**Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – December 2, 2025**

## REPORTS

**Item No. 2 Fire Underwriters Survey City of Winnipeg Updated Fire Insurance Grade Classifications**

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**Title:** Fire Underwriters Survey City of Winnipeg Updated Fire Insurance Grade Classifications

**Critical Path:** Standing Policy on Committee Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

## AUTHORIZATION

| Author | Department Head | CFO | CAO |
|---|---|---|---|
| L. Hathout | C. Schmidt | N/A | J. Dunford |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) is an evaluation of a fire department's performance. The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) commissioned a full review in 2014. It contributed to the development of the WFPS Strategic Plan. This survey should be conducted every 10 years.

In 2024, WFPS updated its FUS and recently received the final scores. Since 2014, the City has made improvements in protection for larger buildings. This includes apartments, commercial buildings, and factories. The City's fire protection rating improved from Class 3 to Class 2.

The better rating shows the WFPS's performance and communication systems have improved. It also shows a reliable water supply and better fire safety measures. It reflects major investments in infrastructure, training, and emergency readiness.

The FUS scores help determine insurance rates across Canada. The 2024 results may help lower insurance costs in Winnipeg, especially for businesses. Winnipeg also kept its top rating of Class 1 for single-family homes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That this report be received as information.

## REASON FOR THE REPORT

The Fire Underwriters Survey is an external evaluation of the performance of the department's fire service. The FUS was completed in 2014 and updated in 2018 and 2024. This report accompanies the results of the 2024 updates as detailed in the updated grade report letter dated July 24, 2025 (Appendix A).

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications with receiving this report as information.

## HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The Fire Underwriters Survey (conducted by Verisk) is a national organization representing approximately 90 percent of Canada's property and casualty insurers. It provides evaluation data on public fire protection to insurers. The focus is on fire protection capabilities for both commercial and residential buildings. It is recommended that this survey is conducted every 10 years. The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) commissioned an exhaustive review in 2014. It contributed to the development of the WFPS Strategic Plan. In 2024, Verisk was asked to update their report.

### Classification Systems

The Fire Underwriter Survey uses two classification systems - the Public Fire Protection Classification (PFPC), and the Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG).

### Public Fire Protection Classification

The PFPC has a scale of 1 (best) to 10 (least protection or no recognized service). Its purpose is to evaluate fire protection for larger buildings (multi-family, commercial, industrial, etc.). It is used by most commercial lines insurers.

PFPC is derived from four primary categories. Each contributes a percentage to the final grading:

1. Fire Department (40 percent) improved from a relative classification of 3 in 2014 to 2 in 2025. Nineteen factors are evaluated, including:

- Engine and ladder services
- Firefighter staffing and training
- Equipment and apparatus condition
- Alarm response and operations
- Pre-incident planning and administration

2. Water Supply (30 percent) improved from Class 2 to Class 1. Fifteen factors are evaluated, including:

- Reliability and capacity of supply systems
- Hydrant distribution and condition
- Pipe installation and maintenance
- Fire flow delivery capabilities

3. Fire Safety Control (20 percent) improved from Class 4 to Class 3.

- Evaluates the city's fire prevention and public education efforts:
    - Fire prevention programs
    - Code enforcement
    - Building and electrical code inspections

4. Emergency Communications (10 percent) maintained Class 1, showing strong emergency communications infrastructure. Seven factors are evaluated, including:

- Dispatch systems
- Radio operations
- Public alarm transmission
- Call intake systems

**Final Grading and Strategic Significance**

Winnipeg's PFPC is now officially Class 2, improved from Class 3 in 2014 (provisional Class 2 was held since then). This reflects an enhanced ability to handle fire risks due to improvements in the WFPS and water infrastructure.

| Grading Area | Approximate Weighting | Relative Classification 2014 | Relative Classification 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fire Department | 40% | 3 | 2 |
| Water Supply | 30% | 2 | 1 |
| Fire Safety Control | 20% | 4 | 3 |
| Emergency Communications | 10% | 1 | 1 |
| **Final PFPC:** | | **3 (70.81 points)** | **2 (85.52 points)** |

