



# Smoke Signals Newsletter

## Winter 2016 Edition

### Derelict and Abandoned Buildings

All communities in the NWT have derelict and abandoned buildings, which pose a significant threat to the safety of residents. A derelict building is a vacant structure or lot that is in a state of disrepair. Community fire officials in the north need a plan to address derelict and abandoned structures that are unsecured and accessible in their communities.

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In late summer 2015, MACA worked with the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk to develop a derelict building management strategy, which contains assessments for eighteen fire-risk structures; recommendations for immediate and future action; and a detailed description of available measures. The purpose of this work is to help municipal officials implement measures to address the problem. Addressing derelict structures takes time and a community plan is necessary to help ensure municipal decision-making and priority-setting guide the community government's efforts to solve the problem. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce the risk of fire, crime, and trespass; improve the municipal landscape; and free up potential lands for future development.

Since finalizing the Tuktoyaktuk strategy in November 2015, considerable progress has been made in contacting property owners and eliminating potential fire threats. Many derelict buildings have been secured and work is underway to demolish or remove several others. Further, MACA recently established a Community Fire Protection Advisory Committee (CFPC) involving key stakeholders, which considers derelict buildings in the NWT a key priority. This will involve partners working with the NWT Association of Communities to create an unsightly property bylaw template and develop a guide to help prevent derelict buildings before they become a problem.

The Office of the Fire Marshal will be presenting the results of the Tuktoyaktuk pilot project to members of the NWT Fire Chief's Association at their annual general meeting in June 2016. Communities interested in considering their own management plan for derelict structures should contact the Office of the Fire Marshal in your region.

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*MACA continues to work with partners to undertake activities aimed at supporting and strengthening the community fire protection capabilities of NWT communities.*

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## Community Fire Protection Plan

Communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT) face challenges not shared by the majority of municipalities across Canada. A low population base and geographical isolation challenge their ability to develop and sustain quality community fire protection services, equipment, and infrastructure. The cost of creating and maintaining an effective community fire protection service in the north is high and there are few opportunities to share equipment and expertise. The vast majority of services are volunteer-based and a considerable amount of on-going training is necessary to establish and maintain adequate resources. NWT communities are also faced with considerable financial pressures as they attempt to balance the diverse interests of residents with required municipal programs and services and a finite level of funding.

In response, community fire protection partners have implemented a work plan to identify short and long term activities with which to support the development and maintenance of community fire protection services for NWT communities. Although the focus is aimed largely towards smaller communities, outcomes will offer benefits and value to all municipal fire services in the NWT. The work plan will be implemented and maintained by the Community Fire Protection Advisory Committee.

The Committee is chaired by Municipal and Community Affairs and participation includes the Northwest Territories Fire Chief's Association; the Northwest Territories Association of Communities; the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories; and the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission.

The Committee's roles and responsibilities include:

- o Overseeing the development and implementation of a Community Fire Protection work plan;
- o Providing advice and reviewing proposed plans, initiatives and results;
- o Addressing other related issues which periodically arise through discussion with communities and stakeholders;
- o Reporting progress to stakeholders.

The Committee met in January 2016 to update the Community Fire Protection Plan and to create a Committee terms of reference. Both these documents have been finalized and are now available on MACA's website at <http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/office-of-the-fire-marshal/community-fire-protection-plan>. A current priority on the work plan nearing completion is a video production that will help inform municipal leaders on community fire protection and guide decision making. The 20 minute production will offer a basis for a facilitated discussion covering the following areas:

- o Overview of the NWT Fire System;
- o Key Elements of a Community Fire Protection Service;
- o Meeting a Community's Needs;
- o Core Administrative and Management Functions;
- o Roles and Responsibilities;
- o Success Factors;
- o The Importance of Leadership;
- o Tools, Resources and Support.

MACA looks forward to providing a detailed update at the upcoming NWT Fire Chief's Association annual general meeting in June 2016. For further information, please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal in your region.

