



Little Harbour & Area Vol. Fire Dept.



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Urgent Request for Improved Telephone Line Service for Little Harbour Fire Department
October 8, 2024

To the Honourable Members of the Shelburne Municipality Council,

As a representative of the Little Harbour Fire Department, I am writing to urgently request your advocacy on our behalf in addressing a critical issue affecting our emergency services: the unreliable telephone line service provided by Bell Aliant.

The Problem: Our paging system, which relies on the telephone line, has been consistently disrupted due to excessive noise and interference. This loud constant noise interferes with our paging system, often making it fail, which jeopardizes our response time during emergencies. As you can imagine, any delay in communication can have serious consequences for public safety. This is our lifeline, we do not have the option to rely on cellular service. This is a serious problem.

When we get an emergency call. Procedure is that the first firefighter who arrives at the fire hall calls Scotia Business Center the company that handles our dispatch) With the phone lines so noisy, it is very difficult to report that we are responding. If the FF has a cell phone, they could call dispatch on it, except that there is little to no cell reception from even outside the hall. We can get one bar out in the middle of the road. We recently added Bell Aliant internet service, in the hope that Wi-Fi calling would help, it does not fill the gap of a reliable landline. If all our firefighters were to be at the Fire Hall at once, we may not even get an emergency call come through to any one of us!

The Ramifications:

1. Response Delays: When our paging system malfunctions, it delays our firefighters' ability to mobilize promptly. Seconds matter in emergency situations, and any interruption in communication could lead to increased property damage or, worse, death.
2. Community Safety: Our community relies on us to provide swift and efficient emergency services. A malfunctioning paging system puts our residents at risk and undermines the trust they place in our department.
3. Operation: The hard lines should be the simplest and most reliable way to communicate in an emergency. Bell Aliant have refused to replace the older copper lines, and have no timeline for





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when they will replace them with fibre optic lines, claiming that our non-profit fire department is classed as a business.

4. Legal: Several of our fire department advocates have diligently engaged with Bell Aliant on multiple occasions, seeking resolution. We have initiated a formal record of these incidents to document their frequency and severity. We emphasize that any delay caused by this communication breakdown—resulting in preventable harm or damage—cannot be attributed to our department.

Our Request: We kindly request that the Shelburne Municipality Council urgently intervene on our behalf with Bell Aliant to address the following:

1. Thorough Investigation: We urge Bell Aliant to conduct a thorough investigation into the noise and interference affecting our telephone lines.
2. Timely Resolution: We seek prompt action to rectify the issue. Whether it requires line repairs, upgrades, or alternative solutions, we need a reliable and noise-free communication channel. How many more years must we go without a reliable phone line supply to our paging system?

Reliable communication is paramount for effective emergency response, and we seek a timely resolution from Bell Aliant.

Conclusion: As dedicated First Responders, we are committed to serving our community with utmost dedication and professionalism. However, our effectiveness is significantly compromised by the current telephone line situation. We trust that the Shelburne Municipality Council will help us, and work with Bell Aliant to resolve this matter swiftly.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your support in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

Rob Maxwell, Fire Chief,
Little Harbour & Area, Vol. Fire Dept.

