

Fire Inspection & Enforcement

Led by: Chief of Calgary Fire Department

Description

Fire Inspection & Enforcement provides fire inspections of commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential occupancies, fire code consultations, and technical services to enhance public safety, ensure compliance with legislation, minimize fire-related risks, and protect lives, property and the environment. All fires are investigated in accordance with the Safety Codes Act to identify trends and advocate for code changes and product recalls to support community risk reduction efforts.

Value and benefits

Fire permit approvals, occupancy limits and compliance inspections ensure the National Fire Code (Alberta Edition) requirements are met and adhered to for the safety of people and protection of property. Regular fire inspections help owners ensure that buildings stay compliant and help reduce risks to owners, occupants and the general public. This also applies to public venues including bars, nightclubs and locations hosting special events, as well as rental housing units. Identifying and correcting potential fire-related issues in buildings and businesses ensures that life safety systems are operational which improves positive outcomes in the event of an emergency. The service also ensures that Fire Safety Plans are completed by building owners and operators which provides first responders with vital information to help plan effective responses in case of an emergency.

Customers

Customers of the service include members of the public who visit and occupy residential, commercial and industrial buildings and spaces, as well as the building and business owners, building managers, staff, special event organizers and attendees, and any citizens who report fire-related safety concerns.

What we deliver

The service delivers fire inspections, permits, fire warden training, flammable tank inspections, special event inspections, inspections for major events, safety inspections for multi-family residential buildings, fire safety plan reviews, and responds to reported fire safety concerns and complaints. The service also enforces the Safety Codes Act and investigates the origin and cause of fires.

Partners

Fire Inspection & Enforcement partners with other City services including Building Safety, Business Licensing, Police Services, Citizen Information & Services, Fire & Emergency Response and Fire Safety Education. External partners include Alberta Safety Codes Council, Alberta Health Services, Office of the Fire Commissioner and related service providers on community risk reduction initiatives.

14,000+	Inspections completed in 2021
30%	Inspections with violations identified
835	Fire investigations in 2021
TBC	City-wide average risk level

Key assets

Not Applicable.

Fire Inspection and Enforcement
2022 Budgeted Gross Operating Expenditures Funding Breakdown (\$ Millions)*



* Gross operating budget may include internal recoveries that are also included in other services' gross operating cost.

Note: Internal recoveries is how The City accounts for the costs of goods or services between services

What we have heard & what we are watching

What we have heard

According to customer research from 2021 and 2022, 95 per cent of Calgarians rated Fire Inspection & Enforcement as being important with 94 per cent stating they are satisfied with the service. According to Calgarians, the most important elements of the service are ensuring that occupancies comply with safety codes and standards, reducing risks for multi-family occupancies and businesses, and ensuring the safety of Calgarians. Safe buildings and public spaces are important to Calgarians, and they feel the service should help to reduce the chance of fires and other life safety incidents from occurring both inside and beyond their homes and property. Finally, 83 per cent of Calgarians agree that buildings rated as a high risk for fire should be inspected annually, which aligns with the transition to a risk-based model for inspections.

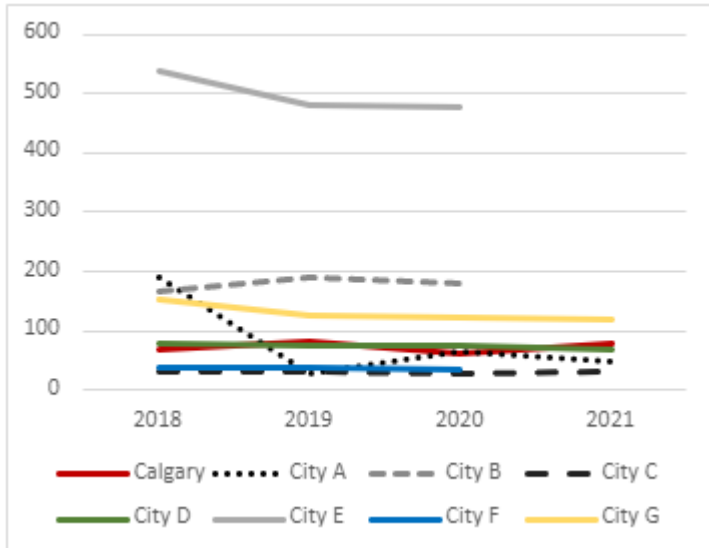
What Council has directed

Fire Inspection & Enforcement contributes towards Calgary's economic and social resilience by helping to reduce risk levels and build safe, vibrant communities where Calgarians can live, work and play. The service supports local businesses by ensuring they are compliant with safety codes which promotes safe, accessible and inclusive neighbourhoods and public spaces. Fire Inspection & Enforcement services also play a role in the Downtown Revitalization initiative through inspection and permit services, ensuring compliance with safety codes, and ensuring that events and large gatherings are safe.

