

Paramedic Services would benefit from standardizing four items for its fleet

Recent trade legislation (the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* and the *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement*) introduced restrictions on the use of trademarks or trade names ('brand names') in the technical specifications of government procurements. Both agreements include 'limited tendering' provisions that permit additional deliveries of a specific good or service if a change of supplier:

- Cannot be made for economic or technical reasons such as requirements for interchangeability or interoperability with existing equipment, software, services or installations
- Would cause significant inconvenience or substantial duplication of costs for procuring the entity

Under these limited tendering provisions, Paramedic Services recommends standardizing the following brand name items for its fleet:

- Interstate's conversion/starting batteries for the Region's ambulances
- Chevrolet Tahoes as the standard SUV for rapid response and command unit vehicles
- Panasonic Toughbook computing devices
- Gamber-Johnson computer mounts

If approved for standardization, the above-mentioned products will be purchased through a competitive procurement process.

Interstate's conversion/starting batteries are recommended as the standard battery for the Region's ambulances

Paramedic Services Fleet is currently outfitted with Interstate Absorbent Glass Mat batteries from the ambulance manufacturer. These batteries have a three-year warranty and a high reserve capacity to support the vehicles' anti-idle systems. Paramedic Services has trialed batteries from multiple manufacturers and found they only have a six-month life cycle in our fleet. Interstate batteries have proven to be the most reliable battery, lasting two to three times longer than batteries from other manufacturers. Since the ambulance manufacturer started outfitting ambulances with Absorbent Glass Mat batteries, the cost to replace batteries, towing costs and paramedic downtime have decreased. For these reasons and to maintain compatibility with the existing fleet, it is recommended that Interstate's Absorbent Glass Mat batteries be approved as the product standard to be procured for the Paramedic Services fleet.

Chevrolet Tahoes are recommended as the standard SUV for rapid response and command unit vehicles

Paramedic Services have moved towards using Chevrolet Tahoe chassis for conversion to rapid response and command unit vehicles because they are a more cost-effective option that meets the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's vehicle and equipment standards. Special service vehicle packages are required for the vehicle conversions and these are only made by Ford and General Motors. The smallest Ford and General Motor vehicles that can accommodate all the equipment that must be carried in the vehicle, as mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, are the Ford Expedition and Chevrolet Tahoe. Ford changed its 2018 Expedition model such that it required after-market adjustments at a cost of about \$15,000, excluding HST, to outfit the chassis for emergency response, which exceeds the budget for conversion. For this reason, Paramedic Services recommends that Chevrolet Tahoes be approved as the product standard to be procured.

Paramedic Services seeks approval to standardize the purchase of Panasonic Toughbook computing devices with Gamber-Johnson Computer Mounts for two years pending a testing of the market

When delivering pre-hospital care, paramedics must document all patient interactions using either an approved electronic platform or paper format. York Region paramedics document electronically for improved quality of record keeping and enhanced capacity for data analysis, which allows for improved care delivery and patient outcomes.

York Region Paramedic Services has used Panasonic Toughbook CF-19 laptops for patient care documentation since 2012. Panasonic Toughbook devices have proven their reliability in the seven years they have been used by Paramedic Services. The Panasonic Toughbook offers the highest performance in its class along with the most rugged (hardwearing, shock-resistant) design. The Panasonic Toughbook meets rugged specifications, such as the military specification (MIL-STD-810) standard, which is a series of tests and weather conditions that the device must be able to withstand. The advanced drop shock protection makes it the most reliable laptop for use in the ever-changing field of paramedicine.

The Gamber-Johnson computer mount is standard equipment on fleet ambulances and conforms to the Ontario Provincial Land Ambulance and Emergency Response Vehicle Standard

Panasonic Toughbooks and Gamber-Johnson computer mounts are currently installed in a common configuration in 92 ambulances and emergency response vehicles. Most of the CF-19 models have already exceeded their life cycle. Paramedic Services also uses Toughbook models CF-31 and CF-54, which will be due for replacement in two to three years. Furthermore, in January 2020, the Region will upgrade to the Windows 10 operating system which is not compatible with the CF-19 models. Toughbook models are required that are compatible with the

Windows 10 operating system. For these reasons, Paramedic Services seeks approval to standardize Panasonic Toughbooks with Gamber-Johnson Computer Mounts for two years pending a testing of the market through a Region-approved procurement methodology.