



NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT DATA BASE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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SUBMITTED BY:

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FIRE CHIEF CITY OF SURREY

Background

A research study completed in September 2012 concluded that the creation of a National Fire Information Database in Canada is feasible with the support of a broad base of partner stakeholders.

The *Report on the Feasibility of a Canadian Fire Information Database* was produced for the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) with a \$149,500 grant from the Canadian Police Research Centre, a federal program administered by the Defence Research & Development Canada - Centre for Security Science.

The intent of the study was to explore the development of a web-based database of fire statistics that would be available to fire departments and organizations across Canada to assist with evidence-based decision-making.

Currently, there is no comprehensive or reliable database on fire incidences in Canada.

Project Participants

B.C.'s University of the Fraser Valley coordinated the project research and consultation on behalf of the CAFC.

The CAFC's representative for the project management lead was Len Garis, Fire Chief for the City of Surrey and President of the Fire Chiefs' Association of B.C.

Working with Chief Garis to manage the research team was Dr. Darryl Plecas, Director of the UFV's Centre for Public Safety Criminal Justice Research and Dr. Paul Maxim, Associate Vice-President of Research at Wilfrid Laurier University who was the lead in conducting the research.

Project Scope

The report outlined the scope for a national system, including:

- types of data to be collected
- hardware and software
- partner roles and responsibilities
- funding sources, and
- resources required to set up and maintain the system.

The project included consultation with fire services across the country and research into best practices as well as public and private data management systems in Canada and abroad.

Report recommendations:

1. Implement the National Fire Information Database in stages:

- Start with reintroducing National Fire Loss reports based on core items outlined in the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners' (CCFMFC) *Code Structure* document.
- Future stages should move towards addressing the full spectrum of fire service activities.
- Some jurisdictions that have recently renewed their infrastructure may need to be gradually phased in.

2. Project should be initiated by the CAFC:

- A similar approach was used successfully by the Canadian Association of Chief of Police for its national Uniform Crime Reporting system.
- Active CAFC involvement will demonstrate to all stakeholders that those responsible for collecting the raw data are strongly committed to the project's success.

3. Statistics Canada is best suited to construct and maintain the system:

- The system envisioned is similar in its demands to the Uniform Crime Reporting system, which is managed and maintained by Stats Canada.
- An option would be to create a stand-alone nongovernmental agency similar to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, Inc.

4. Governing structure must contain a range of stakeholders under the lead of the CAFC:

- At minimum, the governing structure requires representatives from the CAFC and CCFMC.
- Ideally it would also include representatives from other government agencies, academia and the private sector.

5. A sustainable funding model is required:

- It is unlikely a single funding source will be found in the short-term since most fire service activities are not under the federal jurisdiction.
- Likely primary funding sources will be the provinces and territories, with possible federal contribution through the Fire Commissioners' office or another agency.

The full report may be downloaded from the Reports and Publications page at www.ufv.ca/CPSCJR

Interim Steps

The *Report on the Feasibility of a Canadian Fire Information Database* was presented to the joint committee of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs and the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners at an annual meeting in September 2012.

The committee resolved to further request that a "concept of operations" proposal document be created and presented to the joint Committee.

This report proposes to provide the concept of operations that if adopted resembles that of a subcommittee within the joint committee of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs and Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners that would mirror that of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Polices Information and Statistics (POLIS) Committee.

There is considerable experience, process, partnership and governance expertise that can be gained by, assuming the joint committee chooses to press for a nation's records management system. The mandate and objectives of (POLIS) are outline below.

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Information and Statistics, (POLIS) Committee.

