

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: Whitby Fire & Emergency Services – Equipment Standardization

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: September 23, 2024

Report Number: FES 04-24

Department(s) Responsible:

Fire and Emergency Services

Submitted by:

Chief Michael Hickey

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

For additional information, contact:

Deputy Chief Glenn Green

Deputy Chief Mike Tucker

1. Recommendation:

1. That Council approves the standardization of emergency response equipment and fire apparatus, as outlined in Table 1 of Staff Report FES 04-24; for a period of five (5) years, ending September 30, 2029; and,
2. That staff procure standardized equipment outlined in Table 1 of Staff Report FES 04-24 in accordance with the Procurement Policy, and staff be authorized to single source award contracts for items where there is only one authorized supplier/distributor for the Whitby geographical area.

2. Highlights:

- Standardization of equipment, for up-to five (5) years, is provided for in the Town's Procurement Policy.
- Emergency response equipment is vital to protecting the health and safety of firefighters while performing job duties on emergency scenes.

- As per legislative requirements, emergency response equipment is assigned a lifecycle in which equipment is required to be replaced within stipulated timeframe for safe and optimal performance.
- Equipment standardization provides for proficiency in the delivery of excellent customer service, while providing protection of life and property conservation across the Town.
- The emergency response equipment, as listed in Attachments - Table 1, has proven, over time, to meet the needs of WFES and the public with effectiveness and reliability.
- Standardization of fire apparatus, personal protective gear and equipment increases safety for WFES staff and provides WFES staff confidence during emergency responses through familiarization of its' operation and/or locations of tools/controls.
- Assists in smooth transition of WFES staff from one (1) apparatus to another which is often required for coverage and additional response during emergency situations.
- Overall, standardization of equipment provides required and familiar operational features, improves maintenance efficiencies, streamlines inventory, reduces the variety of specialized tools, reduces required training and leans the procurement process for new or replacement fleet/equipment.

3. Background:

The purpose of this report is to recommend Council approval to standardize emergency response equipment and apparatus used by the Whitby Fire and Emergency Services (“WFES”) for a period of five (5) years.

Standardization of equipment is provided for in the Town’s Procurement Policy, Policy # F 080 in situations where the Town has identified specific equipment/manufacturers that best fits the Town’s needs. Once equipment standardization has been approved, purchases must still follow the Town’s Procurement Policy but the process may be streamlined by only reviewing bids from suppliers of the standardized equipment and/or establishing long-term contracts with suppliers of the standardized equipment. The Procurement Policy only allows for standardization for a period of five (5) years before re-evaluation, by the department, is required.

Standardization of equipment and fire apparatus (i.e. aerials and pumpers) provides consistency for WFES staff. That is, in emergency situations, standardized equipment allows for WFES staff to rely on training and muscle memory to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

WFES utilizes an internal committee, comprised of senior officers and firefighters, to identify, research, evaluate and test a variety of equipment. By forming an internal committee, WFES has been able to successfully rely on emergency responders seasoned experience and tactical knowledge to inform procurement of the most appropriate and required equipment.

Equipment used by our firefighters is annually budgeted, as per a ten (10) year forecast,

with procurements made in accordance with the Town of Whitby's Procurement Policy. Over the years, increased delivery timelines have negatively impacted WFES' ability to maintain required inventory; while also creating challenges with procurement and accurate budget allocations.

Standardization of equipment will also assist with streamlining the procurement process and allow for cost savings through multi-year purchase agreements, which in turn aligns with the Town of Whitby's multi-year budget commitment.

4. Discussion:

Standardization of equipment as outlined in Attachment – Table 1, provides fleet maintenance and operating efficiencies in the following manner:

- Provides familiarity for WFES staff when transitioning between apparatuses in the course of a shift and/or on an emergency scene;
- Minimizes the number of specialized WFES apparatus/fleet equipment for Town fleet technicians to be trained on and that the Town must maintain parts for;
- Reduces the quantity and variety of required parts and/or equipment to be inventoried;
- Reduces the variety of specialized tools to service equipment;
- Provides for proficiency in the delivery of excellent customer service; and,
- Reduces the variety of test equipment and software platforms (and updates) required to service equipment.

Throughout WFES, movement of suppression staff between fire stations and/or apparatuses occurs regularly to best utilize the skillsets and training of individuals and to maintain appropriate staffing coverage due to vacations, illnesses or other absences. During emergency responses, it is imperative that firefighters have trust in both personal protective equipment and fire apparatus, while being extremely familiar with its operations and functions. For these reasons WFES test and train extensively on all elements of these key pieces of equipment. To best exploit this extensive training, equipment needs to be uniform across all apparatus a firefighter may be assigned to throughout a shift.

WFES recommends standardization on the following equipment:

Table 1 – Recommended Equipment Standardization:

Item	Manufacturer
Bunker Gear	Starfield Lion
Aerial Apparatus	Pierce
Pumper Apparatus	E-One

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)	MSA
Thermal Imaging Camera	Flir
Fire Hose	Snaptitle

Subject to Council approval of this report, the equipment standardization will be effective for a five (5) year period. During this time, purchases of the equipment listed in Table 1 must still follow the Procurement Policy:

- If there is more than authorized supplier of the standardized equipment in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, quotes or tenders will be issued and award will be based on lowest price;
- If there is only one authorized supplier of the standardized equipment in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, the Town will single source award to that vendor for the one purchase or provide for a longer-term commitment in order to secure timely delivery and potentially better pricing.

The Procurement Policy requires Council approval for single source awards in excess of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement limits (i.e. \$133,800 for goods and services and \$334,400 for construction, effective from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025). It is recommended that where there is only one authorized supplier/distributor of standardized equipment (outlined in Table 1) in the Whitby geographical area (e.g. Whitby, Ontario, Canada, etc.), that Town Staff be authorized to procure the equipment via a single source award subject to the review and approval of WFES, Fleet (if applicable), the Chief Administrative Officer (if applicable based on value), and Financial Services staff. As outlined in the Procurement Policy, procurements \$250,000 or greater will be included in an information report to Council on a quarterly basis.

5. Financial Considerations:

There are no immediate financial implications related to this report. Procurements must have approved budgets prior to award.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Not Applicable

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

Whitby Fire and Emergency services utilizes internal committees comprised of both Management and Unionized staff for research and development including testing of equipment prior to purchase. Once standardization of equipment is approved, Fire and Emergency Services and Financial Services will work jointly throughout the purchasing process.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The recommendation contained in this report advances the following Strategic Pillar and Action identified in the Town's Community Strategic Plan:

- Whitby's Neighbourhoods – Safe, Healthy, & Inclusive
 - Objective 1.1 – Improve community safety, health, and wellbeing

As the Town's population continues to grow, and infrastructure continues to change, emergency service professionals are required to expand knowledge, technical skillset and mechanical aptitude. Standardization of equipment utilized by WFES' will assist in continuing to deliver exceptional customer service while efficiently and effectively responding to emergency incidences across the Town of Whitby.

9. Attachments:

Not applicable