

Municipality of the District of St. Mary's  
**Fire Services Policy**

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**1. Municipal Role:**

Part 10, Section 293 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) states a municipality may maintain and provide fire and emergency services by providing the service, assisting others to provide the service, working with others to provide the service or a combination of means.

**2. Municipal Registration Process**

All Volunteer Fire Departments must register with St. Mary's Municipality every five years using the "Application for Registration as a Fire Department or Emergency Services Provider under the Municipal Government Act". The objective is to ensure emergency services and providers meet registration requirements and to let the municipality know what emergency services are available. Not every department must provide all services; it is always the decision of the volunteer fire department as to which services will be provided.

**3. Mutual Aid Agreement**

The Mutual Aid Fire and Emergency Agreement shall be reviewed by Fire Services Committee every 5 years; including the procedures, equipment and support schedules. Agreement is to be signed by all parties involved and filed at Municipal Office.

**4. Fire Tax Levy**

Purpose:

To establish the manner in which the Municipality collects fire protection rates on behalf of volunteer fire departments, how the rate is determined and justified for each district, applied to tax bills and collected along with general rates from property owners in the area served.

The rate is determined by each of the volunteer fire departments on an annual basis and may be calculated (a) as a uniform charge on each property classified as residential and commercial or (b) percentage of the dollar assessment value of residential and commercial property or (c) as a uniform charge on each property classified as residential with a dwelling unit and commercial properties or (d) as a uniform charge to be applied to residential properties with dwellings and commercial properties with a structure.

- i. The method and levy amount determined shall be submitted annually to Municipal Office, along with Standard Financial Statement (Appendix A) by May 1<sup>st</sup>. If not submitted there will be no changes to rates from prior year.
- ii. The annual resident meeting and rate information will be advertised in the municipal newsletter
- iii. The rate is a first lien on the real property and may be collected in the same manner as property taxes.
- iv. All tax levied through fire area rates will be paid out directly to corresponding fire departments in two installments; September and March of each fiscal year.

## **5. Fire Department Annual Municipal Grant**

### Purpose:

To provide a grant to help offset insurance costs incurred for fire stations.

- i. Annual Municipal grants are determined by Council and will be paid to volunteer departments based on number of Fire Stations/Building to maintain, served by the department.
- ii. A financial statement for the previous year must be submitted to the Municipal Office by each department before the annual grant is released.
- iii. All fire departments shall be required to levy an area rate in order to become eligible for a grant from Council

### Council Approval:

The amount for Fire Department Annual Municipal Grant will be considered as part of the Municipality annual budget process. Council may allocate funds over and above the amount approved in the budget process when request for grants of an emergency or pressing nature are received that exceed the budget. Council reserves the right to grant or reject any application for funding that may or may not qualify in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy.

## **6. Fire Department Annual Training Grant**

### Purpose:

To assist volunteer fire department members in receiving sufficient training in order to serve the Municipality

- i. Annual Training grants are determined by Council and will be paid to volunteer departments based on training received by members from an outside source related to fire protection up to a maximum of \$1000 annually
- ii. Receipts from previous years training must be provided to Municipal Office by each department before a grant is released for the upcoming fiscal year.
- iii. All fire departments shall be required to levy an area rate in order to become eligible for grant from Council

Council Approval:

The amount for Fire Department Annual Training Grant will be considered as part of the Municipality's annual budget process. Council reserves the right to grant or reject any application for funding that may or may not qualify in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy.

**7. Workers Compensation**

Purpose:

To offer workers compensation voluntary coverage to all volunteer fire department members in St. Mary's District. It is up to the individual departments to decide on their inclusion of workers compensation coverage. Such members are entitled to normal compensation benefits if they suffer an injury in the course of their engagement as a volunteer fire fighter. The amount of coverage purchased by the Municipality is \$15,000 per member.

Requirements:

- If the department wishes to have coverage; an Annual (March 31) letter must be filed with the Municipality from each volunteer fire department that states the number of current members who wish to be covered
- The municipality will remit workers compensation on quarterly basis on behalf of members
- The Volunteer Fire Departments involved will be invoiced annually by the Municipality for the members covered, due by March 31.

**References:**

1. *Municipal Government Act Part 10 Fire and Emergency Services*
2. *Fire and Emergency Services Guide; Provisions of the Municipal Government Act respecting fire departments and emergency service providers.*

3. *Workers Compensation Board of NS Policy Number 1.3.4*

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Municipal Clerk

Date

Appendix A

<b>Volunteer Fire Department Name</b> <b>FISCAL YEAR 2016</b>		
Beginning Balance		
	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
	<small>PRIOR YEAR ACTUAL</small>	<small>PROPOSED BUDGET</small>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Tax Levies		
Pipeline Tax Levy		
Grants		
Donations		
Fundraising		
Fire Services		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
	<small>PRIOR YEAR ACTUAL</small>	<small>PROPOSED BUDGET</small>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Building Maintenance		
Training		
Phone		
Power		
Insurance		
Workers Compensation		
Office Supplies		
Vehicle Expense		
Bank Service Fees		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Ending Balance	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>