



7. FIRE SERVICES

The goal of Fire Services is to protect the life and property of citizens and businesses from fire and other hazards. The three primary fire safety activities provided in communities in support of these objectives are:

- public education and fire prevention
- fire safety standards and enforcement
- emergency response

In some municipalities, depending on response agreements between fire services, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and hospital protocols, responses to medical calls can also be a significant activity.

What should you consider when reviewing these results?

Each municipality's results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors, including:

- the nature and extent of fire risks: the type of building construction or occupancy, i.e. apartment dwellings vs. single family homes vs. institutions such as hospitals
- geography: topography, urban/rural mix, road congestion and fire station locations and travel distances from those stations
- fire prevention and education efforts: enforcement of the fire code, and presence of working smoke alarms
- collective agreements: differences in what stage of multi-year agreements municipalities are at and also differences in agreements about how many staff are required on a fire vehicle
- staffing model: full-time firefighters or composite (full-time and part-time)

What are the results?

To improve the comparability of the information in this report, separate urban and rural results have been provided where appropriate:

- Urban areas have been defined as those served by full-time firefighters stationed with their vehicles on a continuous basis.
- Rural areas are defined as those served by volunteer firefighters who are engaged in other professions, but are on call to respond to emergencies as they arise.

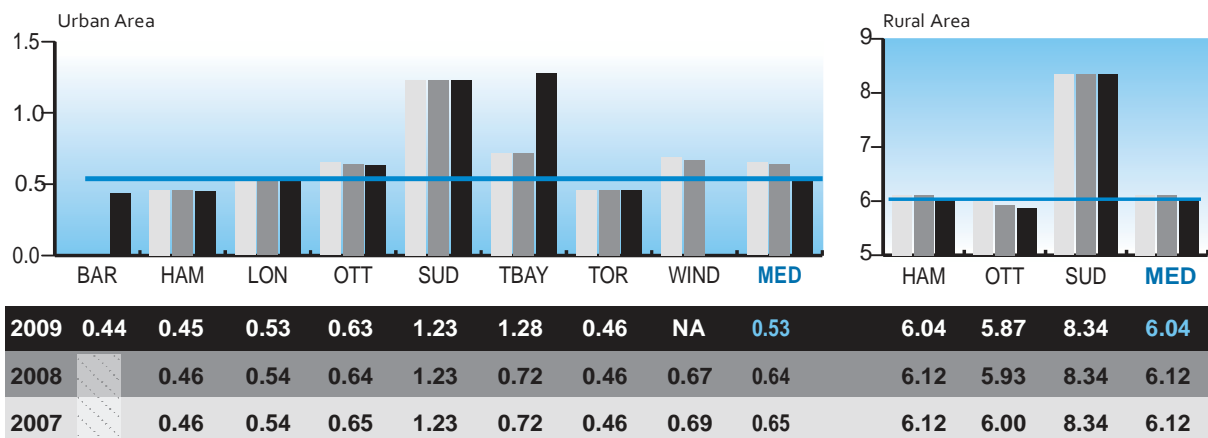
The one notable OMBI exception to this is the City of Thunder Bay, which uses full-time firefighters to serve both urban and rural areas. Where this report provides separate rural and urban data, Thunder Bay's results have been summarized entirely as "urban" to improve the comparability with other municipalities served by full-time firefighters.

City of Windsor data is unavailable for 2009.

FIRE SERVICES

How many hours are staffed fire vehicles available to respond to emergencies?

Fig. 7.1 Number of Staffed Fire In-service Vehicle Hours per Capita (Urban and Rural Area)

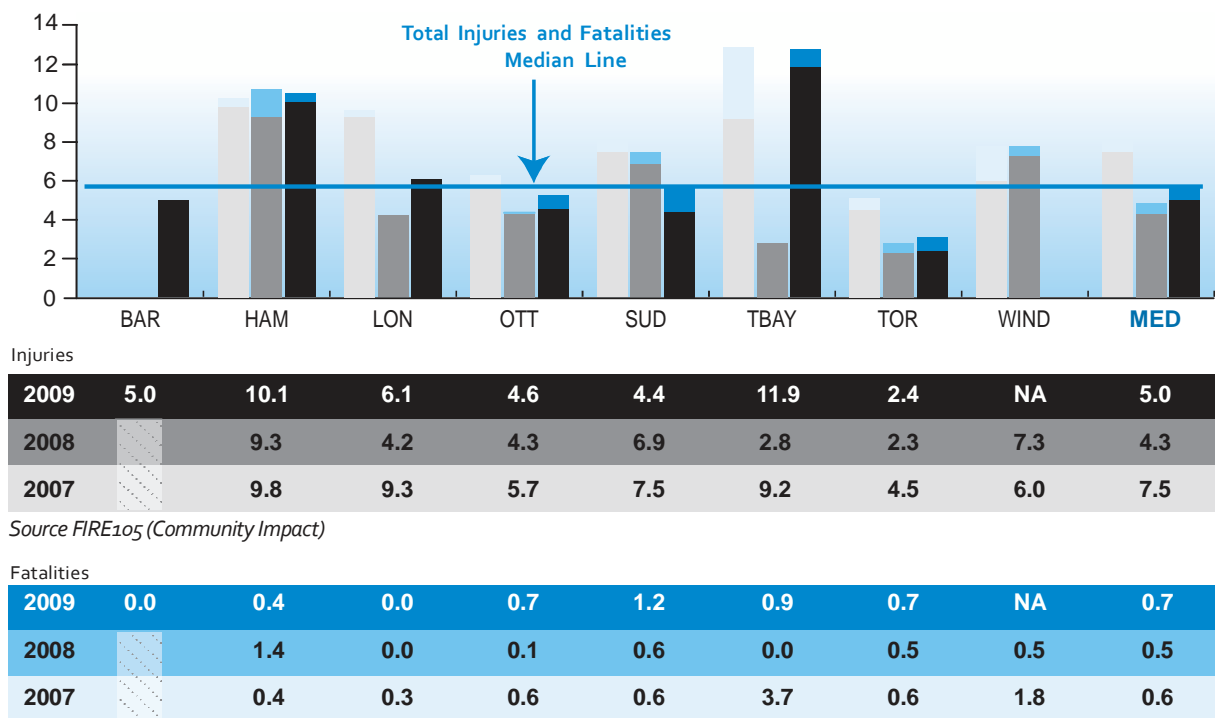


Source FIRE230, FIRE232 (Service Level)

Figure 7.1 demonstrates that rural areas tend to have higher vehicle hours because a proportionately greater number of vehicles are necessary to adequately cover broader geographic service areas with an acceptable response time. Rural areas also typically do not have fire hydrants, necessitating the use of water tanker vehicles that are not required in urban areas.

How many injuries and fatalities resulted from residential fires?

Fig. 7.2 Residential Fire Related Injuries and Fatalities per 100,000 Population (Entire Municipality)

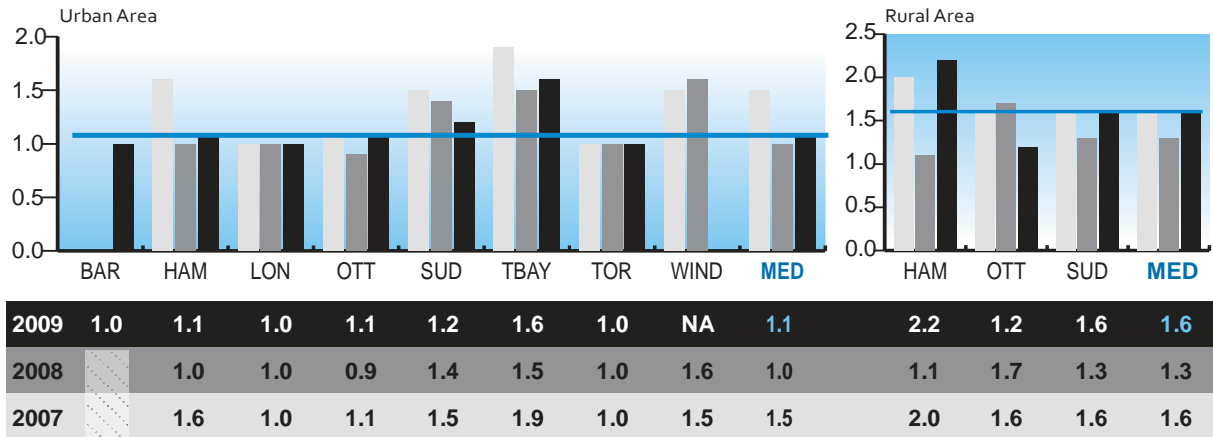


Source FIRE105 (Community Impact)

Source FIRE110 (Community Impact)

How many fires result in property loss?

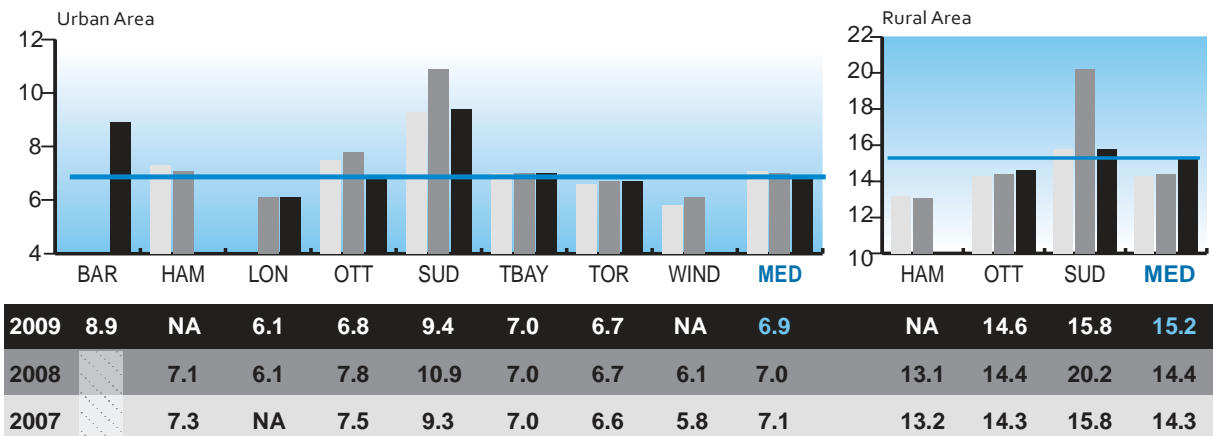
Fig. 7.3 Number of Residential Structural Fires with Losses per 1,000 Households (Urban and Rural Area)



Source: FIRE 116, FIRE117 (Community Impact)

How long does it take to respond to an emergency call?

Fig. 7.4 Actual 90th Percentile Station Notification Response Time for Fire Services (Urban and Rural Area) (Minutes)



Source: FIR405, 406 (Customer Service)

Figure 7.4 provides the 90th percentile urban response time (minutes) from the point that fire station staff has been notified of an emergency call to the point when they arrive at the emergency scene. This is referred to formally as the “station notification response time.” It should be noted that station notification response times do not include the dispatch time – the time between when an emergency call is first received and the time the fire station is notified.

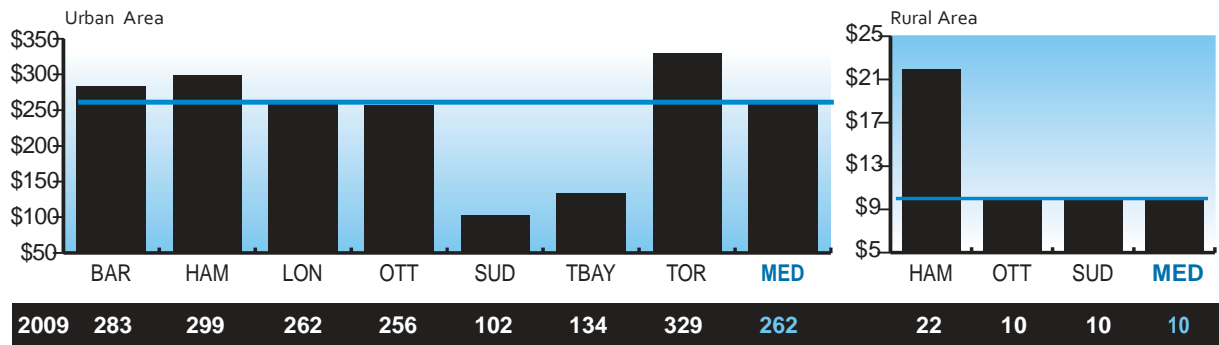
The 90th percentile means that 90% of all emergency calls in municipal urban areas have a station notification response time within the time period reflected on the graph. For example, in Toronto, 90% of all 2009 emergency calls were responded to within 6.7 minutes.

Rural areas tend to require greater response times because of larger geographic distances and the fact that volunteer firefighters must first travel from their place of work to the fire station.

FIRE SERVICES

How much does it cost for each hour vehicles are in-service?

Fig. 7.5 Fire Operating Cost per Staffed In-service Vehicle Hour (Urban and Rural Area)



Source: FIRE₃₀₄, FIRE₃₀₅ (Efficiency)

Figure 7.5 illustrates the cost per hour to have a front-line fire vehicle available to respond to emergency calls in the urban and rural areas of municipalities.

In order to respond to emergencies, each municipality has a different mix of vehicle types and staffing models, reflecting its fire and community risks. The key front-line fire vehicles for emergency response are pumpers, aerials, water tankers and rescue units.

The cost per vehicle hour for rural areas served by volunteer firefighter tends to be much lower than urban areas served by full-time firefighters because volunteer firefighters are paid only for the hours in which they are actively responding to emergencies.