehAlerts.ca, our emergency notification system.

We also achieved initial training of the Community Control Group in the Incident Management System used in the province, which will be the basis for the revised Emergency Response Plan.

Annual compliance for emergency preparedness as required by the Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E. 9 was also achieved for the Town. This requires a number of items be completed through the CEMC and Emergency Program Committee that was established by Council.

Consultations

Nicole Fields, Deputy Chief Compliance

Kevin Kavanagh, Deputy Chief Operations

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with this report.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2023-2026 Strategic Priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Wade Bondy
Director Community Safety & Fire Chief

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None