

From: "Fry, Karen" <Karen.Fry@vancouver.ca>

To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

Date: 4/1/2026 2:23:41 PM

Subject: Memo to Mayor and Council: Update from VFRS on ongoing initiatives to reduce wildland-urban fire risk across the city - April 1 2026

Attachments: VFRS - ADM - Memo to Mayor Council - Update of VFRS ongoing initiatives to reduce wildland-urban fire risk across the city _202 6-04-01.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

The attached memo provides an update on Vancouver Fire Rescue Services' (VFRS) ongoing initiatives to reduce wildland urban interface (WUI) fire risk across the city, including capability improvements, early detection measures, interagency coordination, public education, and implementation of the High Demand Action Plan (HDAP).

If you have any question, please let me know.



Karen Fry (she/her)
Karen Fry | Fire Chief/General Manager

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services

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I am humbly thankful that I live and work on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm ([Musqueam](#)), Skwxwú7mesh ([Squamish](#)) and səliłwətaʔ / səliłwítulh ([Tsleil-Waututh](#)) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

April 1, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Chris Freek, Director of Civic Engagement & Communications
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administrative Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Steve Jackson, General Manager – Parks and Recreation

FROM: Karen Fry, Fire Chief/General Manager, Fire Rescue Services

SUBJECT: Update from VFRS on ongoing initiatives to reduce wildland-urban fire risk across the city

RTS #: N/A

Purpose

This memo provides an update on Vancouver Fire Rescue Services' (VFRS) ongoing initiatives to reduce wildland urban interface (WUI) fire risk across the city, including capability improvements, early detection measures, interagency coordination, public education, and implementation of the High Demand Action Plan (HDAP).

1. Operational Readiness and Equipment Enhancements

Wildland Response Units in Stanley Park

- Two 6x6 Defender Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) are stationed in Stanley Park to support wildfire detection, access, and suppression, with one unit fully equipped for rapid initial attack (pump, water tank, and wildland tools)
- Operation of these units is fully integrated into Hall 7 wildland training to maintain operational readiness.

HDAP for Managing Response Capabilities

VFRS has implemented the High Demand Action Plan (HDAP) with E-Comm 911 to ensure VFRS response capabilities and resources remain available during peak risk periods by protecting critical apparatus,

pre-positioning crews for best available response, stabilizing coverage during call surges, and maintaining operational readiness while continuing to ensure that VFRS Training Department remains operational.

Training Apparatus & Surge Capacity

VFRS has added training apparatus to strengthen surge capacity and ensure crews have continual access to wildland equipment for skills maintenance.

2. Monitoring and Early Detection

In partnership, City of Vancouver Parks and VFRS have implemented enhanced signage in high-risk areas of Stanley Park to support early detection and rapid public reporting of smoke or fire. The signage (see appendix), strengthens early-intervention capability and clearly warns **HIGH FIRE DANGER** and directs the public to call 911 immediately, using a What3Words which is a three-word location identifier to pinpoint the exact location.

3. Interagency Coordination and Regional Collaboration

Stanley Park, Pacific Spirit Park, North Shore & UBC

Continued collaboration with Stanley Park and Pacific Spirit Park staff enhances shared operational knowledge and resource integration. Work with Richard Wallis, Park Operations Supervisor at Metro Vancouver, UBC/Pacific Spirit) focuses on identifying limited water areas, challenging slopes and terrain, high-risk urban interface zones, and coordinated response strategies.

Improved Radio Communication

VFRS and Vancouver Park Rangers continue to have radio interoperability through the E-Comm system, allowing direct coordination on the PFACMD10 talk group to support incident location and operations within parks.

Notifications from ECOMM to Parks

Burning complaints, smoke reports, tent fires, structure fires, and wildland fires in City of Vancouver parks are immediately escalated to the Park Board Superintendent and Supervisor of Park Experience, with E-Comm dispatch directly notifying Parks leadership whenever a fire or wildfire occurs in a Stanley and Everett Crowley Park. Also, whenever ECOMM issues a notification regarding any fire in a City of Vancouver park, the Superintendent and Supervisor are contacted directly.

Aerial Detection - Harbour Air and Heli Jet Airways

VFRS has reached out to both Harbour Air and Heli Jet Airways to reaffirm the process for reporting any signs of smoke in Stanley Park and the UEL.

