



Mayor Dan O'Mara
Municipality of Temagami
Temagami, On
P0H 2H0

March 25, 2024

Mayor O'Mara,

I have reviewed the issues raised by the Cassels and Adjoining Lake Association (CALA) regarding Paramedic response to the lakes within their representation. While I can appreciate the concern for residents living on water access only properties, there are limitations to the services Paramedics deliver. These limitations are established through risk assessment, scope of practice and available resources. Paramedics are not routinely trained in water vessel operation and in many cases some Paramedics may have limited experience in water travel.

The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board – Paramedic Services policy is based on safety, liability, training and the resources available. It has been determined that in the event of water access request for Paramedic response, that the policy must support all aspects of the items mentioned above. In order to ensure the safety of the Paramedics the following excerpt from the policy outlines the resources required for such response:

When an incident exceeds the operational role of a DNSSAB paramedic, the CACC (Central Ambulance Communications Centre) shall be notified and will coordinate the necessary response agencies, including Superintendent notification.

Where any patient is not immediately accessible by road, or within a reasonable distance from a roadway, Paramedics shall communicate as much detail as possible to the CACC ACO and request appropriate response agency for the event. Appropriate response agencies would include Fire Services, Police Services, an Air Ambulance resource, or a remote response resource from another paramedic service (City of Greater Sudbury, District of Timiskaming).

Use of off-road vehicles including snowmobiles, ATVs or boats is permissible where road access is not possible and where the operator of the equipment has been authorized for such responses. Authorized agencies include the Ontario Provincial Police, Municipal Police Services, Fire Services, MNR, Search and Rescue agencies and any other DNSSAB authorized organizations/persons.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health – Central Ambulance Communication Centre Manual of Practice, SOP sec. 11 indicates:

S 11.29 In situations where search and rescue assistance is apparently required, the ACO:

a) Assigns the closest available ambulance resource to the closest identified general location if the location is sufficiently understood to facilitate directing a vehicle; and



b) If available and applicable for the call's location/terrain/situation, assigns a specialty purpose ambulance service vehicle(s) such as an all terrain vehicle (ATV), four wheel drive (4x4), bicycle, watercraft, tactical paramedic unit; and

c) For situations located on land:

- 1) Contacts local police services to request assistance; and***
- 2) Contacts the Centre's duty supervisor/manager to facilitate EHSB Duty Officer contact to obtain further direction; and***
- 3) As per local operating practices.***

d) For situations located on water:

- 1) Contacts local police services to request assistance; and***
- 2) Contacts the Centre's duty supervisor/manager to facilitate EHSB Duty Officer contact to obtain further direction; and***
- 3) As per local operating practices.***

e) For situations involving downed or missing aircraft:

- 1) Contacts the Ornge Communications Centre (OCC) to request assistance; and***
- 2) Contacts local police services to request assistance; and***
- 3) Contacts the Centre's duty supervisor/manager to facilitate EHSB Duty Officer contact to obtain further direction; and***
- 4) As per local operating practices.***

Where a "Land Ambulance" as defined in the Ambulance Act can not access a patient by "normal" means it is deemed a rescue and requires the deployment of additional resources. There are a variety of support services available depending on location and infrastructure.

In the CALA area, typical response for properties accessible by water only would be dependant on resources such as Ontario Provincial Police, Ornge Air Ambulance, Ministry of Natural Resources, a Fire Department with these resources or a contracted commercial operator, where there is confirmation in reference to the safety and accountability of the operator. The DNSSAB – Paramedic Services has recently engaged a commercial operator with resources located in the CALA area and intends to enter into an agreement for on-call coverage of this location. It is anticipated that we will have an agreement executed in spring 2024, provided all parties agree.

To add perspective, we have similar challenges elsewhere in the District. In the area of Lake Nipissing, we are also dependant on the response of allied agencies that may or may not have the resources readily available. The DNSSAB continues to look at opportunities to better serve the community in a cost effective and practical manner. The DNSSAB – Paramedic Services does not offer additional support beyond what is received by the residents of the CALA area to any other areas of the District.

Please feel free to share the information contained with the CALA association as you see fit.



Respectfully yours,

Stephen Kirk

Chief – Paramedic Services

Chef - Services paramédicaux

District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) |

Conseil d'administration des services sociaux du district de Nipissing (CASSDN)

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