



# OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

## FIRE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

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### Background:

Community governments provide fire protection in their communities to protect the health and safety of their residents. The level and amount of fire protection is determined by the residents of the community through decisions made by and support provided by elected officials.

A refocus on fire protection priorities is providing fire departments and communities throughout the NWT with a proactive and resource-based approach to enhancing community fire safety.

It is critical that municipal leaders understand their community’s fire protection needs while ensuring their fire department is compliant with the regulations, recognized standards, and industry best practices.

### Purpose:

The *Fire Department Assessment Tool* was created by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) to provide community leaders with an efficient means to assess their fire department’s current capacity, identify any critical gaps, and determine resource needs.



Assessment items in this tool are directly linked to key performance indicators in [MACA's Accountability Framework for Community Governments](#). It is recommended that this assessment tool be used by communities to maintain a regular system of inspection and evaluation of the fire service.

Information gathered from the assessment will help communities develop an action plan towards a sustainable and desired level of service (LOS). [MACA's Community Fire Protection Matrix](#) provides a general overview of the fire protection LOS available to communities.

## Instructions:

1. The following **assessment checklist, comments, and recommended next steps** should be completed by the Fire Chief, reviewed by the Senior Administrative Officer (SAO), and validated by the Regional Assistant Fire Marshal;
2. Upon completion, **a detailed action plan** ([see note 1 below](#)) should be developed to remedy each item on the checklist marked as “No” or “Needs Improvement”;
3. Lastly, the results of the assessment and detailed action plan should be **clearly communicated to the community government**.

**Note 1):** MACA's Regional Assistant Fire Marshals are available to assist with completing the assessment, addressing any critical safety gaps, and developing an action plan towards meeting your community's fire protection goals.

Should any serious gaps be identified in the fire department assessment **that negatively impact safety**, it is critical that a formal letter be sent to council outlining the concerns and necessity for mitigation measures (with support and guidance provided by MACA). Actions of the fire department should be limited to commensurate with the current level of training, staffing and equipment available.



## **FIRE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT**

ASSESSMENT ITEM <sup>1</sup>	CRITERION	YES	NO	NI <sup>2</sup>
<b>1. Bylaw / Band Council Resolution</b>	Has the fire department been established by a Bylaw or Band Council Resolution?			
<b>2. Level of Service</b>	Has a Level of Service (LOS) been prescribed which defines the response activities that the fire department is authorized to carry out?			
<b>3. Budget</b>	Is there a budget in place and is it sufficient to support the current LOS?			
<b>4. Staffing</b>	Does the fire department have sufficient personnel to operate safely and effectively for the LOS being provided (e.g. minimum of 6 fully trained staff for a basic LOS)?			
<b>5. Fire Chief Appointment</b>	Has the community government appointed a fire chief, and are the roles and responsibilities of the position clearly defined?			
<b>6. Fire Department Organization</b>	Has the fire chief assigned key positions and responsibilities to help manage fire service operations (e.g. deputy fire chiefs, fire officers, admin support, etc.)?			
<b>7. Selection of Apparatus and Equipment*</b>  ❖ General Standards for Vehicles and Equipment	Does the fire department have suitable equipment & apparatus for the current LOS provided?  • vehicles and equipment are to be <b>designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and inspected</b> so as to protect adequately the health and safety of firefighters			

<sup>1</sup> Assessment items listed by order of Priority (as recommended by the OFM)

<sup>2</sup> NI: Needs Improvement (see Assessor Comments section)

\* Mandatory requirements under Part 32. of the WSCC Safety Act and OH&S Regulations (Additional Protection for Firefighters)



ASSESSMENT ITEM <sup>1</sup>	CRITERION	YES	NO	NI <sup>2</sup>
<b>8. Personal Protective Equipment*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Personal Alert Safety System (PASS device)</li> <li>❖ Safety Ropes, Harnesses and Hardware</li> </ul>	<p>Do all members have appropriate and adequate personal protective equipment (PPE)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>employer shall provide PPE</b> to a firefighter who engages in or is exposed to hazards of emergency operations, and ensure that is appropriate and adequate to the risk to which the firefighter will be exposed</li> <li>• employer shall provide a <b>PASS device</b> (where applicable – i.e. advance/professional level of service) to each firefighter who is permitted to enter a structure, and ensure that the firefighter uses the device <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ PASS device shall be tested monthly, before each use, and according to manufacturer's specifications</li> </ul> </li> <li>• employer shall provide <b>safety ropes, harnesses and hardware</b> (where applicable – i.e. advance/professional level of service) that are appropriate and adequate to the risk to which the firefighter will be exposed</li> </ul>			
<b>9. Standard Operating Procedures*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Plan for Response to Emergency Incident</li> <li>❖ Securing of Equipment in Vehicles</li> <li>❖ Transportation of Firefighters</li> <li>❖ Interior Structural Firefighting</li> </ul>	<p>Has the fire department developed and implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and have all members received SOP training for the response functions they perform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>a written plan</b> shall be developed that establishes <u>procedures</u> to be followed by firefighters in response to an emergency incident, this includes: response functions/expectations, number and types of vehicles and firefighters for each type of incident, description of typical emergency operations, incident management system, personnel accountability system.</li> <li>• <b>equipment and PPE</b> in the seating area of a firefighting vehicle <b>must be secured</b>;</li> <li>• <b>firefighters must wear seatbelts</b> and have alternative means of transportation if not enough seats available</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Backup Team:</u> (advanced/professional level of service)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if firefighters are required or permitted to engage in interior structural firefighting, an employer shall ensure that:</li> </ul>			



ASSESSMENT ITEM <sup>1</sup>	CRITERION	YES	NO	NI <sup>2</sup>
	<p>(a) the firefighters <b>work in teams</b>; and</p> <p>(b) a <b>suitably equipped rescue team</b> is readily available outside the structure to rescue any endangered firefighter should a firefighter's SCBA fail or the firefighter becomes incapacitated for any other reason</p>			
<p><b>10. Preventative Maintenance Program*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Inspection of Firefighting Vehicles and Equipment</li> <li>❖ Repair of Firefighting Vehicles</li> </ul>	<p>Is the fire department's equipment &amp; apparatus adequately maintained through a preventative maintenance program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>all firefighting vehicles and equipment</u> are to be <b>inspected by a competent person for defects and unsafe condition</b> as often as is necessary.</li> <li>• <u>where a defect or unsafe condition is identified</u>, <b>steps are to be taken immediately</b> to protect the health and safety of any firefighter who may be at risk until the defect is repaired or the unsafe condition is corrected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ defects are to be repaired or the unsafe condition is to be corrected as soon as is reasonably practicable;</li> <li>➤ repairs are to be done according to manufacturer's specifications and by qualified persons</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<p><b>11. Record Keeping &amp; Reporting*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Written Records</li> </ul>	<p>Does the fire department have appropriate administrative support to ensure adequate record keeping &amp; reporting (e.g. firefighter training, inspection of firefighting vehicles &amp; equipment, inspection of personal protective equipment, incident records)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>written record</b> shall be kept of <u>all training delivered</u>;</li> <li>• <b>written record</b> shall be kept for <u>all inspections of firefighting vehicles and equipment</u> (including maintenance &amp; repairs); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>signed by the competent person</b> who performed the inspection/repair;</li> <li>➤ <b>kept at the work site</b> and made readily available to regulatory officials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			



ASSESSMENT ITEM <sup>1</sup>	CRITERION	YES	NO	NI <sup>2</sup>
12. Training*	<p>Have all fire department members completed MACA School of Community Government training (or equivalent) for the current LOS being provided? Does the fire department conduct regular skills maintenance and have training records on file for each member?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>all firefighters shall receive the training necessary</b> to carry out safely any emergency operations that the firefighter is expected to carry out;</li><li>• training required shall be <b>provided by competent persons</b>;</li><li>• <b>written record</b> shall be kept of all training delivered;</li><li>• vehicles shall be <b>operated by a competent operator</b>.</li></ul>			



**ASSESSOR COMMENTS:**

*(Please provide a detailed explanation for each assessment item marked in the 'red' column as NO, or 'yellow' column as NI – Needs Improvement)*



**RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:**

*(Please provide a list of recommended next steps towards achieving compliance and meeting the community's fire protection goals.)*





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**ASSESSOR NAME:**

**Region:**

**Community:**

**Click Below To:**

**DATE COMPLETED:**

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**AVAILABLE SUPPORT**

Please contact your Regional Assistant Fire Marshal for assistance with strengthening fire protection in your community:

Sahtu Region  
(867) 587-7115

South Slave Region  
(867) 872-6535

North Slave Region  
(867) 767-9167 ext. 21133

Inuvik Region  
(867) 777-7297

Examples of available support:

- Facilitating a community government presentation
- Conducting a fire department assessment
- Establishing & implementing a detailed community action plan
- Establishing a level of service
- Developing or updating a fire protection bylaw
- Developing or updating standard operating procedures
- Budget planning
- Resource information
- Volunteer recruitment & retention
- Firefighter training
- Fire department organization and planning
- Recommended fire protection measures and best practices
- Development of a local fire prevention & life safety program