



# PROTECTIVE SERVICES 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Your City, Your Family, Our duty





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## Message from Chief Kosterman



2018 was a significant year for Fire Services and for Protective Services as a whole. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> complete year that the City of Spruce Grove operated an integrated Fire/EMS service. It was late in 2002 when an email titled “Random Thoughts” was sent by myself to then City Manager, Simon Farbrother. In the following days Mr. Farbrother would ask many questions and request a full written proposal. Ultimately fire services was tasked with hiring staff, purchasing equipment, writing policies and procedures, amending bylaws, partnering with the medical community, and having a new service ready to operate for January 1, 2004. The decision to move EMS within fire services was not without controversy, however after 15 years of integrated service the City of Spruce Grove can be very proud of this decision. Those early partnerships, like the one with the University of Alberta continue today with the U of A providing SGFS with a Fire Surgeon (medical director) and medical residents providing regularly scheduled training to SGFS members.

Also in 2018 construction started on the new Protective Services headquarters. This project will provide fire services and enforcement services with adequate facilities to provide the highest level of services to the residents and visitors of Spruce Grove. By combining Enforcement Services and Fire Services under one roof it solidifies the strong working relationship between these two departments while encouraging further partnerships between them that will result in a higher level of overall service while remaining cost effective.



Once again this year I am proud of all of the Protective Services members who place customer service first.





## Executive Summary

2018 was once again a busy year for Spruce Grove Protective Services with both SGFS and SGES experiencing increases in total call volume. SGFS saw an increase in calls of 12.5% while SGES had a 12.3% increase in complaints. Although call volumes increased, and therefore so did the demand on services, Spruce Grove has remained a significantly safe community with no fire or collision fatalities in 2018.

Response standards set by council for SGFS are related to turnout time and travel time, with an additional total response time for three response areas. These are fire emergencies, medical emergencies, and motor vehicle collisions. The response standards are reported with compliance or improvement in all areas except medical emergency travel time and motor vehicle collisions. Most significantly the HIRF response requirements contained within the Alberta Building Code were complied with and fires with dollar loss had a combined turnout and response time of less than 328 seconds 90% of the time.

Fire was present in property with a combined dollar value of almost 26 million dollars with actual fire loss being held to slightly more than 2 million dollars. A community comparison contained with the report for years 2007 to 2016 indicates that in the area of fire fatalities Spruce Grove is a very fire safe community and dollar loss to fire is also on the low side.

Enforcement Services records indicate that parking and animal issues continues to generate the largest amount of complaints. The three neighbourhoods that generated the largest number of complaints in 2017, continued to generate the largest number of complaints in 2018, however the percentage of increase in these areas was approximately half of the increase in the remainder of the city.

Telephone reporting continues to be the main method of which complaints are received. Although online reporting has been available for years, online reporting represents only 2.36% of complaints received. There was a 5.2% increase in violations notices issued in 2018 with the vast majority of violations being traffic or parking related. Animal control is an important area and there were 808 complaints related to animals with 96 being within the Animal Protection Act.

The main Safe City functions are Automated Traffic Control (ATE) and Fire Prevention. ATE will be reported outside of this report. Fire Prevention conducted 1,633 fire inspections focused on life safety. Mechanical/Electrical failure was the leading cause of fire in 2018, with ignorance of hazard being second.



## Introduction

The City of Spruce Grove Protective Services is made up of four distinct yet linked departments. Fire Services, Enforcement Services, Safe City, and Police. Police services are performed under contract with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and are not part of this report. Automated Traffic Enforcement, which is part of Safe City, will be reported in a separate report.

### Fire Services

Spruce Grove Fire Services (SGFS) provides the traditional services of a fire service but also includes ambulances services which are contracted to Alberta Health Services (AHS). SGFS is an Accredited Organization by Accreditation Canada. Service Standards for SGFS are set by the City of Spruce Grove council and are based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards.

### Enforcement Services

Spruce Grove Enforcement Services (SGES) provides policing services in relation to municipal bylaws and certain provincial statutes. The service is made up of Community Peace Officers who are appointed and given authorities by Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. SGES enforces most city bylaws and primarily the Alberta Traffic Safety Act along with some lesser known legislation such as the Inn Keepers Act. In total they enforce 11 provincial statutes.

### Safe City

Safe City is a concept more than a department. It relies on the cooperation of several other departments within and outside the city to promote and conduct education via direct delivery, advertisement campaigns, and enforcement activities designed to change behaviors. Two example of Safe City coordinated activities would include fire prevention and automated traffic enforcement.

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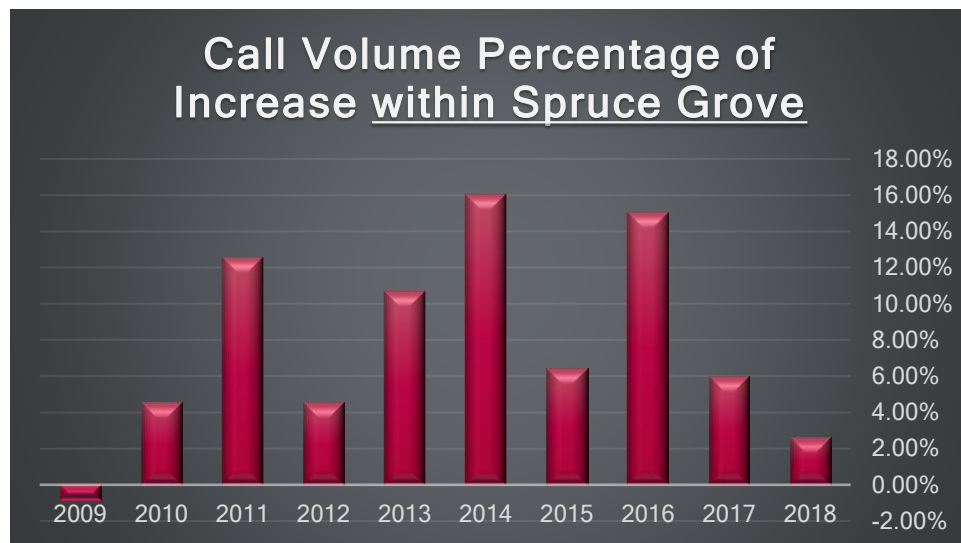


