

Fire & Emergency Response

Led by: Chief of Calgary Fire Department

Service Description

Supported by 42 fire stations and 1,328 firefighters, Fire & Emergency Response provides life-saving emergency assistance to Calgarians and visitors across 848 square kilometres. This includes responding to over 70,000 fire and fire-related incidents, critical medical interventions, motor vehicle collisions, hazardous conditions, specialized technical rescues including water rescues, and calls for public service assistance annually. The service also supports Fire Safety Education and Fire Inspection & Enforcement by helping to deliver community risk reduction programs like general fire prevention education and Fire Safety Reports.

Service Updates

Highlights

The service opened a temporary station structure to begin providing essential emergency response coverage that enables further City growth and development in the Belvedere area. The service is on track to recruit and train up to 160 new firefighters for duty in 2023 which will bolster staffing levels to maintain core emergency response services while balancing other operational demands, including training and wellness. In alignment with Council direction and industry best practice, the service is on track to receive four new aerial units this year and will begin increasing the staffing to four person crews in 2024.

Challenges

The continued trend of increasing service demand is straining resource availability and hindering efforts to improve system performance. The service has responded to over 36,000 emergency incidents so far in 2023, a 19 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2022. Fires have increased by eight per cent and critical medical interventions have increased by 20 per cent.

The increase in service demand, especially for critical medical interventions, has been disproportionately greater in the downtown core, particularly in Station 01 district where medical calls volumes are 150 per cent greater compared to 2021. The service is watching this trend closely and evaluating ways to address risks to the system.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

➔ Progressing as planned

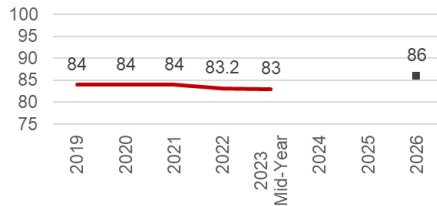
⊖ Not progressing as planned

Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

Status

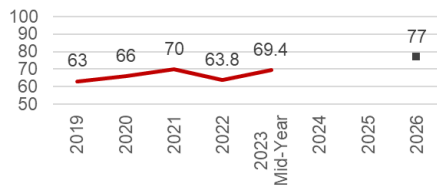
PM 1: First-in engine emergency responses within seven minutes to fire incidents (per cent time target is achieved)



Analysis shows that the 90th percentile time of 7 minutes 36 seconds is 26 seconds slower compared to the same period last year. The service is applying strategies to maintain staffing levels and improve response time performance, but the relaunch of large group training and other programs that were suspended during the pandemic is impacting resource availability. The system is also strained by a nearly 20 per cent increase in emergency call volumes compared to the same period in 2022, putting it on track to exceed the record demand for service experienced in 2022.



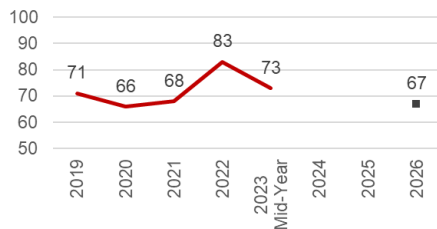
PM 2: Arrival of two engines, one aerial unit and a minimum of 12 firefighters within 11 minutes at serious and escalating fires (per cent time target is achieved)



The service has taken numerous steps to improve response times, including enhanced station alerting systems, quarterly reporting of response performance statistics to District Chiefs to inform decisions, and increased hiring to ensure adequate frontline staffing. The service observed improved response times despite responding to over 36,000 emergency incidents in the first half of 2023, including an 8 per cent increase in structure fires. Since the number of serious and escalating fires tends to be small, there can be significant variation in the 90th percentile statistic for this measure.



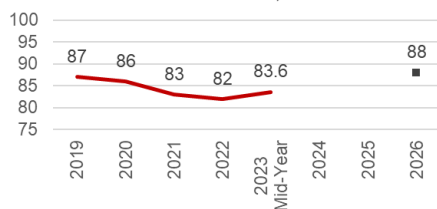
PM 3: Flame spread limited to within the room or object of origin (per cent time target is achieved)



The service observed a deterioration in the percentage of time flame spread is contained to room or object of origin compared to 2022. Flame spread is influenced by many factors including the type and location of the fire, structural design considerations, fire safety systems and preventative measures. Combined with an 8 per cent increase in fire incidents in 2023, this could be contributing to the deterioration in performance despite the improvement in the time to assemble essential resources at serious fires. The overall performance trend is still within the target range.



PM 4: First-in unit emergency responses within six minutes thirty seconds at critical medical incidents (per cent time target is achieved)



Medical response performance remained steady despite the service attending 20 per cent more medical calls compared to the same period in 2022. The greatest increase in medical calls was observed in the downtown core where response times tend to be faster compared to other areas. Still, firefighters continue to spend longer on-scene waiting for AHS-EMS support which impacts the overall system reliability. The number of interactions with Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities is also increasing, with overdose/poisoning incidents increasing by 40 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.



