

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

2025 Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Paramedic Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Oxford County Council approve the 2025 Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan as set out in this report.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Ontario Regulation 257/00 (Part VIII) mandates every municipality providing land ambulance services to approve and forward a Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan (RTPP) to the Director of the Emergency Health Regulatory and Accountability Services Branch (EHRAB) before October 31 annually.
- The proposed response time performance plan remains consistent with previously approved response time performance plans for 2015-2024.
- The Oxford Plan has been benchmarked for consistency with other municipal plans.
- Emergency call volume in 2023 increased 10% from 2022 call volume levels, and this growth trend has continued throughout 2024.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Once the 2025 RTPP is approved by Council, it will be submitted to the Ministry of Health EHRAB, where it will be publicly available on their website. Oxford County Paramedic Services is required to continually monitor compliance with the plan and investigate all occurrences where response times did not meet requirements.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact that will result based on the recommendation contained in this report.

Communications




Required submissions to the Ministry of Health, EHRAB will be provided in accordance with the legislation and service agreement requirements.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being		Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

From 2013 onwards, the Ambulance Act's Ontario Regulation 257/00 (Part VIII) mandates every municipality providing land ambulance services to approve and forward a Land ambulance response time performance plan to the Director of the Emergency Health Regulatory and Accountability Services Branch (EHRAB) before October 31st annually.

These plans outline the target response time and the rate of accomplishment for patients graded 1 to 5 on the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS). The regulation sets an 8-minute response time for the most urgent CTAS 1 patients. Municipalities can set their own response times for less urgent CTAS 2-5 patients and the success rate for all CTAS levels. The measured

response time starts when the paramedic team is alerted and ends when the first team arrives on the scene.

Table 1 – Canadian Triage Acuity Scale Levels

CTAS Level	Clinical Presentation
CTAS 1 Resuscitation	Conditions that are threats to life or limb (or imminent risk of deterioration) requiring immediate aggressive interventions. Cardiac arrest/major trauma/severe respiratory distress.
CTAS 2 Emergent	Conditions that are a potential threat to life, limb or function, requiring rapid medical intervention or controlled acts. Head injury/severe trauma/chest pain.
CTAS 3 Urgent	Conditions that could potentially progress to a serious problem requiring emergency intervention. May be associated with significant discomfort or affecting ability to function at work or activities of daily living. Moderate trauma/assault/moderate respiratory distress.
CTAS 4 Less Urgent	Conditions that relate to patient age, distress, or potential for deterioration or complications would benefit from intervention or reassurance within 1-2 hours. Minor trauma/abdominal pain/headache/back pain.
CTAS 5 Non-Urgent	Conditions that may be acute but non-urgent as well as conditions which may be part of a chronic problem with or without evidence of deterioration. The investigation or interventions for some of these illnesses or injuries could be delayed or even referred to other areas of the hospital or health care system. (Sore throat/minor symptoms.)

The performance plan aims to:

- Establish response time standards based on medical evidence.
- Match municipal performance with patient needs.
- Ensure accountable, transparent, and comparable reporting across municipalities.
- Allow municipalities to set different response times for varying patient severities, leading to a more efficient use of paramedic resources.

Alongside this, the municipality needs to report how often a person with a defibrillator arrived within six minutes to a sudden cardiac arrest case. However, there is no need for the municipality to set a target response time for this specific patient group.

Comments

In developing the 2025 response time plan, staff considered the targets as per the regulations; the backing of medical evidence; and the acceptable levels of customer service. Table 2 displays the 2024 approved Land Ambulance RTPP for Oxford County, alongside our current compliance with targets from January 1 to June 30, 2024. Prior to 2023, OCPS has been meeting the approved Land Ambulance RTPP with our approved resources.

The service enhancements that were approved in the 2024 Paramedic Services Budget were implemented on June 1, 2024. However, response times for all CTAS levels have risen steadily since 2019. This increase is due to a substantial surge in emergency call volumes, especially over the last 4 years:

- 14,817 emergency calls in 2020.
- 17,246 emergency calls in 2021, a 16.4% increase from 2020
- 19,276 emergency calls in 2022, an 11.8% increase from 2021.
- 21,265 emergency calls in 2023, a 10.3% increase from 2022, and 43.5% increase from 2020.
- 2024 YTD emergency call volume is 10% higher than the same period in 2023.

Call volume growth continues to significantly outperform the growth projections in the 10-year master plan. To mitigate the impact of this significant growth in emergency call volume, Council approved additional ambulance hours in the 2024 budget. With these additional ambulance hours added to the system (in Woodstock), a corresponding improvement in system performance has been observed.

Table 2 – Response Time Performance

CTAS Level	Regulatory Standard Response Time	Municipal Approved Response Time	Municipal Approved Percentile	2022 Actual Performance		2023 Actual Performance		2024 YTD Performance	
				System		System		System	
				Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1	<8 Minutes		70%	74.9%		70.5%		74.7%	
				90.6%	43.2%	86.9%	29.9%	91.2%	27.5%
2	<10 Minutes		80%	80.2%		81.0%		80.0%	
				92.8%	50.9%	94.8%	47.1%	92.8%	42.6%
3	<15 Minutes		90%	91.6%		93.9%		95.6%	
				96.3%	77.3%	98.0%	82.6%	98.3%	85.3%
4	<15 Minutes		80%	89.8%		94.2%		97.3%	
				93.9%	74.8%	98.3%	80.4%	100%	85.7%
5	<15 Minutes		80%	90.3%		93.8%		98.0%	
				93.4%	74.8%	98.6%	79.2%	100%	80%

Response time performance is based on the municipality's approved percentile for CTAS 2 (lights and sirens) emergency calls. With projected call volume growth at 10%, additional ambulance hours will need to be added to the system to continue to meet response time performance targets.

Another factor that is influencing response time performance is growth in rural communities, such as Tavistock, Thamesford, and Plattsville. These growth centres are not close to existing ambulance station locations, so response times are increased. More occurrences in these areas are having a negative impact on system response time performance. Staff are developing a 10+ year growth strategy to address these additional system pressures.

CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing response time performance in 2022 and 2023, OCPS met the Oxford County Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan's targets. However, if the current trends in emergency call volume continue throughout 2024 and into 2025, response times will increase, and CTAS 1 and 2 response time performance may not meet targets.

Oxford County Response Time Performance targets are in line with many other Ontario municipalities, and staff recommend the 2025 RTPP remain unchanged, as detailed in Table 2.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by:

Ryan Hall
Director of Paramedic Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by:

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer