

The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 5.4.1.
Resolution Number 2025-284
Title: Support Items 5.3 #1, 3, 4, 5 and 12 from November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting of Council - Extend Deadline for the Fire Certification
Date: December 3, 2025

Moved by: Councillor Lachance
Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

WHEREAS Ontario Regulation 343/22 mandates that firefighters performing specific fire protections services be certified to a prescribed standard by July 1, 2026, with certain technical rescue disciplines requiring certification by July 1, 2028;

AND WHEREAS the Municipality recognizes and supports the value of the certification requirements mandated by the Province of Ontario, acknowledging that standardized training enhances firefighter safety, service quality, and public trust;

AND WHEREAS the Office of the Fire Marshall (OFM) and the Ontario Fire College (OFC) are actively working to provide training and certification programs, including offering over 600 courses annually, yet some certification programs and testing resources remain under development or are not yet widely accessible, particularly in the Ontario Seal Programs;

AND WHEREAS many fire departments in Ontario are staffed predominantly by volunteer firefighters who balance full-time employment with their emergency service commitments;

AND WHEREAS the certification programs are still in development and the current availability does not adequately reflect the operational realities of volunteer fire departments, especially in rural communities, where training opportunities are limited and certification demands place undue pressure on personnel and municipal resources;

AND WHEREAS when firefighter certification was first introduced in 2018, smaller / rural municipalities raised concerns that they do not provide the same level of fire protection services as larger municipalities or urban centres. The Province responded thoughtfully by introducing new legislation to allow municipalities to certify firefighters only to the services they actually provide. This flexibility is appreciated and reflects a fair and practical approach, however, training programs for many of these service-specific certifications are still not available;

AND WHEREAS it is unreasonable to expect volunteer firefighters - who already balance full-time employment and community service - to independently develop curriculums and training programs in-house to meet provincial standards and adequately prepare them for certification exams;

AND WHEREAS smaller rural volunteer fire departments often lack the necessary resources, certified personnel, and specialized expertise to independently develop training curriculums or qualify for learning contracts with the Ontario Fire College;

AND WHEREAS these departments have long relied on the Ontario Fire College's course offerings and have been patiently awaiting the release of the Ontario Seal Programs, having noted preliminary pilot

initiatives in Northern Ontario and anticipating a broader rollout of these programs in the near future;
AND WHEREAS rural municipalities would welcome the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Office of the Fire Marshall to address current barriers and explore collaborative solutions;
BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles respectfully requests that the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Office of the Fire Marshall, extend the compliance deadlines outlined in Ontario Regulation 343/22 to a minimum of two (2) years beyond the final release date of the Ontario Seal Programs offered in the regulation for all affected certification categories;
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province consider implementing a phased or regionally adaptive approach to certification deadlines, taking into account the availability of training programs and the unique challenges faced by volunteer fire services in Rural Ontario;
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Resolution be forwarded to the Minister of the Solicitor General, the Ontario Fire Marshall, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC), our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), and all Ontario municipalities for support and endorsement.



CARRIED