

Government of  
Northwest Territories



# 2014 Annual Report

## Office of the Fire Marshal

# OFM ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Table of Contents

Fire Marshal’s Message .....	2
Mandate of the Fire Marshal .....	3
Staff .....	4
Partnerships.....	4
Current Initiatives .....	5
South Slave Region.....	8
Deh Cho Region.....	9
Sahtu Region .....	10
Inuvik Region.....	11
North Slave Region.....	12
Fire Department Territorial Statistics.....	13
General Observations.....	13
2014 NWT Statistics vs. National .....	14
2010 - 2014 Comparative Summary.....	15
Fire Loss by Act or Omission .....	16
NWT Fires over \$100,000 damage .....	17
NWT Training Initiatives.....	18
NWT Plan Review .....	19
NWT Fire Service Merit Awards .....	19
NWT Length of Service Awards.....	20
Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal (Federal Award) .....	20
Office of the Fire Marshal .....	21

## Fire Marshal's Message



The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Annual Report is an opportunity to reflect upon the current status and response activities of community fire departments and the OFM over the past year. The report also helps identify trends, which assist in the formation of Territorial Fire Prevention programming designed to protect Northwest Territory (NWT) residents and property from the threat of fire.

The primary mandate of the fire service in Canada is the prevention of fires. If fire services can perform this function well, the impact and loss associated with fires can be greatly reduced. Ultimately, fire prevention relies on timely and accurate information, and the source of that information includes the necessity for community fire reporting and identification of the cause and origin of fires through conducting fire investigations.

In the NWT, every community fire department relies on volunteers who are challenged to balance work and family commitments with the responsibility for supporting community fire protection. This year, the focus was on engaging stakeholders and interest groups to create a collaborative working environment.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the dedicated firefighters throughout the Territory who train and respond to community emergencies, often under difficult and harsh conditions, in order to protect the residents of the NWT.

Sincerely,

Chuckler Dewar  
Northwest Territories Fire Marshal



## Mandate of the Fire Marshal

The mandate of the Fire Marshal is provided in the Northwest Territories Fire Prevention Act (Act) and includes many responsibilities that require extensive training, and an effective network to gather information. Five regional Assistant Fire Marshals fulfill these obligations under the direction of the Fire Marshal. Community Fire Chiefs, as Local Assistants to the Fire Marshal, are also subject to direction from the Fire Marshal in enforcing the provisions of the Fire Prevention Act.

Responsibilities of the Fire Marshal include:

- Keep a record of fires reported;
  - Disseminate information and advice about fire prevention and fire protection by means of public meetings, press articles, exhibitions, radio, television or other publicity campaigns
- Review plans for the construction, alteration, and repair of structures for compliance with adopted codes and standards, and with a view to determining that proper precautions are taken against fire and the spread of fire;
- Conduct fire prevention inspections from time to time to determine if precautions against fire and the spread of fire are adequate and satisfactorily maintained;
- Conduct fire investigations to determine the cause, origin, and circumstances of fires;
- Contribute to the development of community fire departments through identification of training programs and courses and the provision of guidance to meet industry standards;
- Submit an annual report to the Minister setting out causes and origins of fires, information on fatalities or injuries inflicted by fire, investigations and any necessary inquiries of fires, prosecutions for arson or attempted arson, a summary of OFM administration of fire prevention and community fire protection activity, together with any other information that the Minister may request;
- Advise and make recommendations to the Minister with respect to:
  - The establishment of fire departments, the necessary organization and equipment of fire departments and the establishment of training programs for firefighters
  - The provision of adequate water supply for fire-fighting purposes
  - The installation and maintenance of fire-alarm systems and fire extinguishing equipment;
  - The storage, use, sale or disposal of combustibles, explosives or other flammable material
  - The construction and maintenance of fire-escapes and other exit facilities in the event of fire or the alarm of fire
  - The types and adequacy of fire-alarms in communities and, in or on any building or property

## Staff

In 2014, the OFM consisted of eight staff members who filled the following positions:

- 2009 Fire Marshal
- 2010 Senior Plan Review Officer
- 2011 Senior Policy Advisor
- 2012 Assistant Fire Marshal, Sahtu Region
- 2013 Assistant Fire Marshal, Inuvik Region
- 2014 Assistant Fire Marshal, North Slave Region
- 2015 Assistant Fire Marshal, Deh Cho Region
- 2016 Assistant Fire Marshal, South Slave Region

A Senior Policy Advisor was assigned to lead implementation of the Community Fire Protection Plan.

