

Analysis of Rural and Urban Average Code 4 Response Times Across Ontario

Executive Summary

A review of rural and urban average code 4 (highest urgency with “lights and sirens”) paramedic response times across 10 of Ontario’s 56 certified Paramedic Services (including the Region of Peel) was conducted to assess how the average code 4 response times in the Region of Peel compare. Response time data were requested from 21 certified Paramedic Services, the analyses are limited only to the 69 municipalities covered by the 10 certified Paramedic Services from which data were either received or available through open source. The following are key findings of the review:

- The Town of Caledon has an average code 4 response time that is one minute and 25 seconds faster than the overall average response time of 51 rural municipalities within Ontario.
- The Cities of Mississauga and Brampton have lengthier response times than the overall urban average response time by 47 and 37 seconds, respectively.
- On average, rural code 4 response times for the 51 rural municipalities are five minutes and five seconds lengthier than urban response times for the 18 urban municipalities.
- When comparing the urban and rural average code 4 response times within each of the nine jurisdictions, the difference in response times between Caledon and Brampton and Mississauga (approximate difference of three minutes) is about one minute and 42 seconds faster compared to the rest.
- In efforts to better assess Caledon’s response time, a comparison was done with the rural municipality that was most like Caledon in respect of land area, population size, and settlement distribution. In this analysis, the comparator municipality is shown to have a faster average code 4 response time (one minute and 49 seconds faster) compared to Caledon. Of note, the comparator municipality does have a more extensive road network that enables improved access within that region. However, like Caledon, the comparator municipality has a lengthier response time than its urban counterpart. Crucially, while there are other municipalities within Ontario that would have served as better comparators, given their population size, land area, and settlement distribution, the study was limited by the data available or provided by other Paramedic Services.
- When comparing variations in response times across Ontario, it is important to consider differences in the context of local Paramedic Service operating models, dispatch tools, population distribution, and demand for paramedic services as these factors directly impact paramedic service delivery.