

VANCOUVER FIRE RESCUE SERVICES

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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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 2024 Annual Report. This past year, our firefighters responded to a record 73,767 incidents, including 3,989 fires that tragically resulted in two fatalities and 96 injuries. The rise in false alarms highlights the need for continued fire safety and prevention efforts, with smoking materials remaining the leading cause of fire-related incidents.

Restricting the sale of lockable butane lighters is a significant step in reducing harm to vulnerable groups, mitigating risks to firefighters, and preventing the loss of valuable housing. Collaborating with the Mayor and Council, we are working to address this issue and create safer environments throughout our city. Additionally, Vancouver became the first North American city to commit to transitioning to PFAS-free gear, underscoring our dedication to sustainability and firefighter safety.

We are addressing emerging challenges, including risks from new technologies such as lithium-ion batteries in Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings and the increasing use of lockable lighters. At the same time, we are deeply committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of our team. Through initiatives that foster resilience and open communication, we aim to ensure our staff is equipped to handle the demands of their vital work.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I announce the retirements of Deputy Chiefs Chris Herbert, Tyler Moore, Rob Renning, Kiran Marohn, and Sewa Pangalia and recognize them all for their exceptional contributions to our Department. Their leadership and dedication have left an indelible mark on our team and the community we serve. Thank you for your years of commitment and service. Wishing you all the best in this next chapter of your lives.

I also want to extend my gratitude to our dedicated VFRS team for their unwavering service and to the residents of Vancouver for their ongoing support. Together, we remain steadfast in our mission to deliver exceptional emergency services and make Vancouver a safer place for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Fry'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Karen Fry
Fire Chief

TABLE OF CONTENTS



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4

YOUR CITY, YOUR VFRS 5

SERVING VANCOUVER 6

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW 7

2024 BY THE NUMBERS 8

FIRE AND BEYOND 10

MAJOR RESPONSES 15

CHALLENGES WE'RE FACING 18

HONOURING CAPTAIN RON HEGEDUS 20

2023 & 2024 FIRE-FIGHTERS OF THE YEAR 21

IN THE COMMUNITY 22

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT 24

JOIN US 26

CONNECT WITH US 27



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

This place is the unceded and ancestral territory of the hə́ńqəmińəm and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (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.

We are grateful for our ongoing opportunity to serve the 60,000 plus residents in our city that have indigenous first nations heritage.





YOUR CITY, YOUR VFRS

VFRS provides service to Vancouver's 129 square kilometres and an estimated population of over 730,000 residents, making it one of Canada's most densely populated cities with over 5,600 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

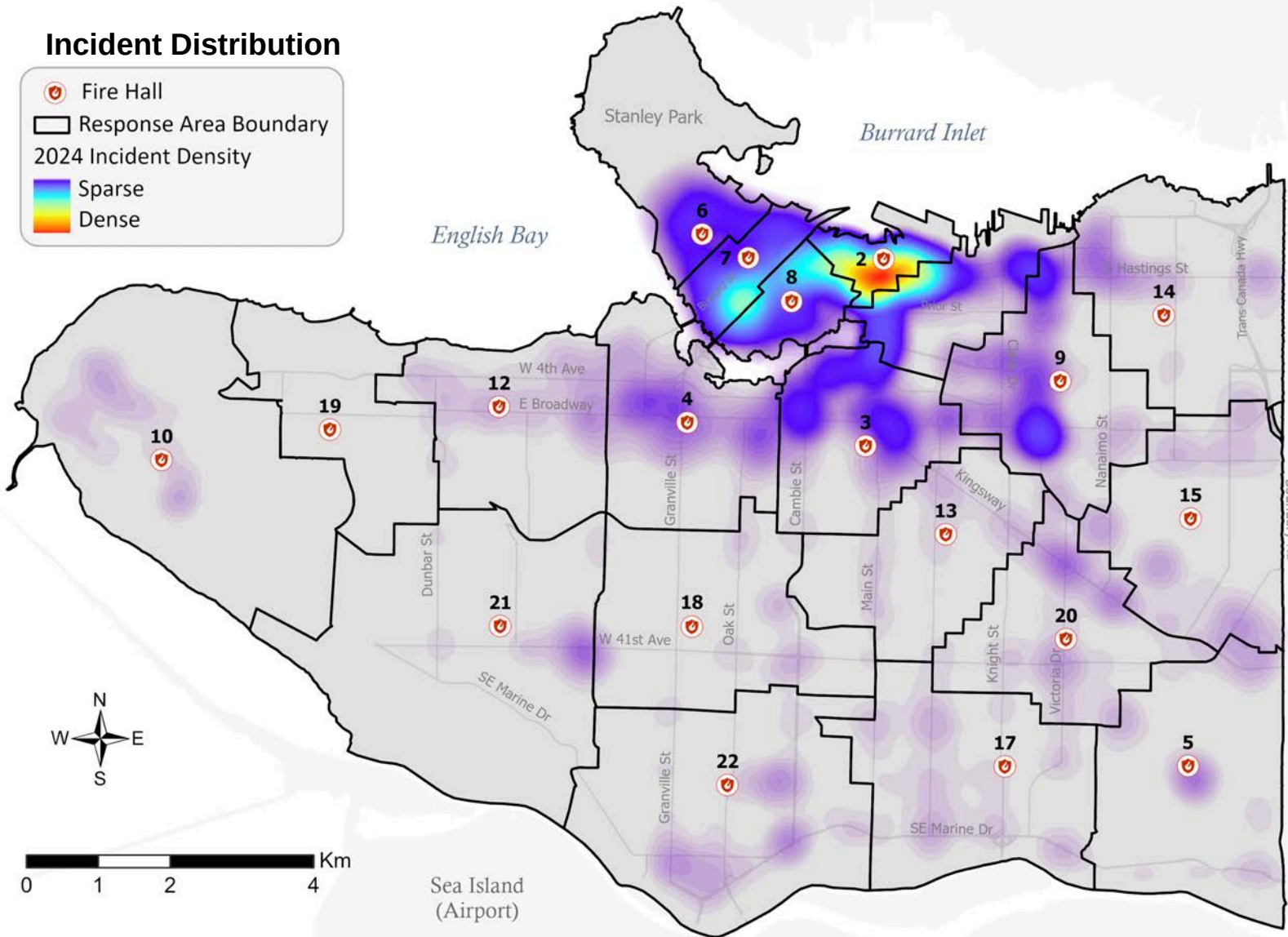
VFRS saves lives and builds safer communities.

SERVING VANCOUVER

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) employs over 940 professionals, operating 20 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, 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 20 strategically placed fire halls, VFRS ensures rapid response in Vancouver's bustling downtown, business district, and growing neighborhoods. Curious about your local fire hall? Explore the map below!

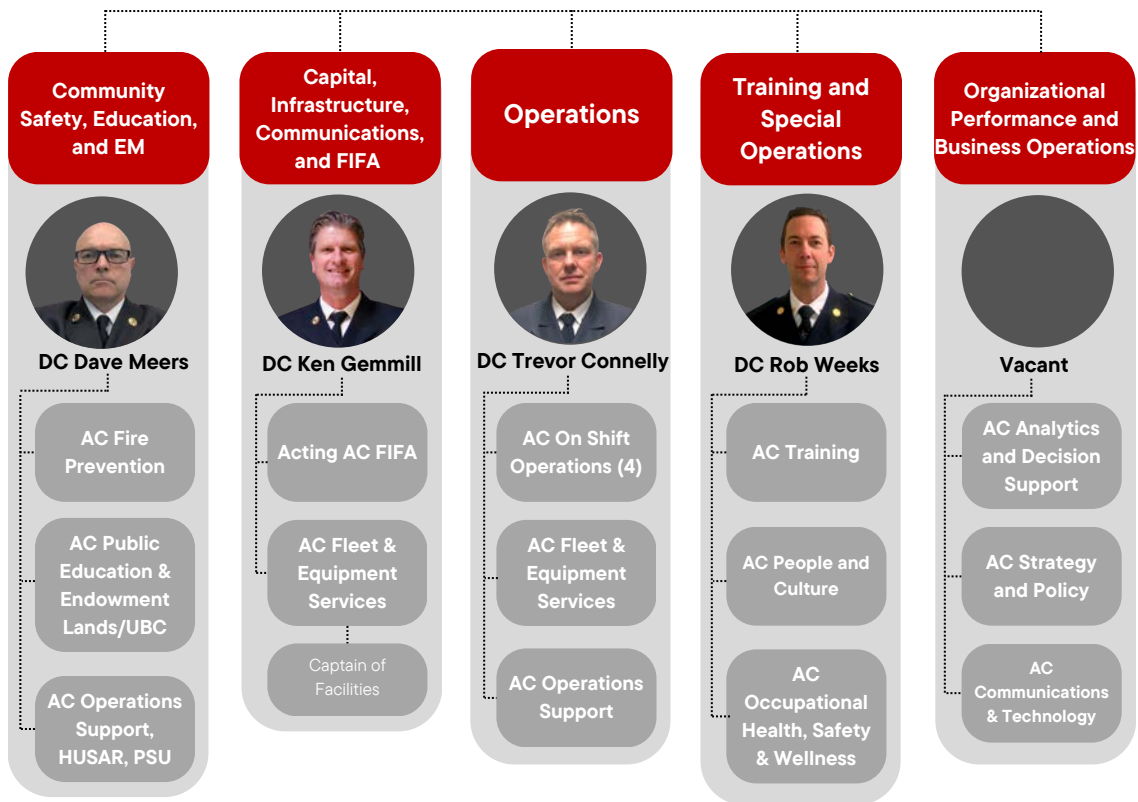
Incident Distribution



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW



Fire Chief Karen Fry



944 TOTAL PERSONNEL COUNT IN 2024

- 21 | Chiefs
- 841 | Operations
- 32 | Prevention & Public Education
- 11 | Fleet Maintenance
- 13 | Training & Recruitment
- 20 | Administration & Support
- 6 | Other

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

*Compared to 2023



73,767

UP 2%

Calls for Service



6m 42s

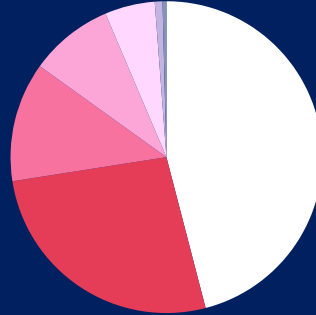
IMPROVED 4s

Emergency Response Time

90th Percentile

*All incident types first on scene

**Response = Turnout + Travel



- Medical - 46%
- Fire & Alarm - 27%
- Assist & Other - 12%
- Public Service - 9%
- MVI & Rescue - 5%
- Hazard - <1%
- Hazmat - <1%



Medical Response Time

6m 44s

DOWN 7s

First on scene for emergency



Life Safety Inspections

20,481

UP 5%



Fires per 1,000 Population

5.4

DOWN 7%



Fire Response Time

6m 32s

UP 4s

First on scene for emergency



Violations per Total Inspections

12.3%

UP 0.4%



Fires Confined to Area of Origin

21.8%

UP 0.7%

102,214

APPARATUS
RESPONSES

7,792

OVERDOSE/
POISONING CALLS

15,628

RESPONSES TO
FALSE ALARMS

3,989

REPORTABLE
FIRES



2024 TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS

*Compared to 2023



67
Specialty
Technicians

Hired &
Onboarded
Across All Four
Specialties



300
EMRs

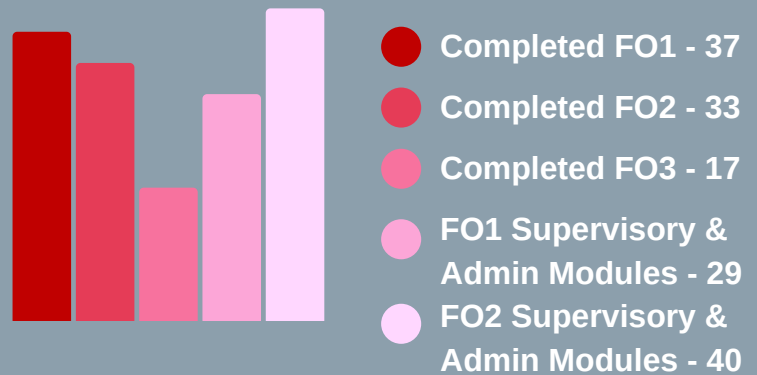
Scope
Update
Provided



44
Recruits

New
Recruits
Trained

156 Officer Candidates Trained



Assistant Training
Officers Hired

43 ATOs



Live Fire Training
Delivered

694 Members



New Members Added to CAN-TF1
(8 BCEHS, 7 VPD, 4 COV, 11 VFRS)

30 Members



NPA Training provided to
FR License Holders

85% FR Holders



Technical High-Angle Rope
Rescue Training Completed

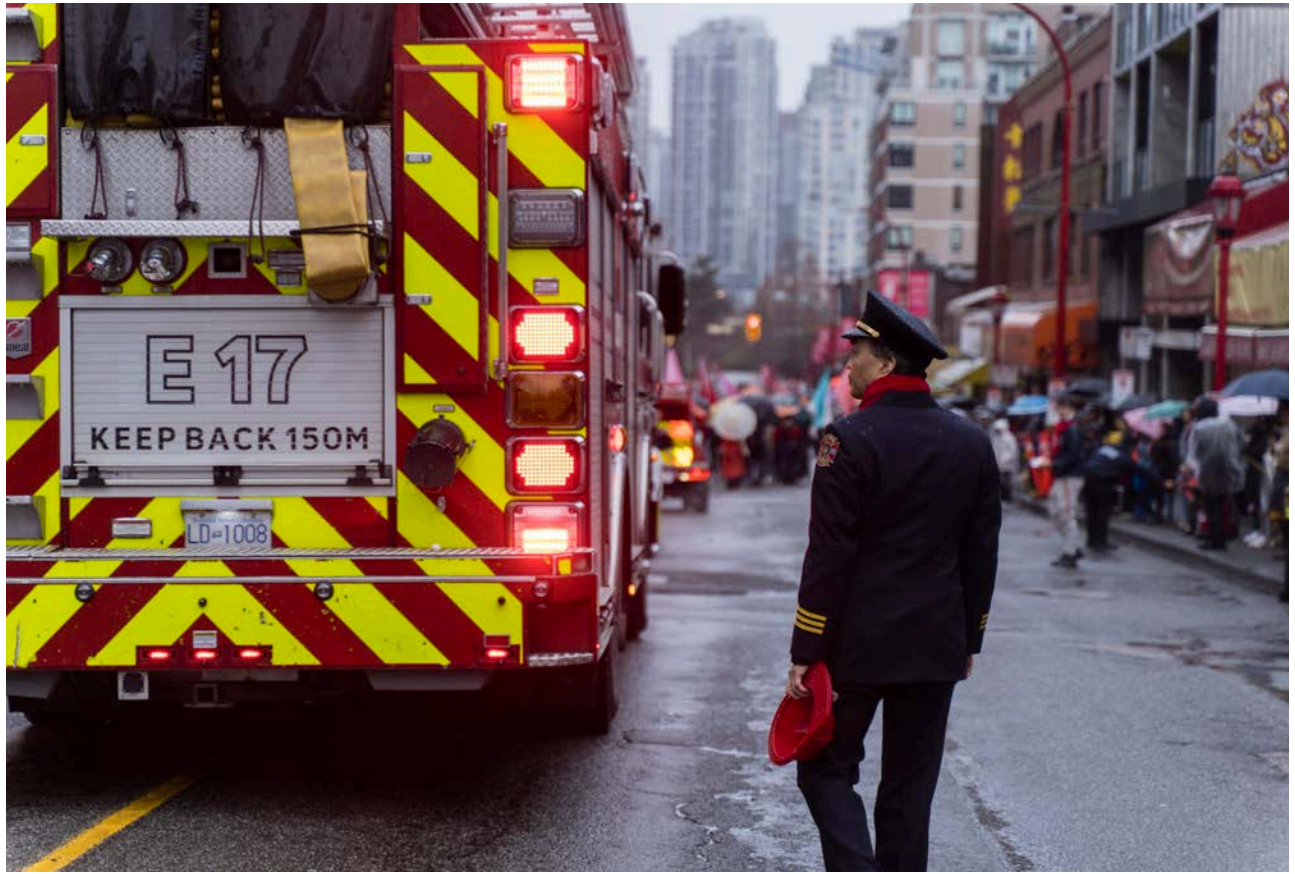
5,485 Hours



Trained Staff on Two New Apparatus
34 on Rosenbauer - 22 on Midmount

54 Members

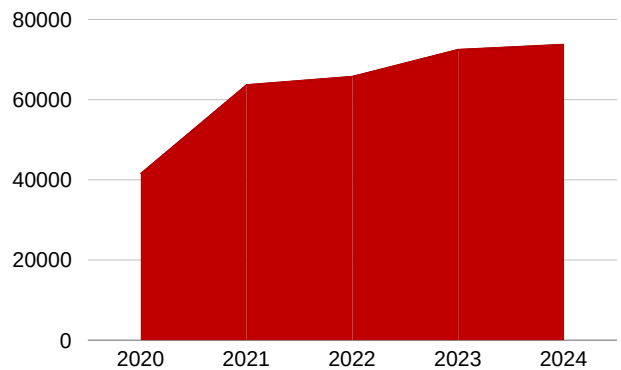




FIRE AND BEYOND

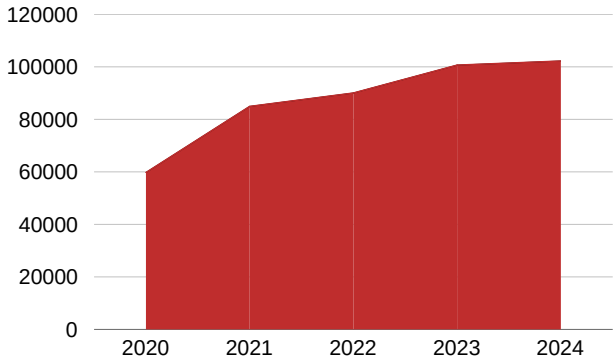
INCIDENTS

* Incidents increased by 2% compared to the previous year, marking the highest call volume in history. This underscores the escalating demand for emergency services and emphasizing the necessity for proactive measures to address community safety concerns effectively.