Mandate:

THE POLIS COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTES VALUE BY DEVELOPING, IMPROVING AND DELIVERING ACCURATE

STATISTICAL AND ANALYTICAL INFORMATION TO THE CANADIAN PUBLIC, POLICE AND GOVERNMENT TO BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR ENVIRONMENT WITH RESPECT TO OFFENDING, VICTIMIZATION AND POLICING, AND TO THEREBY FACILITATE STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. ENSURE THAT POLICE CHIEFS RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT SIGNIFICANT DATA COMPARABILITY ISSUES AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON ANY NEW CCJS REPORTS AND SURVEYS**

- 2. ENSURE THAT EMERGING POLICE ISSUES, PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS ARE ADDRESSED BY CCJS SURVEYS AND PRODUCTS;**

- 3. ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE CONTEXT SURROUNDING ISSUES AND TRENDS IS INCLUDED IN CCJS REPORTS BY PROVIDING APPROPRIATE COMMENTS DURING THE WORK-IN-PROGRESS REVIEW;**

- 4. DEVELOP STANDARD POLICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS;**

- 5. IDENTIFY, DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE BEST PRACTICES IN THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION;**

- 6. ENSURE THAT STATISTICAL DATA CAN BE PROVIDED BY THE POLICE COMMUNITY IN A STANDARDIZED AND COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER, MINIMIZING RESPONDENT BURDEN AND COSTS.**

Appendix A

“The draft terms of reference have been reviewed by the both Presidents that have provided positive feedback, at this point I believe the Terms of Reference are mature to be used for communication and intent to implementation subject the joint committee approval and funding”

Stats Canada – “I don’t have much to add or recommend. I think leveraging the POLIS governance and structure is very strategic and I can tell you that it is considered to be one of the most effective Committee’s that we have at the Centre”.

Terms of Reference

NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT STATISTICS COMMITTEE

(A Subcommittee of the *Joint Council of the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners* and the *Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs*)

MANDATE

The mandate of the *National Fire Incident Statistics Committee* (NFISC) is to provide immediate direction and oversight for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information relating to fire incidents in Canada. The NFISC executes that mandate primarily through its oversight of the National Fire Information Database. The NFISC holds its mandate as a subcommittee of the *Joint Council of the Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners* and the *Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs*. Through its oversight of the National Fire Information Database, the NFISC will work to ensure that accurate, timely and strategic data are made available to operational firefighting agencies, government, and the public. In its directional role, the NFISC will work to ensure that pertinent information to enhance our fundamental understanding of fire incidents, to develop sound policy decisions, and to further our operational abilities to address those occurrences is available.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Composition

The National Fire Incident Statistics Committee will consist of representatives from the *Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners*, the *Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs*, and *Statistics Canada*.

In order to balance effectiveness with representation, the Committee consist of two representatives from the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners, two representatives from the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs and Statistics Canada, and one representative from Statistics Canada as appointed by the Chief Statistician of Canada.

Terms

Membership on the Committee shall be for a term of two years with an option for renewal at the discretion of the constituent organizations.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee will annually, and by majority vote, elect from the members representing the CCFMFC and the CAFC, a Chair and a Vice-Chair to provide overall leadership and management of the Committee. For each election, the Chair will be elected first, followed by the election of the Vice-Chair from the two members representing the Association to which the Chair does not belong. The role of the Chair is to ensure that appropriate rules of order are followed; schedule meetings as mandated and as required; create the agenda for the meetings; ensure that an annual report is submitted to the constituent agencies; and, act as the spokesperson for the Committee.

In the event that the Chair is not available to perform the required duties, the Vice-Chair will act in lieu of the Chair.

Secretary

The Committee will annually, and by majority vote, elect from the members a Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary will be responsible for maintaining a record of the Committee membership and attendance, and will ensure that minutes of the meetings are kept. The Secretary will also be responsible for the records of the Committee's activities. In the absence of the Recording Secretary, the Vice-Chair or another designated member of the Committee may act in lieu.

Additional Participants

The Committee may request that additional individuals who have particular substantive or technical expertise attend the meetings on a regular or occasional basis to provide advice to the Committee. Those individuals, however, shall not be voting members of the Committee.

COMMITTEE RULES AND BYLAWS

The bylaws of the National Fire Incident Statistics Committee will be set by the *Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners*, and the *Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs*. NFISC may recommend additions or alterations of those bylaws to the Joint Council for consideration.

Rules and operational procedures relating to the management and immediate direction of the NFID will be the responsibility of the National Fire Incident Statistics Committee. To that end, NFISC will outline or identify:

- The data to be collected and retained in the NFID.
- The structure and content of an annual report that is to be submitted to the

Joint Council and made publically available.

