

Fire Safety Education

Led by: Chief of Calgary Fire Department

Service Description

Fire Safety Education provides fire prevention and life safety education to reduce community risk levels, including risks to Calgarians, property and the environment. The service develops and delivers educational programs and materials tailored to address specific risks to diverse populations experiencing vulnerabilities that may put them at greater risk of harm from fire and related emergencies. The service also develops programming and training to assist firefighters with general outreach including school fire drills, home safety visits and fire station tours. The service is responsible for the Fire Department's public engagement programs to improve community safety and resiliency.

Service Updates

Key Service Results

The service reached over 50,000 Calgarians in 2023 with tailored fire and life safety programming. The School Fire Drill program was delivered at 25 schools and reached over 11,000 Calgarians with fire and life safety messaging specific to the individual community. The service continued to see success in using community risk data when visiting schools to identify unique fire and life safety risks and provide targeted messages and letters for each household. The Home Safety Program reached a milestone of visiting 500,000 homes since the program began nearly 30 years ago and 98 per cent of Calgarians reported feeling safer and better equipped with fire and life safety information after receiving education. The Virtual Reality platform for delivering fire safety education launched in 2023 with a wide array of spoken language options to engage more Calgarians.

Service Challenges

Emergency incidents in Calgary increased by 15 per cent and fires increased by 14 per cent. The service continues to face challenges in reaching a critical mass of Calgary's population to deliver essential fire and life safety information to mitigate the frequency and severity of emergency incidents. Utilization of frontline firefighters as public education resources is becoming more difficult as they respond to record numbers of incidents while trying to fulfill operational duties like mandatory training and wellness requirements. A working group has been convened to reassess the service delivery model and the role of frontline operations staff.

Trends & Potential Uncertainties

New risks to community safety are emerging, including new technologies in residential settings, including lithium batteries and hydrogen fuel. The service currently does not have sufficient resources to deliver existing programs and identify new risks and strategies to address them. Increasing urban density and the impacts of the housing crisis and social disorder are also impacting community risk levels, which require proactive public education strategies.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

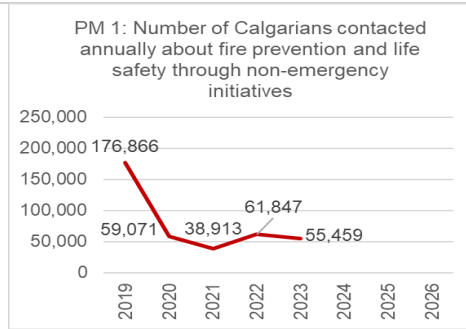
➡ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

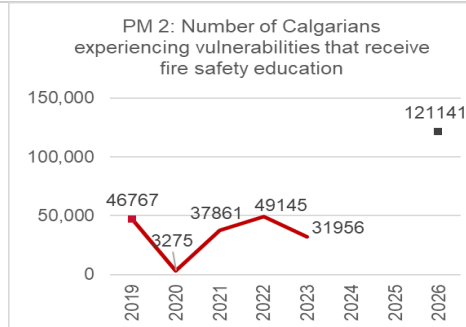
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

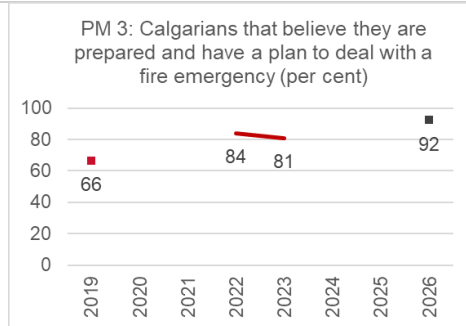
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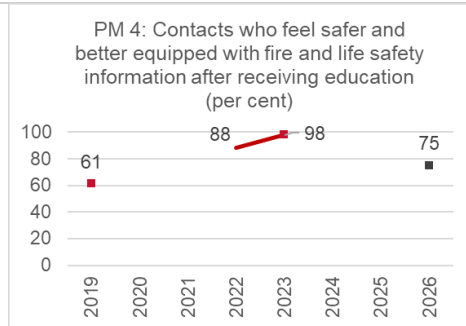
The service is continuing to deliver public safety education through a hybrid online/in-person model, although the number of in-person engagements is recovering rapidly. The slight decrease in the number of Calgarians contacted annually is partly due to many people choosing in-person engagements, which improves the quality of education but limits the overall quantity of contacts possible. The service has observed that although there is greater population reach with virtual education, face-to-face contact is more effective for delivering critical life safety messages.



