



# Ships Point Volunteer Fire Department

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## Fire Chiefs Report to the Board

19 January 2026

### Call-outs

- Since last SPID report on 08 Dec 2025, we have had two (2) first responder (FR) callouts

### Practices

- Normal Tuesday training & Wednesday knowledge briefs / exams ongoing, with periodic weekend training events scheduled as time / requirements permit

### Purchasing

- Two (2) new hard hats to replace unserviceable items
- Insurance for forestry trailer renewed
- Paint supplies purchased to allow painting of the fire hall washroom

### New Items for Info/Discussion

- Three members have completed an Emergency Scene Management course to increase our pool of qualified on-scene commanders (Rob Vreugde, Bob Timbers & Dave Shepherd)
- No word has yet been received on our grant application for UBCM funding in support of fire depts operations & training, decision expected end Jan 2026
- Santa Claus parade was held on Sat, 20 Dec 2025, appeared well received by the community
- In mid Dec a letter was received from Cowichan Bay Improvement District reference 'Request for Unified Support Regarding the Office of the Fire Commissioner's (OFC) exclusion of Improvement Districts in the New Fire Safety Act (FSA)'
  - The BC Fire Safety Act replaced the BC Fire Services Act, background information attached
  - Under the FSA the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) has excluded Improvement Districts as it relates to fire inspections & investigations
  - Under the previous Fire Services Act, inspections & investigations were carried about by the Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner (LAFC) under the delegated authority of the OFC
    - I previously held the position of LAFC for Ships Point Fire Protection Area
  - Under the new FSA, authority for inspections & investigations are delegated to Municipal & Regional District authorities
    - Regional Districts have authority to delegate responsibilities for both local inspections & investigations to adequately training personnel, includes Improvement Districts personnel
      - Current CVRD plans are to designate authorized personnel in non-CVRD fire depts
    - I'm currently completing the new Fire Inspector & Fire Investigator training packages IAW OFC direction
    - Changes should not have a big impact on Ships Point, as there are no public facilities, large businesses or multi residential structures on the Point
      - For info, support of an OFC inspector/investigator can always be made to assist if required
  - While SPID may desire to support the proposal/request from a political perspective, from an operations perspective the current FSA should meet our requirements
- Association is selling fire safety equipment to increase community safety & as a fund raiser
  - WASP home sprinkler systems & Fire Blankets

## **Background on BC Fire Safety Act**

On August 1, 2024, the new *Fire Safety Act* was brought into force, replacing the *Fire Services Act*.

### **1. Fire Prevention Responsibility**

The new *Fire Safety Act* places clear responsibility on property owners for the assessment and removal of fire hazards on their property. Section 7 of the new Act clearly states that an owner of premises must ensure that no fire hazard exists on or in the owner's premises. This is a departure from the *Fire Services Act*, where there was no such explicit requirement on property owners.

### **2. Designation of Fire Safety Inspectors and Investigators**

Under the new *Fire Safety Act*, local governments must designate persons or a class of persons as Fire Inspectors. These Fire Inspectors will be responsible for conducting all fire inspections within the local government's jurisdiction. Local governments should designate a Fire Inspector as soon as possible.

In the *Fire Safety Regulation*, the Fire Commissioner will designate certain training standards that Fire Inspectors must meet. However, there is a one-year transition period before designated Fire Inspectors are required to meet the necessary training standards.

### **3. Inspection and Entry Provisions**

The *Fire Safety Act* includes new inspection and entry authority provisions. Under section 10 of the new Act, Fire Inspectors may, at any reasonable time, enter onto or into premises for the purpose of conducting fire safety inspections. However, before entering a "private dwelling" (including a private residence), Fire Inspectors must have either the consent of the occupier or an entry warrant under section 32 of the Act.

A Fire Inspector that enters onto or into premises to conduct a fire inspection may:

- inspect, analyze, measure, sample, or test anything;
- use or operate anything or require the use or operation of anything, under conditions specified by the inspector;
- take away samples;
- remove a record from the premises; or
- make a record of the premises or of anything on or in the premises.

### **4. Tactical and Preventative Evacuations**

Unlike the *Fire Services Act*, the new *Fire Safety Act* contains express provisions regarding evacuations. The new Act provides authority for tactical and preventative evacuations.

Section 13 of the new Act authorizes the fire chief (or person authorized by the fire chief) to perform tactical evacuations. Namely, if the fire chief (or authorized person) believes there is an "immediate threat to life" due to a fire hazard or explosion, the fire chief (or authorized person) may evacuate a geographic area or premises. Evacuated persons must not return to the evacuated area until notified by the fire chief (or authorized person) that it is safe to do so.

Section 14 of the new Act authorizes local governments to perform preventative evacuations within their jurisdiction. Namely, if the local government believes that conditions exist on or in the premises that a fire on or in the premises would "endanger life" and the owner of the premises has failed to comply with an order by the Fire Inspector, the local government may evacuate the premises. However, before performing a preventative evacuation, the local government must serve the owner of the premises with an evacuation order and post a copy of the evacuation order in a visible location on or in the premises.

### **5. Cost Recovery**

The new *Fire Safety Act* arms local government with some additional cost recovery powers.

Section 16 of the new Act authorizes local governments to secure evacuated premises if the owner fails to secure the premises to prevent unauthorized entry. The local government is then permitted to recover the cost of doing so from the property owner as follows:

- For Municipalities – the cost is a special charge within the meaning of s. 250 of the *Community Charter* [*taxes are a special charge on the land*] and is deemed to be "delinquent taxes on the land" from the date the costs were incurred. As a result, the municipality can recover its costs by putting the property up for tax sale that same year.
- For Regional Districts – the Board of the Regional District must certify the costs to the surveyor of taxes. Then, the cost forms a lien and charge on the land in favour of the regional district and is deemed "delinquent

taxes” from the date of the certificate. The Regional District can then collect the cost in accordance with the *Taxation (Rural Areas) Act*.

## **6. Enforcement**

The new *Fire Safety Act* includes provisions which make enforcement of offences under the Act clearer. For example, the new Act specifies that the limitation period for prosecution of offences under the Act is three (3) years from the date on which the offence occurred. The new Act also specifies the means in which service may be affected.

In addition, the new Act includes increased penalties for offences:

- individuals convicted of an offence are liable to a fine up to \$50,000; and
- corporations convicted of an offence are liable to a fine of up to \$250,000