What we are watching

Fire Inspection & Enforcement is watching several trends and risks across Calgary. These include fires in buildings, code compliance and community risk levels. Risk is increasing due to several factors including reduced maintenance on building life safety systems following the economic downturn and the pandemic, the increased vacancy rate, aging infrastructure, fire-prone business activities, and careless behaviours that increase the risk of fires (i.e. careless cooking and smoking). Harmonization of Provincial codes with the National Fire and Building Codes is anticipated to increase the workload for the service.

Number of Non-Residential Structural Fires with Losses



MBNCanada

Comparing our service

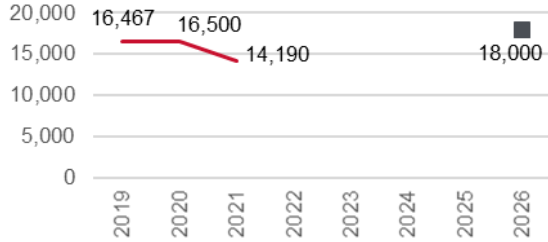
The chart presents the number of structure fires with an estimated dollar loss amount greater than \$1 across comparator municipalities. While urban form and densification and the degree of risk, such as fire spread, age and type of building stock, type of occupancy, hazardous materials, etc. associated with these varying forms can have an impact on the comparability of results, it is also an indicator of the impact of Fire Inspection & Enforcement services in the community. In 2021, the number of non-residential structure fires with losses in Calgary was above the median value.

Measuring performance & where we want to go

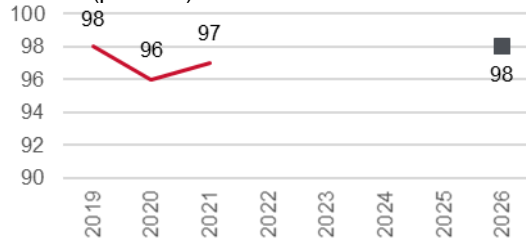
For Council Approval

— Actuals ■ Expected Future Performance

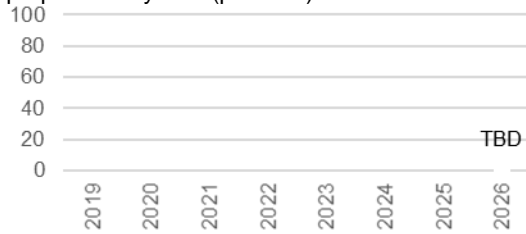
PM1: Number of fire safety inspections performed by Inspectors



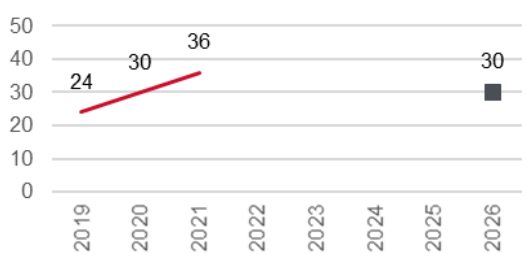
PM2: 3-1-1 Customer Service Requests completed on time (per cent)



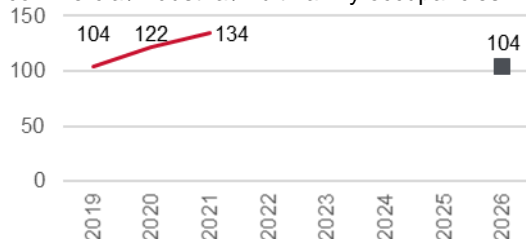
PM3: Reduction in fire risk level for inspectable properties citywide (per cent)



PM4: Re-inspection ratio (per cent)



PM5: Number of structure fires in commercial/Industrial/multi-family occupancies



Story behind the curve

The Fire Department's fire prevention and inspection activities have been a significant contributor to the reduction in the number of fire incidences in buildings that are to be inspected by a fire safety codes officer. The capacity to complete more inspections and proactively reduce risks depends on resource availability, occupancy types and complexity of compliance issues. As the business environment recovers from the pandemic and economic downturn, the service expects an increase in demand for inspection and enforcement activities.

