On behalf of the staff of Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRRS), I am pleased to release our 2022 Annual Report. As Fire Chief, I am proud to report our department continued to demonstrate excellence in protecting the safety and well-being of our community. Our firefighters responded to a variety of emergencies, including fires and medical incidents, while facing the challenges and impacts from the opioid crisis and other socio-demographic issues, including homelessness, encampments, mental health, and housing. Above all, they did this with dedication and professionalism.

With over 65,000 incidents, it was another busy year for our front line staff. The 54% rise (from pre-COVID levels in 2019) in reportable fires with damage to 3,608, along with the 10 fire fatalities and 65 injuries, demonstrates that we need to continue to do more to protect our community. Lithium-ion batteries and smoking were the leading causes of fire related fatalities. We will continue to focus our prevention initiatives on these causes to reduce the risks from these type of fires.

VFRRS faced many challenges that extended beyond front-line emergency response. Our training division recruited and trained for one of the largest hiring years in history due to unprecedented levels of retirements and much needed additional staffing through our City Council-adopted Growth Plan. The growth plan enabled us to increase staffing levels and put a net new ladder truck into service as we work toward ensuring that we have enough personnel to respond to the increased demand within our city. In our search for excellence, we continued to roll out the Emergency Medical Responder program to provide medical aid at a higher level to our residents. We also focused on prevention and public education to promote fire safety and emergency preparedness in many areas in our diverse city. In addition, we continued to work on our response times and update our equipment to ensure we are ready for any emergency.

I would like to thank the members of our department for their hard work and commitment, as well as the residents of Vancouver for their support during these difficult times. From having to address the safety of occupants and responders in the downtown eastside encampment, addressing the fire safety risks within our SRO buildings and a heavily stressed healthcare system, we made significant progress in making our city a safer place to live, work, and visit.

I would also like to acknowledge the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our department, and how the team adapted with flexibility and resilience. We have seen a significant increase in the number of calls for service over the last few years and we understand that this increase in call volume can be stressful for our community and the members of our department. I want to assure our community that we are taking all the necessary steps to meet the needs of our community while keeping our team safe.

I am confident that VFRRS will continue to be a leader in emergency services and I look forward to serving the community in the coming year.

Sincerely,

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), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

This place is the unceded and ancestral territory of the hən̓ q̴̑̓əmin̓ ə̓m̓ and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh speaking peoples, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and has been stewarded by them since time immemorial.

Vancouver is located on territory that was never ceded, or given up to the Crown by the Musqueam, Squamish, or Tsleil-Waututh peoples. The term unceded acknowledges the dispossession of the land and the inherent rights that Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh hold to the territory. The term serves as a reminder that Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh have never left their territories and will always retain their jurisdiction and relationships with the territory.

About VFRS

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) employs over 880 people, has 20 fire halls, a training site, and three fire prevention offices. In addition to fire suppression, VFRS provides pre-hospital care, vehicle rescue, marine response, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, and many other emergency services in Vancouver. We work to create safe communities through public education for all ages, fire prevention and inspection services, and by working closely with partner agencies and community groups.

VFRS is committed to the health and safety of our staff and community. We will continue to enhance awareness through education and involvement while providing world class fire and rescue services.
MISSION
VFRS saves lives and builds safer communities.

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

Your City, Your VFRS

VFRS provides service to Vancouver’s 129 square kilometers and an estimated population of over 690,000 residents, making it one of Canada’s most densely populated city with over 5,300 people per square kilometer. 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 is also responsible for protecting and providing service to the more than 214,000 properties, 8 stadiums/centers and 10 bridges.

Our Values - Teamwork CIRCLE

CORE VALUES
- Teamwork: WE display commitment and trust through collaborative communication and actions
- Courage: WE have the conviction to defend our values and willingness to challenge the process
- Integrity: WE demonstrate sound moral and ethical principles
- Respect: WE encourage opinions and ideas of self and others
- Compassion: WE demonstrate empathy for others, offer guidance and acknowledge strengths
- Leadership: WE inspire and empower others to achieve the best results
- Excellence: WE surpass expectations and set benchmarks above the standards to measurably be the best
Serving Vancouver

With 20 fire halls across the city of Vancouver, VFRS helps to ensure a safe community for all our residents and visitors.

A bustling downtown and business district as well as increasing density means that fire station placement and accessibility are crucial for a timely response.

If you’ve ever wondered which station serves your area, check out the map below!

*Photo credit: Daniel Marquardt*
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Fire Chief Karen Fry

889 TOTAL PERSONNEL COUNT IN 2022

21 l Chiefs
800 l Operations
28 l Prevention & Public Education
12 l Fleet Maintenance
11 l Training & Recruitment
11 l Administration & Support
6 l Other
2022 BY THE NUMBERS

*Compared to 2021

SAT
BUSIEST DAY
15.3% of total call volume

6-7PM
BUSIEST TIME
5.3% of total call volume

STATION #2
BUSIEST STATION
19.6% of total call volume

6,973
OVERDOSE/POISONING CALLS

Medical
49.3%

Fire & Alarm
25.2%

Assist & Other
11.1%

Cancelled
8%

MVI & Rescue
5%

Hazard
1%

Hazmat
0.4%

SAT
BUSIEST DAY
15.3% of total call volume

6-7PM
BUSIEST TIME
5.3% of total call volume

STATION #2
BUSIEST STATION
19.6% of total call volume

6,973
OVERDOSE/POISONING CALLS

Medical Response Time
7m 10s
UP 5s

Life Safety Inspections
18,488
UP 8%

Fires per 1,000 Population
5.2
UP 4%

Fire Response Time
6m 43s
UP 3s

Violations per Total Inspections
10.0%
DOWN 3.2%

Fires Confined to Area of Origin
19.5%
NO CHANGE

65,770
Calls for Service
UP 3%

7m 05s
Emergency Response Time
UP 4s

90th Percentile
*All incident types first on scene
**Response = Turnout + Travel

CITY OF VANCOUVER
**FIRE AND BEYOND**

**1,018 STRUCTURE FIRES**

Structure fires were up in 2022, increasing by 2% from 2021 and 18% from 2019. Implemented Structure Fire Level 4 and Structure Fire level 5 in efforts of meeting the deployment standards set out in section 5.2.4. of the most recent edition of NFPA 1710.

**2,415 OUTDOOR FIRES**

Outdoor fires were up in 2022, increasing 5% from 2021 and 78% from 2019. Outdoor fires near buildings are extremely dangerous as they can quickly transition into the structure. Fire life safety systems are designed to protect lives and property from fires that start inside, not outside.

**58% FIRES CAUSED BY SMOKER MATERIALS**

Understanding what causes fires is an important step for future prevention. Smoker materials are the main cause of fires in Vancouver.

**12,948 FALSE ALARMS**

There was a 14% increase in the number of false alarms over last year and 24% over pre-pandemic levels. 21% of these alarms were caused by cigarette smoke. These false alarms not only tie up emergency resources but also put an unnecessary burden on our community. We kindly ask smokers to be more considerate and smoke only in designated areas. We also remind property owners to ensure that their fire alarm systems are well-maintained and free of cigarette smoke. By working together, we can reduce the number of false alarms and ensure a quick response to real emergencies.

**10 FIRE RELATED DEATHS**

Rise in fire related deaths in 2022, with half resulting from rechargeable batteries, including lithium-ion batteries.

**675 INCENDIARY FIRES**

It is with great concern that we have seen an increase in the number of incendiary fires in our community. These fires not only put the lives of firefighters and first responders at risk, but also threaten the safety of our citizens and damage to property. We remind everyone to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police. Together, we can help keep our community safe from dangers of arson.
DIFFERENT VFRS SERVICES OFFERED
In addition to fires, VFRS also handles: hazardous material events, medical emergencies, marine responses, motor vehicle incidents, technical rescue incidents, public service calls, special operations, fire inspections and public education.

INCIDENTS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
This is up 2.5% from 2021 and 14% since 2019. With this rate growing, incidents are increasing at a higher rate than the population rate increase, adding more importance than ever to prevention and response measures.

AVERAGE ANNUAL CALLS BY FIRE HALL
Average calls per station are up 3% compared to 2021 and up 19% from 2019.

MEDICAL RELATED CALLS
Abundant medical responses due in part to the opioid crisis, pose a serious threat to our resources.

MEDICAL INCIDENTS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
With increased strain on the medical system and a decreased capacity with family physicians, emergency response is on the rise. For 2022, medical incidents increased 2% from 2021 and 27% from pre-pandemic levels. Service levels were adjusted in late-July to address capacity and resource issues with the hope of having valuable resources available for imminent life threatening emergencies.
NEW FIREFIGHTER RECRUITS TRAINED
In 2022, VFRS welcomed one of the biggest class of new firefighter recruits in our team’s history. With ever changing needs in the community, our aim is to keep the public safe at all stages.

STAFF TRAINED AS FIRE OFFICERS
The training division put 95 staff through the officer development program to become fire officers and had an additional 42 wrote their entrance exam for the program.

SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY STAFF COURSES HELD
Fire and Life Safety training helps to ensure best practices and mitigate possible emergency escalation.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING EVENTS
Keeping best practices top of mind in the community is important. Through fire extinguisher events we were able to train our community, bring attention to fire safety and spend time with the public in a meaningful way.

COMMUNITY EVENTS
VFRS kept busy throughout the community in 2022, with everything from charity events, safety presentations to fire hall tours for the community. Part of a proactive fire strategy, public education is critical to help keep the city and its members and visitors safe. Empowerment through education is a key focus for the department, presentations on safety in the community help to accomplish that mission and make Vancouver safer.
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<td>Administration</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>BC/AC</td>
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<td>Service Ready Engine</td>
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<td>Command</td>
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<td>Service Ready Ladder</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Service Ready Rescue/BC</td>
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<td>Engine</td>
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<td>Service Ready Squad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Investigation</td>
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<td>Special Operations Tender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireboat</td>
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<td>Squad (heavy rescue)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forklift</td>
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<td>Technical Rescue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Alarm Engine</td>
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While there are many highlights of 2022 to celebrate, there are also many challenges facing VFRS and our community at large.

**Opioid Epidemic** - Since 2016, British Columbia has been dealing with an opioid epidemic leading to a major increase in overdose-related calls. Vancouver firefighters responded to 6,973 overdose calls (11% of total calls) in 2022. Firefighters are trained to administer naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal medication, which was required 862 times during the year.

**Homeless Encampments** - The city has attempted to address the issue of homeless encampments through a variety of means, including providing temporary housing and support services, increasing affordable housing options, and enforcing laws against camping in public spaces. However, the problem remains ongoing and complex, with no easy solutions.

**Call Volumes** - Calls volumes are up in 2022, including a 3% increase in overall calls since 2021 and a 19% increase since 2019. These calls include fires with damage up 5% (54% up vs. 2019), alarms up 14% (25% up vs. 2019) and medical related up 2.5% (27% up vs. 2019). Call volume increases are leading to high levels of fatigue and burnout amongst firefighters while stretching department resources thin. Staffing-levels and budget continue to come to the forefront to keep our community and fire teams safe.
Join Us

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services employs over 880 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 practises the highest standards of diversity and inclusion at our 20 fire halls, dedicated training centre, and two 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!

vancouver.ca/your-government/join-fire-and-rescue-services.aspx
Connect with Us