

ABSTRACT OF THE MAJOR PRACTICAL PROJECT

DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY: CREATING FIRE DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE READY FOR THEIR DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

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A common set of problems continues to plague fire service organizations when it comes to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. Bolstered by legislative policies, Canadian fire departments have recognized that to build a better public service, they must place time, effort, and energy into attracting underrepresented groups and developing a workforce reflective of its communities. This paper employed a literature-based approach and secondary analysis to help fire service managers understand which diversity and inclusion practices serve as a benefit or a hindrance to the fire service industry. It was found that the fire service's historic culture and paramilitary hierarchical dynamics affected the firefighting mentality at a micro level and has impacted diversity initiatives. This paper will help fire service stakeholders understand the true concept and definition of diversity, and places sound theoretical frameworks into practice so that

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relevant, cost effective, and practical strategies can be patently and feasibly implemented by Canadian unionized fire departments.