# Fire Services

## Call Volume

There were 5,128 incidents in 2018 which is a 12.5% increase over 2017. Call volumes have increased every year over the last ten years except in 2015 when volume decreased. The decrease was largely due to provincial efforts to keep ambulances in their home communities. The 12.5% increase in 2018 is due to a large increase in ambulance call volume outside of Spruce Grove.

Within Spruce Grove there were 2,727 incidents, which is an increase of 2.7%. Call volumes within Spruce Grove have increased every year in the last 10 years with the exception of 2009. Since 2008 call volume within Spruce Grove has increased by slightly over 200%.



## Types of Incidents

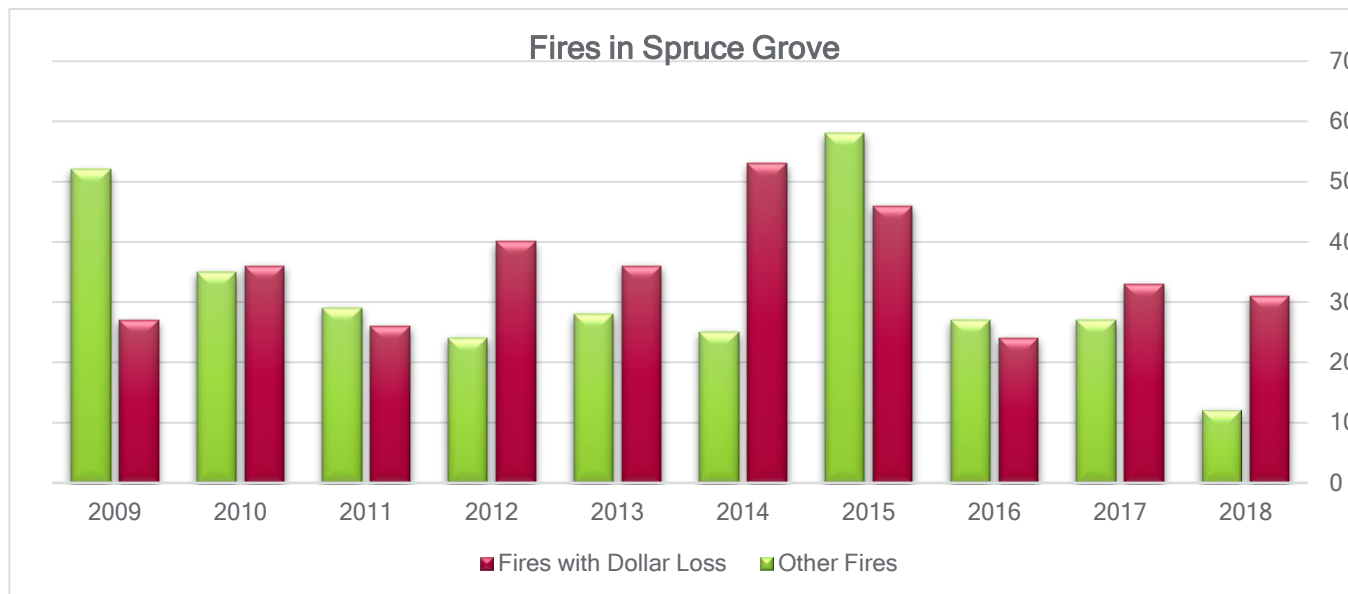
For reporting purposes 34 different response types are grouped into eight categories. Medical calls make up the majority of these incidents with a total of 4,650 incidents (2,303 were in Spruce Grove). Of the remaining 478 incidents, 424 were within Spruce Grove and can be divided into the following eight categories:

- Alarm No Fire 160
- Rescue 1
- False Alarm 40
- Fire with Dollar Loss 31
- Fire Other 12
- Motor Vehicle Collisions 109
- Public Hazard 35
- Public Service 36





“Fires with Dollar Loss” were held at 31 incidents which is two less than 2017. The number of fires in Spruce Grove that cause dollar loss remains low even though the community continues to grow. The following graph shows fires since 2009.