## Fire Prevention Message

A trending cause of residential fires throughout the NWT has been improperly discarded smoking materials. This has resulted in thousands of dollars in property loss and had a serious negative impact on residents and their families. Many owners of buildings no longer permit smoking inside their home, even if renting, and residents are not taking adequate measures to protect themselves and others from a fire occurring outside of the home where smoking is now taking place. Here are some simple fire prevention tips that can help stop fires as a result of smoking outside of homes:

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Fire safety tips for residents;

1. Smoke Alarms Save Lives;
  2. Put a Carbon Monoxide Detector in Your Home  
(<http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/office-of-the-fire-marshal/carbon-monoxide>)
  3. If you have a fire, plan Your escape "GET OUT AND STAY OUT"
  4. Big Fires Start Small, don't be a statistic
1. Smoke away from combustibles i.e. – not on Decks / Balconies or landings etc.;
  2. Place a non - combustible container with a lid a minimum of 5 feet away from all combustibles for the disposal of matches and cigarette butts;
  3. Do not extinguish cigarettes in potting plants, these contain peat moss, which readily burns and contributes to the spread of fire;
  4. Ashtrays do not work well in the outdoors, embers and butts can blow out of them easily causing a grass or structure fire;
  5. Take extra care to ensure all butts are extinguished prior to disposing of container contents into a non-combustible exterior garbage container. Consider lightly soaking down and monitor for a time prior to discarding contents.

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Please take some time to share this information with residents in your community, in particular those who smoke or are exposed to those who smoke. Some ideas around the distribution of this information are: handouts / Place on information boards / Advise residents of concern at local meetings / Posters / local radio messages etc. NWT Fire Safety Officials are creative, find the best and most effective way to get the smoking safety message to your community's residents!

For additional information please visit the link below;

<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/causes/smoking/smoking-material-safety-tips>

## A Message from NWTFCFA President

It's hard to believe that it's already time to draft another Smoke Signals article; time sure does fly here in the north. Believe it or not, it's been a very busy time for your Northwest Territories Fire Chiefs Association (NWTFCFA) Executive; we are currently working on this year's conference and hope to send out the registration packages by the end of April. We took into account all suggestions that were made following last year's conference and have tried to incorporate everything into this year's program. Suffice to say, if you enjoyed our Learning Symposium and Tradeshow last year, BUCKLE UP, because this year's event is shaping up to be bigger and better.

I would like to take this opportunity to bring the membership up to date on a few initiatives that we have been working on:

**Presumptive Legislation:** We have received notice from WSCC Legal Counsel that the amended legislation which included the addition of five cancers (Breast, Kidney, Ureter, Bladder, and Esophageal) was passed and received royal assent March 17, 2015. This puts the NWT at the same level or better than Canada's other provinces and territories. To my surprise, WSCC covers PTSD under its normal legislation which means that we are virtually covered, however it will be our priority to advocate having it included as part of the presumptive legislation. I will explain the difference during our conference.

**Regional Training Centres:** As mandated at last year's AGM, I drafted and submitted letters to the Ministers of Finance, MACA, Education, and WSCC seeking funding and/or direction to make regional training centres a reality. The letters were sent following the last election and the selection process for new Ministers. I am happy to announce that I received responses from all Ministers that were consulted and I will be providing an overview of their responses and the recommendations of your executive on a move forward basis at this year's AGM.

**Community Fire Protection Strategy:** I was happy to be part of a working group that is planning for the future of community fire safety, which met in Yellowknife at the end of February. A lot of what was discussed and included future plans, will be discussed at length during the conference, with some of our training being geared toward the selection and maintenance of community levels of service. During my visit to Yellowknife, I was asked to participate in a video interview which will be used to educate Councils and SAOs regarding the provision of fire services within their communities. We've been training Fire Chiefs for the past two years regarding what is required to develop and maintain an operationally effective fire department and its time that Councils and SAOs are exposed to the same information. The video, which is the brainchild of the Fire Marshal's Office, is an excellent resource tool which will go a long way in accomplishing this.

