

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE IN CANADA

GENERAL

1. The Order of St. John maintains two foundations: the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, and the St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade (“St. John Ambulance”). The mission of St. John Ambulance in Canada is to enable Canadians to improve their health, safety and quality of life by providing training and community service. This is accomplished through the Association and the Brigade.

St. John Ambulance Association

2. The St. John Ambulance Association is the effector arm of development and delivery of training. It is a network of health professionals and program development specialists who develop first aid and health promotion courses, that are taught by trained volunteer instructors to hundreds of thousands of Canadians each year.
3. The St. John Ambulance Association is responsible for setting the standards for all first aid and health promotion courses, to ensure uniform levels of content, protocols and instruction nationally (see StJCI Part 4). The Brigade Training System meets or exceeds these standards.

St. John Ambulance Brigade

4. The St. John Ambulance Brigade is the effector arm of delivery of community service. It is a group of trained uniformed volunteers recognizing and responding to community based needs. They serve their community in a variety of ways, including provision of patient care at public events, Therapy Dogs, support in times of emergency or disaster, and youth programs that encourage community service and personal development.
5. The Brigade statement of purpose is:
Trained volunteers recognizing and responding to the community-based needs of all people.

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

6. Priory Chapter is the governing body of St. John Ambulance in Canada and represents the membership across the country. Priory Chapter derives its authority from the Prior of the Order and from *the Royal Charters, Statutes and Regulations of the Order - 1993 Edition* and *By-Law No 1 and Priory Rules (1994)*.

7. Priory Council is the executive arm of Priory Chapter and derives its authority from the Prior in accordance with *By-Law No. 1 and Priory Rules (1994)*. Priory Council, comprised as a “board”, is concerned with policy and governance issues, and is invested with the power to authorize action in the name of Priory Chapter.
8. Priory Chapter and Priory Council depend on the work of several standing committees to develop policy recommendations for approval and adoption by Priory Council. The Volunteer Development Committee, chaired by the National Commissioner, is responsible for all aspects of the organization specific to volunteers (see StJCI 2-1 for details on the Volunteer Development Committee).
9. The National Brigade Committee, chaired by the National Commissioner and comprised of all National Brigade Officers and Provincial/Territorial Commissioners, develops policy recommendations specific to the Brigade, for approval and adoption by Priory Council, through the Volunteer Development Committee

NATIONAL OFFICERS

10. The National Commissioner represents every Brigade member at the national level of the organization. In this capacity, the National Commissioner is a member of Priory Chapter and Priory Council, chairs the Volunteer Development Committee and the National Brigade Committee, and is also a member of the national Executive Committee, Nominating Committee and Order Committee
11. The National Brigade Officers are the National Commissioner, Deputy National Commissioner, National Medical Officer, National Nursing Officer, National Cadet Officer, National Training Officer, National Planning Officer and National Administrative Officer. National Brigade Officers are members of Priory Chapter and of the National Brigade Committee. Maintaining personnel in any of these positions is at the discretion of the National Commissioner. (See StJCI 2-3-2 for details of the nomination process for National Brigade Officers.)
12. The Deputy National Commissioner is responsible for assisting the National Commissioner, and for taking the place of the National Commissioner if the incumbent is absent or unable to carry out their duties for any reason.
13. National Brigade Officers represent each functional area of the Brigade. They are responsible for advising the National Commissioner on matters within their functional jurisdiction, for developing a network of similar functional positions within the Brigade, and for communicating with their Provincial/Territorial counterparts.

14. National Staff Officer is an appointment by the National Commissioner to carry out one or more specific tasks. The incumbent is not a member of Priory Chapter or the National Brigade Committee, but is invited to attend Brigade meetings dependent on the meeting agenda.

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL OFFICERS

15. A similar structure based on function exists at the provincial/territorial level. The Provincial/Territorial Commissioner is a member of the Provincial/Territorial Council (most often represented as a Vice-President of the Board) and presides over the other Provincial/Territorial Officers that comprise their Brigade Committee.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

16. The St. John Ambulance Association began giving first aid courses in Quebec City in 1882. The St. John Ambulance Brigade grew alongside the developing Association, and formed its first division for men in London, Ontario, in 1909. In 1912, a woman's nursing division was formed in Toronto. The first Cadet Division was established in Montreal in 1926.

THE BRIGADE LEGACY

17. The Brigade has a proud history of service and involvement in local events as well as those of national and international scope. In both World Wars, Brigade Members served at home as well as overseas, often in situations of danger and considerable risk. In Canada, the Brigade has responded to disasters and emergencies such as the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918; the mine disasters of 1956 and 1958 in Springhill, Nova Scotia; the train derailment and subsequent evacuation of 250,000 people in Mississauga, Ontario in 1979; and the Westray Mine disaster in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, in 1992.
18. In recent years, the Brigade has continued to exercise its national scope, standardized training, and the willingness of its volunteer membership in the provision of patient care and emergency services at major events, whether annual or occasional. The Calgary Winter Olympics of 1988; the National Scout Jamboree in PEI in 1989; the Commonwealth Games in Victoria in 1994 and many large annual events such as the Abbotsford Air Show, Pacific National Exhibition, Canadian National Exhibition are examples of major events where Brigade members from across the country have provided and continue to provide service.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

19. Since the early 1990s, the Brigade has seen a gradual rise in membership, correcting the decline experienced during the 1980s. The largest areas of growth are in the Youth Programs and in the newly developed Therapy Dog Program. New ways of delivering the traditional Brigade services, as well as a number of innovative forms of service are being developed and tried in many communities.