



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## VANCOUVER FIRE RESCUE SERVICES



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# MESSAGE FROM OUR FIRE CHIEF



**KAREN FRY**  
FIRE CHIEF/GM

On behalf of Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS), I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. Over the past year, our firefighters responded to 66,574 incidents, including 3,792 fires that sadly resulted in two fatalities and 71 injuries. We are encouraged to see incident numbers trending downward in 2025, as many of the initiatives launched this year and in previous years are now showing tangible, positive results.

Throughout the year, we advanced several key initiatives focused on reducing incidents and strengthening community education, with particular attention to supporting Vancouver's most vulnerable residents. These efforts included expanded SRO education sessions, continued progress through the False Alarm Reduction Program, enforcement of the lockable butane torch sales ban, and enhanced collaboration with partner agencies such as BC Housing, Atira, PHS, the Residential Tenancy Branch, and the SRO Collaborative. Early outcomes are promising, and sustained momentum will be critical to creating a safer city for both the community and VFRS members.

We also continued to address emerging challenges, including the health and occupational risks our members encounter daily. The rollout of our PFAS-free gear represents a significant milestone, and we are grateful to the Mayor and Council for prioritizing this work and providing the necessary resources to make it possible. We remain committed to initiatives centered on resilience, well-being, and open communication, with the goal of ensuring all staff are fully supported and equipped to meet the demands of their vital work. I am also proud of the progress made between the City and the Union, reflected in the signing of the new Collective Agreement and the resolution of a long-standing Employment Standards Act matter over the past year.

This year's accomplishments reflect the unwavering dedication and professionalism of every member of our department, even as we faced profound loss. We mourn the line-of-duty deaths of Acting Battalion Chief Sean Bolan and Acting Captain Neil Austin, whose courage, leadership, and service to our community will never be forgotten. We also honour the memories of Ava Choy and Laretta Loong, cherished members of our fire service family whose contributions and spirit continue to resonate with all who had the privilege of working alongside them. Their legacies guide us as we move forward with resolve, gratitude, and a deep commitment to the people we serve.

My deepest thanks go to our exceptional VFRS team, whose dedication inspires us every day, and to the residents of Vancouver, whose trust strengthens our mission. I am also grateful to our senior leadership team, whose guidance helps drive our goals and keep us focused on our mission. United in purpose, we continue to build a city where safety, compassion, and community thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Fry', written in a cursive style.

Karen Fry  
Fire Chief



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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

This place is the unceded and ancestral territory of the hə́ńǵəmińə́ń and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh speaking peoples, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, and has been stewarded by them since time immemorial.





# YOUR CITY, YOUR VFRS

VFRS provides service to Vancouver and the University Endowment Land's (UEL) 129 square kilometres and population of over 744,000 residents and 3,200 UEL residents, making it one of Canada's most densely populated cities with almost 5,800 people per square kilometre. Adding in the over 200,000 commuting workforce, as well as being responsible for protecting the nearly 10.3 million tourists yearly, VFRS protects over 1,000,000 people on a daily basis. VFRS also protects and provides service to the more than 214,000 properties, 8 stadiums/centers and 10 bridges.

## VISION

VFRS will be the international leader in fire, rescue, community risk reduction, and staff safety and wellness.