PM 5: Number of Calgarians engaged in fire prevention and life safety education by firefighters



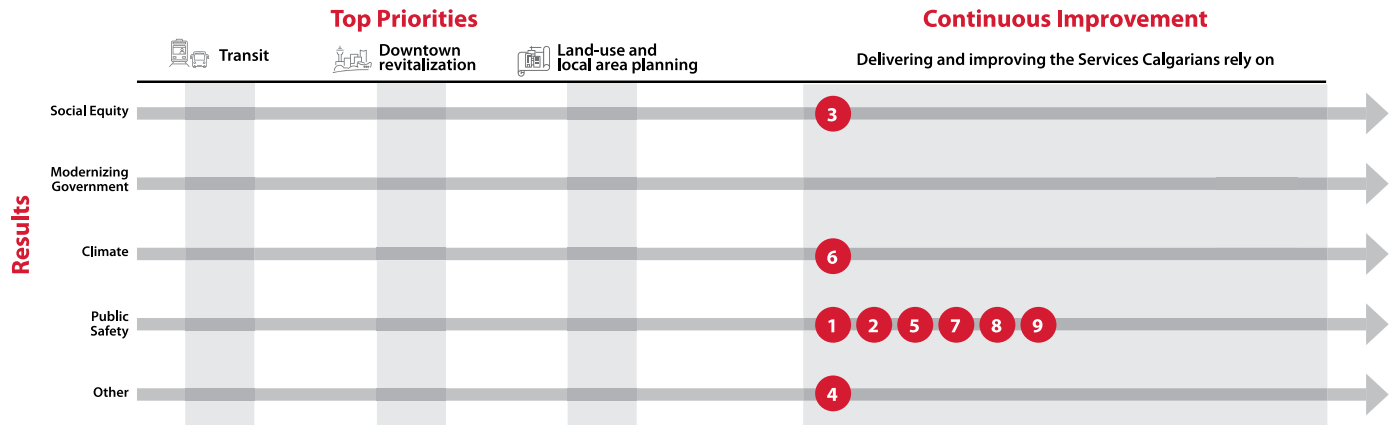
Key engagement programs like the Home Safety Program and Fire Safety Reports program are launching later than planned this year due to competing operational priorities. Firefighters continue to deliver education to Calgarians through other programs, including School Fire Drills, Firefighter Storytime, and Station Tours requested via 3-1-1, although the volume of people reached by these methods is considerably lower.





Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



Legend



Completed



Progressing as planned







Not progressing as planned



Initiative number

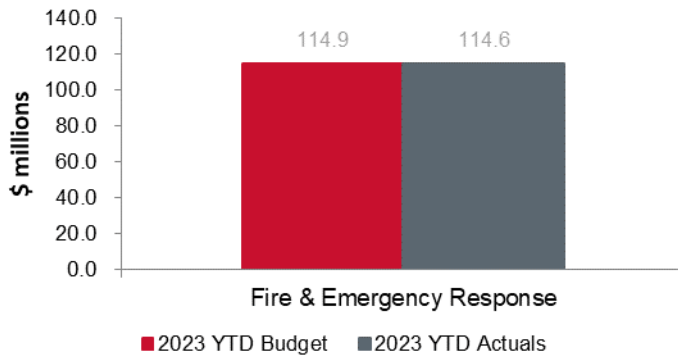
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Improve emergency response and outcomes at serious fires by decreasing the time needed to assemble essential firefighting resources (two engines, one aerial, and a minimum of 12 firefighters) within 11 minutes at the incident. The service will focus on increasing the number of aerial units deployed across the city and the number of firefighters staffing those units.	The service is replacing four aerial apparatus this year as it shifts to a new deployment model that will help improve the time required to assemble critical firefighting resources at escalating fires. One aerial has been commissioned as is being used for training due to changes in design that impact operations. The service is on track to receive three more aerials in 2023 and will be ready to increase staffing on these apparatus to four people in 2024.	
2 Maintain service levels by ensuring adequate staffing levels to balance operational demands including emergency response, community risk reduction initiatives, training and wellness.	The service is on track to train up to 160 new recruits for frontline operations which will help manage staffing levels to meet service demands. The service is also evaluating overall Sickness and Accident benefit usage to identify and address underlying issues, and attendance levels appear to be improving.	
3 Foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace that understands and represents the community served and where staff feel valued and experience a sense of belonging. The service will expand learning opportunities for, and remove barriers to, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, explore more equitable recruitment, selection and promotion processes, implement recommendations from The City's Anti-Racism Program, and practice Trauma Informed Leadership.	The service is currently focusing on improving the competencies and skills of leaders and future leaders in Operations. Respect and Inclusion and Human Resources are providing support to District Chiefs to strengthen interpersonal skills and relationship building capacity with crews. The service is improving individual performance through structured dialogues between leaders and frontline firefighters, while also focusing on improving how we engage with, recognize and express the value of staff.	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
4 Improve employee health, wellbeing and resilience by expanding mental health and psychological supports, reducing stigma in the workplace and culture and continuing to support medical health and physical wellbeing.	The service continues to ensure that all frontline members receive annual health screenings. Permanent funding approved by Council for the Psychologist program has improved availability of this service offering and each recruit now receives a mental health screening and information on other available services.	
5 Enhance service efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging new and emerging firefighting equipment and technology.	The service is working on establishing specialized portable, on-demand units (POD) to support emergency responses at high-risk events and incidents. The Decontamination POD is on track for September 2023. Upgrades to the Wildland Firefighting Program tools and equipment are on track for Fall 2023, despite delays in the procurement process. The service is also implementing technology upgrades to improve frontline alerting and communications during emergency responses.	
6 Mitigate the environmental impact of fire service delivery by assessing the feasibility of alternative fuel sources to power the heavy fleet while continuing to explore emerging firefighting technology and equipment to mitigate environmental impacts.	The service continues to investigate ways to mitigate the environmental impact of fire service delivery. A contract for an electric engine pilot is in the final stages of negotiations and media support is being organized to generate awareness amongst the general public. As part of the long-term plan to reduce environmental impacts, a project is being developed to identify potential solutions and prepare business cases for action.	
7 Maintain the standard of service delivery by improving processes for frontline firefighters to maintain and enhance the necessary skills and competencies to perform their roles effectively and meet legislated Occupational Health and Safety requirements.	The efficiency and effectiveness of the recruit training program has been improved to embrace change and meet the needs of the service. The service is on track to train up to 160 new recruits with the essential skills for success in their role in a shorter period while maintaining the standard of quality. The service is also meeting the needs of incumbent firefighters by delivering approximately 75,000 hours of training over the last six months to maintain skills and competencies all while stretching available resources to meet the increased workload.	
8 Mitigate risks related to the Green Line project, including construction accidents like tunnel collapses, and the potential for service impacts due to road closures and traffic pattern changes. These risks are new ground for the service and require working with service partners to determine emergency response needs, impacts from construction work, response protocols, training requirements and specialized equipment needs.	The service is preparing for planning and design work with Green Line Department and Construction Consortium and the subsequent development of CFD support plan for construction phases. A more substantive update is expected by December 2023.	
9 Align the expansion of fire service delivery with community growth and development and meet the needs of Calgarians by ensuring that capital assets and infrastructure are timely, adequate, and well-maintained.	The service successfully opened a temporary structure to deliver fire and emergency response services to the Belvedere community in East Calgary. Operations will move to a temporary station later in 2023 when the infrastructure is complete. A station optimization study is also underway to identify and recommend improvements that would enhance emergency response operations and employee wellbeing. The service is also working to improve stewardship of the capital budget by reviewing and enhancing processes for capital forecasts, purchase and lease agreements, and service agreements.	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

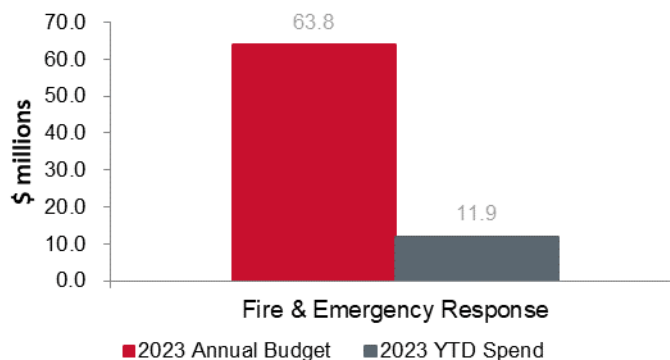
Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of June 30, 2023



Operating Budget Updates - 2023 YTD net operating budget vs actuals:

The favourable variance of \$0.3 million was driven by favourable variances in Salaries and Wages caused mainly by vacancies due to temporary limits of training capacity offset by unfavourable variance in Materials and Equipment from increases in materials and maintenance costs.

Capital Budget and Spend as of June 30, 2023



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

Fire & Emergency Response has spent 19 per cent of the 2023 approved capital budget. Year-to-date, the capital expenditures have been used to deliver mainly new fleet and firefighting equipment. Our projected year end spend rate is 45%. Lower spend rate due to delays in Integrated Civic Facility Planning process and construction of new fire stations due to slower community growth.

Belvedere temporary station was opened on April 17th, beginning Fire service in the community and support further development in the area.