

Town of Huntsville

Huntsville Fire Department Update

July 2026

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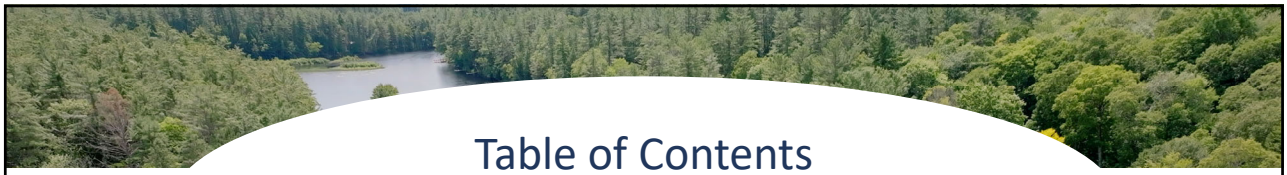


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Prevention Division – Who we are

- Two-Person division focused on reducing fire risk across Huntsville.
- Guided by the Community Risk Assessment to target highest-risk areas.
- Work delivered through three pillars:
  - Public Education
  - Fire Code Inspections & Enforcement
  - Fire Investigations
- Collaborate with building owners, managers, vulnerable occupancies, community groups, and suppression crews to deliver risk-based prevention.



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Prevention Division – What we do

Public Education

- **Targeted Programs** – Develop, implement, and evaluate Community Risk Assessment (CRA)-driven education initiatives; deliver messaging based on incident trends.
- **Community Outreach** – Station tours, open houses, school programs, older adult outreach, YMCA/ Community groups, youth groups, festivals/ fairs.
- **Training & Assessments** – Building staff training, daycare visits, extinguisher training, home/ business safety assessments, Fire-Smart wildland assessments, recruit training.
- **Public Information & Hazard Education** – Social media, website/ radio/ video messaging, fire danger signs, emerging hazard education (Li-ion batteries).



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Prevention Division – What we do

Inspections & Code Enforcement

- **Fire Safety Inspections** – Vulnerable occupancy, concern/ complaint, request, and risk-based.
- **Occupancy & Site Approvals** – Retrofit and pre-occupancy inspections, fireworks firing sites and vacant/ demolition inspections.
- **Plans, Permits & Hydrants** – Application and emergency plans review, private/ dry hydrant maintenance oversight.
- **Administration & Compliance** – False Alarm fee administration, court procedures, documentation, coordination with building/By-Law/ District Fire Prevention Officers (FPOs), mandatory certification and ongoing code training.





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Prevention Division – What we do

Investigations

- **Scene Documentation** – Full photo/ video/ sketch documentation, detailed notes, debris removal, reconstruction, and origin determination.
- **Interviews & Analysis** – Witness interviews, systematic examination, developing and ruling out cause theories, verifying smoke/ CO alarm presence and functionality.
- **Reporting & Legal Preparation** – Comprehensive 15–30-page reports, preparation for potential legal proceedings, maintaining defensible investigative records
- **Trend Identification** – Analyzing recurring causes to guide targeted prevention programs and public education



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Prevention Division – Recent Successes

- **Smoke/ CO Alarm Program** – Strong compliance, positive engagement, and multiple CO alarm saves directly tied to targeted installations.
- **Vulnerable Occupancy Drills** – Realistic, scenario-based drills with suppression crews leading to faster, safer, and more accurate evacuations.
- **Fire Extinguisher Training** – Staff at Long Term Care and Retirement Homes successfully extinguished real fires thanks to hands-on Prevention Training.
- **Fire Safety Plan Improvements** – Updated and enforced plans resulted in organized evacuations and controlled responses during actual incidents.



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Prevention Division – Challenges

- **Increasing Inspection Demand**– More development, more occupancies, and more requests for Fire Code guidance.
- **Emerging Risks** – Li-ion batteries, wildland-urban interface growth, aging build stock.
- **Growing Event Demand** – The Fire Department has become increasingly popular and is frequently requested at community events, festivals, and public gatherings.
- **Limited Support Availability**– It is challenging to secure enough volunteer firefighter support to staff these events, which can pull Prevention resources away from inspections, investigations, and core duties.



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Training Division– Who we are

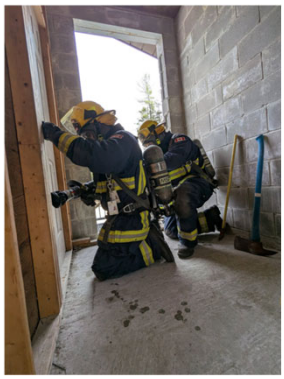
- Functions under the supervision of the Deputy Fire Chief.
- Consists of one full-time Training Officer, Captain Nic Bruxer.
- Supported by a team of Fire Instructors designated from within the Huntsville Fire Department volunteer membership.
- Includes: Recruit Training, Officer Development, Pump Ops/ Driver Training, Specialty Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Command Training, Standard First Aid, Health & Safety, WHIMS, and Wildland.