## Partnerships

The OFM works with a variety of organizations and groups on issues associated with fire safety. They are as follows:

- NWT Association of Communities (NWTAC)
- Local Government Administrators of the NWT (LGANT)
- Northwest Territories Fire Chief's Association (NWTFCFA)
- Council of Canadian Fire Marshal and Fire Commissioners (CCFMFC)
- Canadian Fire Safety Advisory Council (CFSAC)
- National Research Council (NRC)
- Provincial / Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes (PTPACC)

## Current Initiatives

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OH&S) REGULATIONS

The *Safety Act* sets out obligations of workers and employers, and *OHS Regulations* under the *Act* provide detail on how to comply with the *Safety Act* and how to ensure safe and healthy work sites.

In 2014, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSSC) made clear, their intentions to bring into force, revised *OH&S Regulations* that represent a significant change over the current regulatory framework. The OFM anticipates the new *OHS Regulations* will require adjustments to current OFM regulatory activities and community fire safety services and programming. A plan is necessary to make sure the communities are capable of ensuring adherence to the new *OHS Regulations* and Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) is able to provide effective advice to communities.

It is anticipated the new *OHS Regulations* will influence:

- The conduct of Assistant Fire Marshals in performing investigations and inspections;
- The delivery of community fire protection services by paid staff and volunteers; and
- All aspects of training related to the fire service

Of particular interest to MACA are the following:

- Facilitating the use of Codes of Practice (Guidelines, Standards) and an on-going role for employers, workers, and other stakeholders in their development;
- Having a greater role for preventive measures (e.g., hazard assessments, programs, plans, etc.);
- Updating requirements for Personal Protective Equipment;
- Addressing the unique occupational health issues for workers in the North (e.g., cold weather work, cessation of routine work below -45<sup>0</sup>C, risk of frostbite, altered properties of materials, permafrost); and
- Establishing additional protection for firefighters.

The OFM is working on an assessment of how the various components of the regulations will affect MACA and the communities, starting with Part 32 which is specific to the fire service.

### FIRE INCIDENT TRACKING SYSTEM

In order to obtain critical statistical data for community fire occurrences and OFM programming activity, the OFM has a records management system in place called Fire Department Manager (FDM). The data obtained through the FDM program assists the OFM in producing a detailed annual report that includes the particulars of fire, fatalities, or injuries by fire, investigations and inquiries into fires, and a summary of the administration, fire prevention and fire protection activity. This is a program central to establishing the OFM's strategic direction and key priorities, which serves in the interest of protecting residents from the threat of fire.

In 2014, MACA updated the FDM program. The update involved new software that allowed for data collection that is much more representative of the OFM's current regulatory environment.

Going forward, the program will receive periodic evaluations to ensure it continues to meet the OFM operational needs.

### **VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOL**

In 2014, the OFM implemented the Volunteer Fire Fighter Recruitment and Retention Tool to simplify and guide community efforts to recruit and retain volunteers for delivering emergency services to residents.

Available on MACA's website, the resource provides volunteers, Fire Chiefs, senior administrative staff, and community governments with an overview of best practices to consider in the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters. The tool was developed to assist individuals responsible for the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire service personnel. The stakeholders who developed the tool have done background research and identified effective strategies and practices for volunteer recruitment and retention efforts in the NWT. The end result is a comprehensive, flexible and convenient collection of practices and tools.

