

**Lethbridge Professional Fire Fighters IAFF Local 237** represents the Professional Firefighters, Paramedics, and Emergency Dispatchers who serve the City of Lethbridge. As part of our commitment to public safety, we are asking all candidates in the 2025 municipal election to share their views on fire and EMS services, response standards, and community safety.

Your responses will be shared with our membership and may be made available to the public.

**1. Are you familiar with Lethbridge's integrated Fire/EMS model?**

Yes. Lethbridge has operated an integrated Fire/EMS model since 1912, where dual-role firefighter-paramedics provide both fire and emergency medical support. This model is unique in Alberta and has been repeatedly highlighted by both the City of Lethbridge and IAFF Local 237 as a system that improves flexibility, efficiency, and overall community safety.

Further, this model saved my Dad's life, so I may be biased, but I very much support this and the work you do.

**2. What is your understanding of current fire and ambulance staffing levels (e.g., 3-person fire engines, 2-person ambulances), dual-role firefighter-paramedics, station coverage, and the role of emergency dispatchers?**

Based on IAFF Local 237 data and City service-level reports that we've received:

- Some fire engines are staffed with 3 personnel, below the NFPA-recommended 4; however, we have been working to move to 4-person engine staffing.
- Ambulances operate with 2 paramedics, most of whom are dual-role.
- We continue to hire dual-role firefighter-paramedics.
- Dispatchers are essential in coordinating timely, effective response in our city. Since EMS dispatch was centralized under AHS in 2021, Lethbridge lost local autonomy and the benefits of dispatchers with intimate knowledge of local geography – I saw this first-hand when I worked at Lethbridge Public Library and we needed EMS services. Dispatchers didn't know where the Main Branch of the Library was, and staff didn't know the address.
- Anecdotally, I hear that rapid west side population growth has strained station coverage.
- That our Fire Master Plan has us moving to 6-stations.

**3. Do you support continuing the integrated Fire/EMS model operated by Lethbridge Fire and Emergency Services (LFES) since 1912? Please explain your position.**

Yes. Evidence from both City reports and union submissions shows this system ensures seamless response across emergencies, reduces duplication, and keeps accountability local.

Further, it is cost-effective and operationally efficient for our city. Dual-role staffing also safeguards capacity during overlapping fire and medical emergencies.

And, as I stated above, I saw the integrated model in action when my Dad had a heart attack – the integrated model saved his life.

**4. Do you believe EMS should remain under municipal control, or should the City consider transferring responsibility to Alberta Health Services (AHS) or another provider? Why or why not?**

The AHS dispatch centralization in 2021 demonstrates the risks of provincial control – slower response, less coordination, and reduced accountability and flexibility.

Again, when Library staff needed EMS services dispatch was delayed because the dispatcher didn't know Lethbridge.

Further to that, keeping EMS municipal ensures better integration with Fire and Police – quite often it's a combination of Fire/EMS/and Police that need to be dispatched, and they need to be dispatched in a timely manner.

**5. In 2021, EMS dispatch was centralized under AHS. Do you believe this change has improved or harmed local emergency response and coordination between Fire/Police/EMS? Would you support returning EMS dispatch to municipal control?**

It has harmed response. I again go back to when Library staff would call dispatch, and the delays we would see.

Since 2021, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Calgary, and Wood Buffalo have all raised concerns about slower ambulance response times and coordination failures.

I support returning EMS dispatch to municipal control to restore local knowledge and faster response times.

**6. Lethbridge uses a combination of service benchmarks and development standards to guide fire protection.**

**- The current municipal response benchmarks set by previous councils include:**

- **First apparatus arrival on scene in under 10 minutes, 90% of the time**
- **Minimum 4 personnel before initial attack at structure fires (\*Please note some apparatus are currently staffed with only 3 Firefighters)**
- **12 – 14 personnel on scene for high-hazard incidents**

**Are our current service levels adequate, or would you support changes to improve them?**

Our Fire and EMS responders to a great job with current resources; however, I would support changes for improvement for you to do the job we're asking you to do. I believe we need to be phasing upward to improve response times and to ensure worker safety.

Our current benchmarks are below recognized best practices. NFPA 1710 recommends 4-person crews and 4:30 response times for initial fire suppression.

**7. The HIRF (High Intensity Residential Fires) recommendation, used in building development approvals, emphasizes building design and setbacks to compensate for limited fire response resources. This building recommendation is based on a 10-minute response model.**

**The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710 standard), recognized across North America, focuses on response times, staffing (e.g., 4-person fire crews), and deployment models to ensure effective fire suppression, rescue and firefighter safety. NFPA 1710 standard is a minimum of 4 firefighters per apparatus, and a response time of 4 minutes and 30 seconds.**

**Knowing now that our current response guidelines fall far below the NFPA standard, has your position on if our current service levels are adequate changed? If elected, what if anything, would you do to improve them?**

Knowing we fall short underscores the urgency. I would word towards ensuring that our Fire/EMS have the resources to do the job we are asking you to do.

- Work towards ensuring that we are fully staffed.
- Work toward staffing all engines with 4 firefighters.
- Work toward the plan for 6 stations.
- Review growth-driven coverage gaps.

**8. Firefighter and paramedic recruitment, retention, and wellness (including mental health and cancer prevention) are ongoing concerns. What steps will you support to strengthen long-term sustainability for our frontline professionals?**

I would support ensuring Fire/EMS has the resources you need to do the job you need to do, and that includes supports such as:

- Cancer prevention initiatives such as clean cab programs, gear washing facilities, and improved ventilation (as advocated by IAFF Canada).
- Mental health supports, including peer-to-peer counselling and expanded EAP access.
- Competitive wages/benefits to retain dual-role professionals.
- Partnerships with Lethbridge College and University of Lethbridge to develop a local talent pipeline.

**9. How would you ensure public safety remains a top priority during City budget discussions, especially during financially challenging times?**

I will advocate for public safety being among the top priorities in City budgets and use the forthcoming Long-Term Financial Sustainability Framework to help prioritize these essential services before discretionary or non-essential spending, even in financially difficult times.

**10. Do you support or oppose single-egress (one stairwell) designs in multi-storey residential buildings? How would you balance housing goals with life safety for residents and responders?**

I oppose single-egress (one stairwell) designs in multi-storey housing. If there is single-egress, strict and informed safeguards must be present, and risk must be mitigated. While we must meet housing supply targets, we cannot lower safety standards. NFPA and IAFF guidelines warn that single-egress designs increase risks for both residents and first responders. The risk-management context matters.

**11. What does a respectful, productive relationship with IAFF Local 237 look like to you? If elected, how will you engage with our members?**

A respectful relationship means ongoing, transparent dialogue. I would commit to:

- Meeting regularly with union leadership and members.
- Learning more and receiving regular updates on response times and hospital off-lad times.
- Continuing to advocate to the Province on dispatch and EMS system reform.
- Listening to concerns from IAFF members, not just at election and/or budget time.
- Bringing information back to the Council table to ensure frontline expertise informs Council decisions.

**12. Any final comments on your vision for public safety in Lethbridge?**

Public safety is the foundation of a strong, future-ready community. This is a critical service. My vision is a Lethbridge where:

- Residents feel safe in their homes and neighbourhoods.
- Critical front-line services – Fire, EMS, and LPS – have the resources they need for you to do the job we are asking you to do.
- Thank you for your service and everything you do for our city.