## Fire Fatalities

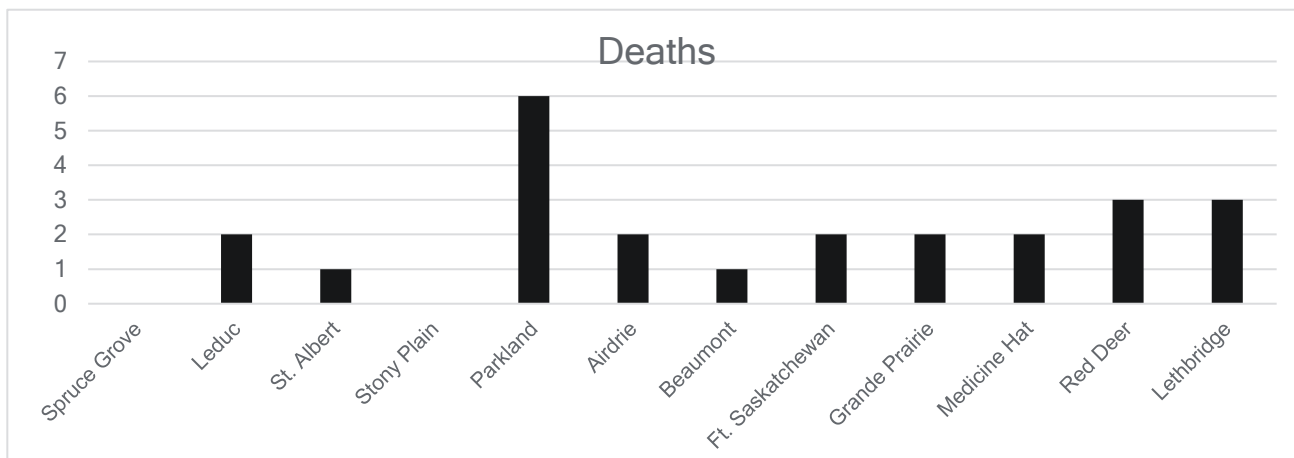
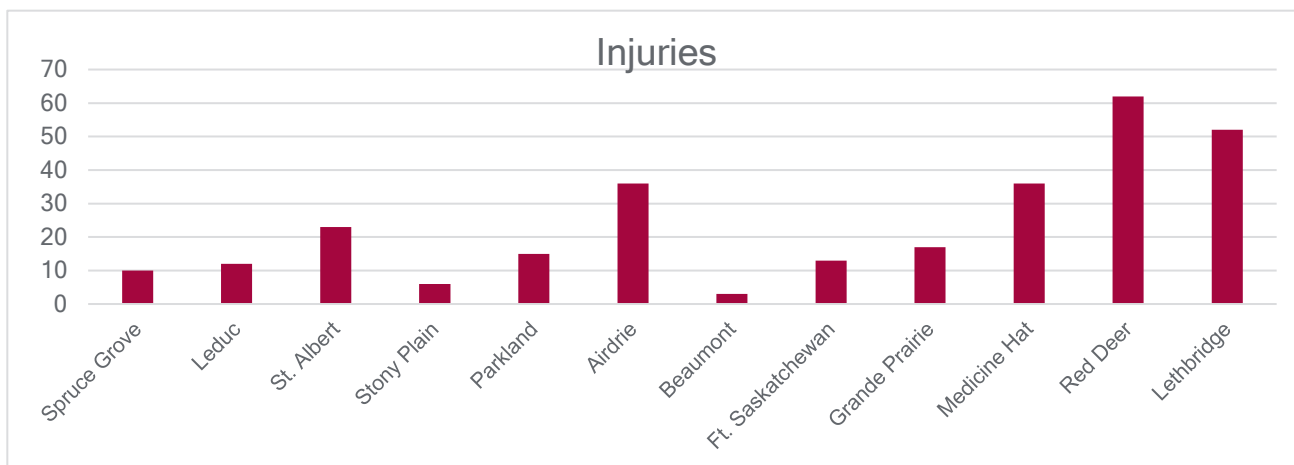
There were no fire fatalities in Spruce Grove in 2018.

## Fire Dollar Loss

Fire losses each year are completed as an estimate of total value of property including contents. In 2018 the total value of property in which a fire occurred was \$25,994,366. The estimate fire loss is \$2,082,450. This may be translated to figure of \$23,911,916 of property value saved from fire in 2018.

## Community Comparisons

The following 2007 to 2016 Alberta Fire Commissioner data is shown in charts that provide a quick overview of other cities and Spruce Grove neighbours. The province wide statistics for the same 10 year period of time are 284 fire deaths, 1,959 injuries, and \$6,773,166,590 in fire loss.





## Response Standards Compliance

Corporate Policy CP-1005-17 requires the reporting on compliance with various response standards. This section of the report is designed to fulfill this reporting requirement.

### Emergency Fire Responses

Response reporting is broken down into various components of the response.

- Total Response Time
- Dispatch Time
- Turnout Time
- Travel Time – first unit
- Travel Time – second unit

Total Response Time is the most important of all the response time factors. It is the cumulative reporting of all other times that determines if an apparatus arrives in time. In 2018 the required time of 399 seconds or less, 90% of the time, was met 54.4% of the time. In 2017 this standard was met 41.4% of the time so although still well below targets it does represent a significant improvement over 2017. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile time for total response time was 559 seconds.

Total Response Time improved by 31.4%

The breakdown of other times helps identify areas in need of improvement.

Dispatch Time is not set by council however the policy does require reporting on dispatch time. The standard for dispatch time is 79 seconds or less 90% of the time. This is measured from time of 911 call until dispatch provides the responders with an address to respond to. For emergency fire related calls the 79 second standard was met 7.7% off the time. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile time for dispatch was 248 seconds.

Dispatch Time Improved by 57%

Turnout Time is measured from the time of dispatch (responders are provided with an address to respond to) and the time that they declare themselves on route. For calls requiring the donning of bunker gear this time is set at 80 seconds 90% of the time. In 2018 this target was achieved with 80 seconds or less being met 93% of the time. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for turnout time was 62 seconds.

Turnout Time Standard Achieved



Travel Time – first apparatus is the actual drive time of the first responding apparatus. Council has established a travel time standard of 240 seconds 80% of the time. In 2018 this target was met 65.5% of the time.

Travel Time – 1<sup>st</sup> Apparatus Improved by 3%

Travel Time – second apparatus is the actual drive time for the second apparatus. The standard of 480 seconds or less 90% of the time was achieved 95.5% of the time. However this does not reflect turnout time for this apparatus and only drive time.

Travel Time – 2<sup>nd</sup> Apparatus Achieved

Turnout and Travel Time combined is an important time to monitor as this is the portions of the Total Response Time that SGFS is directly accountable for. In this area fire responses have a combined standard of 320 seconds. This time frame was met 78.9% of the time with a 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of 383 seconds. However in the “fire with dollar loss” classification of calls the 320 second time frame was met 84.6% of the time with a 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of 328 seconds.

90% of fires with a dollar loss were responded to (turnout + travel) in 328 seconds.

### Alberta Building Code (HIRF)

The Alberta Building Code requires enhanced building standards when the fire response from

HIRF Requirements Achieved



time of call received by dispatch to on scene exceeds ten minutes or 600 seconds 9 out of 10 times (same building). In 2018 fire services met this requirement 96.2% of the time for fires with dollar loss and 92.5% of the time for all non-medical responses.

### Emergency Medical Responses

Medical responses are difficult to properly benchmark. This is as AHS is responsible for dispatching and SGFS has no access to the raw data. In the fall of 2019 changes will be made to the way medical response data is collected in Spruce Grove to ensure better accuracy.

Medical response reporting does not include motor vehicle collisions and certain elements such as dispatch are not reportable. Medical response reporting is broken down into the following components.



- Total Response Time
- Turnout Time
- Travel Time

Total Response Time is the time measurement that adds both the turnout time and the travel time for a combined time. Unlike fire and MVC responses, medical responses do not take into account dispatch time in their calculation. The combined total response time for medical incidents is 300 seconds or less 90% of the time. In 2018 this standard was met in Spruce Grove 76.3% of the time.

Turnout Time is measured from the time of dispatch (responders are provided with an address to respond to) and the time that they declare themselves on route. For medical emergencies there is no requirement to don bunker gear and the turnout time is 60 seconds or less 90% of the time. In 2018 this target was achieved with 60 seconds or less being met 91% of the time.

Turnout Time Standard  
Achieved

Travel Time is the actual drive time of the first responding unit. Council has established a travel time standard of 240 seconds 80% of the time. In 2018 this target was met 56.3% of the time. This is well below the level of performance in 2017 when this standard was met 65% of the time. Fire apparatus responding without a SGFS ambulance achieved a travel time of 240 seconds or less 75% of the time.

Alberta Health Services is responsible for ambulance service within spruce Grove and contracts Spruce Grove to provide two Advanced Life Support units in to the provincial system. Although based in Spruce Grove these units can be sent anywhere by AHS dispatch. The standard which AHS has established for an ambulance response within Spruce Grove is 15 minutes or 900 seconds. In critical calls such as heart attacks, strokes, or trauma this time is considered by SGFS to be unacceptable.

Area Coverage: In 2018 SGFS ambulance were sent to provide “area coverage” a total of 590 times. Area coverage is when an ambulance is sent out of Spruce Grove to sit in another community and provide coverage for that area, while there is no active emergency call. During these times SGFS will send a pump crew with Advanced Life Support firefighters and equipment to any medical call in Spruce Grove thus ensuring the residents and visitors of Spruce Grove continue to receive optimum care.

Pump Response is defined as anytime a fire pump responds to a medical call in Spruce Grove. There are only two scenarios in which a pump responds. The first is to any serious incident. Incidents are categorized as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, and Omega. A

pump is dispatched to assist an ambulance for any call categorized as Delta or Echo. They are also dispatched to any medical incident when an SGFS ambulance is not available to respond. There were 467 of these responses in 2018, and 75% of the incidents identified as emergency were responded to in less than 300 seconds, from time of dispatch.

## Motor Vehicle Collisions

Response reporting is broken down into various components of the response.

- Total Response Time
- Dispatch Time
- Turnout Time
- Travel Time



Total Response Time is the most important of all the response time factors. It is the cumulative reporting of all other times that determines if an apparatus arrives in time. In 2018 the required time of 399 seconds or less, 90% of the time, was met 58% of the time. In 2017 this standard was met 82% of the time. This is a significant decrease in ability to meet the response time standards.

The breakdown of other times helps identify areas in need of improvement.

Dispatch Time is not set by council however the policy does require reporting on dispatch time. The standard for dispatch time is 79 seconds or less 90% of the time. This is measured from time of 911 call until dispatch provides the responders with an address to respond to. For motor vehicle collisions the 79 second standard was met 17.6% off the time.

Dispatch Time compliance decreased from 49.25% to 17.6%

Turnout Time is measured from the time of dispatch (responders are provided with an address to respond to) and the time that they declare themselves on route. For motor vehicle collisions that time is set at 80 seconds or less 90% of the time. In 2018 this target was achieved 96% of the time.

Turnout Time Standard Achieved

Travel Time is the actual drive time of the first responding apparatus. Council has established a travel time standard of 240 seconds 90% of the time. In 2018 this target was met 77% of the time. In 2017 this standard was met 80.6% of the time.



## Response Standards Conclusions

In 2018 the compliance with response standards is less than hoped for, however it is important to note that critical areas such as building code requirements were achieved, turnout time in all categories was achieved, and fire response had a combined turnout and travel compliance of 78.9% while medical calls had a combined turnout and travel compliance of 76.3%.

The main areas of concern are dispatch times and second calls. Second calls are being addressed with the approved hiring in 2019 and proposed hiring in 2020, to allow for a second fire apparatus to be staffed. SGFS continues to work with dispatch to improve dispatch delays. In 2019 the new Protective Services building incorporated a new station alerting system to speed up dispatching. The challenge in 2020 will be to establish better reporting protocols to ensure times are recorded accurately and performance is managed.



*Figure 1 Time is a critical component of a fire or medical response*

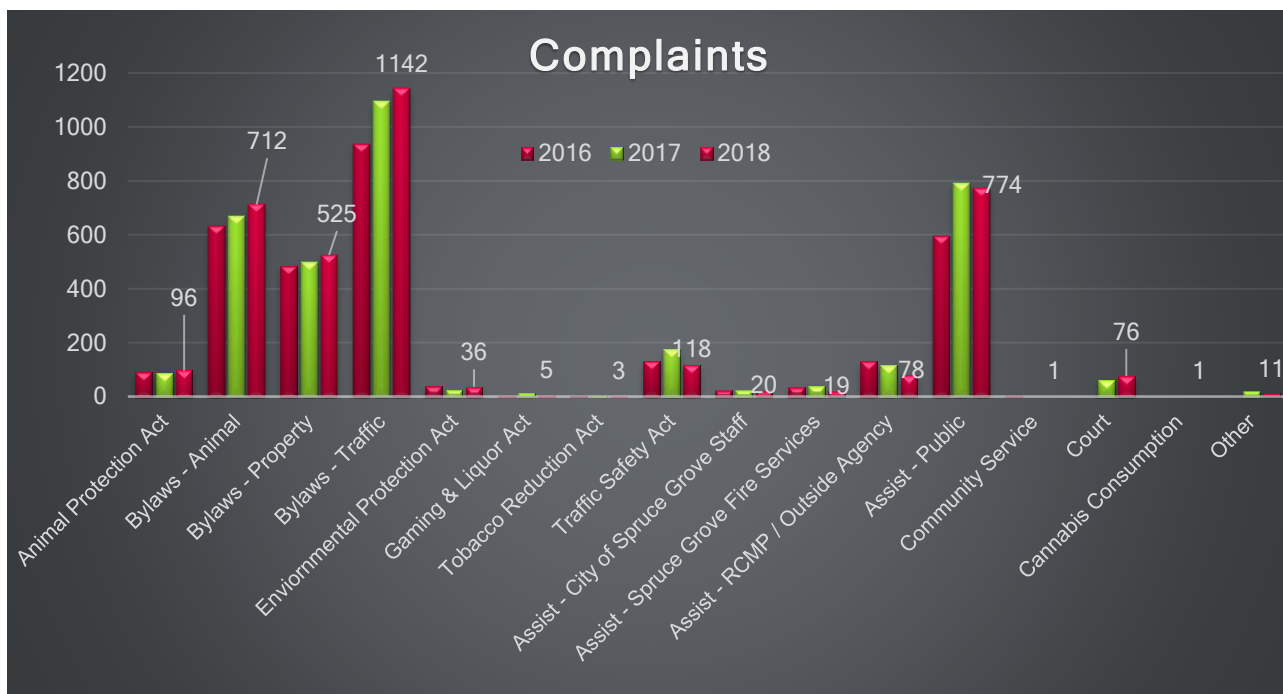


# Enforcement Services

## Complaints Received

In 2018 enforcement services had a 12.3% increase in the number of complaints received for a total of 3,617. For reporting purposes these are broken down into 16 categories. The busiest area remains bylaw – traffic which is largely parking related matters. Although cannabis was legalized in 2018 there was only one complaint received by enforcement services related to cannabis.

The following chart shows each category in a three year comparison. Over the three year period parking and animal control continue to dominate the types of complaints received.



