

To: Safety and Facilities Services Committee

From: Adam Grant, Commissioner,
Safety and Facilities Services Department

Report Number: SF-25-29

Date of Report: May 7, 2025

Date of Meeting: May 12, 2025

Subject: Tablet Command

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform City Council of the upcoming implementation of Tablet Command, a leading incident management software, across all front-line apparatus within Oshawa Fire Services (OFS). This report highlights the operational benefits of this initiative, outlines the training rollout plan, and provides a summary of anticipated improvements to emergency response services.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Safety and Facilities Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That Report SF-25-29, dated May 7, 2025, concerning Tablet Command be received for information.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Fire Services
- Tablet Command

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Background

Oshawa Fire Services is committed to continuous improvement in emergency management, enhancing firefighter safety, and service delivery to the community. As part of this commitment, OFS has equipped all front-line apparatus with up-to-date iPad tablets to support the deployment of Tablet Command, a proven incident management application tailored for fire services operations.

Tablet Command enables real-time incident management, personnel accountability, resource deployment, and enhanced situational awareness, streamlining operations during emergencies. Comprehensive training for all OFS crews will commence in May 2025, with full operational deployment scheduled for June 3, 2025. This initiative positions OFS at the forefront of fire service technology, aligning with industry best practices and community safety objectives.

4.2 Benefits of Tablet Command

4.2.1 Enhanced Incident Command and Accountability

Real-Time Tracking: Incident commanders can monitor the location and status of crews in real-time, enabling rapid tactical adjustments during dynamic incidents.

Improved Personnel Safety: Accountability features track personnel in high-risk environments (e.g., interior fire attack, roof operations), enhancing firefighter safety by ensuring accurate monitoring and rapid response to emergencies.

4.2.2 Streamlined Communication and Computer Assisted Dispatch Integration

Tablet Command integrates directly with Oshawa Fire Services' Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system through a secure, real-time interface. This integration significantly improves the efficiency of emergency response operations through the following specific mechanisms:

a. Faster Access to Critical Information

- **Immediate Dispatch Alerts:** Incident details are pushed to Tablet Command instantly upon creation in the CAD system, eliminating delays between call receipt and unit notification.
- **Automatic Updates:** Updates to incidents (e.g., such as additional hazards, patient updates, or supplemental resources) are instantly pushed to the tablets, ensuring crews receive evolving information without waiting for radio communication.

Impact:

- Reduces dispatch-to-enroute times by providing instant visual notifications.
- Allows crews to start enroute preparations immediately after receiving dispatch data, without waiting for verbal confirmations.

b. Improved Navigational Efficiency

- **Integrated Mapping:** Tablet Command displays detailed GIS-based mapping, including live routing, hydrant locations, building pre-plans, and tactical landmarks.
- **Optimized Routing:** Real-time traffic data and dynamic rerouting capabilities reduce travel times to incidents, especially in traffic congestion areas.

Impact:

- Decreases scene arrival times by offering more direct and traffic-informed routes.
- Reduces reliance on dispatchers for manual navigation guidance.

c. Minimized Radio Traffic and Congestion

- **Visual Unit Status Updates:** Crews update their statuses (e.g., enroute, on-scene, staged, cleared) directly in Tablet Command by tapping one button. These updates are automatically synced with the CAD system.
- **Resource Requests:** Additional alarms, specialized units (e.g., HazMat, Technical Rescue), or mutual aid can be requested through Tablet Command prompts rather than lengthy radio conversations.
- **Task Assignments and Progress Reports:** Incident commanders can assign units to specific tasks within Tablet Command (e.g., fire attack, RIT, ventilation, search and rescue) without needing verbal radio assignment broadcasts.

Impact:

- Significant reduction in radio channel congestion during critical incidents, improving clarity and bandwidth for urgent communications (e.g., MAYDAY, urgent hazard reports).
- Prevents missed radio transmissions during high-tempo incidents where every second counts.
- Provides a quieter operational environment, helping improve situational focus for both incident commanders and crews.

d. Structured Incident Management with Guided Prompts

Tablet Command incorporates pre-built action templates and prompts based on best-practice operational guidelines (e.g., National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, OFS Standard Operating Procedures).

When specific incident types are selected (e.g., "Residential Structure Fire," "Motor Vehicle Accident with Extrication"), Tablet Command offers a structured checklist of critical actions, including:

- Confirmed water supply established.
- Primary search initiated.
- Fire attack assignment.
- Ventilation group established.
- RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) in place.
- Accountability initiated.

Impact:

- Helps incident commanders ensure all critical tasks are addressed even under high-stress conditions.
- Reduces need for repetitive verbal confirmations over the radio (e.g., commanders can monitor task completion visually).
- Supports standardized incident management, reducing variability across shifts and ensuring consistent tactical execution.

e. Enhanced Multi-Agency Coordination

Shared Incident View: Mutual aid partners equipped with Tablet Command, upon invitation, can access real-time incident data, fostering collaboration.

- **Cross-Agency CAD Updates:** Mutual aid requests and unit status updates are visible across agencies without congesting the radio interoperability channels.

Impact:

- Facilitates faster, more coordinated multi-jurisdictional responses.
- Enhances clarity of operational picture between Oshawa Fire Services and assisting agencies.

4.3 Training

Starting in May 2025, OFS will conduct comprehensive training for all crews to ensure proficiency with Tablet Command. The training program includes:

- **Hands-On Operational Use:** Familiarization with the software's interface and features.
- **CAD Integration:** Training on real-time data syncing and dispatch workflows.
- **Emergency Scenario Simulations:** Practical exercises to prepare crews for real-world applications.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly related to this Report.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area “Care: Safe and Sustainable Environment” with the goal to enhance emergency preparedness and response, including preparing for potential climate emergencies and significant weather events.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Barkwell".

Stephen Barkwell, Fire Chief,
Fire Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Grant".

Adam Grant, Commissioner,
Safety and Facilities Services Department