

Fire Response Time

10-Year Target: Respond to fire calls within six minutes and 20 seconds at least 90% of the time

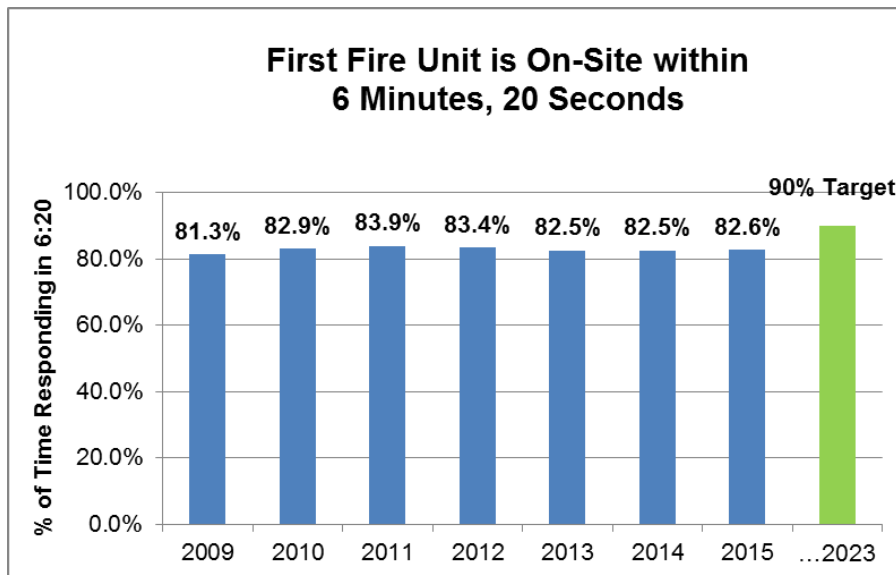
Description:

“Fire Response Time” measures total response time from when dispatch receives a call for a fire emergency until the first unit arrives at the fire scene. Total response time includes dispatch (communication), turnout (reaction) and travel time.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a body of professionals that develops best practice models for fire services, recommends the following response times for emergency fire calls in urban settings, to be achieved 90% of the time:

- 60 seconds to receive and process the call
- 80 seconds for responders to don protective clothing
- 240 seconds (4 minutes) for travel time for the first arriving unit to arrive at the incident after leaving the station
- Eight minutes travel response time to have a full complement of at least 16 firefighters on-site

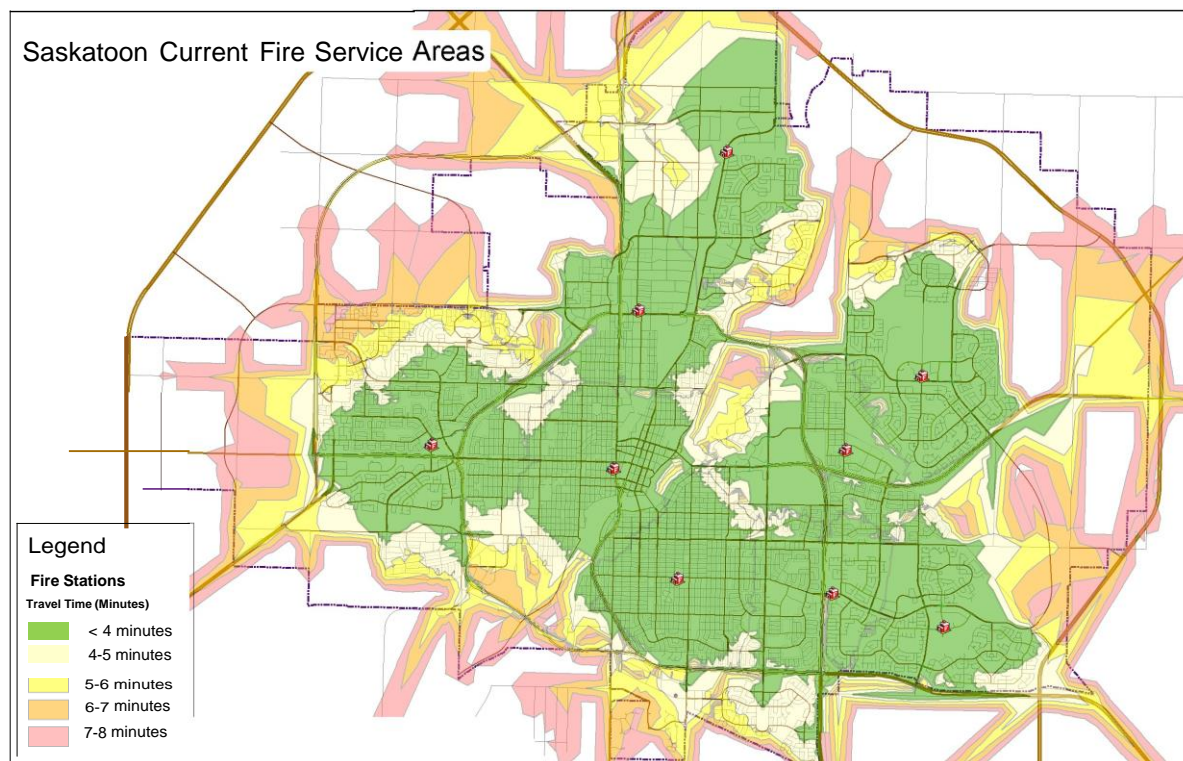
How are we doing?



In 2015, the Saskatoon Fire Department responded within six minutes and 20 seconds to 82.6% of 12,618 emergency and non-emergency calls for service. Of the total number of calls, 2,255 calls were specifically related to fire alarm bells and remote fire calls.

Source: Saskatoon Fire Department

The map shows the present location and coverage of the nine fire stations and the travel time required to respond to a fire in the service area.



How are other cities doing?

Fire Departments have different allowances for time in three categories (dispatch, reaction and travel) within their total Fire Response Time, thereby making direct comparisons with other jurisdictions challenging. The following chart compares Saskatoon allowances with Calgary and Edmonton allowances.

	Saskatoon	Calgary	Edmonton
Dispatch Time (Seconds)	60	60	90
Reaction Time (Seconds)	80	90	90
Travel Time (Seconds)	240	270	240
Total Time (Seconds)	380	420	420
Total Time (Minutes)	6:20	7	7

What do we need to do to achieve this target?

Strategically located fire stations which maximize the service area that can be reached within a four minute travel time are key to meeting the total response time target. New fire stations, with appropriate funding plans, must be incorporated in long-term planning strategies. Minimizing overlap of service areas will increase operating efficiencies while continuing to provide effective coverage.

What are the benefits of achieving the target?

- Due to the dynamics of fire growth, seconds count in saving lives and property.
- Increased densification, new building and insulation materials, and modern furnishings which contribute to quicker fire spread and release of toxic chemicals make a timely response even more important to protecting citizens and their property.
- By achieving timely response time targets, “quality of life” is enhanced by the knowledge that life and property have a reasonable, quantified chance of success.
- Fire protection levels are a key driver in the establishment of insurance rates within the service area. Quicker response times can lower insurance costs.

What are the risks?

Meeting targeted response times may be negatively impacted by the following:

- The construction of houses in new neighbourhoods which are further from fire stations
- Increased neighbourhood densification and resulting traffic congestion
- More train traffic through the city
- Lack of appropriate funding plans for the development of strategically located fire stations

