

Toronto Fire Services

ATI Evaluation Discipline — Operating Business Case

Title: Establishing a Dedicated ATI Evaluation Discipline

Division: Fire — Academic Standards & Evaluation

Business Case Description:

What is proposed?

Toronto Fire Services (TFS) currently lacks a standardized, defensible process for evaluating Authorized Training Instructors (ATIs) against NFPA 1041 standards. Survey data from recruits and program participants consistently identify training consistency concerns across disciplines and platoons.

This business case proposes the establishment of a dedicated 16-person ATI Evaluation Discipline — a neutral, rotating cadre of qualified ATIs tasked with conducting unannounced evaluations of instructors across all training disciplines.

The proposal directly addresses:

- NFPA 1041 mandatory continuous improvement and evaluation requirements
- Documented training consistency concerns identified in recruit surveys
- The absence of a defensible, standardized evaluation methodology
- The need for comparable performance data across disciplines and over time
- **Deliverable:** An operational evaluation framework, governance structure, and dashboard tool to track coverage, identify performance concerns, and support evidence-based program improvement.

Current State

- Four-platoon operational structure (24-hour shift cycle)
- Multiple training disciplines: Recruit, Aerial, Driver, EMS, Rescue, Hazmat, and others
- Distributed ATI assignments across disciplines
- No standardized instructor evaluation process or documentation
- Training consistency concerns documented in program surveys

Regulatory Driver

NFPA 1041 (Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications) explicitly requires:

- Evaluation of instructor performance
- Continuous improvement based on evaluation data
- Documentation of evaluation and remedial action
- Maintenance of instructor qualifications

The current state does not have a process aligned with these NFPA 1041 evaluation requirements. TFS has no systematic process in place to fulfill them.

What is the cost?

Sixteen dedicated ATIs, structured as one per shift per discipline framework (4 shifts × 4 discipline clusters, flexible):

- Selected by the ATI Committee using proposed minimum qualifications: NFPA 1041 Level 2 + NFPA 1021 Level 1 (minimum); DC and above also eligible per union/management preference
- Assigned exclusively to evaluation for a three-year cycle
- Rotating evaluation assignments across disciplines (no evaluator anchored to one discipline)
- Unannounced evaluations at the discretion of the District Chief, Academic Standards & Evaluation

Evaluation Instrument

- **Standard:** NFPA 1041 competency framework (7 criteria, 36 behavioral indicators)
- **Scope:** Adherence to approved lesson plan, instructional delivery, safety, content expertise, student engagement, professional conduct, and session management
- **Form:** Long-form evaluation (36-item detailed rubric)
- **Output:** Scored evaluation plus written deviation notes (content deviations, safety concerns, etc.)

Why is the change being proposed?

Deviations and performance concerns identified during evaluation are routed to the Program Coordinator and Program Lead for action:

- **Content deviations:** The Lead determines whether the deviation is corrected (retraining with ATI) or incorporated as a lesson plan improvement

- **Performance flags:** Any category scoring below 2.0 / 4.0 is escalated to the District Chief for review and possible remedial action, program review, or management assessment
- **Management visibility:** All evaluation data and flags are accessible to management via a secure dashboard (access limited to management and the District Chief / Training Officer)

A separate Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) will accompany this proposal to define escalation procedures, documentation requirements, and record management.

What are the goals and objectives of the proposed changes?

Minimum threshold (Year 1): 50% of ATIs in each discipline evaluated at least once.

Operationally, this means TFS will:

- Monitor total training hours delivered versus total audit hours logged
- Track the percentage of ATIs evaluated
- Track the percentage of total delivery hours under evaluation
- Identify which disciplines are behind coverage targets
- Direct evaluator deployment to high-priority gaps

Dashboard functionality will support real-time visibility of coverage status and enable efficient deployment decisions.

Quality Assurance: Evaluator Bias Detection

- Track evaluation count per evaluator
- Monitor average score per evaluator versus the cohort mean
- Flag systematic variance (evaluators consistently scoring high or low)
- Monitor discipline distribution per evaluator (detect concentration in one area)
- Trigger recalibration or reassignment based on variance signals

Indicate if the proposal is aligned with any of the City's priorities and strategies:

- **Equity Impact** ☐
- **Climate Lens** ☐
- **Poverty Reduction** ☐
- **AG Recommendation** ☐

Describe the current and future service levels

Current Service Level:

Instructor oversight is currently maintained through existing discipline structures, with no dedicated, standardized evaluation function. This model relies on informal, inconsistent review and provides no defensible record of instructor performance against the NFPA 1041 framework.