### **FIRE PREVENTION ACT REVIEW**

The *Fire Prevention Act* relates to the investigation and reporting of fires, regulates fire hazards, and allows for the adoption of standards for the prevention and extinguishment of fires. The *Act* has not been reviewed thoroughly since its passing in the mid-1970s. In 2013, a technical working group conducted a review of the *Act* which flagged several issues to help guide MACA's research and assist with the development of the legislative proposal.

In 2013, a new Fire Marshal was hired which prompted a detailed analysis of the OFM's regulatory affairs. The results of this work demonstrated additional areas which require serious consideration in a revision to the *Act*. In 2014, MACA completed an examination of options through a review of relevant legal opinions, policy research and analysis, including identifying gaps, completing inter-jurisdictional research, and determining additional areas for improvement.

The next steps involve incorporating feedback and analysis received to date and engaging industry stakeholders and the public about proposed amendments to the *Act*. The Department anticipates submitting a legislative proposal in 2016.

### **COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION PLAN**

MACA continues to work with key partners to implement a multi-year plan to support and strengthen community fire protection in the NWT. In January 2013, MACA worked with the NWT Fire Chiefs' Association; the LGANT; and the NWTAC to identify priority initiatives the OFM will lead in collaboration with partners. Updated annually, the plan serves as a means to gain consensus on priority actions and maximize value from available OFM resources. In 2014, the OFM completed several fire prevention initiatives and began groundwork on published guidelines for the OFM's plan review function; a community government engagement presentation; and a generic template for standard operating procedures for community fire services. Completion of this work is expected in early 2016.

## **FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES**

Every year, the OFM looks to Fire Prevention Week (FPW) to educate residents and promote fire safety awareness initiatives in line with the national theme. This year's FPW took place October 4-10, 2014. The theme was "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep" and focused on providing residents the knowledge necessary for the safe installation and maintenance of smoke alarms.

The OFM targets three main audiences during FPW:

- **General Public**
  - *Providing information to NWT residents that helps them understand the importance of being prepared for the dangers of fire.*
- **Schools**
  - *Involvement and support from schools is essential for successful use and distribution of FPW materials.*
- **Community Fire Departments**
  - *Providing messaging about the importance of educating the public on fire safety, and providing community fire departments with tools to help them engage the public on these issues.*

The OFM has sourced a number of printed materials for distribution to local fire departments, schools, and residents including:

- A 2014 FPW Fire Department Guide for local fire departments to promote fire prevention and fire safety awareness within their communities;
- A Fire Safety Starts With You (FSSWY) school activity booklet with puzzles, games, quizzes, and general fire safety information;
  - *Developed annually in collaboration with public fire and life safety educators in the western provinces and territories.*
- A school newsletter and fire safety tips poster;
- A teacher lesson plan which provides suggested activities on how to make effective use of FSSWY activity booklets; and
- A family letter and home fire safety inspection checklist encouraging parents to review the FSSWY activity booklets with their children and inspect their home for fire safety.

In 2014, MACA initiated measures through a variety of activities aimed at preventing the dangers associated with carbon monoxide poisoning and educating residents about the risks. The campaign's aim is to work with community governments, fire departments and other partners to raise public awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide and educate NWT residents on proper maintenance of heating appliances and to prompt home owners to install carbon monoxide detectors. Communication tools included newspaper advertisements, social media, new website content, brochures, door knockers, and posters.



## South Slave Region

Located within the South Slave region are the communities of Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Enterprise, Hay River, Fort Providence, Kát'odeeche First Nation, Kakisa, as well as the former settlements of Fort Reliance and Pine Point. Statistics are also tracked for Rocher River-Talston, and South Slave Hinterland. A total of 14 fires were reported in the South Slave region in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>Enterprise</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
<b>Fort Resolution</b>	3	0	0	2	0	4	1
<b>Fort Smith</b>	3	0	0	2	0	33	25
<b>Hay River</b>	3	0	0	0	0	48	40
<b>Fort Providence</b>	4	0	0	0	0	5	20
<b>Kát'odeeche First Nation</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Kakisa</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Hinterland</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>106</b>