Cross Training and Joint Initiatives

Annual joint wildfire training programs are being planned with UBC and Metro Vancouver. Cross training opportunities with Stanley Park Rangers are in development.

VFRS hold regular meetings E-Comm 911 and provides updates on new initiatives, while also developing and reviewing Standard Operating Procedures each year to ensure that managers and staff understand how they can support responding crews.

Everett Crowley Park

Coordination with Everett Crowley staff has identified interface risk areas with water access limitations. Additional wildland instructors have been trained onsite to improve familiarity and readiness.

North Shore

VFRS staff have participated in exercises with The BC Wildfire Service, Fortis BC, BC Hydro and other partner agencies in a comprehensive WUI scenario in 2025 called Operation Wolf which took place on Grouse Mountain. This event provided valuable experience in managing a complex, worst-case wildfire scenario requiring extensive external agency support and unified incident management.

4. Training, Workforce Development & Capability Building

2025 Wildland Training

Approximately 96 staff were trained in 2025, including all four shifts from the three wildland halls and seven wildland instructors.

Annual Spring Training Commitment

Wildland training will occur annually each spring/early summer to prepare for peak wildfire season.

Enhanced Wildfire Training

Expanded training includes scenario driven wildfire operations and interagency exercises.

VFRS has enrolled key members of the Training Division in the S-231 Engine Boss Course delivered by BC Wildfire Service scheduled for May 2026.

Additional Wildland ATOs

VFRS plans to hire additional Wildland Assistant Training Officers (ATOs) in 2026 to support ongoing curriculum development and delivery.

BC Wildfire Expertise

Many ATOs and instructors bring years of BC Wildfire Service experience, enhancing the technical depth of the program.

Wildland eLearning Program

A new eLearning module for all suppression staff is being developed to provide consistent citywide wildland fire awareness.

5. Public Education and FireSmart Initiatives

VFRS continues expanding FireSmart outreach in interface neighbourhoods. Seasonal campaigns focus on reducing hazards around homes, promoting early reporting, and raising awareness of WUI risks. Community workshops and digital resources support ongoing public readiness.

6. Summary of Progress

Through HDAP implementation, equipment enhancements, expanded training, early detection improvements, interagency collaboration, and increased FireSmart outreach, VFRS has strengthened the City of Vancouver's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to WUI fires.

Conclusion

WUI fire risk continues to increase due to regional climate trends. VFRS remains focused on proactive mitigation, rapid response readiness, and strong -cross-agency partnerships to safeguard the city's residents, infrastructure, and natural assets.

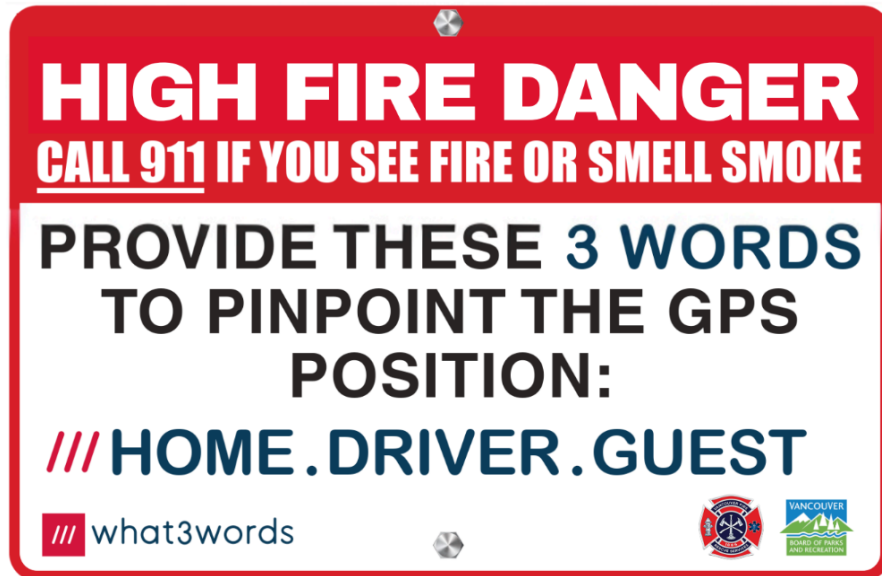
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Fry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karen Fry
Fire Chief / General Manager

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Appendix

Sample Sign:



Mapped Sign Locations:



UTV Image:

