

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION  
10-17 (4): GROUND AMBULANCE AND HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES**

**Motion**

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) enhance its work in the area of ground ambulance and highway rescue by emphasizing training and preparation for emergencies outside of municipal boundaries;

AND FURTHER, that the Government bring forward legislation within the next twelve months to update the *Fire Prevention Act* and to make any other amendments required to make provisions for ground ambulance and highway rescue services;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the GNWT provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

**GNWT Response**

On June 3, 2013, a detailed presentation was provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure describing efforts underway to strengthen ground ambulance and highway rescue services in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

The GNWT's goal is to support community governments to deliver effective, coordinated, and sustainable community-based emergency response, ground ambulance and rescue services that reflect community needs and capacity, which may also include the provision of ambulance service within communities and on the adjacent public highway system.

To achieve this objective, several key initiatives are underway. In summer 2013, eligibility for funding available through the Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Services Funding Program was expanded to all community governments. This ensures all communities have access to available funding to help train volunteer personnel. In addition, vehicle purchases now qualify as an allowable expense.

In fall 2013, Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) will complete a project aimed at helping communities recruit and manage volunteers required for effective ground ambulance and highway rescue services.

In fall 2013, key stakeholders will update the Highway Emergency Alerting Protocol (HEAP) to ensure good communications and coordination between key emergency responses agencies involved in highway rescue. This work will also help inform the development of an effective public communications strategy.

In fall 2013, work will start on an implementation study for a territorial-wide 911 system. This effort will take into consideration work completed by the City of Yellowknife and GNWT in 2008.

The *Fire Prevention Act* regulates the investigation and reporting of fire hazards and adopts codes and standards related to fire prevention. It does not serve to address ground ambulance or highway rescue in the NWT, nor are similar statutes used for this purpose in other jurisdictions.

To combine the two policy objectives into a single legislation initiative will only serve to delay an update to the *Fire Prevention Act*, which is needed to help ensure residents are kept safe from the threat of fire.

In other jurisdictions, specific legislation is passed to guide the provision of emergency medical services. In the NWT, efforts are underway to develop a *Health and Social Services Professions Act* that will include profession specific licensing regulations for Emergency Medical Service providers. The Department of Health and Social Services is also moving forward with developing standards legislation for ambulance, emergency vehicles, and equipment.