

Operating Guideline # 221

Risk Management Philosophy

November 26, 2023



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to articulate the departmental “Risk Management Philosophy” and to establish the framework for all decision-making processes at emergency incidents where the incident has the potential to endanger the safety of Muskoka Lakes Fire Department personnel.

GUIDELINE:

1. The fundamental operating principle of the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department (MLFD) shall be to protect the health and safety of all members of the department in accordance with the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act; to implement proactive measures to assure their safety, and to respond to all emergency incidents as mandated by the most current version of the Township of Muskoka Lakes “Establishing and Regulating” By-Law for the department. Currently “ByLaw 2016-125”.
2. It is well recognized that the first duty of a firefighter is to safeguard human life. It is also extremely important to recognize the duties of Incident Commanders and Sector Officers to provide for the safety of all workers (under the provisions of Provincial health & safety legislation) and the necessity to work on job sites that (most frequently) are inherently dangerous and uncontrolled by their very nature.
3. In light of these considerations, all officers shall continually evaluate and re-evaluate emergency incident response activities from with a **“Risk vs. Benefit” approach**. In other words, every decision made, and every action undertaken on an emergency scene must be preceded with the question **“Is what we are about to do (or are doing) worth the risk involved?”**
4. To help answer this essential question, all staff operating at emergency scenes are to be guided by the following “Risk Management Philosophy”:
 - a. We will risk our lives in a calculated manner - to protect savable lives.
 - b. We will take minimal risks and in a calculated manner, to protect savable property.
 - c. We will not risk our lives at all to protect lives or property that is/are already lost.
5. Having regard for the concepts contained within our “Risk Management Philosophy”, MLFD Incident Commanders shall always hold the safety of firefighting staff as paramount in any decision making process.
6. Though the Internal Responsibility System espoused by the OH&SA suggests that everyone in our organization is responsible for the safety and well-being of all staff members, it is ultimately the Incident Commanders responsibility to ensure that this Risk Management Philosophy and firefighter safety is consciously engrained into every emergency response and incident.

RESPONSIBILITY:

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

REFERENCES:

- OSHA Section 21 Committee –Best Practices all Firefighters Guidance Notes