

3.0 ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Overview

The Town of Oakville Fire Department is organized into two divisions: Operations & Emergency Planning and Support Services. The management and administration of the Department is made up of four senior management personnel: the Fire Chief, and three Deputy Fire Chiefs. The latter are each responsible for one of three divisions: Operations, Support Services, and Training and Prevention. The four senior management personnel are responsible for budget management, purchasing, facility and equipment maintenance programs in addition to numerous administrative responsibilities.

The Fire Chief reports to the Town of Oakville Council through the Commissioner of Community Services. The administrative division includes one Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief, one Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Chiefs as well as one communication technical support person as shown in the organization chart below. Each of the Fire Prevention and Training sections also has one Clerk/Typist for administrative support. The organization chart for the Oakville Fire Department is included in **Figure 3.1**.

The goals and objectives of the department administration include:

- Providing advice and direction to Oakville Town Council on fire protection and prevention/education requirements
- Management of the levels of service, budgets, collective agreements and safety issues of the Fire Department
- Management of communication and dispatching services
- Providing input into Provincial fire legislation, Municipal By-laws and standards which affect the delivery of fire protection

3.2 Current Analysis

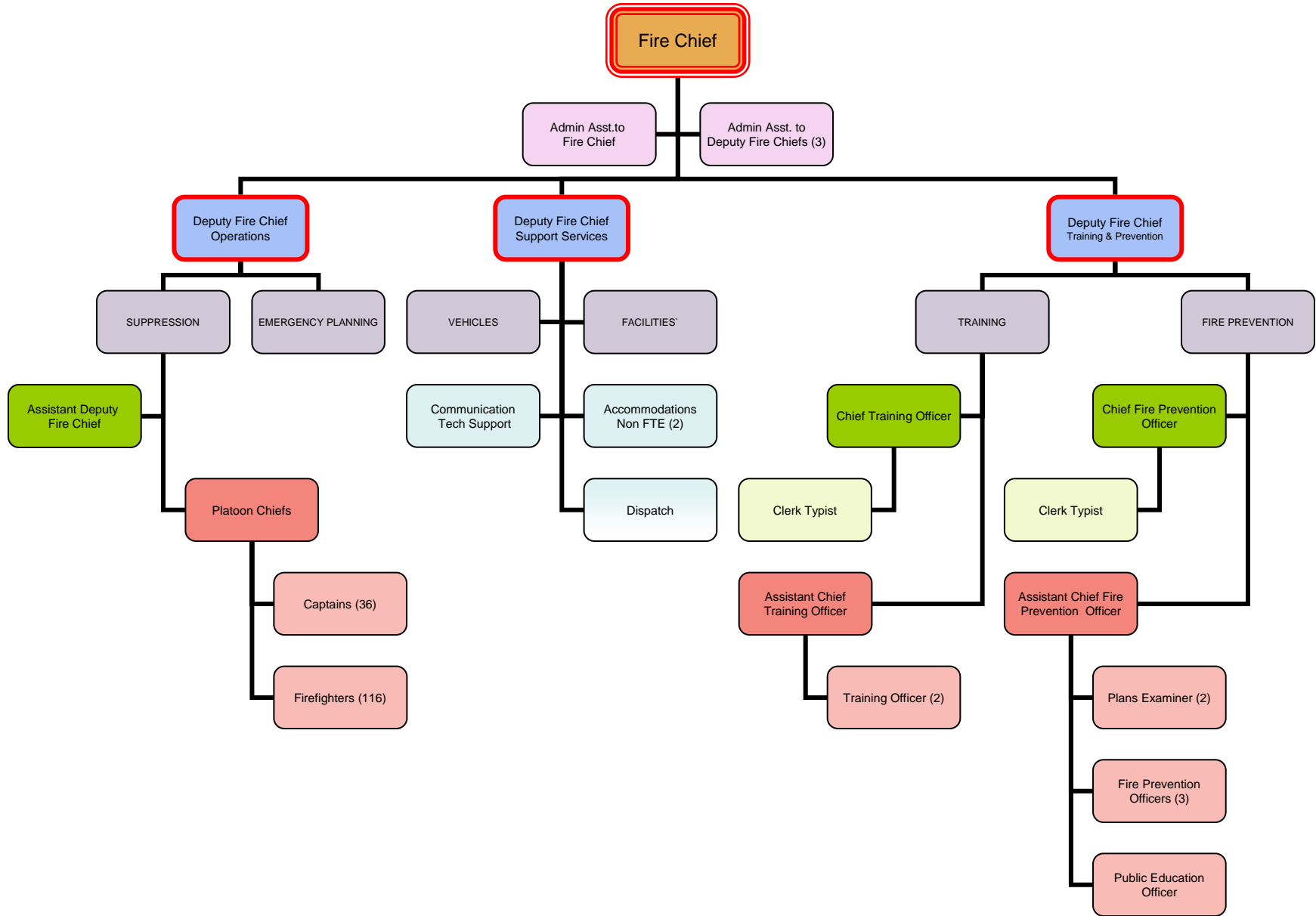
Based on a review of past evaluations, feedback from members of Oakville Fire Department and a broad understanding of the administrative requirements of a Fire Department, the following elements have been noted for review.

Staffing

The Oakville Fire Department is currently functioning with four non-union management employees: the Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief Operations, the Deputy Fire Chief Support Services and the Deputy Chief Training and Prevention. The Deputy Chief Support Services position was recently created and filled by the Assistant Deputy Chief. The role and responsibilities of the Assistant Deputy Chief were transferred to the Deputy Chief position since these were considered to be management functions (i.e. coordination of vehicle and apparatus maintenance, building and facility management, etc.).

The Assistant Deputy Chief position remains a union position and is in the current organization chart but is not currently filled. As such, the current management staff capacity has essentially remained unchanged under this new organizational structure except that a new management position has been created and staffed and a non-union position remains in the organization chart but is unstaffed.

Figure 3.1 - Oakville Fire Department Organizational Chart



With an annual budget of \$20 million dollars the Fire Chief is responsible for the management of 177 full time staff, as outlined in **Table 3.1**. He is a key participant of the Region of Halton Mutual Aid Plan and Program. The department responds to over 6,000 emergency calls per year.

Chief and Deputy Chiefs	4
Administration	5
Accommodations Non-FTE	(2)
Fire Prevention	7
Public Education	1
Training	4
Suppression	156
Assistant Deputy Chief	0 (Vacant)
Total Staffing:	177

During the interview phase of this study it was noted that the number of administrative staff supporting the Division has been the same for the past 25 years. As the Department and Divisional responsibilities have increased so have the workload and responsibilities for data entry, routine and urgent correspondence, reception, general phone duties and the numerous other support tasks that are required to manage the Oakville Fire Department. The number of support staff, however, has remained the same.

The roles and responsibilities of the administrative staff should be reviewed to determine whether workload can be reassigned or redistributed amongst the group. Current administrative responsibilities include, among others, human resource issues (promotions, overtime, leave), purchasing, financial records management, department statistics tracking and correspondence. It is possible that some tasks could be reduced or eliminated or that more efficient ways can be found to complete tasks (e.g. Information Technology (IT) solutions as discussed below under Records Management).

Succession planning is a concern in the area of department administration. To plan for the future, it is recommended that cross-training occur where practical so that more than one staff person is aware of how the more critical administrative tasks are performed in each area. This could also serve as an opportunity to identify efficiencies, better ways to operate and/or to eliminate any potential duplication of tasks.

It is recommended that one of the Deputy Chiefs lead the administrative review initiative with input from all department managers. An appreciation for all department responsibilities and staff roles is essential to effectively make recommendations to rationalize staff workload and potentially re-align staff roles and responsibilities. It is not possible to predict how the implementation of a records management system will impact administrative functions within the department.

The review should be carried out in conjunction with implementation of the records management solution. If the review does not lead to a reduction in administrative workload, consideration should be given to hiring additional administrative staff. The process for acquiring a records management system has been initiated. As such the administrative review should commence this year.

Currently, one company officer (i.e. on-duty firefighter) is responsible for overseeing the department's apparel and protective equipment stock and reporting back to management. Ideally, this function would be performed on all shifts to issue apparel and equipment more efficiently and to keep better control of

stock. The department formerly maintained a “Utility Person” position that carried out the above functions as well as shuttling fire trucks when repairs or maintenance were needed. Other department duties were also filled by the person in this role (e.g. minor repairs within fire stations).