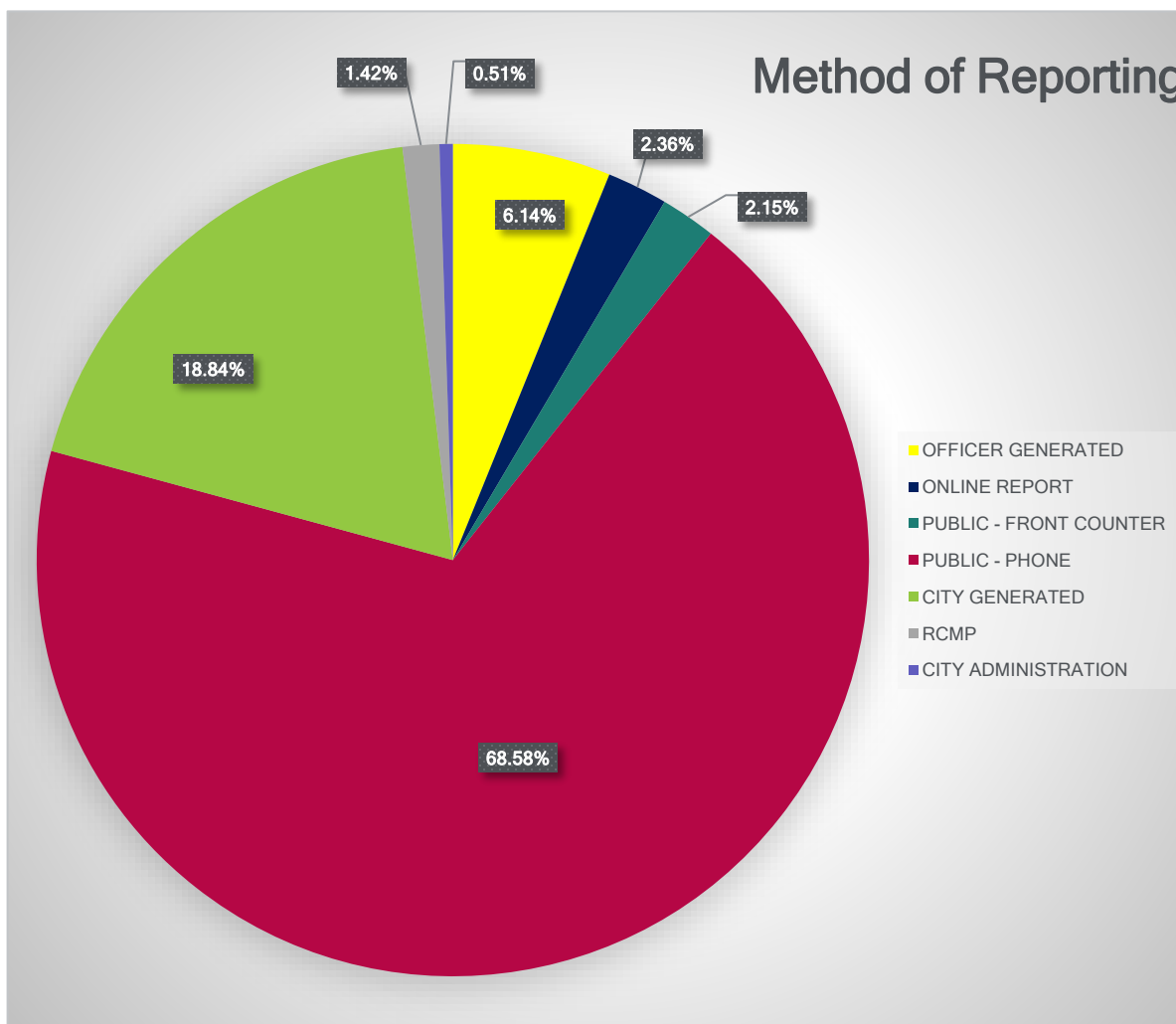
## Complaints by Neighbourhood

For the purpose of identifying priority patrol areas complaints are tracked by neighbourhood. The top three areas with complaints in 2018 were same top three as 2017. These are Harvest Ridge, Spruce Ridge, and Spruce Village. The complaint volume in these areas collectively increased 6.6% in 2018 over 2017. Although a decrease in complaints would have been preferred one must note that a 6.6% increase is 46.3% less of an increase than the city as a whole. These neighbourhoods will continue to receive extra attention in 2019.



## Complaint Method of Reporting

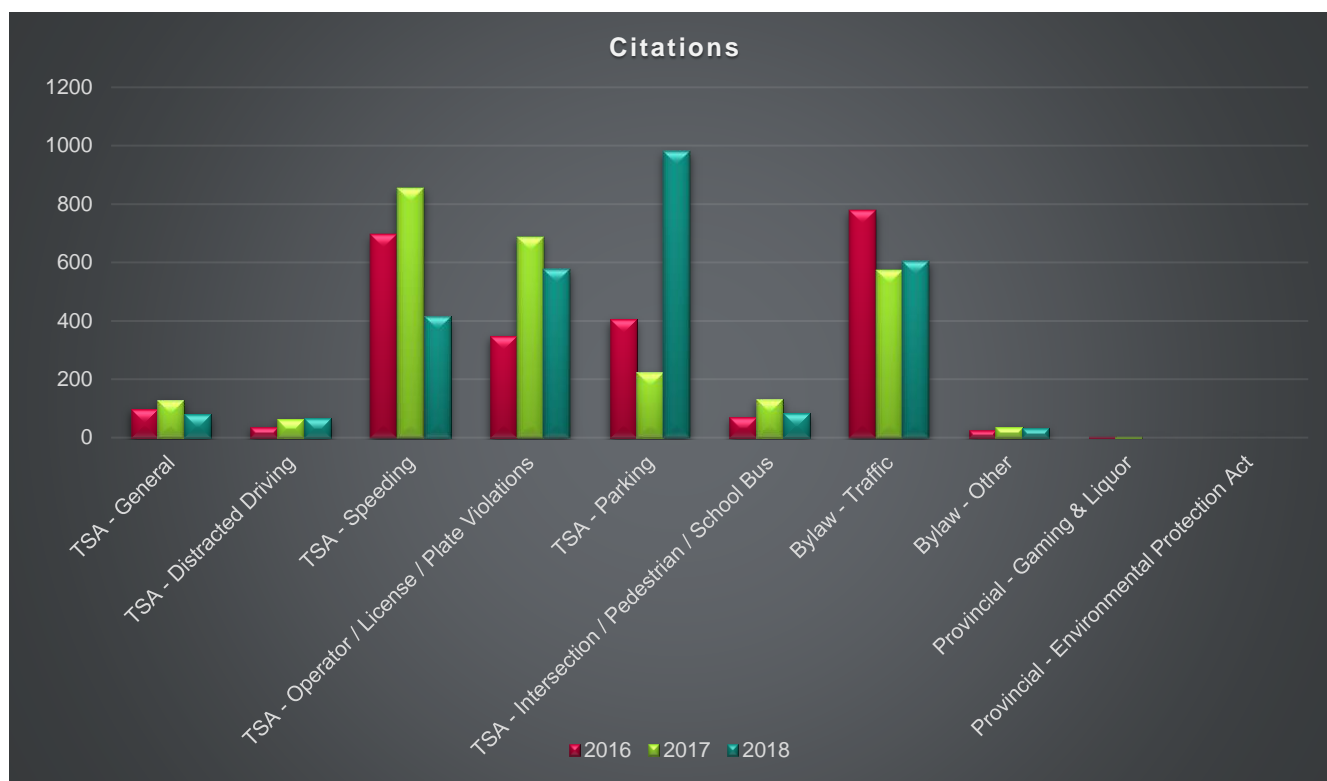
Within society there has been an increased trend to use online services. For years Spruce Grove has provided an option for residents to use an online portal for submitting complaints directly to enforcement services. In 2018 only 2.36% of tracked complaints were submitted via the online portal. Over 68.5% of complaints were submitted via telephone indicating that the preferred for making a complaint remains the telephone. This statistic reinforces the importance of maintaining a strong ability to receive complaints via telephone. The next largest method of reporting to enforcement services (18.8%) was from city internal sources. This is either a city generated complaint or where the complaint had first spoken with another city department, and the complaint is forwarded to enforcement services.





