

Policy No. 115-2026

TITLE: FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT – LEVEL OF SERVICE

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE:

- *Safety Codes Act & Uniform Quality Management Plan*
- *Emergency Management Act & Regulations*
- *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Municipal Government Act*

ADOPTED:

July 13, 2026, 2026-0182

REVISED:**NEXT REVIEW
DATE:**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Westlock is committed to providing organized, risk-based fire protection and emergency response services that are reasonable, sustainable, and appropriate to the identified risks within the community. Through the Westlock Fire Department, Council authorizes the delivery of emergency and non-emergency services as outlined in this Policy, recognizing the operational realities of a volunteer fire service model.

The service levels identified herein represent the intended operational capability of the Department when trained personnel, equipment, and supervisory resources are available. Due to variability in volunteer staffing, response times, staffing levels, and operational capacity cannot be guaranteed. Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as creating a mandatory response time, minimum staffing obligation, or guaranteed operational outcome.

Firefighter safety, public safety, and compliance with applicable legislation shall take precedence in all operational decision-making.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all members of the Westlock Fire Department and governs the delivery of all emergency and non-emergency services authorized by Council, including fire suppression, rescue services, hazardous materials response, medical first response, fire prevention, public education, emergency management support, and mutual aid operations. It applies to incidents occurring within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Westlock and to authorized responses outside municipal boundaries pursuant to established mutual aid or automatic aid agreements. This Policy establishes service intent and operational parameters but does not supersede applicable provincial legislation, occupational health and safety requirements, medical control direction, or the authority of the Incident

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Commander at an emergency scene.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to formally define the types of fire protection and emergency services authorized by Council and to establish the intended level at which those services will be delivered by the Westlock Fire Department. This Policy provides clarity regarding operational capabilities, acknowledges the inherent limitations of a volunteer-based service model, and outlines the framework within which services are provided. It further recognizes applicable legislative requirements and relevant industry standards while ensuring that such standards are not interpreted as mandatory performance guarantees. This Policy is intended to promote transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making by Council, Administration, and the public regarding municipal fire protection services.

4. DEFINITIONS

a) Awareness Level

The Awareness Level represents the minimum level of service that will be provided at all incidents. At this level, responders focus on scene safety, hazard recognition, isolation, and protection of the public and environment. Actions are defensive in nature and do not involve direct intervention with the hazard. Typical activities include establishing command, securing the scene, evacuating or protecting occupants, and requesting additional resources.

b) Dangerous Goods

Dangerous Goods means a product, substance or organism included by its nature or by the regulations in any of the classes listed in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.

c) Fire Department

The Town of Westlock Fire and Rescue Department.

d) Incident Commander

The Incident Commander (IC) is the individual responsible for the overall management of an incident, regardless of its size or complexity. The IC is the single point of command at the scene and has the authority to establish incident objectives, priorities, and strategies in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS).

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e) Medical First Response Program

A provincially regulated initiative that allows fire departments to provide emergency medical care as a first responder service. Under this program, fire departments are trained and equipped to respond to medical emergencies, typically providing life-saving interventions such as CPR, trauma care, and basic medical support until paramedics or more advanced medical services arrive. The program helps to ensure timely medical assistance, particularly in rural or remote areas where other emergency medical services may face longer response times.

f) Operations Level

The Operations Level represents a defensive level of service where responders take limited, non-entry-based actions to contain or control an incident from a safe distance. This may include exposure protection, defensive fire suppression, diking or containment of spills, and support functions to prevent incident escalation. Operations are conducted without placing personnel in direct contact with the hazard unless it can be done safely with available training, equipment, and resources.

g) Priority Dispatch System

A unified system used by dispatch centers to assign appropriate aid to emergencies, including a systemized caller interrogation, pre-arrival instructions, standardized protocols, and total quality management system.

h) Public Assistance / Service Calls

A Public Service Call is a non-emergency request for assistance where the fire department provides support to address a safety concern, hazard, or access issue that does not involve an active fire, medical emergency, or hazardous materials incident. These calls may include lift assists, lockouts involving vulnerable individuals, smoke or odor investigations, minor flooding, alarm resets, and other situations where there is no immediate threat to life or property, but where fire department intervention may help prevent escalation or support public safety. Public service calls are prioritized based on risk and resource availability and are subject to deferral when higher-priority emergencies are in progress.

i) Technician Level

The Technician Level represents the highest level of service provided by the department, where responders may take direct, offensive action to control and mitigate the hazard. This includes interior structural firefighting, advanced rescue

