



2023

Essex Fire and Rescue Services ANNUAL REPORT

Town of Essex

essex



Enhancing Public and Firefighter Safety is Priority #1



Enhancing fire safety through Fire Code Compliance inspections.



Enhancing fire safety through Public Education.

Report Overview

The Essex Fire and Rescue Services is responsible for delivering fire suppression and emergency response, fire prevention and public education programs in accordance with the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. This report provides an overview of the activities associated with the Department's Suppression, Emergency Response and Fire Prevention Division in 2023.

Message from the Fire Service Leaders

Madame Mayor S. Bondy and Members of Council:

The information contained in this report is a summary of the activities of Essex Fire and Rescue Services (EFRS) for the year ending December 31, 2023.

In 2023 the number of incidents reported to the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office was 394, an increase of 17% from 2022. Examining the occurrences of the past year, a significant factor contributing to the rise was the occurrence of three major storm events in 2023. These events encompassed an ice storm, tornado and an intense rainfall storm that led to inland flooding. EFRS managed a total of 64 calls during these incidents. If these events had not occurred, our call numbers would have been nearly identical to last year's, differing by only 2 responses.

Actual fire responses totaled 34 in 2023, approximately 9% of the Department's total calls. The fire dollar loss for 2023 was estimated at \$1,751,500.00.

Highlights in 2023 include:

- Delivery of a new support apparatus at Station 3,
- Partnership with Southwest Fire Academy to develop a memorandum of understanding agreement to provide training to EFRS and neighbouring fire departments.
- Continued upgrading of the department's personal protective gear program,
- Implemented naloxone administration to enhance our tiered medical response,
- Ongoing pager replacement program,
- Nozzle, hose, and appliance replacement,
- Development of a Master Fire Plan & Community Risk Assessment,
- Upgrading of the Town's Emergency Response Plan; and
- Involvement in provincial and national associations, OAFCA, OMFPFA, CAFC, and IAFC.

In summary, Essex Fire Rescue Services personnel worked hard through 2023 providing extraordinary service to the residents, businesses, and visitors of the Town of Essex. The coming year will prove challenging for staff as they work to reduce the risk of fire in the Town of Essex and participate in several key projects such as implementing the recommendations of the Fire Master Plan, service vehicle and equipment replacements, firefighter recruitment and continuing to create a proficient service delivery model.

Thank you for your continued support to Essex Fire & Rescue.

Our Principles

Our Vision

The vision of Essex Fire and Rescue Services is to be a well-planned, well-trained, and well-equipped emergency response agency where the safety and well-being of all involved in any emergency response is paramount.

Our Mission

The mandate of Essex Fire and Rescue Services is to provide fire protection services and emergency response, public fire and life safety education, and fire prevention initiatives to protect the lives and property of the citizens, businesses, and visitors to the Town of Essex.

Our Values

The Essex Fire and Rescue Service values:

- The public's trust and the opportunity to serve,
- A work environment that promotes health, wellness and harmony, respect for each person, and is free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation,
- Leadership committed to the Department's Mission,
- A diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves,
- A highly trained professional workforce; and
- Teamwork to effectively achieve the Department's Mission.

Fire Stations

Three fire stations are strategically located throughout the Municipality:

Station 1

55 Alice Street North, Essex



Station 2

3575 North Malden Road,
Gesto



Station 3

25 Centre Street East,
Harrow



Command Vehicles



Meet the Current Essex Fire Rescue Services Team

Fire Chief	Deputy Fire Chief	Assistant Deputy Fire Chief
Jason Pillon	Jacey Brockman	Vacant

Administrative Staff

Administrative Assistant	Firefighter
Glenda Beneteau	Kevin Fram

District Chiefs

Station 1	Station 2	Station 3
Rick Bonneau	Ed Lepain	Elwood Defour

Station #1 – Essex



Officers:

- Rick Bonneau, District Chief
- Doug McCormick, Captain
- Mark Sweeney, Captain
- Michael Rounding, Captain
- Sarah Newton, Captain

Firefighters:

- Aaron Langlois
- Adam Mitchell
- Andrew Westwood
- Brandon Chartier
- Derek Deacon
- Gary Armstrong
- Jason Blais
- Ken Broughton
- Kevin Sinn
- Rob Archambault
- Trevor Menard
- Austin Power-Wagenaar

Station #2 – Gesto



Officers:

- Ed Lepain, Fire Chief
- Justin Pulleyblank, Captain
- Mike Bosse, Captain
- Joe Meloche, Captain
- James Meloche, Captain

Firefighters:

- Angela Lang
- Brian King
- Chris Meloche
- Cole Freeman
- Debbie Dufour
- Dennis Lang
- Francis Bosse
- Jeff Stratichuk
- Kyle Renaud
- Kyle Vermast
- Logan Malenfant
- Walter Howson

Station #3 – Harrow



Officers:

- Elwood Defour, District Chief
- Gerry Vigneux, Captain
- Henry Blumenreder, Captain
- Mike Ryan, Captain
- Ric Keller, Captain

Firefighters:

- Alex Dunmore
- Brayden Uttley
- Daniel (DJ) Lacey
- Jason Hernandez
- Josh Cookson
- Kevin Mutterback
- Kyle Renaud
- Milan Tot
- Robert Welzel
- Rodney Klie
- Shawn Holliday
- Shawn Marontate
- Tom Abbott

Core Services

Fire Suppression and Emergency Response Core Services

Fire suppression services are delivered in both an offensive and defensive mode. This encompasses search and rescue operations, forcible entry, ventilation, protecting exposures, property conservation including salvage and overhaul as appropriate.

Emergency pre-hospital medical care is provided through acts such as defibrillation, standard first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Special rescue services include performing extrication using hand tools, air bags and heavy hydraulic tools as required. Water/Ice Rescue services are provided by those firefighters who are competently trained to perform the requested level of service.

Defensive hazardous material emergency response occurs at an Awareness Level by the firefighters.

Fire Training and Development

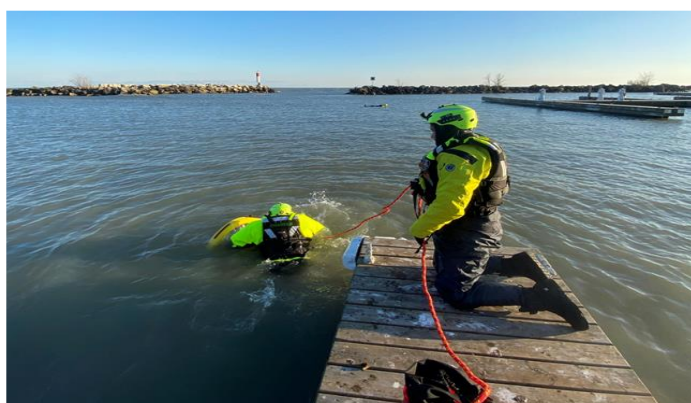
Training is the only way to ensure that Essex firefighters are well-prepared to protect the community. When combined with adequate apparatus and the necessary equipment: safe, effective, and realistic training is essential in preparing the fire service to achieve its mission of preserving life and property.

The department's goal is to present a wide variety of training evolutions which provide new skills, while also ensuring the re-evaluation of training for previously taught subjects.

In 2023 Essex Fire provided the below training to personnel:

- NFPA 1021 – Standard for Fire Officer Level I
- NFPA 1021– Standard for Fire Officer Level II
- NFPA 1521 – Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer
- Standard First Aid and CPR Re-Certification
- Advanced Auto Extrication
- Ammonia Awareness Training
- Peer Support Training – Wounded Warriors Canada
- Water and Ice Rescue Training – In 2023 we continued water-based training for our team, this training will continue annually to ensure we meet needs of the community.

Fire Training Pictures 2023



Essex Fire Provincial Certification

Firefighters:

Currently staffing 36 Firefighters. Of the 36 Firefighters, 35 are certified Firefighters. All Firefighters have been given the opportunity to certify and are required to be certified by 2026.

- Two Levels – NFPA 1001 Level I & II

Fire Officers

Currently staffing 15 Officers. All officers are certified to Level I. District Chiefs attended NFPA 1021 level II in 2023 and are currently awaiting their course results. An additional 12 firefighters also received level I certification in 2023.

- Four Levels – NFPA 1021 Level I – IV

Fire Service Instructor

37 personnel are certified or compliant to this standard.

- Two Levels – NFPA 1041 Level I & II

Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator

25 personnel are certified; the balance of the department is considered compliant to the Standard.

- Level I - NFPA 1002 (Pump Driver Operations)
- Level II - NFPA 1002 (Aerial Driver/Operator)

Technical Rescuer

Currently 10 personnel are trained to the standard, no certification has been provided provincially to date. Provincial certification expected to be completed by 2028.

- NFPA 1006 & 1670 - Water & Ice Rescue (Awareness Level, Technician Level)

Peer Support

Currently a team consisting of 10 personnel are trained to provide peer support. This team provides emotional support, which is an important contributor to recovery, peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common and most importantly inspires healing and hope. Firefighter Health and Mental Wellness/ Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) - Mental illness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Occupational Stress Injuries are on the rise in the fire service. This leadership training takes a strong foundation of promoting and maintaining resilience in oneself and now applies this information to the leadership role. The goal for EFRS is to provide annual updated training to members so they can put this knowledge into practice which assists to develop and maintain their wellbeing. The department currently has a peer support team consisting of 10 members. Peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, and emotional, social, or practical help for each other.

Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR)

Currently 3 personnel are trainers for this program which is an educational-based program designed to address and promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness in a first responder setting.

Emergency Response Statistics

In 2023, crews were dispatched to a total of 394 incidents.

Firefighters respond to and apply their skills and experience to a variety of response types.

The following are examples of typical responses:

Fire and Explosions

Instance of destructive and uncontrolled burning involving structures, vehicles, and open area fires, including explosion of combustible solids, liquids or gasses which may or may not have resulted in a dollar loss or an explosion or rupture because of pressure with no presence of fire.

Outdoor, No Loss Fires

Uncontrolled fires, outdoors, that did not result in a loss, injury or fatality and is not suspected to be caused by arson, vandalism or children playing.

Burning (controlled)

Complaint call related to outdoor controlled burning, authorized or unauthorized. Fire Department did not take suppression action.

CO (carbon monoxide) False Call

A call where it is determined that the detection equipment malfunctioned or there was a perceived emergency - no CO detected.

False Fire Call

Alarm activation or fire call that when investigated, is determined to be a result of equipment failure, malicious/prank, perceived emergency, or accidental activation of alarm by a person.

Medical/Resuscitator Calls

Includes a response to a patient(s) suffering from asphyxia, respiratory condition, convulsions, epileptic, diabetic seizure, electric shock, traumatic shock, heart attack, stroke, drug related incidents, cuts, abrasions, fractures, burns, person fainted, nausea and pre-hospital care such as administering oxygen, CPR, defibrillation or basic first aid.

Other Response

Assistance to other Fire Departments, calls cancelled on route, non-fire incidents where an illegal grow operation or drug operation was discovered.

Overpressure Rupture/Explosion (no fire)

Includes a response for ruptures to steam boilers; hot water tanks or other pressure vessels due to internal pressure, or any munition explosions (bombs, dynamite, and similar explosives).

Pre-Fire Conditions

Incidents with no fire that involve heat or potential pre-fire conditions e.g., pot on stove, cooking - smoke or steam, lightning, fireworks.

Public Hazard Call

Includes a response for spills and/or leaks of a hazardous product such as natural gas; propane, refrigerant, miscellaneous/unknown, gasoline or fuel, toxic chemical, radio-active material, power lines down or arcing, bomb threat, explosive removal standby, CO (carbon monoxide) or other public hazards.