The on-time completion rate for request and complaint inspections received through 3-1-1 is an indicator of efficient and effective service performance and a precursor to high customer satisfaction. Although resources will be strained by demand and the expansion of the new risk-based inspections program, the goal is to maintain high customer satisfaction while expanding to provide more proactive fire prevention services.

The implementation of a permanent risk-based inspections program is a major milestone in proactively managing fire risk in the city. The overall risk level in the city is expected to decrease at a faster rate as the service allocates more resources to proactively target higher risk occupancies in Calgary. This new measure is an indicator of both service efficiency and effectiveness and will demonstrate the value of the risk-based inspection program.

A downward trend in re-inspection ratio demonstrates the effectiveness of the service in identifying code violations and working with business owners to achieve compliance. The ability to reach expected future performance depends on the complexity of issues identified at inspectable properties. With the expansion of risk-based inspections, the service could face challenges in achieving the future value in the near term since higher-risk buildings have more complex compliance issues which can be more challenging to resolve after a single inspection.

Over the past few years the service observed an upward trend in the number of structure fires at inspectable properties (commercial, industrial, and multi-family occupancies), particularly in multi-family occupancies. The increase in residential fires in inspectable occupancies is likely due to COVID-19 impacts, including stay-at-home orders, which shift risks away from commercial settings towards private residences. The expected future performance value reflects a need to reverse this trend through prevention initiatives, including inspections and enforcement.

What we plan to do

Result for 2023-2026

We will focus on community risk reduction and maintaining the safety and resiliency of Calgary's businesses, events and communities by working with Calgarians to ensure compliance with life safety codes through education, inspections, investigations and enforcement.

How we are going to get there

Support safe public spaces and events through ongoing fire inspections, education and compliance monitoring while implementing a proactive risk-based inspections model to deliver targeted inspections for higher risk occupancies.

Ensure that the city continues to grow and develop safely by providing plans review, technical services support and planning for new communities, occupancies and commercial operations.

Strengthen the sustainability of the service by investigating and recommending a funding model that supports the full breadth of services provided.

Improve service levels for Calgarians by optimizing workforce capacity to align with service demand and workloads.

Reduce community risks and enhance public safety and socioeconomic resilience by providing investigation services to identify fire trends and drive code changes, education efforts and product recalls.

Enhance fire prevention, loss reduction and safety codes compliance by maintaining staffing levels to support attendance of fire investigators at all fires according to the Safety Codes Act.

Fulfill The City's commitment to the Province under the Quality Management Plan (QMP) to ensure compliance of buildings and businesses with the Safety Codes Act for the safety of Calgarians.

Support emergency response enhancements, safety education and fire prevention initiatives by improving the collection, quality, and analysis of incident data.

Operating budget needed to achieve results

For Council Approval

Breakdown of net operating budget (\$000s)

	2023		2024		2025		2026	
	Base	One-time	Base	One-time	Base	One-time	Base	One-time
Previous Year's Net Budget	6,835		7,388		7,588		7,610	
Previously approved One-time budget		-		-		-		-
2022 One-time carry forward		-		-		-		-
Revenue Changes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Recoveries Changes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inflation	13	-	20	-	22	-	20	-
Operating Impact of Previously Approved Capital	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Impact of New Capital (Incremental)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Service Reductions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Service Increases	540	-	180	-	-	-	-	-
Total net budget*	7,388	-	7,588	-	7,610	-	7,630	-

*The previous year's One-Time Budget is not carried forward to the following year.

Total Operating Budget (\$000s) for Approval

	2022 Budget	2023			2024			2025			2026		
	At April 30	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total
Expenditures	10,039	10,492	-	10,492	10,692	-	10,692	10,714	-	10,714	10,734	-	10,734
Recoveries	(63)	(63)	-	(63)	(63)	-	(63)	(63)	-	(63)	(63)	-	(63)
Revenue	(3,041)	(3,041)	-	(3,041)	(3,041)	-	(3,041)	(3,041)	-	(3,041)	(3,041)	-	(3,041)
Net	6,935	7,388	-	7,388	7,588	-	7,588	7,610	-	7,610	7,630	-	7,630
Base	6,835												
One-Time	100												

* Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.