## MISSION

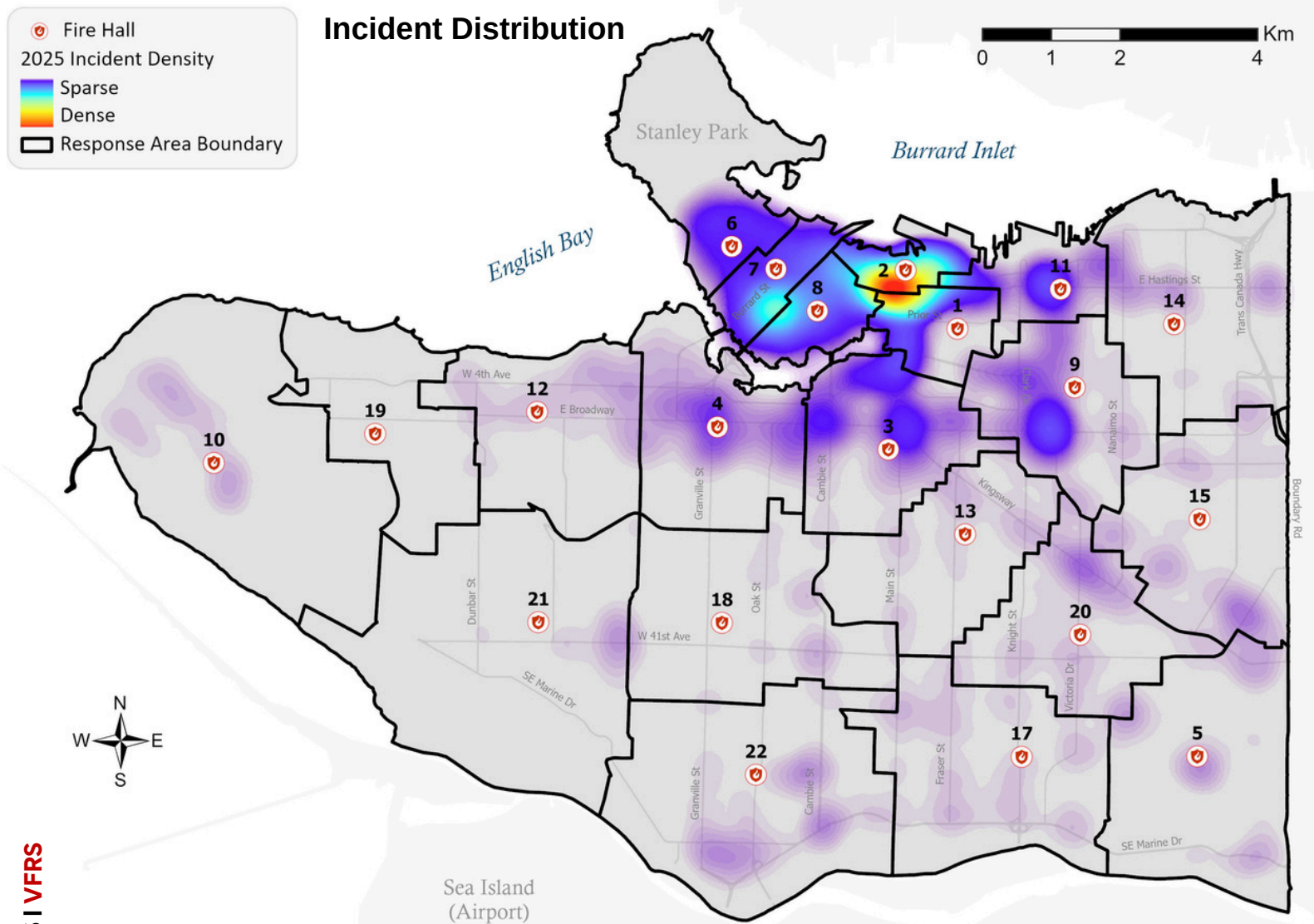
VFRS saves lives and builds safer communities.

# SERVING VANCOUVER

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) employs 960 professionals, operating 21\* fire halls, a training facility, and three fire prevention offices. Alongside fire suppression, VFRS provides emergency services like pre-hospital care, vehicle rescue, marine response, technical response, and hazardous materials handling. We prioritize public safety through education, fire prevention, and partnerships with community organizations.

Committed to the health and safety of our staff and community, VFRS delivers world-class fire and rescue services while promoting awareness and involvement. With 21\* strategically placed fire halls, VFRS ensures rapid response in Vancouver's bustling downtown, business district, and growing neighbourhoods. Curious about your local fire hall? Explore the map below!

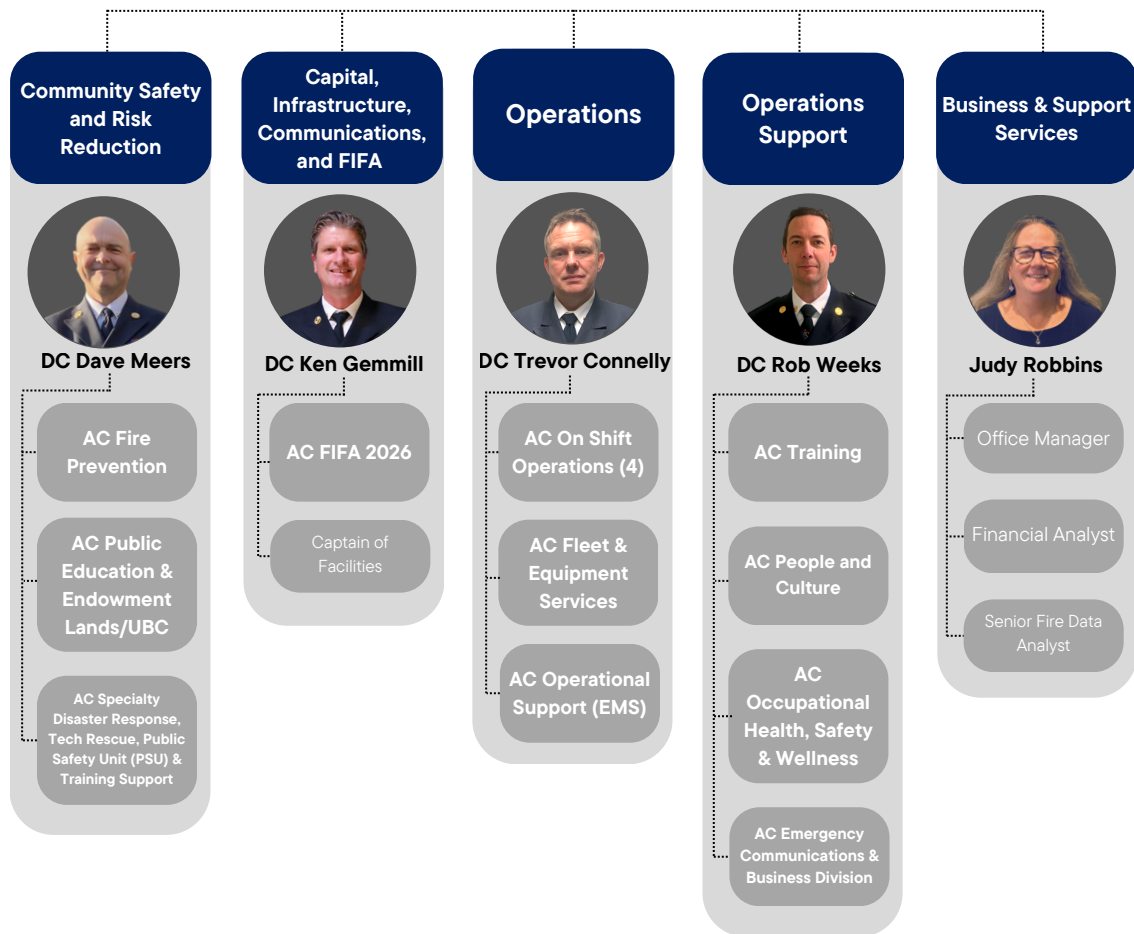
\*A temporary fire hall (Hall 11) was established in May 2025 to address expansion needs and call volumes



# DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW



Fire Chief Karen Fry



# 960

TOTAL PERSONNEL COUNT IN 2025

- 19 | Chiefs
- 853 | Operations
- 33 | Prevention & Public Education
- 13 | Fleet Maintenance
- 17 | Training & Recruitment
- 20 | Administration & Support
- 5 | Other

# 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

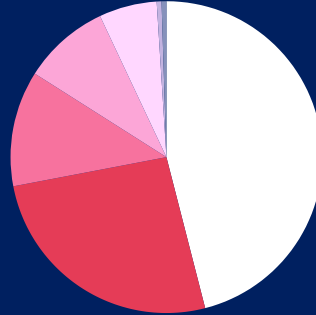
\*Compared to 2024



**66,574** Incidents  
DOWN 10%



**90,961** Apparatus Responses  
DOWN 11%



- Medical - 46%
- Fire & Alarm - 26%
- Assist & Other - 12%
- Public Service - 9%
- MVI & Rescue - 6%
- Hazard - <1%
- Hazmat - <1%



Medical Response Time

**6m 46s**  
UP 7s

First on scene for emergency



Life Safety Inspections

**19,963**  
DOWN 4%



Fires per 1,000 Population

**5.1**  
DOWN 6%



Fire Response Time

**6m 28s**  
DOWN 4s

First on scene for emergency



Violations per Total Inspections

**8.7%**  
DOWN 3.6%



Fires Confined to Area of Origin

**21.5%**  
DOWN 0.7%

**338,475**

VFRS STAFF ON SCENE

**7,126**

OVERDOSE/  
POISONING INCIDENTS

**13,199**

RESPONSES TO FALSE ALARMS

**3,792**

TOTAL FIRES



# 2025 TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS



**94**  
Specialty  
Technicians

Hired &  
Onboarded  
Across All Four  
Specialties



**267**  
RTF

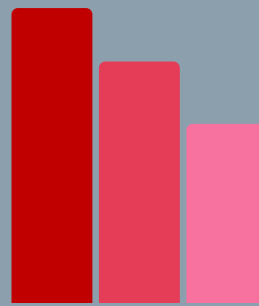
Rescue Task  
Force (RTF)  
Members Trained



**49**  
Recruits

New Recruits  
Graduated

## 80 Officer Candidates Trained



- Completed Fire Officer Training Level 1 33
- Completed Fire Officer Training Level 2 27
- Completed Fire Officer Training Level 3 20



Portfolio-Specific Assistant  
Training Officers (ATOs) Hired

**19** ATOs



Live Fire Training  
Delivered\*

**656** Members



VFRS Members Completed  
5-day Chemical, Biological, Radiological,  
Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) Course

**55** Members



Emergency Medical  
License Renewals

**114** License  
Renewals



Technical High-Angle Rope  
Rescue Training Completed

**6,380** Hours



Fire Ground Survival  
Training Delivered\*\*

**562** Members

\*Live fire exercises let firefighters practice real fire conditions in a controlled setting so they can build skills and stay safe during actual emergencies.

\*\* Fire Ground Survival Training equips firefighters with essential self-rescue and survival techniques to stay safe during unexpected, life-threatening situations on the fireground.

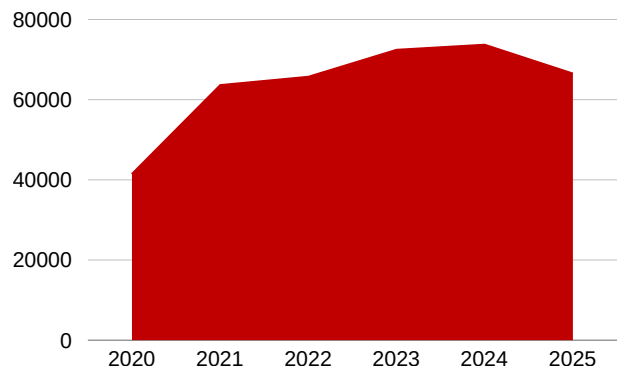




# FIRE AND BEYOND

## INCIDENTS

\* Incidents decreased by 10% compared to the previous year. This underscores the effectiveness of programs implemented over the years. While this progress is encouraging, the Department is still responding to high call volumes and will continue to proactively find and implement measures to address community safety concerns.

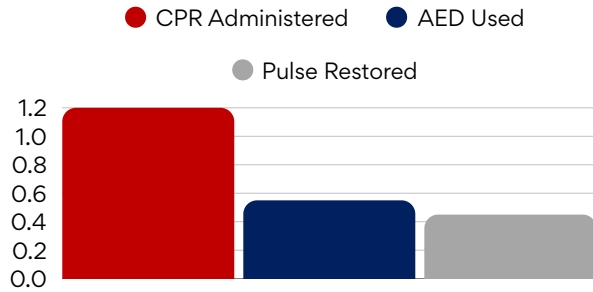


**89**  
INCIDENTS PER 1,000  
RESIDENTS

**66,574**  
TOTAL INCIDENTS

-10%

## 2025 Daily Numbers



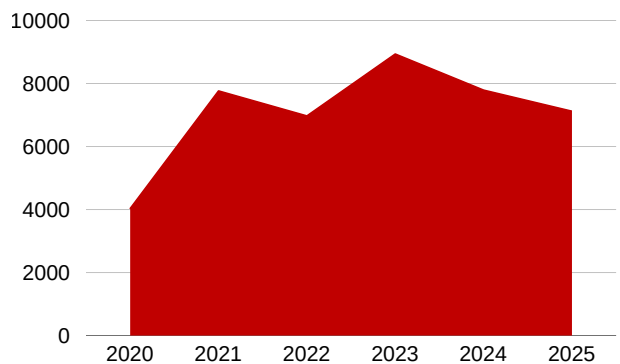
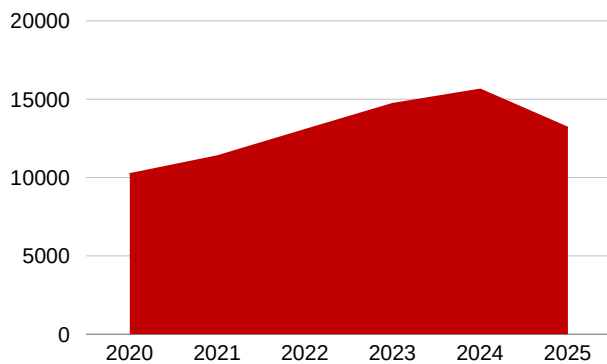
\* VFRS provides first response medical assistance in the City of Vancouver. During 2025, there was a 10% decrease in medical incidents. EMR-certified staff improve response times, patient assessment, and pre-hospital care, enhancing emergency medical services. In 2025, this included: administering CPR (431), using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) (201), and restoring pulse (165).

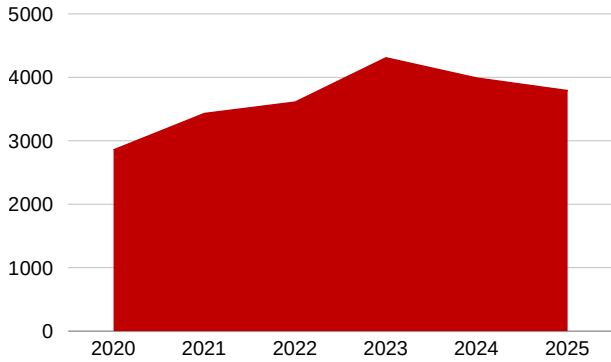


## 25%

### FALSE ALARMS CAUSED BY SMOKERS MATERIALS

False alarm numbers are down 16% from last year and false alarms caused by smokers materials are down 25%. This is due to many factors, including VFRS initiatives and collaboration with SRO housing providers like BC Housing and other partners. We continue to urge smokers to use designated areas and remind property owners to maintain smoke-free fire alarm systems. Together, we can further reduce false alarms and free valuable resources to be able to respond swiftly to genuine emergencies.





\* In 2025, there were 3,792 total fires, representing a 5% decrease from 2024. While numbers are down, they still remain almost double 2017. Unfortunately, there were 2 fire-related fatalities (same as 2024) and 71 injuries (down 26% from 2024). The department's commitment to fire safety and prevention remains paramount.



**60%**

FIRES CAUSED BY SMOKER MATERIALS

Understanding the causes of fires is key to effective prevention. In Vancouver, smoker materials like lighters, matches, cigarettes, and pipes are the leading fire sources. Promoting responsible disposal practices and enforcing strict regulations on their handling and disposal are essential steps to reduce fire incidents in the city.

**1,435**

INCENDIARY FIRES

49% increase in the number of incendiary fires in our community. An incendiary fire is a fire that is deliberately ignited with the intent to cause damage, destruction, or other harmful effects. This trend creates concern for the safety of our citizens and increases risks to firefighters, first responders, and property. It remains important for everyone to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police. Together, we can make our community safer and protect it from the dangers of suspicious fires.

\* Structure fires were down in 2025, decreasing by 17% from 2024. 22% of structure fires were confined to the area of origin - 33% originated in sleeping quarters and another 29% in the kitchen/cooking areas. The main causes of structure fires were Cooking (33%) and Smoking Materials (30%)

\* Outdoor fires went up in 2025 compared to 2024 (increase of 8 fires, less than 1%). Outdoor fires near buildings remain highly dangerous, as they can quickly spread to the structure. Fire life safety systems are designed to protect lives and property from fires that start indoors, not outdoors.



# INSPECTIONS

\* Our team completed nearly 20,000 inspections this year, reinforcing safety across diverse sectors in alignment with the BC Fire Code and Vancouver Fire Bylaw. Our inspection work protects human health and safety by reducing fire risks, preventing loss of life and units, and safeguarding scarce and vital housing stock. This performance reflects our strong commitment to proactive monitoring and community well-being.