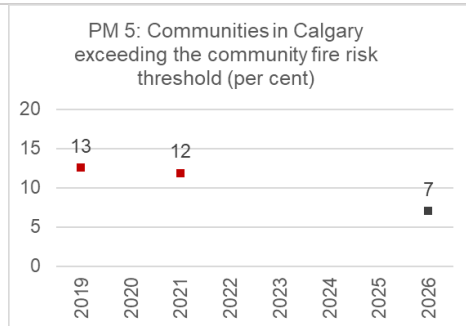
The service is focusing education efforts on underserved populations that experience higher risks such as seniors, individuals with lower incomes, people with disabilities and new Canadians. The slight decrease in quantity was partly due to a shift in preference from virtual to in-person education with school-age children which reduced the quantity of engagements possible. The number of trained public education officers has also decreased slightly since 2019 even as Calgary's population has grown to nearly 1.5 million people, constraining the reach of programs and services in the community.



In 2023, the service reached the milestone of visiting over 500,000 homes in Calgary since the launch of the Home Safety program. Although 96 per cent of households surveyed indicated they had working smoke alarms on each level of the home, only 49 per cent said that they tested their alarms monthly. Over 50 per cent of Calgarians identified that they did not have an adequate escape plan in case of emergency. The service is exploring how it can improve the quality of public education delivered in an environment where firefighters have reduced capacity to engage with the community in non-emergency settings due to competing priorities.



In 2023, 98 per cent of contacts feel that their level of preparedness for an emergency improved after receiving education. The service leveraged community risk data when visiting schools to identify unique fire and life safety risks in different areas and provided targeted messages and letters for each household. This provides strong support for increasing the service's reach as a key method of reducing community risks in Calgary.



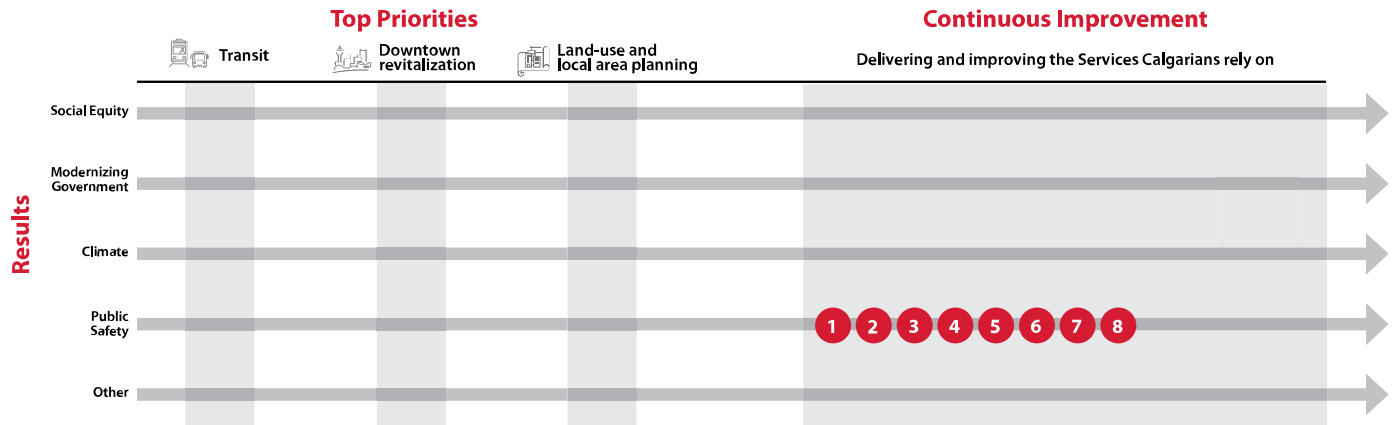
The number of communities exceeding the community risk index threshold has increased from the baseline due to multiple trends including an increase in the number of emergency incidents city-wide, new and emerging community risks like lithium battery fires, overdoses and poisonings, and fewer education interactions in the community. As the population of Calgary continues to grow towards two million people, the service is not adequately resourced to keep pace with these trends and is actively working to identify alternative service delivery models that would improve community risk reduction efforts.








Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- ✔ Completed
 - ➔ Progressing as planned
 - ⊖ Not progressing as planned
 - ⏻ Not started
 - 1 Initiative number