Finally, I'm drafting this article from my hotel room in Ottawa where I'm about to participate in meetings that will steer the future of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), a future that I see our NWT community fire departments being an active part of. I was recently part of the Strategic Planning Committee and throughout our deliberations I stressed the importance of an inclusive CAFC and told them that they must ensure that membership is attainable from coast to coast to coast; that the CAFC must not only serve the membership and issues from the large centre fire departments, but those of the smallest communities within our great country. They listened and it will be very exciting to be part of the newer revitalized CAFC. I look forward to hosting the CAFC President at this year's conference and listening to his overview of what the CAFC has to offer the Northwest Territories. I am also here in Ottawa to participate in Government Relations Week where I will take the time to meet with our Member of Parliament Michael McLeod. Not only will I discuss those issues that are referred to as national issues, but I'll discuss those issues that hopefully he'll be able to help us (NWT) with from the national level (i.e. building or program funding in support of our regional training centres).

The Executive would like to thank each of you for your continued support and let you know that we are looking forward to seeing you again in Yellowknife for the 2016 AGM, Learning Symposium, and Tradeshow.

Jim Sawkins  
President NWTFCFA

## A Message from WSCC

The following are suggestions in order to ensure you maintain a safe and healthy work environment:

- Reduce the force required for the job. Examine the items you need to move or the movements involved in doing the job, and plan ahead to ensure you are not overexerting yourself.
- Take your time with tasks - sudden or unexpected movements can bring about strains and sprain injuries. Do not rush, and pay attention to your surroundings. Make sure you have enough light to see what you are doing and where you are going. Slippery or uneven surfaces can lead to slips, trips, or falls.
- Take advantage of the equipment and machinery offered in your workplace. Use carts, hoists, and mechanical equipment whenever possible to handle heavy materials. Ladders, work platforms, scissor lifts, and extension poles can reduce the need to reach overhead and overextend yourself, and can bring the work closer to you. Powered tools can reduce the force required for a task.
- Work together: do not attempt to lift or carry large items or materials by yourself. Ask your colleagues to assist you. If you must lift and carry by yourself, carry a load that you can safely lift and maintain proper posture by keeping items close to your body to help reduce the strain on your joints.
- Wear proper and appropriate footwear for your work. Keep one hand free to help balance or break a fall. If you work in an environment where you may walk or move around on a slippery or wet surface, make sure your employer invests in non-slip mats to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents. Rubber mats offer traction and grip, and are easy to install.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices in the workplace. Clear any cluttered areas, and clean and remove any spills as soon as you see them. Cover and protect from damage cables and cords that cross walkways.
- Maintain good health, and warm up prior to physical activity to loosen your muscles and increase the range of motion in your joints. Take regular breaks to give your body time to recover.

Sprains and strains are preventable. Take appropriate measures to ensure a safe and healthy work environment. For more information, visit [wscc.nt.ca](http://wscc.nt.ca) or [wscc.nu.ca](http://wscc.nu.ca) and explore our Codes of Practice, Hazard Alerts, Safety Bulletins, and Posters.

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### Office of the Fire Marshal

#### Beaufort Delta

Please join the Beaufort Region in welcoming Adam Kudlak, the new Fire Chief of the Ulukhaktok Fire Department. Adam is already hard at work in his efforts move the Ulukhaktok Fire department forward.

Training in the Beaufort communities continues. Members of the Inuvik Fire Department are participating in the online 1001 training through the School of Community Government. We wish them well in their endeavor.

As an item of interest, through the efforts of Chief Sawkins and his personnel, Inuvik received a brand new front line pumper just before Christmas. This demonstrates the benefits of working with your community council in identifying and rationalizing the needs of your community fire department. Congratulations to the Inuvik FD on their new purchase!

#### Dehcho

Seven (7) Fort Simpson Fire Department members are taking the defensive operations training through the school of community government. Two certified instructors from the department will be teaching the firefighters and the Deh Cho Assistant Fire marshal will be conducting the evaluations for the training. This will bring new members recently recruited up to a competent level and refresh more seasoned members on their skills.

The Village of Fort Simpson in cooperation with MACA is putting on an EMO workshop to update their current community emergency plan. Fort Simpson is one of the unique communities that has a potential for an emergency community evacuation every year because of the risk of flood. They have to be prepared each year for the worst and through working with partners in the development of a current emergency plan assists the community in preparing for the worst case scenario.

*Failing to plan is planning to fail!*

#### North Slave

After a number of successful training courses held throughout the summer and fall of 2015, our focus this year is going to shift towards ensuring all of our North Slave fire departments have the basic administrative fundamentals established in their organizations.