### List any fires that caused over \$100,000 in damage

April 7	Hay River	Suspicious	\$200,000
April 19	Fort Resolution	Arson	\$600,000
August 15	Fort Resolution	Mechanical Failure	\$300,000
October 7	Fort Smith	Electrical Short Circuit	\$150,000
October 25	Fort Smith	Electrical Failure	\$300,000
December 2	Fort Resolution	Electrical Short Circuit	\$300,000
December 12	Fort Smith	(12 Ptarmigan St)	\$200,000
September	Fort Providence	(cooking fire)	\$100,000
June	Hinterland	(car hauler)	\$100,000

### Fire Loss by Act or Omission Stats

Human Failing	1
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	2
Child Fire Play	2
Arson/Set Fire	3
Construction Deficiency	2
Misuse of Equipment	0
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	1
Combustible Material Too Close to Heat Source	1
Part Failure	5

## Deh Cho Region

Located in the Deh Cho region are the communities of Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake, and Wrigley. The Deh Cho had 11 reported fires in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>Fort Liard</b>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Fort Simpson</b>	11	0	15	7	0	9	1
<b>Jean Marie River</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Nahanni Butte</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Trout Lake</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Wrigley</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hinterland</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

### List any fires that caused over \$100,000 in damage

February 12	Fort Simpson	Unknown	\$100,000
April 27	Fort Simpson	Arson	\$100,000
May 24	Fort Simpson	Suspicious	\$200,000
August 24	Fort Simpson	Suspected Impairment	\$300,000
October 20	Fort Simpson	Arson	\$100,000

### Fire Loss by Act or Omission Stats

Ignorance of Hazard	1
Smoker's Material	
Human Failing	
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	1
Child Fire Play	
Arson/Set Fire	7
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	2
Vehicle Accident	
Combustible Material Too Close to Heat Source	
Part Failure	
Inadequate Control	

## Sahtu Region

Located within the Sahtu Region are the communities of Colville Lake, Délı̄ne, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, and Tulita. A total of six fires were reported in the Sahtu region in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>Colville Lake</b>	1	0	0	0	0	5	0
<b>Délı̄ne</b>	2	0	0	0	0	5	1
<b>Fort Good Hope</b>	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
<b>Norman Wells</b>	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
<b>Tulita</b>	1	0	6	1	0	5	1
<b>Hinterland</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>

### List any fires that caused over \$100,000 in damage

September 7                      Tulita                      Ignorance of Hazard                      \$150,000

### Fire Loss by Act or Omission Stats

Smoker's Material	
Human Failing	2
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	
Arson/Set Fire	2
Misuse of Equipment	
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	2
Distracted/Preoccupied	
Vehicle Accident	
Combustible Material Too Close to Heat Source	
Part Failure	
Inadequate Control	

## Inuvik Region

Located in the Inuvik region are the communities of Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok. A total of twenty nine fires were reported in the Inuvik region in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>Aklavik</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Fort McPherson</b>	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
<b>Inuvik</b>	22	0	72	16	3	26	0
<b>Paulatuk</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Sachs Harbour</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Tsiigehtchic</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Tuktoyaktuk</b>	3	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Ulukhaktok</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Hinterland</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>

### List any fires that caused over \$100,000 in damage

January 21	Aklavik	Electrical Short Circuit	\$200,000
April 25	Tuktoyaktuk	Smokers Material	\$400,000
May 24	Inuvik	Suspicious	\$1,500,000
September 23	Inuvik	Arson	\$500,000
September 23	Inuvik	Arson	\$500,000
November 26	Tuktoyaktuk	Suspicious	\$500,000

### Fire Loss by Act or Omission Stats

Ignorance of Hazard	3
Smoker's Material	2
Human Failing	4
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	1
Child Fire Play	
Arson/Set Fire	6
Construction Deficiency	1
Misuse of Equipment	
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	1
Suspicious	2
Unknown	1



## North Slave Region

Approximately half the population of the NWT resides in the North Slave region, which includes the city of Yellowknife and the communities of Dettah, Behchokò, Gamètì, Łutsel K'e, Wekweètì, and Whatì. Three operating diamond mines are also located in the North Slave region. A total of 217 fires were reported in the North Slave region in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>Dettah</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Behchokò</b>	3	0	0	2	0	4	1
<b>Gamètì</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Łutsel K'e</b>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>N'Dilo</b>	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
<b>Wekweètì</b>	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
<b>Whatì</b>	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
<b>Yellowknife</b>	213	40	191	9	32	235	4
<b>Hinterland</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>6</b>

### List any fires that caused over \$100,000 in damage

May 14	Yellowknife	Smokers material	\$700,000
May 17	Behchokò	Arson	\$200,000
September 21	Yellowknife	Suspicious	\$110,000
October 12	Behchokò	Arson	\$1,000,000
November 8	Behchokò	Unknown	\$120,000

### Fire Loss by Act or Omission Stats

Ignorance of Hazard	2
Smoker's Material	1
Human Failing	
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	
Child Fire Play	
Arson/Set Fire	4
Unknown	1
Suspicious	1
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	
Distracted/Preoccupied	
Vehicle Accident	

## Fire Department Territorial Statistics

The following is a summary of statistics for the five regions of the NWT in 2014.

	Fires Reported	Rescue	False Alarms	Fire Investigations	Dangerous Goods	Fire Inspections	Training Events
<b>South Slave</b>	14	0	0	4	0	92	106
<b>Deh Cho</b>	11	0	17	7	0	10	4
<b>Sahtu</b>	5	0	6	2	0	27	2
<b>Beaufort Delta</b>	29	0	73	19	3	30	4
<b>North Slave</b>	217	40	191	12	32	251	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>120</b>

## General Observations

- There were a substantial number of Arson and/or suspicious fires having an enormous financial impact on the NWT during 2014. This signals a real necessity for enhanced fire prevention measures, particularly focused on youth. The 23 fires over \$100,000 listed previously as arson or suspicious amounted to a dollar loss of over \$4,244,000. That works out to an average of \$193,000 per fire and the loss per population is just less than \$93.00. Take into account that some fires do not get reported, and some fires do not get a dollar loss reported which indicates these numbers are likely higher than presented.
- The increase in Arson and/or suspicious fires resulted in an increase in fire investigations for the OFM.
- The per capita frequency of fires in the NWT is more than triple the national average.
- There were 3 fire related fatalities in the NWT during 2014.
- The OFM did not participate in any prosecutions for arson or attempted arson in 2014, despite an increase in arson related activities from the previous year. This can either be attributed to an absence of prosecutions by the RCMP or successful prosecutions of individuals by the RCMP not requiring OFM involvement in the judicial process.
- 26 fire events occurred in 2014 which resulted in considerable dollar losses. The total dollar loss reported in 2014 was significantly lower than the previous year, but higher than the recent average. This may be in part due to the increase in major dollar loss fire events, and/or to the more complete information on fires reported to the OFM.
- The increase in fire Inspection activity can be attributed to increased record keeping and reporting by the regions.

## 2014 NWT Statistics vs. National

The following is a summary of population, fire and cost statistics for the five regions of the NWT in 2014.

	South Slave	Dehcho	Sahtu	Beaufort Delta	North Slave	Northwest Territories	5-Year Average	National*
<b>Population</b>	7,951	2,697	2,261	6,986	23,503	43,537	43,530	35,158,300
<b>Fires Reported</b>	14	11	5	29	217	276	249	60,109
<b>Dollar loss (000)</b>	\$2,300	\$802	\$150	\$3,750	\$2,738	\$9,740	\$1,251	\$1,215,414
<b>\$\$ loss per Capita</b>	\$290	\$298	\$67	\$537	\$117	\$224	\$228	\$40.82
<b>Deaths</b>	1	0	0	2	0	3	1	234
<b>Deaths per 100,000</b>	12.57	0.00	0.00	42.94	0.00	6.89	2.30	1.27
<b>Injuries</b>	2	1	0	0	0	3	2.0	3048
<b>Injuries per 100,000</b>	25.15	37.08	0	0	0	6.89	4.60	7.43

\* National averages represent figures from 2007, which is the most recent year comprehensive information is available for Canada on fire statistics.

## 2010 - 2014 Comparative Summary

- The number of fires reported in 2014 is similar to 2013. There is a high per capita dollar loss and a large number of high loss fires in all regions, but the Sahtu. Another concern is the number of high loss fires that are suspicious or determined to be intentionally set.
- False alarm incidents remain a concern for the impact on the fire department resources. There are more false alarms than fires and that may impact the ability to respond if there are multiple alarms, or the urgency a fire department responds with because of complacency due to the ongoing false alarms.
- Inspections include statistics for Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik which each have elected to perform some or all of their local inspections.
- The NWT experienced 3 fire related fatalities in 2014. The deaths occurred at 3 different fires.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Fires</b>	242	187	290	278	276
<b>False alarms</b>	416	202	240	283	286
<b>Investigations</b>	16	5	9	33	44
<b>Inspections</b>	517	235	489	209	410
<b>Plan Reviews</b>	162	188	159	101	88



## Fire Loss by Act or Omission

The following is a summary of the 57 reported fire losses that occurred through acts or omissions in the NWT in 2014. Deliberately set fires (arson and juvenile/child fire play) are the highest reported cause for fires of this nature. In response, the OFM continues to deliver Youth Fire Setters Intervention Training in communities across the territory. Other concerning trends are the high rate of fires categorized as Ignorance of Hazard, meaning the person did not know or understand the danger they were creating with the activity causing the fire, as well as distracted/preoccupied occurrences. These include stove top fires where the occupant was distracted away from the stove. Additional education is required for this to reverse the trends.

Of the 276 fires reported in 2014, causes were determined for approximately 20%. This indicates there is a need to ensure reporting is thorough and immediate, as this would help investigators in determining cause. In response to the findings, MACA continues to work with fire departments and community governments to educate members on the necessity of timely, accurate reporting, and to find ways to ensure its own internal alerting mechanisms are effective in getting investigators on the scene in an appropriate time frame.

<b>Act or Omission</b>	<b># of fires</b>
Ignorance of Hazard	6
Smoker's Material	2
Human Failing	7
Mechanical/Electrical Failure	4
Child Fire Play	2
Arson/Set Fire	18
Construction Deficiency	3
Misuse of Equipment	0
Impairment (Alcohol or Drugs)	6
Suspicious	2
Combustible Material Too Close to Heat Source	1
Part Failure	5
Cannot be Determined	1

## NWT Fires over \$100,000 damage

In 2014, 26 fires were reported that had an estimated dollar loss of greater than \$100,000. The following is a brief summary of date, location, cause, and dollar loss.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Dollar Loss</b>
01/21/2014	Aklavik	Electrical Failure	\$200,000
02/12/2014	Fort Simpson	Undetermined	\$100,000
04/07/2014	Hay River	Suspicious	\$200,000
04/19/2014	Fort Resolution	Arson	\$600,000
04/25/2014	Tuktoyaktuk	Smoker's Material	\$400,000
04/27/2014	Fort Simpson	Arson	\$100,000
05/14/2014	Yellowknife	Smoker's Material	\$700,000
05/17/2014	Behchokò	Arson	\$1,500,000
05/24/2014	Fort Simpson	Suspicious	\$200,000
June 2014	Hinterland South Slave	Unknown	\$100,000
08/15/2014	Fort Resolution	Mechanical Failure	\$300,000
08/24/2014	Fort Simpson	Suspected Impairment	\$700,000
09/07/2014	Tulita	Ignorance of Hazard	\$150,000
09/21/2014	Yellowknife	Suspicious	\$110,000
Sept 2014	Fort Providence	Ignorance or Hazard	\$100,000
09/23/2014	Inuvik	Arson	\$500,000
09/28/2014	Inuvik	Arson	\$500,000
10/07/2014	Fort Smith	Electrical Failure	\$150,000
10/12/2014	Behchokò	Arson	\$1,000,000
10/20/2014	Fort Simpson	Arson	\$100,000
10/25/2014	Fort Smith	Electrical Failure	\$300,000
11/08/2014	Behchokò	Undetermined	\$120,000
11/26/2014	Tuktoyaktuk	Suspicious	\$500,000
12/02/2014	Fort Resolution	Electrical Failure	\$300,000
12/12/2014	Fort Smith	Human Failing	\$200,000