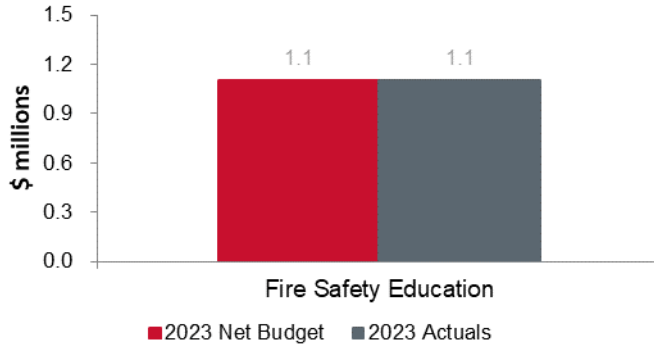
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Reduce the risk of property loss, injury and death due to fire for people impacted by socioeconomic inequity. The service will achieve this by continuing to develop and provide targeted fire and life safety education to Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities.	The Youth Fire Intervention program continues to intervene with youth experiencing vulnerabilities and educated 17 individuals in 2023. A new “Steps to Safety” program was delivered to seniors in 2023 to provide eight fire safety messages and eight fall prevention measures. The service also worked with Calgary Housing Company to deliver education to people with lower incomes. The service continued to use an inclusion lens in developing programming, embedding considerations and guidance for individuals with different abilities, including deafness, vision loss and more.	➔
2 Build stronger and safer communities by ensuring Fire Operations staff receive adequate education and training to improve the delivery of quality general fire safety education.	The service launched the “Community Safety Café” series which provides regular videos from community safety officers to fire crews to discuss trends in community safety and updates to available programming. The final Community Safety training module is on hold while a working group convenes to discuss changes to the Home Safety program.	➔
3 Reestablish pre-pandemic community engagement efforts, life safety education programs and other suspended service offerings while developing new modes of delivering education and programs that leverage emerging technologies.	In 2023, the service reached the milestone of visiting over 500,000 homes in Calgary since the launch of the Home Safety program in 1996. This year, over 30,000 visits led to the installation and replacement of over 1700 smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Programs like the School Fire Drills, the Fire Safety Trailer and all other in-person engagements were restarted in 2023. The service also launched the Virtual Reality Education platform as an immersive way to experience fire and life safety education.	➔
4 Improve the inclusivity, impact and reach of fire safety education programs by continuing to develop and expand the virtual and in-person hybrid service delivery model.	While virtual education enables greater population reach, certain customers and programs are requesting in-person engagements for safety education. This enhances the quality of education delivered, but it constrains the volume of Calgarians that can be reached by each program. Virtual Reality simulations have been adapted for a wider array of spoken languages and the service is leveraging multilingual firefighters in delivering education to diverse communities in Calgary. The service is continuing to apply an inclusion lens, embedding considerations and guidance for people of all abilities.	➔
5 Enhance targeted community risk reduction programs by developing risk assessments using a community lens combined with fire station district boundaries to better align educational outreach for specific risks.	The use of historical incident data and specific community risk profiles to inform School Fire Drill program content has been successful. The information is used to develop tailored messaging and educational material for families whose children participated in the School Fire Drills program. In 2023, firefighters visited 25 schools and over 11,000 Calgarians. A Community Risk Index provides information about risk factors for each community for Community Safety Officers to identify relevant education programs. This will improve the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.	➔

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
<p>6 Improve the identification of community risks and development of specific risk reduction strategies by collaborating with service partners to leverage their knowledge of Calgary's diverse communities when completing annual updates to community risk assessments.</p>	<p>The service is collaborating with Community Strategies to complete the 2023 update to the Community Risk Assessment. Due to competing priorities, the update is expected in Q1 2024. Door-to-door engagements are being informed by GIS data, focusing on areas that have a history of greater emergency incidents, communities over 10 years of age (increased probability of expired smoke alarms), and communities with a greater percentage of individuals experiencing vulnerabilities.</p>	
<p>7 Strengthen the sustainability of Fire Safety Education services by developing and maintaining relationships with sponsors and community partners.</p>	<p>In 2023 the service developed and delivered public education messages in collaboration with groups like Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, Calgary Housing Company, Meals on Wheels, Deaf and Hear Alberta, Dare to Care, Alpha House, and Calgary Public Library. A sponsorship with Conoco Philips provided funding for the development of the Virtual Reality Safety Simulation platform and a continuing sponsorship with Kidde enables the service to install and replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in communities across the city.</p>	
<p>8 Incorporate social equity outcomes and cultural responsiveness in service design and delivery by deepening the understanding of key barriers, risks and opportunities when engaging populations experiencing vulnerabilities in Calgary.</p>	<p>The service is deepening its connections in the community by building relationships with cultural groups. Over the past year, firefighters and community safety officers were involved with organizations and events, including Fiesta Filipino, GRIT – Getting Ready for Inclusion Today, Almadina Language Charter School, Independent Living Seniors Resource Centre, Centre for Newcomers, Japanese Festival, Dash Mesh, French Immersion Schools, Mandarin Bilingual Schools, and people with disabilities at Columbia College.</p>	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of December 31, 2023



Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Fire Safety Education has no operating budget variance for the reporting period.

In 2023, Fire Safety Education was able to visit over 30 thousand homes, installed 1,250 smoke alarms and 430 carbon monoxide alarms.

Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

Fire Safety Education has no capital budget in 2023.