\* In 2025, there were violations found in 8.7% of inspections. These violations highlight areas where improvement is needed for enhanced safety and compliance.

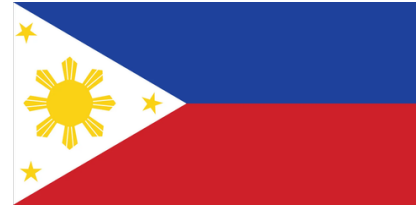


\* Issued Municipal Ticket Information (MTIs) totaling \$151,250 with the goal of improving compliance and enhancing fire life safety standards.





# MAJOR RESPONSES



## LAPU LAPU - APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup>

The Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy remains one of the most solemn and challenging moments our city has faced. A celebration of culture and community was abruptly transformed into a mass-casualty event that left deep and lasting impacts on families, witnesses, and the broader public. Vancouver Fire Rescue Services responded with a full major-incident deployment, sending 21 apparatus and 59 members to stabilize the scene, support triage operations, and work in close coordination with partner agencies under extremely difficult conditions. Our crews acted with professionalism, compassion, and resolve as they worked to protect lives and bring order to a rapidly evolving emergency.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the Filipino community, whose strength, unity, and cultural pride have long enriched Vancouver. In the face of profound loss, your resilience and solidarity have been a source of inspiration. We honour those who were taken and stand with all who continue to heal.

We also acknowledge the people of Vancouver, whose collective response reflected the compassion and care that define our city. Community members, volunteers, and local organizations stepped forward in meaningful ways, offering comfort, support, and resources during an immensely difficult time.

A special recognition is owed to our partner agencies—BC Emergency Health Services, the Vancouver Police Department, and other regional and municipal responders—whose collaboration was essential to managing the incident. Their swift actions, coordinated efforts, and unwavering commitment to public safety were vital in supporting victims and containing the scene.

As we reflect on this tragedy, we remain committed to strengthening our partnerships, enhancing our preparedness, and upholding the trust placed in us during moments of crisis.



# MAJOR RESPONSES CONTINUED...



## APRIL 23RD FIRE - 2700 BLOCK OF EAST HASTINGS

On Wednesday, April 23, 2025, VFRS responded to a significant early-morning structure fire along the 2200-block of East Hastings Street, one of the most impactful commercial-corridor fires of the year. The incident began shortly after 4:00 a.m., with flames rapidly spreading through multiple connected businesses, including the historic Dayton Boots storefront. The fire escalated to a three-alarm response as crews worked to contain heavy smoke and active fire conditions affecting several buildings.

Firefighters arrived quickly and began suppression efforts while Vancouver Police and BC Ambulance supported scene safety and medical readiness. East Hastings Street was closed between Nanaimo and Lakewood for several hours due to the scale of the response and the intensity of the fire. Although no injuries were reported, several residents living above or adjacent to the affected businesses were displaced as a result of smoke and structural damage.

In total, 14 apparatus and 94 firefighters responded on scene. The fire burned for several hours before being fully extinguished around midday, with crews remaining on scene to manage hotspots and prevent reignition. Vancouver Police later confirmed the fire was deemed suspicious, and the investigation was transferred to the VPD Major Crime Section for further review.

The loss of multiple long-standing businesses and the displacement of residents had a significant impact on the Hastings-Sunrise community. Cleanup, structural assessments, and investigative work continued in the days following the incident.

# OBSTACLES WE'RE FACING

There were many highlights that happened in 2025 that we want to celebrate, however, there are also many obstacles that VFRS and our community continue to experience.

## FIFA WORLD CUP

As we prepare for the FIFA World Cup, we're proud to support this major event, but we are also keenly aware of the significant challenges it brings—from larger crowds and higher call volumes to added pressure on our emergency response system. Our priority is ensuring that we are ready to manage these risks and keep our city safe throughout the tournament.