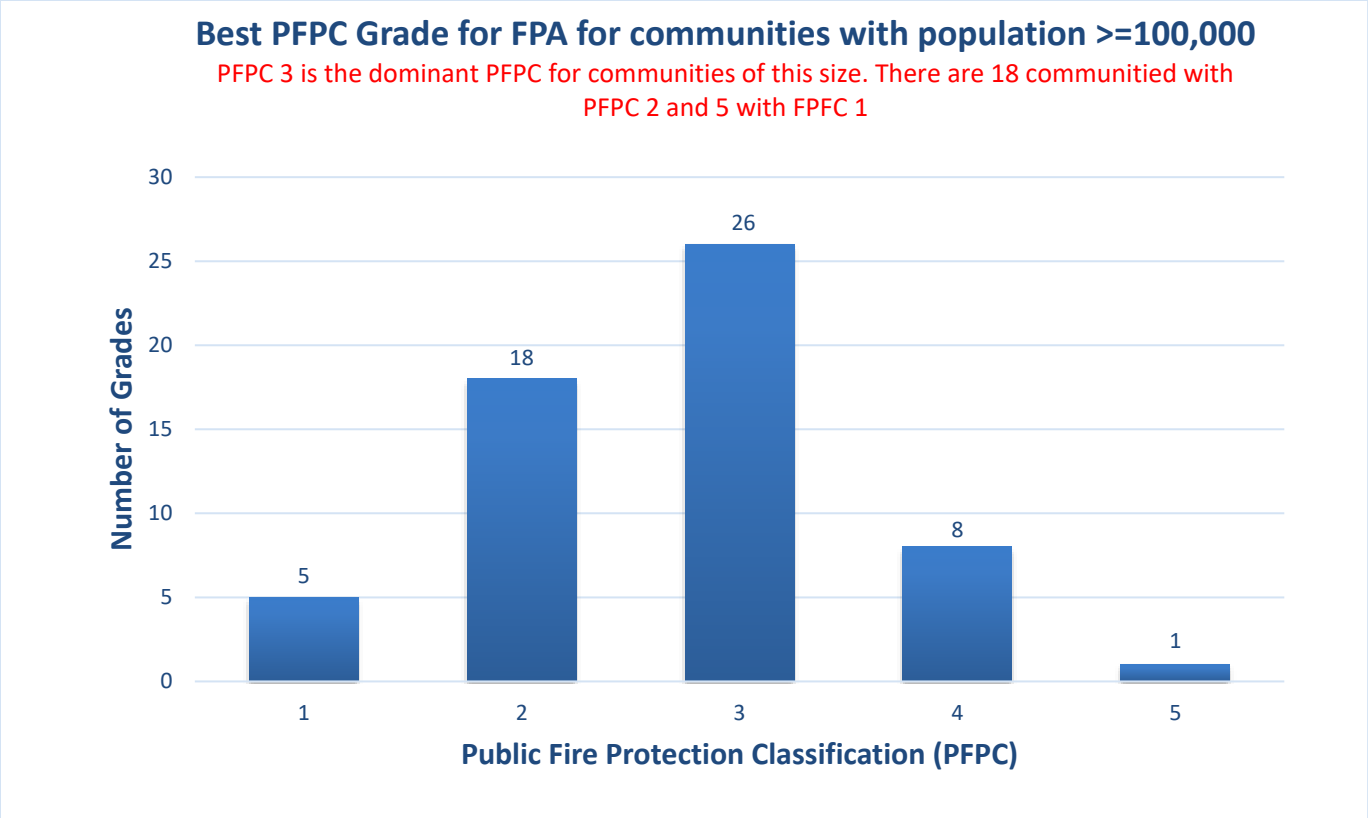


Chart provided by Fire Underwriters

These improvements can lead to better insurance premiums for businesses and property owners, especially in commercial zones. The National Fire Protection Association 19th edition of the Fire Protection Handbook (FPH™) Section 7 Chapter 2 p. 7-42 looked at how PFPC insurance grading classifications affected insurance rates:

| City Class Change | Percent of Premium Decrease |
|---|---|
| Class 10 to Class 9 | 15 |
| Class 9 to Class 8 | 9 |
| Class 8 to Class 7 | 5 |
| Class 7 to Class 6 | 5 |
| Class 6 to Class 5 | 5 |
| Class 4 to Class 3 | 8 |
| Class 3 to Class 2 | 3 |
| Class 2 to Class 1 | 2 |

The confirmed PFPC 2 reflects significant investments and improvements by the WFPS, and the City overall, in infrastructure, training, and operational readiness.

The improved score removes the “provisional” status granted in 2014, making the new grade official and stable for insurers. Winnipeg’s improved rating means a possible three percent decrease in insurance for commercial properties.

**Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG)**

The Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG) has a Scale: 1 (best) to 5 (no protection or >8 km from fire station). It evaluates fire protection for small structures like single-family dwellings. It is used for personal lines insurers. Winnipeg maintains a score of 1.

| SUB DISTRICT(S) and (contract protection areas) | DPG 2018 | DPG 2025 | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| City of Winnipeg Hydrant Protected Area | 1 | 1 | Hydrant Protected – Commercial Lines insured properties within specified distances of a hydrant and within specified distances of a fire hall. |

**Follow-up**

The report identifies areas that can still be improved, particularly fire safety control. WFPS is using this feedback to target areas for improvement, particularly:

- Ladder Service
- Distribution of Fire Resources
- Total Fire Force Available
- Pre-Incident Planning
- General Program Fire prevention programming
- Codes and Enforcement

**Implications**

- The external evaluation supports the WFPS strategic planning approach.
- The FUS PFPC improved from the last evaluation. This score is used by insurance companies to set insurance premiums. This improvement can lead to better insurance premiums for businesses and property owners, especially in commercial zones.
- The FUS detailed standardized assessment identifies fire service areas to improve upon. WFPS will take them into consideration for future service improvements.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

## Financial Impact Statement Date: Oct 20, 2025

## Project Name:

## Fire Underwriters Survey City of Winnipeg Updated Fire Insurance Grade Classifications

**COMMENTS:**

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

John Hall FCMA, CGMA
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

## CONSULTATION

This report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Fire Underwriters Survey (Verisk Canada)

## OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

**Goal: Good Health and Well-Being**

4.7 Community Safety
Provide capacity to prepare, mitigate, assess risk, respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change, extreme weather, human or natural emergencies, disasters, and diseases, to promote community resilience within a changing hazard landscape.

4.8 Building Safety
Enforce compliance with building codes and property maintenance standards, to ensure housing quality, safe building occupancy, and extended building lifecycles.

## WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP) Alignment and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

## WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

## SUBMITTED BY

Department: WFPS
Division:
Prepared by: Linda Hathout
Date: October 20, 2025
File No: N/A

Attachments:

Appendix A – FUS Grade Update Letter - City of Winnipeg