



FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

RR # 1

Aspen, NS B0H 1E0

Email: admin@fsans.ns.ca

Website: www.fsans.ns.ca

Phone: (902) 833-2037

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Office of the Legislative Council
Law Amendments Committee

Re. Bill 204 Workers Compensation Act

The Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia wishes to acknowledge the Minister for his recognition of the province's 7000 volunteer firefighters who work daily to protect life and property here in our province. The acknowledgment of the need to protect "those who protect" is a very positive step forward for the Fire Service. These changes will enhance the protection provided to fire fighters, particularly in the areas of cancer and mental health. We would also like to thank the staff at LAE and WCB for helping understand how these amendments will impact the Fire Service.

As this legislation directly impacts firefighters, there are several other emergency response agencies who work alongside firefighters but, because of their status as volunteers, are not entitled to participate in the WCB program. These groups include stand-alone Medical First Response teams, Ground Search and Rescue and the provincial Special Hazards Response Units. As these groups also respond to many types of emergencies, they too are exposed to various hazards including physical and chemical hazards as well as psychological health hazards that manifest from attending a traumatic event. FSANS believes these organizations should have the option to "opt-in" to the WCB program, providing the Municipal unit in which they register choose to do so. This would in fact be the same process that the Volunteer Fire Service had - prior to this legislation - and allows these members, as providers of Emergency Service, the ability to obtain the same protection as the Volunteer Fire Service.

May I suggest the following:

Volunteer Emergency Service Providers registered in a Municipality as per section 295 of the Municipal Government Act may, on the application, of a Municipality within whose boundaries a Volunteer Emergency Service Provider is located and serves, the board may admit the Volunteer Emergency Service Provider to the application of this point.

FSANS believes that the amended Legislation along with this small enhancement is a good news story. It not only enhances the level of protection and assistance provided to

sick or injured responders, but it also becomes a valuable Recruitment and Retention tool for all Volunteer Emergency Service Providers within the province. We look forward to working with our partners during the planning and implementation phases of this project.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Roper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "R".

Jim Roper
Past President
Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia