



11, rue Principale Sud
Sutton (Québec)
J0E 2K0

Tél. : (450) 538-2290
Télec. : (450) 538-0930
ville@sutton.ca

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

The First Responders Service keeps going!

Sutton, March 8, 2022 — The Town of Sutton wishes to reassure its population and reaffirm its firm commitment to maintaining the First Responders Service.

The announcement of the reorganization of the First Responders (PR) Service caused some understandable commotion among first responders themselves, and some citizens thought it would simply disappear. On the contrary, the Town considers this service to be essential and wants to ensure that it operates 100% of the time, i.e. that no life-threatening emergency call is ignored.

Understanding the PR levels

For the public's understanding, first responder training levels are graduated into four designations: PR-0 (or PR-DEA), PR-1, PR-2 and PR-3. PR-3 training is the longest because it covers all types of response from PR-0 to PR-2, plus more general, non-life threatening medical emergencies (see [levels of services](#)). However, where a first responder can make the most difference is in the most serious cases: cardiopulmonary arrest (PR-0), anaphylactic shock (PR-1) and trauma (PR-2). The other situations (PR-3), which are not to be neglected, are not life-threatening emergencies.

The PR service changed to the PR-2 level

Before making its decision, the Town of Sutton consulted with the Regional Medical Director of Prehospital Emergency Services at the CIUSS Montérégie Centre, Dr. Dave Ross, as well as the Regional Coordinator of the same services, Mr. Jean-Marc Breton, who commented: "We have been aware of the difficulties in Sutton for some time and we were concerned about the lack of on-call duty. We consider that it is better to lower the level to PR-2 rather than not responding to 100% of the PR-3 calls. For us, this is not a reduction in service, but a reorganization. We are here to support the Town and we will make representations to the Government for grants to cover equipment and training needs."

Relying on a reorganized team, including first responders, citizens who have already expressed interest in joining the ranks and volunteer firefighters, the administration has therefore decided to lower the response level to PR-2 for the time being. This way, it is sure to offer an efficient service that will cover all life-threatening emergency calls, even if its wish is to respond to all calls. This level may be re-evaluated in the future. As a comparison, the Town of Dunham's first responders service only offers a PR-0 level, Cowansville a PR-1 level, while Bromont, Frelighsburg, Saint-Alphonse, Brigham, Granby or Farnham does not have one.

A new on-call response system

The major problem that the first responders service has had for years has always been the lack of manpower to fill its on-call shifts. It should be remembered that the shifts were 12 hours long with two people who had to remain in a fixed location while waiting for responses, for an average of one PR-2 call every two days. Also, inspired by the successful methods used for fire call response, the Town decided to abolish the permanent guards and to place the team on the same call system, forming groups according to availability (day, evening, night, weekend). This way, the first responders available on the territory will go to the scene of a call with the same efficiency and speed. This system should also increase the possibilities of recruiting people who had difficulty with this fixed 12-hour shift with their schedule, since they will be able to go about their business as long as there is no call. In terms of equipment, each first responder will have basic equipment available at all times to begin first aid while waiting for the emergency vehicle to arrive. Additional defibrillators will be installed in Abercorn and Brome to better cover the territory and improve response time.

Equal compensation for the team

Recognizing the different compensation system that existed between first responders and firefighters and considering the new call system, the Town has decided to offer the same conditions to all: first responders will receive a minimum of 3 hours of compensation for each call, at the current hourly rate of \$23.64/hour. This method of compensation will not increase the budget, which is approximately \$190,000 per year for the entire service. Other benefits include paid training, the La Vigile assistance program and an insurance policy for first responders. In addition, there are new opportunities for team members to participate in wilderness rescues, become an auxiliary firefighter, assist firefighters in response to emergencies and help out at public events.

By using the model of the fire department whose performance is no longer in question, this reorganization of the first responder service is a positive step towards a more efficient management of the service that will meet the vital emergency needs of our population.

Source:
Isabelle Capmas
Communications Advisor
communications@sutton.ca
Tel.: 450 538-2290, ext. 238