Given the anticipated workload and current difficulties maintaining stock and distribution with different staff shifts, two options are possible. One option is to assign additional duties to on shift fire suppression staff so the functions can be carried out across all four shifts. In this case the Assistant Deputy Chief would maintain the role of “coordinator” across all shifts. Additional wages might be required to justify additional responsibilities for on-duty staff. The second option is to create a “Utility Person” position which would be staffed during regular hours (e.g. Monday to Friday). Creation of this position would free up more of the Deputy Chief Support Service’s time as the coordination role would not be as demanding. Each platoon would have the opportunity to resolve equipment issues during their daytime shifts (i.e. one week per month).

Currently, a member of the department on accommodated duty is responsible for the distribution and maintenance of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment. This person also assumes responsibility for related air systems and department defibrillators. Given the importance of breathing apparatus within structural fire fighting, this role has become essential. Currently, the following function are carried out: all fit testing for SCBA masks and N95 masks for use in pandemic, maintaining 75 firefighter air packs and 150 air bottles, maintaining air compressors at two stations, SCBA training, air bottle shuttling during fires and post-fire equipment checks. The department should establish an “Air Technician” position once the accommodated position lapses.

By-laws and Agreements

A number of sources were consulted to gain background information, including the Master Plan for Fire Protection (1996), Town of Oakville Integrated Business Plan (2004) and the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Municipal Fire Protection Information Survey. Information was also gathered during the interview phase of the study.

After reviewing data and information from these sources it would appear that there are some service by-laws that require revision or introduction. The Fire Department Enabling and Regulating By-law is out of date and should be revised. Updated by-laws are in place appointing the Fire Chief, the Deputy Chiefs and Chief Fire Prevention Officer, as well as Building Code Inspectors, Fire Prevention Officers, Plans Reviewers, the Chief Fire Prevention Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Prevention Officer. The Fire Department should ensure that these by-laws are updated as needed. A comparison of fees for fire service in similar communities was recently completed and a revised fee schedule adopted by Town Council.

The Oakville Fire Department participates in the Region of Halton Mutual Aid Plan. The Oakville Fire Chief is one of the key participants in the plan that provides for cross-municipality responses. In addition to allowing firefighting and emergency response upon request, it also provides the legal authority to provide aid in other municipalities. The Halton Plan also interacts with neighbouring municipality of Mississauga through the Region of Peel Mutual Aid Plan.

In addition to the Halton Mutual Aid Plan, the Town of Oakville has also approved separate by-laws which allow mutual aid with adjacent communities. The present mutual aid by-laws appear to be up to date.

To ensure that by-laws are compliant with the Ontario Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) 1997 it is recommended that the Oakville Fire Department communicates with the Town of Oakville Legal Services and consults appropriate Public Fire Safety Guidelines from the Office of the Fire Marshal of

Ontario (OFM). These guidelines provide key direction to municipalities with respect to fire protection. In the absence of other regulations, they represent the best available direction upon which fire departments in Ontario base their service.

Policies and Procedures

Many of the Fire Department's operating guidelines, policies and procedures are either out of date or do not exist. Depending on the subject matter, this can be a management and/or occupational health and safety concern. A lack of up-to-date operating guidelines, policies and/or procedures can impact the effective and efficient training of firefighters. This is important as it affects the ability to meet the increasing demand for specialized training. Updated operating guidelines must be consistent with the Office of the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Guidelines and with the Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 21 Guidance Notes.

The process of updating and maintaining operating guidelines, policies and procedures for a fire service is very time consuming. In addition to subject matter expertise, it requires communication and consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that legal, risk management, training and occupational health and safety requirements are met. This review should include, but not be limited to, a complete analysis of the current operating guidelines, policies and procedures for all department sections. Given the nature of this work, consideration should be given to using contract or additional personnel to ensure that all operating guidelines, policies and procedures are up-to-date. If additional personnel were to be assigned, the Deputy Chief or a new Executive Officer position would be good resources to assign this work to. An Executive Officer would be part of the Fire Department management team and would add more capacity to the current structure this is further discussed below.

It is recommended that a system be developed that reviews, develops, implements and maintains all department operating guidelines, policies and procedures. This system would outline an on-going process that ensures that the operating guidelines, policies and procedures are current and relevant to the meet the intense population and municipal growth that the Town of Oakville is facing. This system can be centralized, or be assumed by each of the department areas (e.g. Administration, Training, Fire Prevention, Public Education) with each being responsible for ensuring that their respective operating guidelines, policies and procedures are up-to-date.