## NWT Training Initiatives

On April 1, 2013, the School of Community Government signed an eight year training agreement with the College of the Rockies to deliver accredited and non-accredited Fire Training in the NWT. This contract brings a new method of delivery to the NWT including certified training to those departments that want to pursue professional accreditation and non-certified practical training to volunteer fire departments in the smaller communities. In 2014, five students finished the NFPA 1001 Professional Firefighter Standard.

### 1001 Certified Training

<b>Hay River</b>	15 students - 5 chapters completed
<b>Inuvik</b>	27 Students 5 chapters completed 23 Students 9 chapters completed 15 Students 13 chapters completed
<b>Fort Simpson</b>	8 Students – 5 chapters completed
<b>Yellowknife</b>	7 Events – various chapters – 38 students
<b>Fort Resolution</b>	9 students – 7 chapters completed
<b>Behchokò</b>	8 students – 7 chapters completed
<b>NFPA 1001- Online FF1</b>	17 Students – 3 communities represented
<b>NFPA 1001- Online FF2</b>	17 Students – 3 communities represented

### Non-Certified Introductory Training

<b>Jean Marie River</b>	5 students – 4 chapters completed
<b>Wekweètì</b>	7 students – 4 chapters completed
<b>Tulita</b>	9 students – 4 chapters completed
<b>Déline</b>	9 students – 5 chapters completed

### Other Training

<b>Fire Scene and Evidence Preservation</b>	22 Students – 15 communities represented
<b>Hazardous Materials Awareness</b>	8 Students
<b>How to be a Fire Chief</b>	23 Students – 15 communities represented
<b>NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Level 1</b>	9 students
<b>NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator</b>	8 students – 4 communities represented
<b>NFPA 1041- Fire Instructor Level 1</b>	8 Students – 2 communities represented

*Total for 2014 – 26 training events, 290 students*

## NWT Plan Review

The NWT plan review plays a vital role in the Government of the Northwest Territories' obligation to protect residents from the threat of fire and spread of fire by ensuring a thorough review of architectural design and engineering plans for construction projects in the NWT. The OFM is responsible for reviewing plans of all construction excluding single family dwellings and ancillary structures for single family dwellings.

With the exception of Yellowknife, there is no regulatory authority in the NWT to ensure a building is safe for public occupancy in relation to adopted codes and standards, beyond the fire safety requirements identified by the *Fire Prevention Act*. Plans and specifications are reviewed by the OFM to determine whether they meet the fire safety requirements adopted by the *Fire Prevention Regulations*, and developers are responsible to ensure all statutory requirements are met and construction is completed in a manner consistent with the OFM plan review assessment.

The OFM also participates as a member of the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, and the Provincial/Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes. These committees coordinate the development and revision of the codes adopted through the *Fire Prevention Act* that govern all construction and renovation in the NWT.

The plan review activity involves a wide variety of construction projects including multi-residential, commercial, resource development, fuel storage and dispensing, mining, oil and gas, water supply, etc. Plan review is conducted on a fee for service basis.

In 2014, the OFM reviewed 116 plans for construction of new buildings and/or alterations of existing buildings.