Future Service Level:

The proposed ATI Evaluation Discipline would establish dedicated, rotating evaluators conducting unannounced, standardized assessments across all disciplines. This would provide a consistent escalation pathway for performance concerns, a defensible evaluation record, and a data-driven foundation for continuous program improvement.

Secondary Option (If Primary Proposal Deferred)

Should organizational constraints prevent implementation of a dedicated evaluator discipline, a secondary option exists:

- Use Program Leads from different disciplines to cross-evaluate
- Leverages existing expertise but introduces peer-evaluation bias risk
- Requires robust bias monitoring and clear conflict-of-interest protocols
- Less scalable for long-term coverage goals

Describe performance impacts of the proposal

The proposal is expected to improve performance by establishing standardized, documented instructor evaluation where none currently exists. It would strengthen oversight, consistency, and accountability across all training disciplines.

Expected impacts include more consistent instructional delivery, earlier identification of safety or content deviations, a defensible record supporting NFPA 1041 alignment, and a data-driven basis for lesson plan and program improvement.

Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1 — Governance & Selection

- Finalize ATI Committee evaluator selection criteria
- Union negotiation and agreement
- Formal SOG development (escalation, documentation, records management)

Phase 2 — Preparation & Training

- Evaluator cohort training on the 1041 rubric and consistency calibration
- Establish baseline (current ATI population)
- Develop lesson plan repository by discipline

Phase 3 — Pilot & Operations

- Begin unannounced evaluations (target: 50% coverage in Year 1)
- Dashboard deployment (data tracking, coverage monitoring, performance flags)
- Quarterly review and calibration

Phase 4 — Scaling & Refinement

- Expand coverage targets as capacity allows
- Data-driven program improvement cycles
- Continuous evaluator bias monitoring

Dashboard Solution

- **Operational Scorecard:** Training hours delivered and audited by discipline, percentage of ATIs evaluated, percentage of hours under evaluation, and coverage gap versus the 50% target
- **Evaluator Performance Monitoring:** Evaluations per evaluator, average score versus cohort mean, variance (bias detection), and discipline distribution
- **Performance Flags:** Any category scoring below 2.0 / 4.0; relative outliers (bottom decile, 1+ SD below discipline mean); lesson plan deviation summary
- **Data Integration:** Manual CSV export from the approved Medallia platform into Power BI or a local dashboard — no new data flows, no external APIs, approved tools only

Dependencies/Limitations/Variables of the proposal

The 16 evaluator positions must be filled by ATIs meeting the minimum NFPA 1041 Level 2 / NFPA 1021 Level 1 qualification, selected through the ATI Committee process.

Implementation depends on union negotiation and agreement on the evaluator role, rotation model, and selection criteria, and on formal ratification of the accompanying SOG defining escalation, documentation, and records management.

Risks & Mitigations

Capacity loss: 16 ATIs pulled from home disciplines	Phased implementation; monitor training throughput; adjust evaluator count if needed
Evaluator bias or inconsistency	Built-in bias-detection dashboard; quarterly calibration sessions; evaluator reassignment if variance detected
Union resistance	Early union engagement via the ATI Committee; clear governance SOG; transparent selection criteria
Low evaluation coverage (cannot hit 50%)	Adjust the 16-person target downward; prioritize high-risk disciplines; use the secondary cross-discipline option as a fallback
IT infrastructure constraints	CSV-based integration only; avoid API dependencies; use approved tools (Power BI or local host); minimal data persistence

Success Metrics

Compliance	100% of evaluations documented and stored per the NFPA 1041 standard within Year 1
Coverage	50% of ATIs in each discipline evaluated at least once within Year 1; track progress toward higher targets
Consistency	Evaluator cohort variance (standard deviation of average scores) < 0.3 / 4.0, indicating consistent rubric application
Actionability	80%+ of flagged performance concerns result in documented lead action (retraining, lesson plan update, or management review)
Stakeholder buy-in	Union agreement; management endorsement; evaluator cohort completion of calibration training

What is the consequence, if not approved?

TFS continues without a standardized, defensible instructor evaluation process, leaving the training consistency concerns identified in recruit surveys unaddressed and the organization without a documented pathway to align with NFPA 1041 evaluation and continuous-improvement requirements.

Conclusion

The establishment of a dedicated ATI Evaluation Discipline addresses documented training consistency concerns and provides TFS with a scalable, defensible framework for continuous instructor improvement, aligned with NFPA 1041 evaluation requirements.

The accompanying dashboard enables data-driven decision-making and transparent performance monitoring. This proposal balances operational feasibility, union considerations, and governance rigor.