## Citations

Citations or charges laid may be the result of a complaint received or in many cases as a “self-generated file”, the result of a routine patrol. In 2018 SGES issued 2,841 violation notices which is a 5.2% increase over 2017. The vast majority of these are TSA (Traffic Safety Act) related.



## Animal Control

Animal control complaints continue to increase with the growth of the city. In 2018 there were 712 complaints in relation to Spruce Grove bylaws and 96 in relation to the Animal Protection Act for a total of 808 complaints. This represents a 6.7% increase over 2017. Within animal control the two areas with the highest number of complaints are dogs at large and dogs barking.

In 2018 there were 211 animals impounded into the animal shelter; 128 dogs and 83 cats. Peace officers delivered 108 of the animals, while 103 were delivered to the shelter by members of the general public. Of those impounded 145 were claimed, 27 were adopted, 37 were transferred to animal rescue agencies, and two had to be euthanized due to being severely injured.

## Special Events

One of the services provided by enforcement services is assisting with traffic control or site security at special events held within the city and attending organizations recognition events. Some of these events in 2018 included:

- Parkland School Division Triathlon
- Canada Day Celebrations
- Christmas in Central Park
- Memorial Service – Humboldt Broncos / Saints players.
- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Heritage Trail
- Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women’s Awareness March
- Mental Health Awareness March
- Remembrance Day events
- Coffee with a Cop
- Girls Group at the Log Cabin
- Stuff a Cruiser
- RCMP Youth Academy
- High Visibility Patrols during the festive season
- Option 4 – Seat Belt Restraint program with Alberta Health Services
- Bike Rodeo





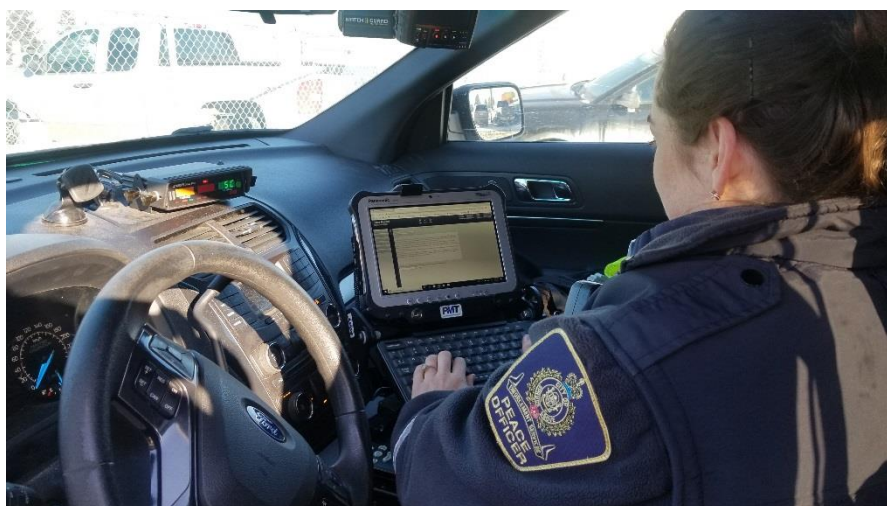
# SAFE CITY

The two main areas of Safe City are Traffic Safety and Fire Prevention. Traffic safety is a collaborative effort of Enforcement Services, RCMP, Engineering, Public Works, and Automated Traffic Enforcement. Fire Prevention is a collaborative effort of Fire Services, Planning, and the province. Safe City also assists in crime prevention initiatives.

## Traffic Enforcement

### Joint Operations

In an effort to maximize visibility, and enhance resource deployment the Spruce Grove RCMP, RCMP Integrated Traffic Unit, and Spruce Grove Enforcement Services conducted high visibility joint force operations to augment other applied traffic safety measures. In 2018, twenty-six (26) joint forces traffic safety operations were conducted.



### Fatalities

Once again 2018 was a year without a single traffic related fatality in Spruce Grove.

