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Bill 56

**An Act to enact the 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act, 2021 and
to amend the Ombudsman Act to create an Assistant Ombudsman
responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations**

Ms F. Gélinas

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading November 24, 2021

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act, 2021* which requires the Solicitor General or such other member of the Executive Council as may be assigned the administration of this Act under the *Executive Council Act* to fulfil various obligations related to the provision of and infrastructure for 9-1-1 services. The Act also places certain obligations on persons or entities who operate a 9-1-1 call centre respecting the staffing, supervision and training of staff.

The Bill also amends the *Ombudsman Act* to establish the position of Assistant Ombudsman responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations and the Assistant Ombudsman's functions, which include assisting the Ombudsman with investigations relating to the provision of 9-1-1 services.

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to amend the Ombudsman Act to create an Assistant Ombudsman
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Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Definition

1 In this Act,

“Minister” means the Solicitor General or such other member of the Executive Council as may be assigned the administration of this Act under the *Executive Council Act*.

Duty re 9-1-1

2 (1) The Minister shall take all necessary steps to ensure that,

- (a) the infrastructure is in place such that any individual across Ontario who dials 9-1-1 is connected to,
 - (i) a call centre responsible for answering calls to 9-1-1 for police, ambulance and fire services, or
 - (ii) the police service with jurisdiction in the area from which the call is placed;
- (b) the infrastructure is in place such that 9-1-1 call centres responsible for answering calls to 9-1-1 and police, ambulance and fire services may operate on the same or compatible computer aided dispatch systems by December 2023 that allow for,
 - (i) the immediate sharing of information among these services,
 - (ii) use of a re-bid feature to request caller location information, and
 - (iii) users of the system to emphasize critical information and escalate alerts the greater the delay in dispatching assistance;
- (c) the infrastructure is in place to permit 9-1-1 call centre personnel to obtain updated location information from cellular service providers;
- (d) the infrastructure is in place that allows bi-directional real-time computer aided dispatch data to be available to emergency responders on mobile data terminals or any other data transfer device used by emergency responders; and
- (e) emergency resources are identified in all municipalities for dealing with a water rescue, including availability of police or fire boats, launch points and personnel and that this information is made available to all 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers and their supervisors.

Interoperable radio channel

(2) The Minister shall take all necessary steps to establish an interoperable radio channel for use by the Ministry of Health and police, ambulance and fire services for use during a multi-agency response to a 9-1-1 call.

Measures to ensure better communication

(3) The Minister shall investigate measures, including equipment and facilities, to assist 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers and their supervisors to effectively listen to and understand information being communicated from callers and colleagues.

Duty to assist

(4) Any other member of the Executive Council shall provide any assistance to the Minister that the Minister requires in order to fulfil the obligations under this section.

Responsibilities re 9-1-1 services

3 (1) Any person or entity that operates a call centre responsible for answering calls to 9-1-1 for police, ambulance and fire services shall ensure that,

- (a) the call centre is appropriately staffed to handle its call volume and to permit individuals with supervisory roles to focus on their supervisory duties and not be required to take 9-1-1 calls or perform dispatching duties;

- (b) 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are adequately trained and have completed any industry recognized professional certification required by the Minister;
- (c) supervisors of 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are trained in the software used by the individuals they supervise and that supervisors are able to communicate directly with each other;
- (d) appropriate supports are provided to 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers and their supervisors, including mental health supports and support for post-traumatic stress disorder;
- (e) 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers have the capacity to monitor computer aided dispatch information at all times;
- (f) front line emergency service responders are able to communicate directly with other responders and dispatchers;
- (g) the call centre operates on the compatible computer aided dispatch system referred to in clause 2 (1) (b) as of January 1, 2024; and
- (h) a policy is put in place that meets the requirements of subsection (2) and that 9-1-1 personnel receive training on the policy.

Policy

(2) The policy mentioned in clause (1) (h) shall address the following matters:

1. How to permit callers who are unable to verbally communicate their needs to communicate through other means.
2. Circumstances in which it is appropriate to permit front line emergency service responders to communicate directly with a caller.
3. Circumstances in which a medical tiered response is engaged, including simultaneous notification.
4. Who is accountable in cases of unnecessary delays in dispatching emergency services.
5. Circumstances in which 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers must consult with their supervisors before making a particular decision.
6. How to identify and acknowledge critical information during radio communications.
7. Mandatory internal reviews in circumstances where 9-1-1 services were sought in connection with the death of an individual and a close relative, as defined in subsection 2 (1) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, of that individual or a person responsible for providing the 9-1-1 services has identified a concern about the manner in which the 9-1-1 services were provided. The internal review must include consultations with staff both during and upon completion of the review.

Crown bound

4 This Act binds the Crown.

Amendments to the *Ombudsman Act*

5 Section 8 of the *Ombudsman Act* is amended by adding the following subsections:

Assistant Ombudsman, 9-1-1 operations

(1.1) The Ombudsman shall designate an individual from among the employees of the Ombudsman as the Assistant Ombudsman responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations.

Same

(1.2) The Assistant Ombudsman responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations shall,

- (a) assist the Ombudsman in conducting any investigation under subsection 14 (1) that relates to the provision of 9-1-1 services;
- (b) provide a close relative, as defined in subsection 2 (1) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, of an individual with information related to an investigation referred to in clause (a) if the investigation relates to the death of the individual;
- (c) develop and implement a public awareness campaign on the purpose of 9-1-1 services, including information on alternative numbers for reaching police in non-emergency situations;
- (d) investigate methods to deter inappropriate and accidental use of 9-1-1 services; and
- (e) on or before April 1 in each year, prepare an annual report on the Assistant Ombudsman's activities over the course of the previous year and make the report available to the public.

Disclosure

(1.3) Clause (1.2) (b) applies despite subsection 7.3 (1).

Commencement

6 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

7 The short title of this Act is the *9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act, 2021*.