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operations, and hands-on hazardous materials interventions where applicable. These operations require sufficient trained personnel, specialized equipment, and appropriate supervision, and are only undertaken when the Incident Commander determines that conditions allow for safe and effective action.

j) Technical Rescue

Specialized category of rescue operations that involve complex, high-risk, and highly technical procedures to extricate victims from hazardous situations. Technical rescue encompasses various disciplines, including, but not limited to, rope rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, high-angle rescue, vehicle extrication, and Swiftwater rescue.

k) Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)

The area where human-developed communities, such as homes and businesses, meet or border natural, undeveloped land like forests, grasslands, or shrubs. This zone is at elevated risk for wildfires, as fires can spread quickly from wildland areas to urban environments, threatening both life and property.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a) Town Council

Town Council is responsible for approving this Policy and any amendments through resolution. Additionally, Council will consider the allocation of resources required for the successful implementation of this Policy during the annual budget process, ensuring that the necessary funding and support are provided to meet the service requirements outlined in the Policy.

b) Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for implementing this Policy and approving the associated procedures. Additionally, the CAO will ensure regular reviews of the Policy and procedures are conducted, verifying their ongoing implementation and effectiveness to ensure the Fire and Rescue Department's operations align with the established service standards.

c) Fire Chief

The Fire Chief is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and its associated procedures. The Fire Chief will also ensure that the Policy and procedures are reviewed periodically to maintain their effectiveness and relevance. Based on these reviews, the Fire Chief will make recommendations to the Chief

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Administrative Officer for any necessary amendments to the Policy or procedures to improve service delivery and meet operational needs.

d) Incident Commander

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for overall management of an emergency incident. The IC establishes incident objectives, sets priorities, directs response operations, and manages all resources at the scene. The IC has full authority to adjust tactics, limit or terminate operations, and ensure the safety of personnel and the public. The Incident Commander may be the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, or another qualified officer, depending on the type and scale of the incident. The IC operates within the framework of the Incident Command System (ICS) and is accountable for implementing policies, procedures, and risk assessments during emergency response.

e) Supervisors

Company Officers, including Lieutenants and Captains, are responsible for understanding and adhering to this Policy and its associated procedures. They will ensure that all firefighters are made aware of the Policy and procedures, and that they are trained on its contents to ensure compliance and effective execution during operations. Company Officers will also promote ongoing awareness and understanding among their teams to support consistent and safe practices in line with the established service standards.

f) Firefighters

All personnel are required to thoroughly understand and consistently adhere to this Policy and its associated procedures. This includes familiarizing themselves with the service standards, operational guidelines, and safety protocols outlined in the Policy. Compliance with the Policy ensures that all actions and decisions made during emergency response operations align with established best practices, promote safety, and uphold the department's commitment to providing effective and efficient services. All personnel must review and follow the procedures, ensuring their actions contribute to the overall success of the department's mission and the safety of the public and responders.

6. SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

- a) The Westlock Fire Department is a volunteer fire service providing fire suppression, rescue, medical first response, hazardous materials response, fire prevention, public education, and emergency management services.
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- b) Service delivery depends upon:
 - i. Availability of trained personnel
 - ii. Apparatus and equipment readiness
 - iii. Environmental and weather conditions
 - iv. Incident complexity
 - v. Dynamic risk assessment
- c) Due to volunteer staffing variability, response times and staffing levels fluctuate and cannot be guaranteed.

7. RESPONSE TIMES AND STAFFING

- a) The Department acknowledges recognized industry standards, including ***NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.***
- b) This standard provides recommended benchmarks for staffing and response performance. The Town recognizes the importance of understanding these benchmarks; however, the Department may not be positioned to consistently achieve them.
- c) Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as creating a mandatory response time, minimum staffing guarantee, or compliance obligation with NFPA deployment standards.

8. OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY AND LIMITATIONS

- a) The level of service identified in this Policy represents the intended operational capability when sufficient trained personnel, supervision, and equipment are available.
- b) When adequate resources are not immediately present, the Department will operate at a minimum **Awareness level** until sufficient resources arrive. Awareness Level operations may include:
 - i. Scene size-up and hazard identification
 - ii. Establishment of Incident Command
 - iii. Isolation and perimeter control

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- iv. Evacuation and public protection
- v. Defensive exposure protection
- vi. Requesting and coordinating additional resources
- c) Offensive, entry-based, or Technician Level operations will only occur when:
 - i. Adequately trained personnel are present
 - ii. Required personal protective equipment is available
 - iii. Occupational Health and Safety requirements are satisfied
 - iv. The Incident Commander determines conditions permit safe operations
- d) Firefighter safety shall take precedence over property conservation.