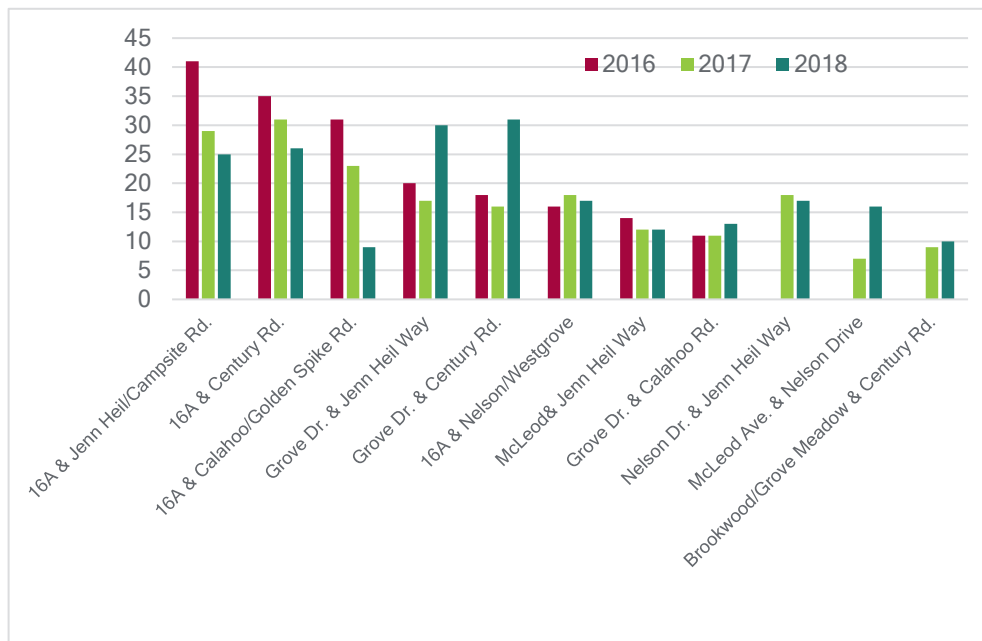
### Collisions

Collisions remain a difficult statistic to monitor. This is as there are several reporting agencies and the methodologies of reporting may change within a given year making year to year comparisons difficult. There is also a high level of error when collisions are reported as the municipal boundaries are often misinterpreted. Safe City works hard to filter this data and create comparisons. 2018 saw a significant increase in collisions at Century Road and Grove Drive, moving this intersection to the highest rank collision site in the city.





To help identify areas that may need additional enforcement, engineering, or other measures, the top ten collision sites are identified. Of the top 10 collision intersections four are on Hwy 16A and four are on Jennifer Heil Way. 2016 data was not available for three of the intersections.



Note: 1 2016 data for Nelson & Jenn Heil, McLeod & Nelson, Brookwood & Century is no longer available.

### Automated Traffic Enforcement

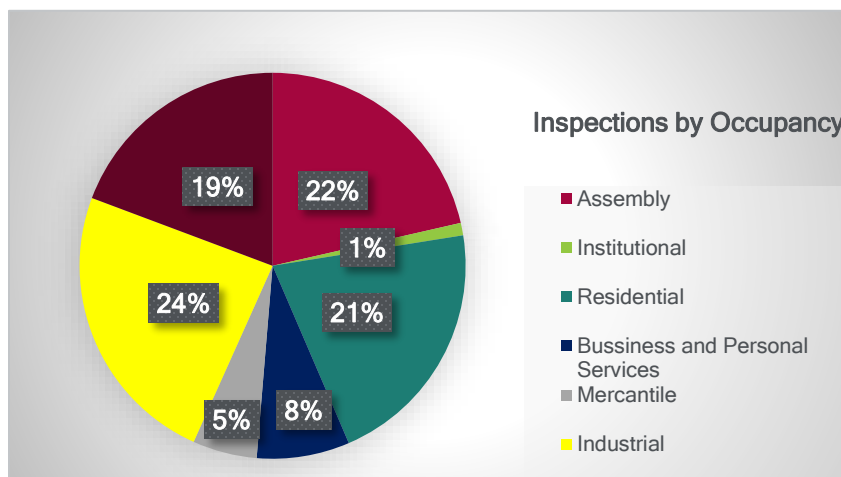
A detailed Automated Traffic Enforcement report is prepared and presented on separately from the annual Protective Services report.

## Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention Officers work to reduce hazards and increase safety practices. They provide fire safety sessions, perform fire inspections and, along with chief officers, conduct fire investigations. All of these activities are done in accordance with the Alberta Safety Codes Act and its regulations.

### Inspections

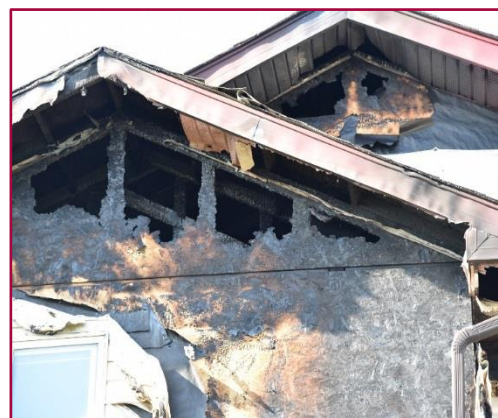
In 2018 a total of 1,633 inspections were conducted. A primary concern of these inspections is life safety, therefore the majority of inspections are in locations where people sleep or congregate.



### Investigations

All fires within Spruce Grove that cause a minimum of \$1.00 in damage must be investigated and reported to the Office of the Fire Commissioner. The purpose of these investigations is public safety and not to assign blame, however when the investigation becomes suspicious the investigator then brings in the RCMP and the scope of the investigation becomes criminal.

In 2018 all fires with a dollar loss were investigated with the leading cause of fire being Mechanical/Electrical Failure.





## Causes of Fire 2018

