

Meeting Date: September 4, 2023
Department: Fire Services
Report No.: FIRE-2023-07
Submitted by: Brent Smith, Fire Chief / Director of Fire Services
Approved by: Trisha McKibbin, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Purchase of 2nd Set of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council receive report FIRE-2023-07 for information; and THAT: Council approve the purchase of a 2nd set of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for every member of the department, the purchase cost to be included in the 2024 budget as well as redirection of 2023 Capital monies.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Local Infrastructure: Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc are supported by reliable, financially responsible and well-maintained infrastructure networks.

Growth Management: Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources.

BACKGROUND:

As a result of the council meeting Report # Fire -2023-05 – Health & Safety Cause and Concerns, it was deemed that the highest hazard to Firefighter's Health is the inability at each station to decontaminate PPE quickly to ensure firefighters are readily available.

Having a second set of PPE provides an increased level of protection for firefighters so they do not re-expose themselves to harmful toxins and carcinogens by reusing PPE that has been recently worn. It also maintains the response capabilities of the department in circumstances where a second response occurs. If contaminated PPE is not cleaned properly and then is stored in the firefighter PPE gear racks, it now cross contaminates the PPE being stored adjacent to it. This exposes firefighters to known carcinogens where alternative measures that can be achieved through a second set of gear.

NFPA Standard 1851 prescribes advanced cleaning to be performed annually, which the department complies with, however it is now recommending moving to two advanced cleanings a year as a best practice. This would further compound the issue of proper gear being available, due to the one-week turnaround time of PPE to be returned to the station.

By purchasing a second set of PPE for fire fighters, this would be moving the department closer to achieving its goals under the OH&S Act, Section 25, ss. 2, (h), *“take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker;”*.

COMMENTS:

The 2nd set of gear will consist of a Bunker coat, bunker pants, gloves, and balaclava.

CONSULTATION:

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/firefighter-guidance-notes>

Ontario Section 21 Firefighter Guidance Notes – Firefighters Cancer Prevention Checklist

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Bunker Coat/Pants - \$ 4000.00

Gloves- \$ 130.00 each

Balaclava - \$ 165.00 each

Total cost per 1 complete set of PPE \$ 4295.00, 80 members, Grand total \$ 343,600.00

Director of Finance to speak to financial implications as well as how monies can be redirected from 2023 capital with remaining balance assigned to the 2024 multi-year budget.