

Operating Guideline # 1812

Planning Department Application Comment Guide

January 6, 2023



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to assist Fire Prevention staff when reviewing Planning Applications and housing developments; it compiles information about standards, best practices and identifies opportunities through which fire departments can affect development approvals to increase emergency response safety.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

Review of planning department applications shall have the same effect as 'Inspections' defined in part VI in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. An inspector may, without a warrant, enter and inspect land and premises for the purposes of assessing fire safety. Fire safety includes;

1. Safety from the risk that a fire, if started, would seriously endanger the health and safety of any person or the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it.
2. Safety from the risk that the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises would seriously endanger the health and safety of any person.

GUIDELINE:

1. The planning department will request comments from the Fire Prevention officer and the Fire Chief periodically using the "Planning Department Application Comment Request Form". The Inspector should take note of the location of the property via civic address, date that comments are required, and the explanation for the application in order to aptly address the comment section on this form.
2. There is an assumption that there is adequate firefighting force available unless otherwise noted through comments. Inspectors need to share the capabilities and limitations with building department officials, planning department staff, members of the building community and elected municipal leaders.
3. Capability of the fire department depends on the closest responding fire station with adequate staff, equipment and training to effect rescue and suppress fires.
4. Identifying the closest station to the civic address is key to determining the response timeline of the responders to any emergency. Response time is calculated by adding the travel time (google maps directions) to the assembly time (average assembly time for all calls for the first due apparatus in the last 36 months for the fire station responding). This response time should be noted on every application to ensure that the applicant is made aware of the typical response expected, this should also be measured against the NFPA 14 minute response time goal for rural response and noted in the comments.
5. The height of the ladder on the first responding apparatus should be mentioned in comments for applications that have structures over 24 feet that may require rescue for persons. Emphasis should then be made to ensure that all sleeping rooms above this height should have working smoke alarms installed and escape ladders for provide for self rescue.

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6. The size of the structures on the property should be considered and noted in comments where appropriate risk is determined. If the structures on the property are over 600 meters squared in building area or three storeys in height, emphasis on the on automatic sprinkler protection and increased separations should be highlighted to make the applicant aware of methods to increase safety.
7. Water supplies for firefighting should be noted in the comments with explanations on how the water will be used by responders. Hydrant locations should be noted in proximity to the structures, lack of hydrants should also be noted, proximity to static water sources should be considered including whether the responding fire station has the equipment to draft this water and it should also be noted if the responding fire station is covered under the Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation for areas without hydrants. A note of the water flows and whether the water system is maintained should be mentioned in comments.
8. If a dry hydrant system is the identified primary source, maintenance and responsibilities to maintain as per NFPA and local guidelines.
9. Exposure structures that within 30 meter distances will increase the amount of water required to suppress a fire. All exposures should be noted on the comment form and whether they are within the 30 meter distances.
10. Access to the property for emergency vehicles should be noted by the distance to any structures from the municipally serviced roadway. A note should be made that any private lanes or drive ways should be maintained to the Ontario Building Code 9.10.20.3 to ensure adequate access for emergency apparatus. Access to Geo Hub can assist with understanding the proximity to roadways.
11. Using the Wildfire mapping system on Geo Hub, it should be noted on the application if the property falls closely to an identified wildfire hazard risk fuel load. Further, it should be noted that for properties within the Moderate, High to Extreme hazard fuels the [Fire Smart Home owners manual](#) should be consulted to understand how treatments to the property influence wildfire spread.
12. Homes are most vulnerable while under construction, there should be attention paid to safeguard construction, including pre planning resource deployment and requiring hydrants prior to construction. Placing limits on the number of exposed building areas is also something that should be noted when there are no limiting distances present.
13. After compiling all the information above on a form, careful consideration and proper comments should be prepared for the application.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

REFERENCES:

[Fire Chief's Guide for Development Design Approval Version 1.0, May 2022](#)

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| Location: | Application #: |
| Date Required: | Applicant: |
| Closest Station Responding: | Distance: |
| Travel time: | Assembly time avg: |
| First Due Apparatus: | Ladder length: |
| Height of tallest structure: | Size of structures (m ²): |
| Stories: | Municipal Hydrants: Y / N |
| Dry Hydrants: Y / N | Distance to Water Supply: |
| Sup Tanker Shut Accreditation: Y / N | Exposure Structures within 30 m: Y / N |
| Municipal Roadway: Y / N Distance: | Private Road: Y / N |
| Wildfire Risk Level: | Construction Limitations: Y / N |

Example wording:

The property cited in this application is ___ km from the closest responding fire station, typical assembly times are ___ minutes, travel time is ___ minutes. It will take firefighters an estimated ___ minutes to arrive on scene for emergency calls.

WHEN response is longer than 14 minutes...

NFPA 1720 response time goal for a rural area is 14 minutes, consideration should be given to alarm systems for early warning, increased spatial separations, building materials of higher fire resistance and residential fire sprinklers.

The first responding apparatus has a ladder that is 24 ft (7 m) high, the structure on this property is proposed at ___ ft. Due to height of rescue capability, more smoke alarms should be placed to provide early warning and consideration of installing egress ladders would be of benefit.

WHEN SIZE is OVER 600 m or more than 3 stories and the property is served by static water...

The size of the largest structure is ___ m² and ___ stories served by _(#)_ hydrants. The water supply is noted as __(static, dry hydrant, hydrant)___ and located ___ m from the structure. Although the MFLD has achieved an accreditation to supply 1,500 LPM continuously using Tanker Shuttle as the method of supply, this may not be adequate to suppress a fire for a property of this size, consideration should be given to alarm systems for early warning, increased spatial separations, building materials of higher fire resistance and residential fire sprinklers.

The property has access via the municipal roadway ___ m away. The private lane serving the structures should always be maintained to the Ontario Building Code 9.10.20.3 to ensure adequate access for emergency apparatus.

WHEN property is within Extreme, moderate or high fuel hazard zones in MNR wildfire maps...

The property is ___ m from the wildfire fuel hazard class Extreme, careful review of the the Fire Smart Home owners manual should be consulted to understand how treatments to the property influence wildfire spread.

WHEN construction is proposed...

As construction will be occurring on the property, we encourage pre planning with the fire department concerning fire risks during this vulnerable phase of development.