

Training Strategy to Enhance Fire Safety in Occupancies Housing Vulnerable Ontarians

Communiqué 2013-14

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On May 9, 2013, [Ontario Regulation 150/13](#) was filed. It amends the Fire Code ([Ontario Regulation 213/07](#)) to enhance fire safety in occupancies housing vulnerable Ontarians. It mandates that certain persons successfully complete a program or course approved by the Fire Marshal in order to be able to fulfill their fire safety responsibilities competently. These persons are the following:

- Persons required implementing emergency planning provisions (Section 2.8 of Division B) of the Fire Code in care occupancies, care and treatment occupancies and retirement homes regulated under the Retirement Homes Act, 2010. They are the owners and operators of such facilities, or their delegates, and are responsible for developing and putting into effect a fire safety plan. The titles of these persons can vary: manager, general manager, executive manager, executive director, chief executive officer, and chief operating officer, to name a few.
- Chief fire officials responsible for approving fire safety plans for buildings containing care occupancies, care and treatment occupancies, or retirement homes.

Although the regulation takes effect on January 1, 2014, the mandatory training must be completed by December 31, 2016.

Persons designated as “supervisory staff” as defined in the Fire Code must also be trained in regard to their fire safety responsibilities. Under the Fire Code, these responsibilities are set out in a building’s fire safety plan. The fire safety plan also specifies what training supervisory staff must receive in order to be able to carry out their assigned duties competently in the building where they are employed.

To facilitate compliance with Fire Code requirements, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) is developing courses for the two target groups mentioned in the first paragraph and for supervisory staff in care occupancies, care and treatment occupancies, and retirement homes. It is expected that these courses will be available early in 2014.

The courses intended for the owners/operators and chief fire officials will be offered in an online format, and, for anyone unable to complete the training online, as a traditional classroom course. Courses intended for supervisory staff will be offered online. Delivery of the courses will be in both English and French through the Public Service Health and Safety Association (PSHSA), which operates at arm’s length from the provincial government.

Although it is recognized that many within the target groups may have previously acquired relevant fire safety knowledge, the OFMEM is unable to offer credit for prior learning at this time. It may, however, explore opportunities for recognition of prior learning in the future.

The online courses will have a feature that allows skipping over course content that is already familiar. Once the test found at the end of the course has been successfully completed, the person taking the course will receive a certificate.

In order to alleviate the financial burden that the mandatory training may present, between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2016, the OFMEM will cover the course fee for one chief fire official per municipality and for one owner/operator (or designate) per facility housing vulnerable Ontarians. For any other person who takes the training on a voluntary basis, the cost will be \$125.00 for online learning, and \$150.00 for traditional classroom learning.

Details on the courses will be communicated at a later date, when course development nears completion. Enquiries regarding the training strategy should be directed to OFMEM staff members Denise Wallace and Rose Barg, who can be reached by e-mail at Denise.Wallace@ontario.ca and Rose.Barg@ontario.ca respectively. Enquiries regarding Ontario Regulation 150/13 should be directed to the Technical Services Section of the OFMEM; staff members can be reached by e-mail at FireSafetyStandards@ontario.ca, or by telephone at (416) 325-3100 or 1-800-565-1842.