## SRO FIRES

The number of fires within SRO buildings in recent years has created a serious safety concern, emphasizing the need for proactive strategies to reduce risk in these densely populated residences. Our key initiatives include:

- **Fire Safety Training:** Using a “train-the-trainer” model to equip SRO managers with essential fire prevention skills.
- **Collaboration:** Sharing best practices with major metropolitan fire departments.
- **Policy Improvements:** Adjusting billing and alarm sensitivity to reduce false alarms and exploring by-law updates.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Working with BC Housing and housing partners to strengthen fire safety measures.
- **Public Education:** Delivering targeted awareness campaigns for residents and property managers.
- **Enforcement Actions:** Increasing prosecutions and compliance actions against non-compliant SRO operators.

To address the rising number of fire incidents, urgent and targeted actions are needed—including advocating for tighter restrictions on the indoor use and sale of fire-prone items across all levels of government. In addition, an operational review is nearing completion to identify drivers of these incidents and develop data-driven solutions to reduce risk.



## OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Since 2016, British Columbia has faced a prolonged opioid crisis, driving a significant rise in overdose-related emergencies. As an EMR-trained all-hazards department, VFRS continues to play a critical first-responder role. In 2025, firefighters attended 7,126 overdose incidents—23% of all medical calls. While overdoses declined early in the year to a low of 358 in April, they have steadily increased through the year, peaking at 888 overdoses in November.

VFRS crews are trained to administer naloxone, an opioid-reversal medication, and delivered 774 doses in 2025, providing life-saving intervention during critical moments.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

VFRS continues to prioritize firefighter health and safety, with cancer prevention and mental-health support remaining key focus areas. In 2025, we advanced several initiatives to reduce exposure risks and strengthen psychological resilience:

- **PFAS-Free Turnout Gear:** Completed the rollout of PFAS-free gear, reducing exposure to harmful “forever chemicals.”
- **Skin Sampling Program:** Secured grant funding to partner with UBC on chemical-exposure research, supporting ongoing cancer-prevention efforts.
- **Mental Health Leadership:** Hired Dr. Jeff Morley to help enhance VFRS mental-health programs and education.

These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to safeguarding the physical and mental well-being of every firefighter throughout their career.

# HONOURING THEIR LEGACY



This year, we honour four cherished members of our VFRS family whose passing has profoundly affected our department.

**Acting Battalion Chief Sean Bolan** was a respected leader whose steady presence, integrity, and commitment to his crews set an enduring example. His mentorship, professionalism, and calm leadership during challenging moments will continue to guide us.

**Acting Captain Neil Austin** served with exceptional courage, compassion, and teamwork. Known for his positive spirit and unwavering support for others, Neil elevated every hall he worked in and leaves behind a legacy defined by service and kindness.

**Ava Choy**, a dedicated member of our Stores team, played a vital role in ensuring our department ran smoothly each day. Her reliability, pride in her work, and quiet strength made a meaningful difference across the organization.

**Lauretta Loong**, a long-standing and deeply valued member of our administration team whose professionalism and kindness left a lasting impression on those who worked with her. She is remembered for her steady presence, thoughtful approach, and the care she brought to her work and colleagues.

Sean, Neil, Ava, and Lauretta each embodied the spirit of service that defines VFRS. Their contributions, character, and impact will continue to be felt throughout our organization. They will never be forgotten.



**VANCOUVER  
FIRE RESCUE**

# FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR



**2025  
TRAVIS YARYCH**

Captain

Captain Travis Yarych has been named the 2025 Firefighter of the Year for Vancouver Fire Rescue Services. A member of VFRS since 2001, Captain Yarych is widely respected for his compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to supporting our members and their families. His extensive work with the Firefighters Benefit Association—much of it carried out quietly and behind the scenes—has provided essential guidance during some of the most challenging periods of loss within our department.

While serving in one of VFRS's most demanding Captain assignments at Hall 2, he continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership, integrity, and empathy. Captain Yarych truly exemplifies the values of our profession, and we are proud to recognize his outstanding service.



**2024  
MICHAEL VARGA**

Fire Lieutenant

Lieutenant Michael Varga began his journey with VFRS in 2006. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Vancouver Firefighter Charities (VFC), where he has been a dedicated member for over 17 years. Throughout his career, he has consistently demonstrated unwavering commitment, leadership, and passion both on and off duty. His remarkable contributions to the Fire in Your Kitchen (FIYK) program have transformed it from a modest initiative into VFC's signature fundraising tool.