## NWT Fire Service Merit Awards

Community firefighters and fire departments play a critical role in safeguarding residents and communities of the NWT. Firefighters are relied upon to provide an essential service that protects the lives and property of all NWT residents. MACA acknowledges the vital contributions made by fire fighters and fire departments through the Fire Service Merit Awards Program (FSMA).

All community fire departments, volunteer and paid fire fighters in the NWT are eligible to receive a FSMA. Nominees are considered for awards based on their contribution to the NWT fire service and/or community fire protection.

This contribution may include, but is not limited to:

- An outstanding achievement in fire protection;
- An innovative idea or solution to a fire related issue;
- A high degree of personal commitment;
- A demonstrated improvement over the past year (including training achievements);
- The impact of achievements on the community and/or the territory.



Community fire service awards are presented to recognize outstanding efforts to the NWT fire service made by a community. Only those communities that have shown a marked enhancement of emergency service to the community, measured against a formal assessment by the OFM, will be considered in a given year. A selection committee chooses award recipients from among all nominations received by the public.

FSMA may be presented to recipients at a public awards ceremony to be held each year to coincide with FPW (the week containing October 9th of each year). Awards are presented regionally.

In 2014, the following nominee's received a FSMA:

- Clarence Naskin, Wekweètì
- Fire Department (Individual Award)
- Vince McKay, Hay River Fire Department (Individual Award)
- Norm Firth, Fort McPherson Fire Department (Individual Award)
- Fort Smith Fire Department
- Behchokò Fire Department

## NWT Length of Service Awards

MACA recognizes volunteer and paid firefighters who have served for lengths of two, five, ten, 15 and 20 years with individual certificates as well as length of service pins, medals, or a commemorative clasp and service bar for each period.

All volunteer and paid firefighters are eligible to receive length of service awards. As MACA does not keep records on community firefighters, the Department issues a call annually to fire departments and community governments for applications for each level of award as firefighters become eligible. Length of service will be verified by the community Senior Administrative Office or Fire Chief on each application.

The OFM issues length of service awards as applications are received and verified. Awards may be sent directly to recipients or may be presented at an organized event.

## Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal (Federal Award)

Four NWT residents received Fire Service Exemplary Service Medals in 2014:

- Stephen Moss – Previous Fire Marshal and Yellowknife Volunteer Firefighter (30 year bar)
- Ross Potter - Hay River Fire Department (20 year medal)
- Vince McKay – Hay River Fire Department (20 year medal)
- Vince Sharpe – Inuvik Fire Department (20 year medal)

The Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal, created on August 29, 1985, honours members of a recognized Canadian fire service who have completed 20 years of service, ten years of which have been served in the performance of duties involving potential risks, and were employed on or after the date of creation of the Medal.

Recognized fire services include Canadian fire departments, fire marshals' offices, fire commissioners' offices and the Canadian Forces fire services. Exemplary service is characterized by good conduct, industry and efficiency.

Consideration is given only to periods of service for which no other long service, good conduct or efficiency decoration or medal has been awarded by the Crown.

A person who has been awarded the medal is eligible to be awarded a Bar in respect of each additional ten year period of service in the fire services in Canada, after the 20 year period, in respect of which he was awarded the Medal, if that service is of such good standing as to warrant an award.

In order to nominate a person to receive the medal, you must contact the NWT Chair of the Awards Committee and provide the following information:

- The name of the person being nominated;
- Their time of service YEAR/MTH to YEAR/MTH and the name(s) of each fire department served in; and
- A letter requesting that the person be nominated to receive the medal from the municipal council, Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, etc.

The Chair of the NWT Awards Committee is Chucker Dewar of the OFM. The Chair can be contacted by phone at (867) 767-9161, extension 21026, or by writing to:

Office of the Fire Marshal  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Municipal and Community Affairs  
#600, 5201 50 Avenue  
Yellowknife, NT XIA 3S9

## Office of the Fire Marshal

### **Chucker Dewar**

Fire Marshal, Public Safety Division  
Department of Municipal and Community Affairs  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Phone: (867) 767-9161 Extension: 21026  
Fax: (867) 873-0260