Rescue Call

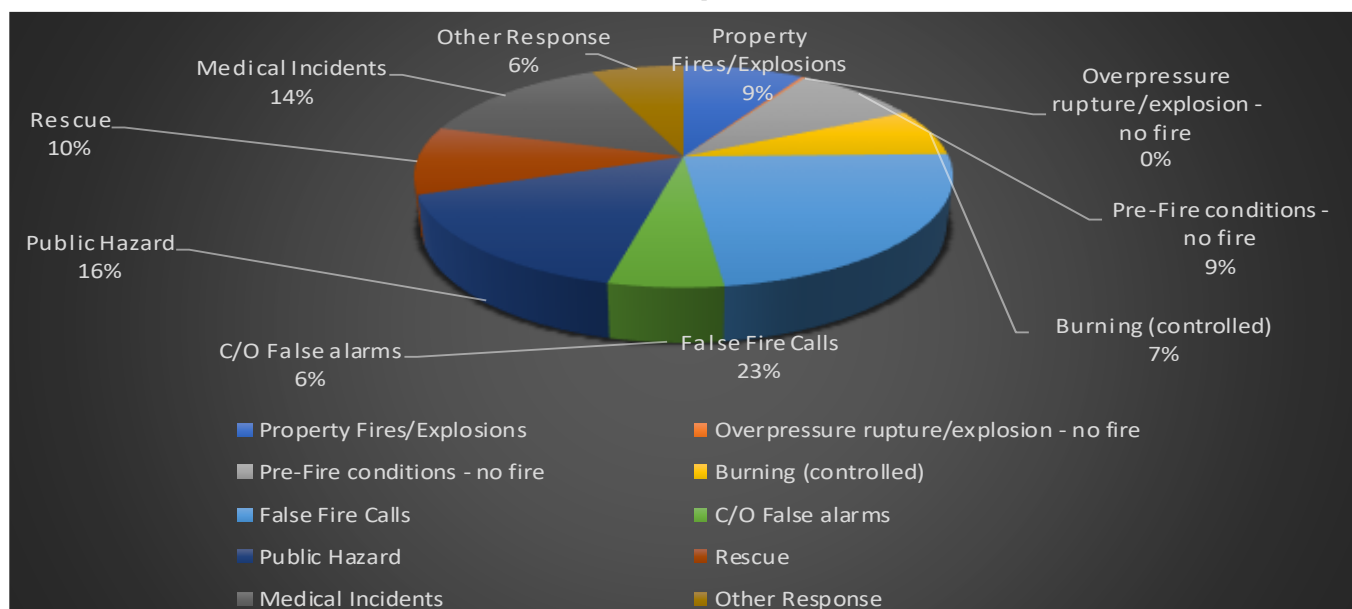
A call for a person in danger due to their proximity to the occurrence and who is unable to self-evacuate and is assisted by Fire Department personnel e.g., vehicle accident, building collapse, commercial/industrial accident, home/residential accident, persons trapped in an elevator, water rescue or water/ice rescue.



Emergency Incident Breakdown

Incident Types	2023	2022	2023% of Total	Difference from 2022
Property Fires/Explosions	34	38	8.63%	-3.55%
Overpressure rupture/explosion - no fire	1	0	0.25%	0.25%
Pre-Fire conditions - no fire	35	28	8.88%	-0.09%
Burning (controlled)	27	20	6.85%	0.44%
False Fire Calls	92	79	23.35%	-1.97%
C/O False alarms	23	15	5.84%	1.03%
Public Hazard	62	34	15.74%	4.84%
Rescue	39	39	9.90%	0.00%
Medical Incidents	55	42	13.96%	0.50%
Other Response	26	33	6.60%	-3.98%

2023 Responses



Station	Responses in 2023	Assisting other Essex Stations
Station 1 – Essex	165	1
Station 2 – Gesto	61	16
Station 3 – Harrow	168	1
Headquarters	0	0
Specialty Team	0	0
Total	394	18



On average, Essex Fire and Rescue Services crews respond to 1.07 incidents per day.



Essex Fire and Rescue Services responded to 34 fires in 2023



Provincial – Top 5 Ignition Sources of Residential Fires



1. Cooking 30.8% - Be alert when cooking and keep things that can catch fire, away from cooking area.



2. Smoking 11.6%- If you smoke, smoke outside, and before you throw away cigarette butts, make sure they are out.



3. Electrical 7.8%- Ensure electrical cords are not running across doorways or under carpets and have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.



4. Appliances 4.9%- Don't overload your dryer and make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry.
5. Candles 3.6%- Blow out all candles when you leave a room or go to bed and keep candles at least 30cms away from anything that can burn.

Fire Prevention and Public Education

Fire Prevention Division Core Services

Inspections arising from complaint, request, retrofit, or self-initiated and fire investigations shall be provided in accordance with the FPPA and Departmental policies.

New construction inspections and plan reviews of buildings under construction in matters respective of fire protection systems within buildings shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable By-law and operating procedures.

Distribution of fire and life safety information and public education programs shall be administered in accordance with the FPPA and policies of the Department.

Smoke Alarm/Carbon Monoxide Program



Our in-service smoke and carbon monoxide alarm program continued throughout 2023. When our fire crew attend an incident, we ask the homeowner to inspect their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are not expired and operational. If their alarms are expired or inoperable, we leave a loaner to the homeowner, once they obtain a new alarm, they either return it or we attend and pick up our loaner alarm and confirm that new alarms have been installed. In 2023 we have assisted 40 households in our community with this program.