Records Management

All areas of the Fire Department have an immediate need for a computer-based records management system. Dispatch and communication issues were under review at the time of writing and records management is an important consideration for any decisions related to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). In addition to the lack of an electronic records management system, many of the vital department records and documents (e.g. fire prevention inspection reports) are in hard copy in a centralized location, which raises concerns with respect to lack of secure storage space and lack of back-up copies. This is discussed further in ***Section 8.0 Communications and Technology***.

Administrative Workspace

At present, the administration offices are located in Headquarters on Randall Street (Station 3). The current offices in the Headquarters are small, storage space is very limited, and there is no separate meeting area or boardroom for visitors or planning sessions. The non-management administration staff workspace has reached its capacity which has resulted in there being a very small reception area for visitors. The administration staff workspaces occupy most of the front entrance to the building.

Headquarters is an aging structure and the current workspace will continue to be an issue if additional

administration or emergency management staff is hired over the coming years. Workspace concerns should be addressed as new facilities for the department are planned and built (e.g. station relations or new stations).

Fire Suppression Management

As the Town grows the Fire Department will want to consider different operating schemes to cover expanded territory and increased staff resources. Common to many larger fire departments, the Town could create two operational districts for the delivery of suppression services. Each district would need a Platoon Chief to oversee the daily operations of the districts whereas there is currently one Platoon Chief position per shift for the entire municipality.

Operating under two districts would require the addition of four more Platoon Chiefs (i.e. one per shift). A supervisor would then be required to manage the eight Platoon Chiefs and would have responsibility for staffing issues (e.g. vacation requests, sick leave and overtime) and other operational issues that will increase as the fire suppression force increases. One option to staff this supervisory role includes filling the currently vacant Assistant Deputy Fire Chief position which would give the Fire Department some flexibility. Such a position would be staffed during weekdays and would be a cost-effective alternative to an alternative staffing option of having an “on shift” supervisory position which would require four full-time staff (i.e. one for each shift).

Either of these options will satisfy the intended purpose and address increased territory and staffing. Workload issues with the current operating scheme (i.e. one district) should be monitored as new North Oakville fire stations and related staff are put into operation.

Emergency Management

With the introduction of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, the Deputy Fire Chief Operations has been assigned the role of Community Emergency Management Co-coordinator (CEMC), which requires on-going involvement in maintaining, testing and training of the emergency response plan, as well as completing increasingly strenuous mandatory *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMA) compliance directives.

The standards for each level of the community emergency management program as well as the status of the Town of Oakville’s Emergency Management Program are outlined in **Table 3.2**.

The Town of Oakville’s Emergency Management Program is up-to-date and compliant with the “Essential” standards set out in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. However, as the Town of Oakville advances towards the “Enhanced” and then the “Comprehensive” levels, the responsibilities, complexity and time commitment of staff to complete and maintain all elements increases dramatically. Please note that Emergency Management Ontario has not established dates for the completion of the Enhanced and Comprehensive level requirements; however each municipality is required to maintain the requirements of the Essential Level each year. Completing and maintaining the responsibilities outlined in the *Act* will ensure the Town of Oakville is able to mitigate, respond and recovery to an emergency in the most effective and efficient manner.

In a municipality the size of Oakville, with rapidly expanding development and growth, there is a necessity to recognize that the Fire Chief is ideally suited to be the *supervisor* and *administrator* of the community emergency management program, but not hold the day-to-day responsibilities of the CEMC.

TABLE 3.2 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Program Level	Element	Status
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of a Community Emergency Management Coordinator • Formation of a of an emergency management program committee • Publication of an approved emergency response plan • Development of an appropriate community emergency operations centre • Identification of critical infrastructure • Conduct of an annual exercise to evaluate the emergency response plan • Identification of individuals to act as emergency information staff • Development and implementation of an emergency management public awareness program • Conduct of an annual review of the emergency management program 	<p>Completed 2004</p> <p>Annual maintenance and re-validation continues.</p>
Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the requirements under the Essential Level • Publication of an enhanced emergency response plan to include supporting plans for high risks • Publication of supporting plan for the dissemination of emergency information including the designation and arrangements for a local information centre • Development of an enhanced emergency operations centre • Development and implementation of an annual emergency management training program • Development and implementation of an annual emergency management exercise program • Development and implementation of a public education program based on identified high risks • Development and implementation of an annual self assessment process 	Ongoing
Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the requirements under the Essential and Enhanced Level • Development and implementation of an Incident Management System • Development and implementation of a prevention/mitigation strategy and plan for identified high risks • Publication of a recovery plan for identified high risks • Develop a response strategy for identified hazards • Implementation of guidelines for risk-based land use planning • Designation of dangerous goods routes • Development and implementation of a detailed risk based public education program • Development of a comprehensive community evacuation plan • Designation of an emergency management week • Development and implementation of an external assessment process to determine the quality and effectiveness of the emergency management program 	Ongoing

The delivery and implementation of the emergency management program on a day-to-day basis and under emergency conditions requires the equivalent of a dedicated staff person to fulfill these requirements. Such a role would be more suitable for an emergency manager that understands the roles of all Town departments in addition to those expected of the Fire Department.

To ensure that there is a successful emergency management program, there is a necessity to either assign an employee to the sole function of emergency management, or distribute the recurring tasks of training, testing, exercise, public awareness, evacuation procedures, schedule maintenance, agency coordination and regular program reviews to a number of staff to ensure that the Town of Oakville is fulfilling its requirements under the *Act*.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

The CEMC operates day-to-day out of the Oakville Fire Department Headquarters; however during an emergency the location is switched to the Town Hall EOC. The EOC is adequate in size and is equipped with technological equipment to manage an emergency. It is important to note that the EOC has full backup power capabilities. During an emergency, it is possible to isolate half of the Town Hall so that the regular business of the community can continue.

It was noted that while equipment and technology was adequate in the EOC, it lacked the ability for multiple computers and laptops to link into the Town network. The ability for personnel in the EOC to access critical records is crucial to the decision making process during an emergency and this deficiency should be reviewed as soon as possible.

The CEMC plays a vital role in the management and operations of an EOC during an emergency. Currently the emergency plan states that the CEMC role will be fulfilled by the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief or other Senior Fire Department Staff (in addition to their role within the department). During an emergency the CEMC should be solely dedicated to their specific coordinating and logistical roles and responsibilities in the EOC. The primary CEMC position inside the EOC should therefore not be fulfilled by the Fire Chief or Deputy Fire Chief Operations, but instead should fall to the “emergency manager” to ensure that each member can concentrate on their respective emergency roles and responsibilities clearly outlined in the emergency plan. However, the CEMC position can be assigned to either of the other two Deputy Fire Chiefs, another Senior Fire Department staff (e.g. Assistant Deputy Chief), an Executive Officer or someone outside the Fire Department (i.e. from another Town department) to ensure continuity during an emergency. The two alternates for CEMC could be either of the Deputy Chiefs or other senior fire department staff.

In the event that an emergency affects the immediate area of the Town Hall, a secondary site for the EOC is located at the Halton Regional Headquarters. There is a high probability that the Regional EOC would also be activated in the event of local emergency in Oakville. The Regional EOC might not be able to accommodate an influx of personnel from both the Municipal and Regional Emergency Control and Support Groups to effectively co-ordinate the response and recovery to an emergency. The Fire Master Plan process includes a station location study and considers the development of a secondary EOC at one of the existing or new locations. This multi-use space could also be considered as the primary EOC some time in the future.

Emergency Plan

The emergency plan is designed in a generic fashion which allows it to respond to situations that are unexpected and require a coordinated response and recovery. The plan is based on a hazard identification and risk assessment (HIRA), which is a required component under the *Emergency Management and Civil*

Protection Act.

The plan also includes a primary Emergency Control Group and Emergency Support Group, which consists of all of the significant stakeholders responsible for the management of the community and adjacent areas. This group would be assembled if the emergency plan is activated to approve the decisions required to control the situations that arise during an emergency.

The emergency plan includes a comprehensive public awareness and education process. Extensive emergency information is available to the public through the Town's website. The website should be reviewed and updated on a regularly scheduled basis and have the capability to become a public information source prior to, and during an emergency.

As outlined in the plan, the CEMC schedules regular EOC training and exercises. There is scheduled training for Public Alerting, Reception Centre and Dispatch Centre procedures. The CEMC also provides training to the Emergency Control Group and Emergency Support Group. However, with the growing administrative responsibilities in the Fire Department this training is not being fulfilled.