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Training Division– What we do

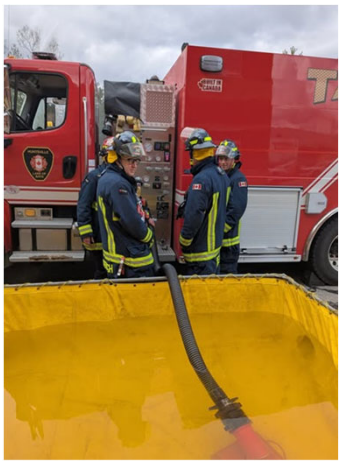
- Responsible for the Training and Development of all Fire Department Staff, both volunteer and career.
- Primary objective is to prepare every member to function safely and effectively in the role required to support the “Three Lines of Defense”.
- Assist with the overall function of the department and contribute to areas such as equipment procurement and policy creation.



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Training Division– Recent Successes

- Increased internal Instructor involvement.
- Improved documentation (First Due).
- Development of a comprehensive long-term training program: Mandatory certification, Recruit Program, Four (4) year Department Cycle.



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Training Division– Challenges

- Increased training requirements
  - Supporting double, the amount of monthly station trainings
  - Focus on Low Frequency/ High Risk events (Hazmat, Rescues, Multi, Storey
- Increased administration workload (First Due, Certification)
- New Equipment and Technology (Garmin GPS, First Due, E-Draulics)



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Operations Division – Who we are

- Direct responsibility of the Deputy Fire Chief
- Consists of 50 Active members responding out of two Fire Stations (Huntsville and Port Sydney)
  - 2 Station Chiefs
  - 6 Captains
  - 6 Lieutenants
  - 11 Driver/ Operators
  - 25 Firefighters



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Operations Division – What we do

- Dedicated to the delivery of first response for emergencies.
- Supports activities involving Public Education and Inspections.
- Provide community engagement through events such as the Annual Food Drive, Dock-Fest, Sporting Events etc.



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Operations Division – Recent Successes

- Updated Records Management (RMS) and data integration.
- Enhanced Motor Vehicle Collision (MVC) response, specifically along the Hwy 11 corridor.
- Upgraded water rescue capabilities.





first due

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Operations Division – Challenges

- Volunteer workload
- Culture
- Increasing costs related to equipment, apparatus and facilities
- Note: Average Chute Time for the past two years
  - **2025:** 8:18
  - **2026:** 10:43

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Average
Avg # Responders	14.22	15.16	12.67	9.72	6.06	5.75	6.15	6.56	4.22	6.2	7.75	8.5873
Avg Response Time	12:21	12:14	13:10	13:23	13:17	15:03	16:16	14:38	15:05	19:31	18:04	14:49
Total # of Responses	400	393	506	384	453	466	500	594	549	588	354	483.3

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Chiefs Office – Who we are

- Overall responsible for protecting lives, property, and environment in the Town of Huntsville.
- Overseeing and supporting all divisions of the Fire Department:
  - Operations/ Emergency Response
  - Training
  - Fire Prevention
  - Emergency Management
- Plays a key role in:
  - Community Risk Reduction
  - Disaster Preparedness
  - Supporting District Emergency Response Initiatives
- Our goal is to deliver a safe, effective, and sustainable fire service while adapting to population growth, increased call volumes, and changing community expectations.

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Chiefs Office – What we do

- Develop Strategic Plans.
- Manage Budget: Staffing, Apparatus Replacement and Capital Projects.
- Ensure compliance with the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, Ontario Fire Code, Occupational Health and Safety Act, and other Legislative requirements.
- Providing advice and recommendations to Council and Senior Leadership.
- Build relationships with outside agencies, neighbouring municipalities and community partners.
- Support professional development for full-time and volunteer staff.
- Plan for future growth and meet emerging risks and service demands.

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Chiefs Office – Recent Successes

- Successfully navigated the transition between Huntsville and Lake of Bays while maintaining operational continuity.
- Successfully secured several provincial grant funding opportunities.
- Strengthened relationships with District and Municipal partners.

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Chiefs Office – Challenges

- **Sustainable Staffing Model**
  - We continue to experience increase demands on the full-time and volunteer staff.
  - Emergency calls are becoming more frequent and complex.
  - Volunteers are getting burnt out.
- **Growth and Service Demand**
  - Huntsville continues to experience residential growth, tourism activity, and increasing traffic volumes.
  - These factors place additional pressure on emergency response resources and require continual evaluation of staffing, deployment, and station locations.
- **Aging Infrastructure and Equipment**
  - Modern fire service operations require significant investment in apparatus, facilities, and training infrastructure.
  - Balancing these capital needs with municipal budget constraints remain a key challenge.

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Closing Remarks

Over the past several years, the Huntsville Fire Department has achieved significant progress, however challenges remain including staffing pressures, growth, infrastructure needs, and financial sustainability. The department is well positioned to continue evolving and meeting the needs of the community.

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