Under his mentorship, FIYK now hosts 15-20 catered dining experiences and 10-15 fundraising galas annually, raising over \$264,000 for the community and growing its membership to more than 53 dedicated volunteers. His exceptional leadership and passion for community service make him a deserving recipient of the 2024 Firefighter of the Year Award.

# IN THE COMMUNITY



VFRS remained active throughout the community in 2025, taking part in charity events, delivering safety presentations, and welcoming residents into fire halls. Public education continues to be a central part of the department's proactive fire-prevention strategy, helping ensure that everyone who lives in or visits Vancouver has the knowledge to stay safe. Through clear, accessible safety outreach, VFRS supports a more informed and resilient city.

**436**

Community Events

**59**

Fire Extinguisher Training Events



In 2025, Vancouver Firefighter Charities (VFC) continued to strengthen community well-being across Vancouver through firefighter-led programs and thousands of volunteer hours. Vancouver firefighters collectively contributed more than 6,000 off-duty hours, supporting children, families, and seniors throughout the city.

In addition to their volunteer service, in 2025 Vancouver firefighters raised \$180,000 through their payroll donation program, with an impressive 85% participation rate, demonstrating a deep collective commitment to charitable impact and the community. Since the inception of the payroll donation program in 2012, it has raised over \$1.4 million dollars.



## Fundraising Highlights

- Ignite the Night, VFC's inaugural gala, generated over \$2.5 million, marking a major fundraising milestone.
- Umbrella Day 2025 raised over \$15,000 to support core VFC programs.
- The first-ever 50/50 raffle raised \$14,000 to expand community support programs.
- Holiday initiatives—including Wrap Day, the London Drugs Toy Drive, and the Christmas Wish Breakfast & Toy Drive—mobilized large-scale public support for families across Vancouver

## Key Community Programs & Impact

- Snacks for Kids – Delivered daily nutritional support to 11,000 food-insecure students across 102 schools, including snack shipments, fresh produce deliveries, and more than 2,000 fresh meals.
- Toys for Kids – Distributed over \$200,000 in toys, sporting equipment, and food to families in need, BC Children's Hospital, and community partners.
- Sports for Kids – Invested \$60,000 to remove barriers to sport, revitalizing the Britannia basketball courts with Buckets and Borders and supporting youth programs such as Streetfront Alternative School.
- Lifelines for Seniors – Continued offering essential safety and support services to help vulnerable seniors live independently.

## Overall Community Impact

With thousands of volunteer hours, significant financial contributions, and deep community partnerships, 2025 was one of VFC's most impactful years to date. VFC's programs provided critical support to tens of thousands of vulnerable children, families, and seniors, creating a healthier, more resilient Vancouver. VFC is proud to have members so dedicated to the City and making an impact.



## Community Contributions

- Donated \$45,000 to the ALS Society of BC.
- Supported United Way BC's Kapwa Strong Fund, helping strengthen community recovery and resilience.
- Achieved record blood donations to Canadian Blood Services.
- Continued to benefit from major community generosity, including a notable \$1 million donation from the Canucks for Kids Fund.

**Join VFC In Making A Difference!**

# JOIN US



Vancouver Fire Rescue Services employs 960 people who respond to a wide variety of emergency and non-emergency incidents, including fires, motor vehicle accidents, and other medical situations. We are an equal opportunity employer that practices the highest standards of diversity and inclusion at our 21\* fire halls, dedicated training centre, and three fire prevention offices.

We are looking for qualified, dynamic people to join our team.

Firefighting is a challenging career that requires self-motivated and physically fit people who thrive in a team atmosphere, enjoy working with the public, and are determined to succeed in whatever they do. If these are some of your attributes and you are excited to serve your community, this is the career for you!

*\*A temporary fire hall (Hall 11) was established in May 2025 to address expansion needs and call volumes*



[vancouver.ca/your-government/join-fire-and-rescue-services.aspx](https://vancouver.ca/your-government/join-fire-and-rescue-services.aspx)



British Columbia  
9720



For more information:

Visit: [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca) or phone: 3-1-1

TTY: 7-1-1 / Outside Vancouver: 604-873-7000

Hỏi chi tiết    Obtenga Información  
資料查詢    ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਏ

CITY OF  
VANCOUVER