

Online Consultation

About your municipality

Name

What do you view as (your municipality's/the municipal) role in delivering emergency services?

Who handles your municipality's fire dispatch?

Police Dispatch?

EMS Dispatch?

911 call centre?

Medical First Response

Medical first response is a service that provides initial first aid treatment to an injured person prior to the arrival of emergency medical services (EMS). It is often provided by municipal fire departments as part of the municipality's response to emergencies in their community. In certain medical conditions, this can allow for better patient outcomes, as a patient can begin to receive medical treatment as soon as possible.

In discussions with municipal and fire service representatives, there seemed to be a perception that EMS dispatch consolidation could lead to an offloading of responsibility for medical services from EMS to fire services through medical first response, or that there is an expectation that municipalities are in fact responsible for providing medical first response to its citizens.

In the view of Alberta Health and Alberta Municipal Affairs, the provision of medical first response is a municipality's choice, and should be determined based on the municipality's assessment of the risks and benefits of such service.

Questions

Does your fire service provide medical first response? (For the purposes of this survey, medical first response is varying levels of first aid and is distinct from other services such as vehicle extrication or fire suppression)

Yes: Please describe the level of medical first response services you currently provide.

Yes: Do you expect to continue providing medical first response services?

No: What are the reasons you do not expect to continue providing medical first response?

Fire service capacity?

Comment box

Cost of training?

Comment box

Cost of consumables and equipment?

Comment box

Other

Comment box

No: Are medical first response services something you want your municipality to provide?

Yes: What are the impediments to delivering medical first response in your municipality?

Does your municipality have medical first response-only volunteers?

Yes: Please describe the benefits and challenges you may have in providing this service.

No: Could medical first response-only volunteers be a means to provide these services or to take some pressure off your fire service?

Yes: What challenges do you foresee in providing a service based on medical first response-only volunteers?

Technology, Communications and 911 Centres

As government launches this consultation, the primary concern is to ensure that communications between dispatch centres and on-scene first responders continues to be effective. While some concerns were raised by the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, government is uncertain if the full scope of the potential issue is known by stakeholders.

Problems could occur when a 911 call is received and emergency services are dispatched as a result of EMS dispatch consolidation. Operationally, a caller to 911 may undergo several transfers and repeatedly provide the same information to personnel in different dispatch centres. This information may be transcribed multiple times for a single call. This could lead to errors, as there is not a common operating platform for all dispatch centres. For example, due to an address input error, a fire service could respond to the wrong address.

Government is aware that challenges exist with multiple public safety answering point centres and multiple fire, police and EMS dispatch centres. There is not one common operating platform for all dispatch centres, which results in the requirement for information to be relayed between centres.

Many public safety answering points in Alberta provide both 911 call answering services and other dispatch services, particularly in non-urban areas. As EMS dispatch is consolidated to Alberta Health Services, the public safety answering points impacted by this change will experience a drop in call volume.

Several smaller public safety answering points that rely on revenue generated by providing EMS dispatch may face financial difficulties in the coming years. The *Emergency 911 Act*, passed in early May 2013, will provide public safety answering points with an additional source of funding through a 911 levy on wireless cell phone subscribers. However, it is not anticipated that this money will replace the lost revenue from EMS dispatch consolidation.

Questions

Has your EMS dispatch centre been consolidated by Alberta Health Services?

Yes: What impacts did consolidation have on your other emergency services?

Yes: Were there dispatch centre to dispatch centre communication issues? (eg. Fire dispatch to EMS dispatch)

Please provide more detail.

Do you use a common operating platform that communicates between EMS and fire dispatch centres?

Yes: Did you need to upgrade your communication equipment to maintain dispatch centre to dispatch centre communication?

Yes: What was the financial impact to upgrade your communication equipment?

No: Would a common operating platform be desirable to facilitate effective communication?

Yes: What is the anticipated financial impact of upgrading communication equipment so that it works with EMS?

Yes: Were there financial impacts to your local dispatch centre?

Please Rate 1-5 (minor-major)

Yes: Were there financial impacts to your local public safety answering point (911 call centre)?

Please rate 1-5 (minor-major)

Yes: Were there on-the-ground communication issues for your fire service with EMS?

Yes: Can you describe the communication issues?

Were you able to resolve the communication issues?

Yes: What was the solution you used?

If possible, please provide an estimate of how much it cost to resolve the communication issue

No: Have you identified any solutions?

Yes: Please describe the solutions.

No: Do you anticipate any financial implications to your local dispatch centre? (Comment Box)

No: Do you anticipate any financial implications to you local public safety answering point (911 call centre)? (Comment Box)

No: Do you anticipate any communication issues between your fire dispatch centre and the consolidated EMS dispatch centres? (Comment Box)

Yes: Would a common operating platform that enables communication between EMS dispatch and fire dispatch be useful for your emergency response services?

Yes: What is the anticipated financial impact of upgrading communication equipment so that it works with EMS?

No: Do you expect on-the-ground communication issues between your fire service and EMS? (Comment Box)

Communication between services at events is an issue that Alberta Justice and Solicitor General is working to address through the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System, slated to be online in some areas of the province later this year. The system uses a P25 open standard radio communications system allowing emergency services to all be on the same radio network without being as restricted in the types of devices that work on the network. The system will provide lower costs for radio equipment and is expected to be completed in 2015.

Would your municipality consider using the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System?

Yes: When would you like to be on the system and provide the reasons you would use the system? (Comment Box)

No: Are there any impediments you have to using the system? (Comment Box)

Regional Collaboration

Regional collaboration is supported strongly by Municipal Affairs.

Have you considered regional solutions to the issues identified in this consultation?

Would you consider regional solutions to the issues identified in this consultation?

Additional Feedback (Comment Box)