



Police, firefighters get keys to DSB housing, buildings

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ESPANOLA—The Manitoulin Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) approved a motion to provide fire and police services access to all of its buildings in order to “promote the safety of all tenants and staff.” The only caveat being that those emergency services follow all appropriate legislation.

Providing that access is somewhat more difficult than it would appear on the face of it, noted DSB CEO Fern Dominelli, since it will logistically require that all of the DSB buildings be outfitted with keypad locks and, although some buildings are already equipped when taking in the entire DSB catchment area, that adds up to a lot of buildings that need to be retrofitted.

“Over the next two to three years we will have them all converted (from key systems),” said Mr. Dominelli. “That would be with keypads and the mechanisms to work them.”

The police would be equipped with a mechanism similar to that used to unlock many modern vehicles, although until these are available for the systems, the keycodes will be provided to the relevant dispatch service.

“It will help with safety in the buildings,” said Mr. Dominelli. “It will allow them to walk through the halls to try to make them safe.” The CEO explained that while he declined to specifically identify the buildings or communities, “we do have some buildings with tenants and issues that are causing us some concerns.”

The new policy states that the DSB will “provide fire and police services with electronic keypad access to the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB buildings. Fire and police services will be allowed to access DSB buildings provided they are following and adhering to any legislation, regulations, authority, policies and procedures required of them in carrying out their normal duties.” The policy goes on to indicate that the access is being allowed “in order to promote the safety of all tenants and staff. The police and fire services will gain entry by utilizing an electronic keypad where, available, at the front of each building.”

Under the policy as passed, the access codes will be maintained by the dispatch service of the fire or police service. “Firefighters and police officers will request and receive the keypad code from their associated dispatch to gain entry to the building when required,” reads the policy, adding that the keypad code will be maintain by the DSB’s infrastructure and asset management department.

Providing the protective services with physical keys would prove too problematic, said Mr. Dominelli. “It just wouldn’t be workable, each officer would have to carry the keys with them when they went on shift,” he said. “Keypads are really the only way to go.”

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