9. AUTHORIZED SERVICES AND LEVELS OF SERVICE

9.1 Structural Fire Suppression

a) Level of Service: Technician (when resources allow)

The Westlock Fire Department provides firefighting services for buildings and other enclosed structures, with the goal of protecting life, property, and the environment. Structural fire response focuses on containing and extinguishing fires, performing search and rescue for occupants, ventilating smoke, and protecting exposures such as neighboring buildings.

b) Technician Level operations include:

- i. Interior fire attack when safe staffing is present
 - ii. Performing search and rescue for occupants
 - iii. Ventilating smoke and heat to improve safety
 - iv. Protecting surrounding structures and exposures
 - v. Salvaging property and mitigating fire damage
 - vi. Overhauling fire areas to prevent re-ignition
- c) If staffing or equipment is insufficient, operations will begin at the **Awareness** level, with a focus on scene safety, hazard control, and exposure protection until additional resources arrive; offensive interior operations will only be undertaken when sufficient personnel, equipment,

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and safety conditions are in place to support such actions.

9.2 Vehicle Fire Suppression

a) Level of Service: Technician

Vehicle fires include cars, trucks, and other motorized equipment. The Department responds to protect life, reduce property damage, and mitigate environmental hazards such as fuel spills.

b) Technician Level actions include:

- i. Suppressing the fire effectively and safely
- ii. Controlling traffic hazards around the scene
- iii. Managing fuel, batteries, and other vehicle-related risks
- iv. Protecting surrounding vehicles, structures, or property

c) **Awareness** level operations focus on scene safety, hazard recognition, and requesting additional support until qualified personnel arrive.

9.3 Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Suppression

a) Level of Service: Technician (Structure Protection Focus)

WUI firefighting occurs where natural areas meet urban development, with a focus on protecting homes, businesses, and infrastructure from wildfire spread.

b) Operations include:

- i. Protecting structures and high-risk properties
- ii. Establishing defensive perimeters to slow fire spread
- iii. Managing water supply for firefighting
- iv. Coordinating with provincial wildfire resources and mutual aid partners

c) Offensive interior operations occur only when adequate resources and safety conditions are met.

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9.4 Flammable Fuels and Hazardous Materials

a) Level of Service: Awareness Level

Incidents involving flammable fuels, combustible liquids, compressed gases, and other hazardous materials present risks of fire, explosion, environmental contamination, and personal injury. The Department will generally manage hazardous materials incidents at the Awareness Level, focusing on scene safety, hazard identification, and control until sufficient resources and conditions allow for a higher level of operational response as identified below.

b) Technician Level actions include:

- i. Containment and suppression of small flammable fuel incidents (<500 L)
- ii. Control of ignition sources and fire spread
- iii. Mitigation of minor spills or leaks where safe to do so
- iv. Protection of exposures and surrounding property

c) Operations Level actions include:

- i. Defensive control of larger flammable fuel incidents (>500 L)
- ii. Cooling and monitoring of compressed gas cylinders from a safe distance
- iii. Establishing control zones and hazard isolation
- iv. Supporting containment without direct offensive intervention

d) Awareness Level operations include:

- i. Scene size-up and hazard identification
- ii. Establishment of isolation zones and perimeter control
- iii. Evacuation or protection of the public
- iv. Requesting additional resources or specialized hazardous materials support
- v. Coordination with mutual aid and provincial resources

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9.5 Technical Rescue

a) Level of Service: Technician

Technical rescue includes high-risk operations to save life in complex situations, such as:

- i. Vehicle extrication
- ii. Confined space rescue
- iii. Elevator rescue
- iv. Surface ice rescue

b) Awareness Level operations begin until sufficient trained personnel and equipment arrive. Guidance aligns with NFPA 1006 standards.

9.6 Emergency Medical Response

a) Level of Service: As defined under the MFR agreement

The Department provides rapid assessment, stabilization, and basic life support in accordance with the Medical First Response agreement with Alberta Health Services. Patient transport is not provided.

