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*The selection process for this test period will end March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.*

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## Two-hatter firefighter tribunals has paramedics crying foul

By **Graeme Frisque**  
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A long-running battle between unions representing Ontario's firefighters and Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is heating up again.

Recent happenings within the province's firefighting community seem to have poured gas on the flames of an ongoing battle over the use of so-called fire-medics, which has seen firefighter unions butt heads with CUPE since first being proposed in 2015.

In the province of Ontario the OPFFA is attempting to infringe on paramedic work by placing paramedics on to fire trucks. This would result in a significant financial burden for municipalities without any statistical evidence to prove it is necessary, said Jeff van Pelt, a paramedic and Chair of the CUPE Ambulance Committee of Ontario.

The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA) and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) made headlines recently when four Halton Hills double-hatter or two-hatter firefighters sometimes referred to as volunteers were brought before an internal union tribunal in Mississauga, their municipality of full-time employment.

A similar situation is currently unfolding in Caledon.

Two-hatting refers to firefighters who work full-time in one jurisdiction and part-time in another often in their commu-

nities of residence. The practice is strictly forbidden by union rules in Ontario, but is widespread in smaller communities who may not require a full roster of full-time firefighters to meet their needs.

Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador are the only two Canadian provinces who do not have legislation protecting firefighters right to do so.

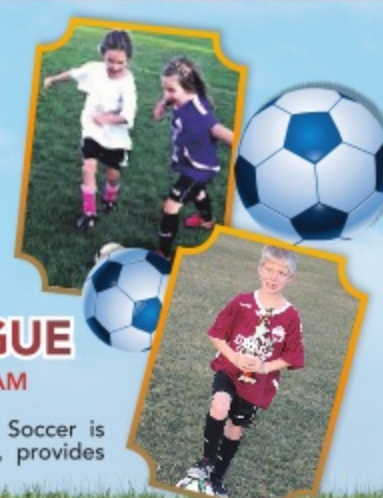
The Town of Caledon's two-hatters are also facing disciplinary action similar to the four Halton Hills part-timers, who were all found guilty of their infractions and faced fines, as well union and benefit suspension until resigning from their part-time gigs.

The actions being taken by the OPFFA, IAFF and their satellite regional chapters towards their two-hatting members has raised the eyebrows of their paramedic counterparts.

van Pelt said he believes OPFFA and the IAFF are being hypocritical in an effort to make examples out of some of their own members while ignoring firefighters moonlighting as paramedics, something van Pelt says is also forbidden under union rules.

What you may not know is that the OPFFA knows of many, many more people around the province but have only targeted these few members as a form of intimidation and harassment, said van Pelt. The reality though is that the IAFF and the OPFFA are acting in a hypocritical fashion and are doing so because it serves their own purposes.

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