With the release of the updated NWT Safety Act in June 2015, it is critical that we spend time making sure all necessary documentation and record keeping practices are in place. We will be working with community departments to ensure they have fire protection bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), equipment maintenance and safety checklists, and other items required by this legislation.

This does not mean operational training will stop – training is essential in order to support our responders in maintaining their skills and ensures they are ready and prepared when they are needed to respond to community emergencies. Training, Standard Operating Procedures & maintenance scheduling are all pieces of the puzzle, and when combined, make our fire departments more efficient and effective in providing emergency services.

The North Slave Assistant Fire Marshal is looking forward to working with all of our North Slave fire departments this year, and is excited to see things progress in the upcoming months.

## Sahtu



## Behdzi Ahda First Nation

In December 2015 Behdzi Ahda First Nation (Colville Lake) received their first fire truck, which was delivered to them on the winter road. The fire truck is a 2015 Dodge 5500 Compressed Air Foam (C.A.F) unit, manufactured by Tuff Built out of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Similar trucks have been built by Tuff Built for Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour fire departments.

This C.A.F. truck holds 300 imperial gallons of water and 15 gallons of class A foam. A 75hp Deute engine pumps out the completed foam product. The manufacture states that this truck is not only capable of extinguishing wild land fires and exterior structure fires, but can also extinguish a fully involved structure fire in approximately 3 to 5 minute with a 3.5 percent foam (shaving cream like).

The manufacturer and the Assistant Fire Marshal for the Sahtu Region went in to the community in early March to conduct care and maintenance of the pump, pump operations and basic use of the truck. Unfortunately, a low number of people were able to make it out for the training session do to prior engagements. The Office of the Fire Marshal and the Behdzi Ahda First Nation will conduct another training session to be done in the summer.

Behdzi Ahda First Nation and the Office of the Fire Marshal are working to have the community establish a fire department with a Fire Chief and firefighters, create a Band Council Resolution (BCR) to have a fire department in the community, and to establish and create Standard Operating Guidelines and Procedures.

## South Slave

Fort Smith and Hay River are currently completing the Online 1001 training through the SCG.

Enterprise is in the midst of recruitment and is hoping to sign members up for participation in online training in preparation for the inclusion of K'atlodeeche .

Katlodeeche and Enterprise are in the process of ordering new bunker gear so practical skills training can proceed as part of their plan.

## School of Community Government Training Opportunities

Dave Earl has moved on from the School of Community Government and accepted a position as MACA's Coordinator of Information Systems. I would like to thank Dave for his contributions to the school, we have received numerous compliments on his efforts over the years and we will miss his enthusiasm and helpful disposition that has contributed substantially to moving Territorial fire training initiatives forward. I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say we wish Dave all the success in his new role.

The School of Community Government is pleased to announce that Catherine Jorstead will be filling the Public Safety and Training Development Coordinator position on a casual term.

Catherine was born and raised in the north, spending much of her time in Inuvik. She brings knowledge and experience to MACA with an Education Coordinator background from the Government of Alberta including main responsibilities of coordinating a provincial program and developing education programs for youth. Catherine has currently filled the administrative role to support the SCG but will better able utilize her skills in the new coordinator role.

Catherine will be overseeing the following SCG training programs:

- Fire
- First Responder
- Bylaw Enforcement
- Emergency Management

In this position she will be working closely with the Public Safety division and will also be available to support community development work as required by regions. In order to provide the required support to the best of her abilities she will immediately follow through with a training plan which will include:

- Basic Emergency Management
- First Responder
- Bylaw Enforcement

If you have any questions about the Public Safety program or would like to discuss public safety training, feel free to contact Catherine.

The school is also pursuing re - activating the schools Training Advisory Committee in the near future.

Kind Regards,

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Smoke Signals Newsletter is sent out quarterly to all fire departments in the Northwest Territories. The goal is to keep all fire departments up-to-date on what is happening and for them to contribute to the newsletter.

Electronic copies will be sent to the Senior Administrative Officer and Fire Chief of each community. Paper copies will be sent out upon request.

You can send pictures, a story or any emergency related events to the editor at [nadira\\_begg@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nadira_begg@gov.nt.ca).

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