



CITY OF
ST. CATHARINES

Memorandum

To: Budget Standing Committee
Cc:
From: Jeff McCormick, Acting Fire Chief
Date: November 15, 2017
Subject: Medical Calls

Please accept this memo as a follow-up to a question that occurred as part of the FEMS 2018 budget presentation on November 6, 2017.

FEMS responds to medical calls in the Niagara Region under the authority of By-law 2016-101; a by-law to authorize a Tiered Response Agreement with the Region of Niagara. The bylaw authorized the fire chief to sign the agreement and any documents to complete the conditions of the agreement.

In collaboration, the Niagara Region EMS, Niagara Region Medical Officer of Health, Niagara EMS Base Hospital physician and the twelve regional municipal fire chiefs (or designates) discuss, review and decide the criteria as to Fire Department Tiering. The types of calls fire departments are tiered to fall into medical assist, specialty rescue, forcible entry/access/egress situations and hazard mitigation. For select medical calls fire departments are tiered as an additional resource on higher acuity patient calls.

Through this collaboration, the group has an agreed upon a Tiered Response Policy that layouts the framework for how the responses are to be managed. The Policy was originally implemented on June 1, 2005. It has been revised a number of times in the past twelve years; in 2005, 2006, 2007 (3 times), 2008, 2009, 2011 and most recently in 2014.

There is a Medical Assist Committee, comprised of representatives of the above noted agencies that meet regularly to review, monitor and seek areas of improvement to ensure the system and Policy is working as designed.

In September of 2017, the Niagara Region EMS Chief penned a letter to all fire chiefs in the region indicating that NREMS was considering System Design Changes for their service delivery model. Some of the items that were outlined for possible changes include 911 "Unknown" calls, Police Calls Response Strategies, Lift Assist, Response Plan Reconfiguration, Mental Health Calls and Citizen Response to Cardiac arrests. The letter further indicates that Niagara EMS will not be implementing changes without first consulting with the Niagara region fire chiefs.

It is my opinion that if Niagara Region EMS changes their delivery model to reduce the number of calls they respond to then a subsequent revision to the Tiered Response agreement would occur and FEMS responses to medical calls would also be reduced.

Respectfully submitted

Jeff McCormick

Jeff McCormick,
Acting Fire Chief, Director of Fire and Emergency Management Services