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> From: Norbert Schlenker [mailto:norber
> Sent: Monday, April 11, 2016 2:30 PM
> To: Cooper, Robert TRAN:EX
> Subject: Fire service level on Salt Spring Island

*Correspondence
Fire Service Level
Schlenker Cooper
Apr 11 #12, 2016*

*Board/Trustees
He May 2016
1-3*

> Mr. Cooper,

>
> As one of the trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District,
> I am following up on the written exchange you've had below with Andy
> Hildebrand. I would like to say that your reply has given us the
> information we need to clarify our decision-making process, but we're
> still puzzled. We are grappling with several factors that may be clear to
> you, yet are confounding to those of us who are the "governing body".

>
> Before going further, I want to be sure that our circumstances have been
> made clear. As previously described, the SSIFPD is a "composite" service
> of eight career firefighters and roughly thirty "paid-on-call"/volunteers.
> There are three fire halls, but please note that these are not distinct
> "departments" as you mention in your reply, but simply three buildings
> housing various apparatus located around the island. Only one of these,
> the primary hall in the town centre of Ganges, is routinely manned, and
> then only during the day. Presently, one of our career firefighters takes
> home the command vehicle each night, and response then is dependent

> largely on the corps of "paid-on-call" personnel.

>
> The main sticking point for us gets back to what is really being
> determined by declaring a "Fire Service Level". On the one hand, it's
> referred to as simply the level to which personnel are expected to be
> trained. That's fine, but is hard to reconcile with the array of factors
> the AHJ is urged to consider: water availability, response times, staffing
> model, etc. While training to "Full Service Level" does not present a
> problem per se, are there legal implications for declaring a service level
> which, practically speaking, cannot routinely be achieved?

>
> Given our circumstances, here are two plausible scenarios:

>
> 1) A fire occurs at an elder care facility within a mile of the main fire
> hall, on the hydrant system, and at a time the hall is staffed. If we were
> Full Service the residents and the building could be saved. If we declare
> Exterior Level, can crews trained to Full Service, and having sufficient
> water on hand, enter the building to rescue residents and fight the fire
> from inside? Or must they, because we have declared Exterior, stand
> outside while residents burn, and deal with the consequences?

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> 2) A fire occurs in a commercial building at night, not on the hydrant
> system, initial response time by the lone duty officer 15+ minutes, with
> further crew then called out and the tanker shuttle system as a water
> source. By the time crews arrive the building is fully engulfed. If we
> declare Full Service, we cannot provide it. It is conceivable that the
> building's insurance company may sue us for not providing what we
> committed to by our Full Service declaration and upon which they based
> their premium decision. Or perhaps they just use it as an excuse to deny
> the claim, so the owner sues us.

>
> Because of the possibility of Case #1 we may feel compelled to declare
> Full Service. Conversely, circumstances such as #2 suggest we should
> declare Exterior Service. Then again, as you mention in your reply, "if
> you have no water and long response times, there is little value in being
> full service because both issues likely preclude the opportunity to attack
> a fire from inside (or at all)." As you can see, we are between the
> proverbial rock and a hard place. We appeal to the OFC for assistance in
> making a proper determination.

>
> Respectfully,

>
> Norbert Schlenker, Trustee, Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District
>

5/13/2016

> From: Cooper, Robert [mailto:robert.cooper@bc.ca]
 > Sent: April-12-16 12:36 PM
 > To: 'Norbert Schlenker'
 > Cc: [redacted]; 'BA CEM Don Jolley CFO'
 > (mailto:robert.cooper@bc.ca)
 > Subject: RE: Fire service level on Salt Spring Island

> Hello Norbert,
 >
 > Please understand that I cannot provide legal advice regarding your local
 > government provided fire suppression service.
 > Fire suppression service, is a discretionary service, not a required
 > service, that a local government chooses to provide based on its ability
 > to afford it.
 >
 > The Fire Services Act only allows the Fire Commissioner to establish
 > training standards for firefighters. The Fire Commissioner does not have
 > the authority to determine a local governments "fire service level" or
 > capability.
 >
 > Having said that, this means that the decision on the how the fire

> suppression service operates and what is included in the service is the
 > decision of the local government.
 >
 > It is the local governments responsibility to determine the fire service
 > level they provide, and should detail, in a bylaw or written policy, what
 > they can and cannot do, based on the infrastructure that is available to
 > the firefighters.
 >
 > My opinion is that once this is established, the local government should
 > be able to determine the minimum level of training that their firefighters
 > should have.

> BC
 >
 >
 > Bob Cooper
 > Office of the Fire Commissioner
 > Office 250-952-4307
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