9.7 Fire Prevention and Public Education

a) Level of Service: Aligned with Quality Management Plan

The Department works proactively to reduce fire risk and improve community safety through:

- i. Fire safety inspections and code enforcement
- ii. Public education programs and awareness campaigns
- iii. Pre-incident planning for high-risk facilities
- iv. Fire safety plan review and approval

b) All fire prevention and public education services are conducted in alignment with the Town of Westlock Fire Department Quality Management Plan as approved by the Safety Codes Council, ensuring compliance with provincial safety standards, building and fire codes, and consistent service quality.

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9.8 Fire Investigation

a) Level of Service: Aligned with Quality Management Plan

Fire investigations are conducted to determine origin, cause, and circumstances of fires. Activities include:

- i. Systematic scene examination
- ii. Evidence preservation
- iii. Documentation and reporting

b) All fire investigation activities are conducted in accordance with NFPA 1033 standards and aligned with the Quality Management Plan approved by the Safety Codes Council, ensuring professional, standardized, and legally defensible practices.

9.9 Public Assistance

a) Level of Service: Awareness / Technician based on resources

The Department responds to non-emergency situations where safety is at risk, including:

- i. Lift assists for vulnerable individuals
- ii. Access issues (e.g., lockouts)
- iii. Minor hazard mitigation (e.g., flooding, alarm investigation)
- iv. Public safety concerns

b) Responses are prioritized based on risk and available resources.

9.10 Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid

a) Level of Service: Consistent With agreements and Operational Capacity

The Town of Westlock maintains mutual aid agreements with neighboring municipalities for the reciprocal provision of resources, personnel, and support during emergency incidents. These agreements ensure that additional trained personnel, specialized equipment, and operational support can be requested when needed, enhancing the Town's ability to provide safe and effective emergency response. Automatic aid protocols have also been established to ensure immediate assistance from mutual

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aid partners for all structure fires within the Town, improving response efficiency and public safety while maintaining coverage for the Town's own jurisdiction.

b) Automatic Mutual Aid – Structure Fires

- i. Automatic mutual aid responses are established for all confirmed structure fires within the Town of Westlock.
- ii. Additional resources may be requested when incidents exceed local capabilities. Town responsibility for resident and responder safety remains the priority.

10. INCIDENT COMMAND

- a) All emergency operations use the Incident Command System (ICS).
- b) The **Incident Commander** is responsible for:
 - i. Establishing command and control
 - ii. Conducting risk assessment
 - iii. Determining strategy and tactics
 - iv. Ensuring firefighter safety
 - v. Determining operational level
 - vi. Requesting mutual aid and additional resources

11. POLICY REVIEW

- a) This Policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as required to reflect operational capability, legislative changes, and community risk.

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JON KRAMER

MAYOR



SIMONE WILEY

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY RISK / HAZARD ASSESSMENT RANKED BY 10-YEAR INCIDENT OCCURRENCE (2016-2026)

Rank	Hazard	10-Year Incident Count	Probability (1-3)	Frequency (1-3)	Severity (1-3)	Total Risk Score	ICS Incident Type
1	Motor Vehicle Collisions	263	3	3	3	9	Type 4-3
2	Fires (Structure, Vehicle, etc.)	108	2	2	3	7	Type 4-3
3	Hazardous Materials	91	2	2	3	7	Type 4-3
4	Medical / Resuscitation	401	3	3	1	7	Type 5-4
5	Wildland-Urban Interface / Grass Fires	37	2	2	3	7	Type 4-3
6	Public Hazards (Power Lines, etc.)	38	2	2	2	6	Type 5-4
7	Public Service Calls	289	3	3	1	7	Type 5
8	Alarms / No Fire / Smoke Investigation	846	3	3	1	7	Type 5
9	Technical Rescue	24	2	1	3	6	Type 4-3
10	Mutual Aid Responses	18	1	1	3	5	Type 4-2
11	Smoke Investigations (Confirmed Separate)	15	1	1	2	4	Type 5-4
12	Water Infrastructure Failures	3	1	1	3	5	Type 4-3
13	Explosions / Structural Collapse	2	1	1	3	5	Type 3-1

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Probability	Frequency	Severity
1 = Rare (0-1 in 10 years) 2 = Occasional (2-19 in 10 years) 3 = Frequent (20+ in 10 years)	1 = Rare (less than 1/year) 2 = Regular (1-10/year) 3 = Common (more than 10/year)	1 = Low (minor impact, no injuries/property loss) 2 = Moderate (local property loss, limited injuries) 3 = High (loss of life, critical infrastructure, major impact)
Total Risk Score = (Probability + Frequency + Severity)		