



ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION

LOCAL 449 – RENFREW

PO BOX 40014 RAGLAN PO, Renfrew, ON K7V 4G0

1-866-283-0557 | www.opseulocal449.ca

We stand together to win.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday March 27th, 2023

OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 Celebrates National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

RENFREW - OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 is proud to support and celebrate the upcoming 2023 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, taking place from April 9th to 15th 2023, as government officials and organizations recognize the dedication and hard work of 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers.

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week (NPSTW), sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Canada and celebrated annually, honours the thousands of men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens.

"I am incredibly proud of the amazing work our local Ambulance Communications Officers perform for the community," says President and Ambulance Communications Officer Supervisor, Liam Vanderbraak. "Day in and day out, these dedicated public servants from the Renfrew Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) provide efficient and high quality 9-1-1 services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Not only do they provide 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching services for the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service and the District of Nippissing Paramedic Service (Township of South Algonquin), they also provide 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching services for fifteen township fire departments within the County of Renfrew."

The role of an Ambulance Communication Officer can change gears multiple times throughout the day. "Throughout a shift, we can take a variety of different calls," says Treasurer Katie Scheel, who is also an Ambulance Communications Officer. "Calls ranging from chest pain to seizures to motor vehicle collisions to childbirth to cardiac arrest are just a small sample of what we process on a 12 hour shift. Add in fire-related calls such as structure fires, smoke alarms, and water/ice rescues, and you quickly realize that no two days are the same."

Not only do Ambulance Communications Officers have to determine the type of emergency, but they also have to determine the location of the emergency and level of urgency, all within a matter of seconds. "We're qualified to provide lifesaving pre-arrival instructions over the phone once the call for service has been processed," says Vanderbraak. "We can direct callers to give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) for chest pain, administer automatic epinephrine injectors for anaphylactic reactions, prepare and administer naloxone for opioid overdoses, provide high-quality chest compressions for persons not breathing, and assist in delivering an infant during imminent childbirth."



ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION

LOCAL 449 – RENFREW

PO BOX 40014 RAGLAN PO, Renfrew, ON K7V 4G0

1-866-283-0557 | www.opseulocal449.ca

We stand together to win.

Not all aspects of the job are negative. “Being there for people on their worst day, and being able to get them the help they need, enables me to give back to the community that I was raised in,” says Scheel. “Some calls stick with you for the rest of your life.” Vanderbraak likes to think back to the impact he’s had on the community and positive outcomes he’s been able to contribute to. “Helping deliver two babies over the phone on separate occasions is definitely an unforgettable experience. Hearing that first, loud cry after what seems like an eternity of waiting is such an immense relief.”

Some additional facts about the Ambulance Communications Officers who work at Renfrew CACC:

- The area of coverage for Renfrew CACC is over 16,000 square kilometers (almost three times the size of Prince Edward Island), which includes the County of Renfrew, Township of South Algonquin, and the majority of Algonquin Provincial Park;
- Dispatchers have 4 monitors, 5 sets of keyboards, and 5 sets of mice to use when processing 9-1-1 calls;
- Dispatchers in Renfrew can seamlessly coordinate ambulance response with the 22 other ambulance communications centres across Ontario;
- While having the ability to seamlessly access translation services for over 150 languages for emergency calls, some of our dispatchers are fluent in French, German, and Arabic; and
- Renfrew’s Ambulance Communications Officers have a combined 164 years of experience among them.

If you would like to thank an Ambulance Communications Officer from Renfrew CACC, OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449 welcomes members of the community to send along their words of appreciation to hello@opseulocal449.ca.

- 30 -

ABOUT OPSEU LOCAL 449

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Local 449 represents the 50+ Ontario Public Service employees located in Renfrew, Ontario. Our members work with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (MPBSD), Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN), and the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA).

MEDIA CONTACT

Liam Vanderbraak, President, OPSEU/SEFPO Local 449

president@opseulocal449.ca | 613-316-8493