In 2023, Essex Fire visited approximately 283 homes within our community to discuss the importance of installing and maintaining working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and fire prevention. As we inspect homes to determine compliance with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms within the provisions of the Fire Code. During inspections it was found that approximately 147 homes were found to be compliant and the balance of homes we either assisted with new batteries, alarm placement relocation and or new alarm installations to replaced defective or expired alarms.

In Ontario, adults 65 years and older are at higher risk of dying in a fire than any other age group. Often these fires happen where people feel the safest – in their homes, many are preventable. In 2023 we continued our residential Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Awareness Program. This past year the Rotary Club of Harrow made a generous donation of \$4750.00 to acquire battery-powered smoke/carbon monoxide alarms for the residents of The Town of Essex. Throughout this period, team members distributed these alarms to seniors and all residents of the community. For those who couldn't install the alarms themselves, Essex Fire staff aided with the installation process. In addition, thanks to Project Zero funded by Enbridge Gas, we secured 210 combination alarms, further supporting this initiative throughout 2024.



Fire Prevention

Essex Fire and Rescue Services strives to develop proactive risk mitigation awareness through enhanced prevention, investigation, and enforcement strategies. This is done through a variety of functions while always having two goals in mind; preventing preventable fires and educating the public in fire safety so the tragedies of fire are minimized. The following explains the number of inspections performed and public educations activities attended through 2023.



Conducted 15 vulnerable occupancy inspections (including care occupancies, care and treatment occupancies, or retirement homes) to protect the most vulnerable residences in the community.



Conducted 22 complaint-based inspections and 91 request inspections.



Essex Fire is continuing to work with the Windsor Essex County Health Unit, conducting annual inspections at Temporary Foreign Working housing locations. 24 inspections were carried out in 2023. During our inspections we have begun leaving easy-to-read handouts and safety tip sheets in other languages.



Essex Fire conducts annual routine inspections, these inspections can include but are not limited to schools, day care centres, gas stations, apartment buildings and restaurants. In 2023 Essex Fire staff conducted a total of 330 inspections. Out of the 330 inspections 109 were classified as routine.

In 2022, Essex Council gave approval to bylaw No. 2025 which regulated the operation of Short-Term Rental Units (STRU) within the municipality. Part of this licensing included a site fire inspection by fire prevention. In 2023 Essex Fire conducted 35 STRU inspections and are continuing these inspections in 2024.

Vulnerable occupancies – The mandatory compliance date for the Qualification of Persons Responsible for Implementing and Approving Fire Safety Plans in Vulnerable Occupancies was January 1st, 2017. This requires persons responsible for implementing fire safety plans in vulnerable occupancies to have successfully completed a qualification course acceptable to the Fire Marshal. It also requires Chief Fire Officials who are responsible for approving such fire safety plans to have completed a qualification course acceptable to the Fire Marshal.

Vulnerable occupancies in the context of these requirements include the following:

- Hospitals,
- Long Term Care Homes (previously called Nursing Homes or Homes for the Aged),
- Retirement Homes regulated under the Retirement Homes Act, 2010, and,
- Care Occupancies

These facilities must annually comply with above qualifications, fire inspections, fire drills and fire safety plan reviews.

Public Education

After the Fire

One of the most opportune times to educate the public about fire safety is in the days and weeks immediately following a fire incident in the community. This is the time when fire safety is on people's minds, and they are most receptive to fire prevention and safety messages. In the Municipality, Essex Fire continues its "After the Fire" Program. As part of the program, fire personnel present at the incident provide homeowners with valuable information on what to do after the fire, the following day or shortly after the fire personnel will go door to door in that neighbourhood to educate the public on fire safety.

Emergency Preparedness Week

Emergency Preparedness week is an annual federal-provincial-territorial initiative to promote emergency preparedness across Canada. Essex Fire uses social media to raise awareness and promote Everbridge which is a key link to deliver critical life-saving emergency information. Emergency preparedness week traditionally takes place the first week of May.

Fire Prevention Week

Fire prevention week is an annual campaign that unites all fire services across North America regarding fire safety. During this week, several initiatives take place which include a colouring contest in the community schools for grades JK to Grade 4. Prizes are awarded and colouring pictures are put on display at the fire station for a year for everyone to see. Fire Prevention Week open houses are hosted at all 3 stations where EFRS personnel provide station tours and share fire safety messaging to the public.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week

In Ontario, more than 65 percent of injuries and deaths from carbon monoxide occur in the home. Annually, using social media and local newspapers Essex Fire raises awareness by reminding residents to install CO alarms in their homes as well as prevent carbon monoxide (CO) in the home by getting all fuel-burning appliances inspected annually.

Throughout 2023 Essex Fire personnel attended 77 public fire safety events which provided fire safety messaging to approximately 10,000 residents and visitors to the municipality of Essex.

Public education regarding fire safety was delivered at primary and secondary schools, seniors' residences, daycares, fairs, festivals, fire station tours and visits.

The following pictures are some of the public education events that Essex Fire & Rescue attended in 2023.





Essex Fire Health and Safety **B.E.S.T.** Practices

Behaviour:

- Support the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of all personnel.
- Operate all emergency apparatus and privately owned vehicles to conform to the highest road safety standards and enforce the use of seat belts.
- Develop, practice, and enforce recommended health and safety standards for all personnel.
- Monitor and ensure that all active emergency scenes maintain the utmost level of safety and fire ground accountability.

Equipment:

- Provide and require the proper use of full personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Maintain all equipment based on established safety recommendations.

Standards and Codes:

- Encourage the use of all smoke, fire detection, and fire suppression devices, including fire sprinkler systems, in all structures.
- Vigorously enforce all fire safety codes and ordinances.
- Obtain apparatus and equipment that meet safety standards.

Training:

- Use fire training programs that conform to the highest professional standards.
- Always operate a safe fire training ground.
- Establish, maintain, and deliver fire safety programs for all age groups.

Promote Comraderies and Team Cohesion:



One of Essex Fire's B.E.S.T. practices are the establishment of a working agreement between St. Clair College and The Town of Essex Fire and Rescue Service. This partnership is for the purpose of conducting non-emergency response training drills and exercises, which include live fire training as part of its Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training Program.

Fire Departments and training/educational facilities are always looking for ways to simulate real life situations for initial and on-going training. By using modified shipping containers to build a custom training facility, the sky is the limit. Shipping containers offer a lot of flexibility and scalability, which enables the design to easily grow over time.

The training evolutions on site shall consist of the following elements.

- Passenger Vehicle Fire
- Passenger Vehicle Extrication
- Fire Control - Exterior Combustibles
- Fire Control – Interior Structure Fire
- Fire Control – Exterior Liquid Fire
- Fire Control – Coordinate Interior Attack Team
- Fire Control – Flammable Gas Cylinder Fire
- Fire Control – Ground Cover Fire



2023 Service Medals

Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal

This program, created on August 29, 1985, honours members of a recognized Canadian fire service who have completed 20 years of service, ten years of which have been served in the performance of duties involving potential risks, and were employed on or after the date of creation of the medal. Exemplary service is characterized by good conduct, industry, and efficiency. The department did not have anyone eligible for the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal in 2023.



Ontario Fire Services Long Service Medal

First awarded in 1971, the Ontario Fire Services Long Service Medal is an expression of appreciation and recognition of uniformed staff for 25 years of dedication and hard work within the Ontario fire service. At 30 years of service and every 5 years thereafter, a service bar may be requested and added to the medal's ribbon. Spouses of medal recipients receive a companion brooch. The Ontario Fire Services Long Service Medal was awarded to the following in 2023:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|------------|
| • Chris Meloche, Firefighter | 25 Years | April 2023 |
| • Ed Lepain, District Chief | 25 Years | April 2023 |
| • Rob Archambault, Firefighter | 25 Years | April 2023 |
| • Elwood Defour, District Chief | 35 Years | June 2023 |



2023 Retirements

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Rick Arnel, Fire Chief | 48 Years of Service |
| • Tom Bonneau, Captain | 33 Years of Service |
| • Mark Bosse, Captain | 32 Years of Service |
| • Dennis Didone, Firefighter | 19 Years of Service |

Essex Fire and Rescue Services would like to acknowledge and thank the following:

- All businesses and residents who support Santa's Cause for Kids.
- Essex and Harrow Food banks.
- The Rotary Club of Harrow and Enbridge Gas for their continued support to the residential Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Awareness Program.
- All the agencies, businesses and organizations that make Public Education & Fire Prevention a success in Essex.