It was identified that there is an evacuation element in the plan, but the actual policy, plans and procedures have not been written, communicated or tested. The completion of this component of the emergency plan should become an immediate priority. Evacuation planning is also a requirement under the Comprehensive Level of the standard.

At the present time the Town of Oakville emergency management program is meeting the minimum requirements of the Essential Level under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. To ensure that an acceptable level of emergency management exists and future legislated requirements are thoroughly developed, implemented and maintained a series of emergency management recommendations have added to the summary of recommendations found below.

Fire Department Management

Workload for the Fire Department management staff currently exceeds capacity and strategic initiatives are not being addressed. Some of the significant demands that must be planned include new stations and staffing for North Oakville, undertaking an administrative review and implementing records management capabilities within the department. Two main options exist to deal with Fire Department staffing at the management level, given recent re-organization. The first option is to fill the Assistant Deputy Chief position and the second is to create an Executive Officer position. As time passes both positions may become necessary, however, in the interim it may be beneficial to fill one of the two positions and monitor workload as additional stations and staff are added to the Fire Department over the coming years.

Filling the Assistant Deputy Chief position now will require that any routine or non-management tasks be transferred from the existing management staff to free more of their time for the administrative review, planning for new stations and other such strategic initiatives. It will also mean that additional on-shift staff be enlisted to assist with stock control and distribution as described earlier.

Creating a new Executive Officer position while leaving the Assistant Deputy Chief position vacant is the second option. This would require hiring a "Utility Person" for stock control and distribution as the coordination role would not be played by the Assistant Deputy Chief to support making do with on-shift suppression staff for this function. It would be acknowledged that Platoon Chiefs report directly to the Deputy Chief Operations under this option. The Executive Officer would undertake the updating of operational guidelines, policies and procedures as opposed to hiring on contract for this work. Other special projects would also be assigned to the Executive Officer.

The Fire Department can choose either of these management options. Regardless of which option is selected, the Fire Department should re-assess workload and responsibilities for all senior positions once activities related to growth are fully underway (e.g. construction of new stations and hiring of new staff).

Summary of Recommendations

1. Undertake an administrative review of the fire department with input from senior management and administrative staff, in conjunction with implementation of the records management solution. If the review does not lead to a reduction in administrative workload, consideration should be given to hiring additional administrative support staff. Depending on the outcome of the review, it may be necessary to adjust or redefine roles and responsibilities of administrative staff. Additional analytical support for the department could be required as it transitions to electronic records management.
2. Consideration should be given to either creating a “Utility Person” position or filling the Assistant Deputy Chief position in conjunction with assigning additional duties to on-shift fire suppression staff to undertake coordination and distribution of stock for personal protective equipment and other duties related to firefighter equipment. There will also be a need to review the need for an “Air Technician” position once the accommodated position fulfilling this role lapses.
3. The Fire Department should initiate a review and update of all fire service by-laws and agreements. They should also begin the process of introducing and updating operating guidelines, procedures and policies. A new analyst position (temporary, term, or contract) could be added to further the development and implementation of these operating guidelines, or the duties could be assigned to a Deputy Chief or a new Executive Officer position.. A system should be developed to ensure periodic review all operating guidelines, policies and procedures for the Oakville Fire Department.
4. A space needs assessment should be undertaken to determine the requirements and the ways to accommodate current and future needs for the entire Department. Office space at Department headquarters are inadequate and given the additional staff recommended and station relocations planned, a comprehensive review is necessary.
5. The Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) role can be re-assigned to either of the other two Deputy Fire Chiefs (i.e. Support Services or Training and Prevention), another Senior Fire Department staff (e.g. Assistant Deputy Chief), an Executive Officer or someone outside the Fire Department (i.e. from another Town department) to ensure continuity during an emergency. Given that no new capacity has been added within Fire Department management despite recent organizational changes options to be pursued include a new CEMC position within the Fire Department, division of tasks among several senior Fire Department staff or transfer of responsibilities to staff in a different Town department.

The CEMC should prepare a three year emergency management work plan to maintain the requirements under the Essential Level as well as begin to develop and implement the requirements under the Enhanced and Comprehensive Levels should the Town want to pursue an increased level of readiness. Also, a written plan and testing process should be completed for evacuation procedures as outlined in the Town of Oakville Emergency Response Plan. The Town should consider locating a multi-use back-up EOC at an existing and/or new fire station and upgrading the Town Hall Emergency Operations Centre to allow the use of multiple computers.