- The structure and content of any special studies, analyses or occasional reports report that the Committee might deem appropriate. Those items will also be submitted to the *Joint Council* and made publically available.
- Any other initiatives based on the NFID that the Committee might deem appropriate to further its mandate.

MEETINGS

Scheduling

The National Fire Incident Statistics Committee shall meet at least once a year, either face to face or by teleconference. That meeting shall normally coincide with the Joint meeting and Conference of the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners and Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair. Notice of meetings shall be delivered through normal channels of written communications with the membership such as email.

At least one meeting (normally, a designated annual meeting) shall take place in-person. Additional meetings may be held by video- or teleconference in order to respect cost and travel time considerations.

Agenda for the meetings shall be circulated at least two weeks prior to the meeting or as soon as practical.

Quorum

Quorum shall consist of 50%, including at least one representative from each of the plus one Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners and Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs.

Appendix B

Funding Options to Consider

Currently, there is no identified funding source for the National Fire Information Database. One model that might provide short and/or long-term support would be for the jurisdictions represented by the Council of the Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners to support the database.

It is estimated that an initial budget of \$250,000 would support the creation of the database, one-year's support, and support for an annual report summarizing the data. That amount could be divided equally among the thirteen jurisdictions and would come to about \$19,200 per jurisdiction.

Another approach would be for the cost to be allocated across the constituent jurisdictions proportionately by population. The following table provides a possible distribution of an estimated budget of \$250,000.

There might be corporate partners and or government interest in funding part or all to move forward.

Defence Research & Development Canada - Centre for Security Science call for proposals might be an eligible short term solution for startup funding for the first few years.

Public Safety Canada might consider funding in the longer term, consideration for a federal long term grant to fund might be a strategy.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---------------|
| Project Total Cost | | | \$ 250,000.00 |
| Number of Contributors | | | 13 |
| Equal Allocation based on Number of Contributors | | | \$ 19,230.77 |

| | 2012 Population | Population % Allocation | Cost Allocation by Population |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 512,700 | 1% | \$ 3,674.68 |
| Prince Edward Island | 146,100 | 0% | \$ 1,047.14 |
| Nova Scotia | 948,700 | 3% | \$ 6,799.63 |
| New Brunswick | 756,000 | 2% | \$ 5,418.48 |
| Quebec | 8,054,800 | 23% | \$ 57,731.23 |
| Ontario | 13,505,900 | 39% | \$ 96,800.94 |
| Manitoba | 1,267,000 | 4% | \$ 9,080.98 |
| Saskatchewan | 1,080,000 | 3% | \$ 7,740.69 |
| Alberta | 3,873,700 | 11% | \$ 27,764.00 |
| British Columbia | 4,622,600 | 13% | \$ 33,131.60 |
| Yukon | 36,100 | 0% | \$ 258.74 |
| Northwest Territories | 43,300 | 0% | \$ 310.34 |
| Nunavut | 33,700 | 0% | \$ 241.54 |
| Total | 34,880,600 | 100% | \$ 250,000.00 |
| Check (formula)- should equal 0 | | 0.00% | \$ - |

Appendix C

Original Proposal

Part 1

Create a concept of operations report (mirror where appropriate the POLIS committee) that would be sufficiently mature, that would include but not limited governance, structure, process, and operating budget to generate a decision by the joint committee to proceed with a joint national records management committee and if favorable inaugurate a join committee.

Estimated Budget \$ 11,000, University of the Fraser Valley

Considerations

There are three possible scenarios for consideration:

- Objective 1 is completely defeated a national records management is deferred.
- Objective 1 budget considerations contained with in the report cannot be achieved national records management is deferred.
- Objective 2 Grant funding might be realized through the Defence and Security Research Institute (DSRI) as a joint venture of DRDC and the joint committee.

Part 2

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs along with or with support for the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals might be eligible for transitional grant funding that could provide for an interim funding to implement and operate the national records management system for two to three years. Thereafter a joint funding model would need to be implemented.

Estimated Budget \$ 5,500, University of Fraser Valley, Grant writing for application to achieve interim funding to commence the National Records Management system.