101
INCIDENTS PER 1,000
RESIDENTS

73,767
TOTAL INCIDENTS



* With rising pressure on the healthcare system and fewer family physicians, emergency response rates are increasing. Despite a 3% decrease in medical incidents in 2024, they still made up nearly half of all cases. EMR-certified staff improve response times, patient assessment, and pre-hospital care, enhancing emergency medical services.

102,214

APPARATUS RESPONSES

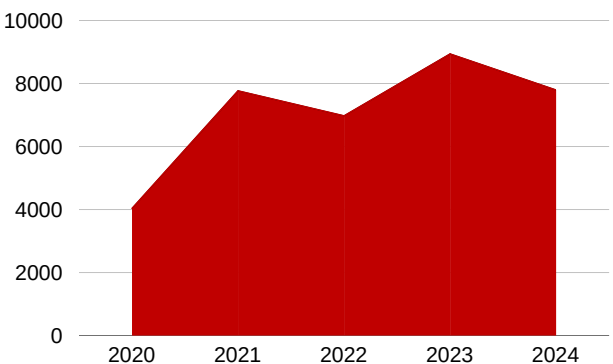
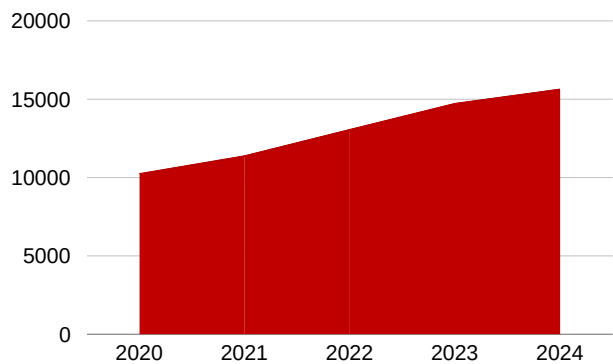
46.2

MEDICAL INCIDENTS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

28%

FALSE ALARMS CAUSED BY CIGARETTE SMOKE

The rising false alarm rate, up 6% from last year, strains emergency services and burdens our community. We urge smokers to use designated areas and remind property owners to maintain smoke-free fire alarm systems. Together, we can reduce false alarms and respond swiftly to genuine emergencies.

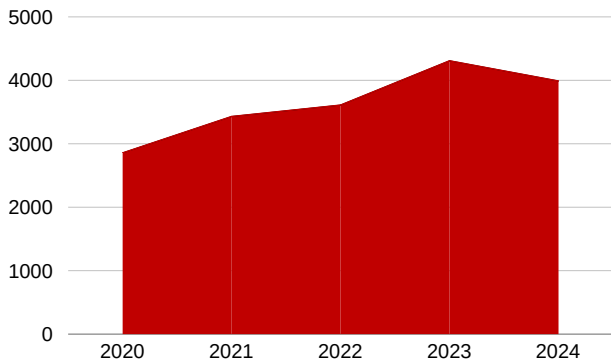


15,628

RESPONSES TO FALSE ALARMS

7,792

OVERDOSE INCIDENTS



* In 2024, there were 3,989 reportable fires and, unfortunately, 2 fire-related fatalities and 96 injuries. The department's commitment to fire safety and prevention remains paramount.

3,989
TOTAL FIRES

2
FIRE RELATED DEATHS

61%

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.

965

INCENDIARY FIRES

We are pleased to report a 13% decrease in the number of incendiary fires in our community. This positive trend enhances the safety of our citizens and reduces risks to firefighters, first responders, and property. However, it remains important for everyone to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police. Together, we can continue to make our community safer and protect it from the dangers of suspicious fires.

* Structure fires were down in 2024, decreasing by 9% from 2023. 22% of structure fires were confined to the area of origin, which was an improvement from 21% in the prior year. 34% originated in sleeping quarters and another 29% in the kitchen/cooking areas.

* Outdoor fires decreased by 7% in 2024 compared to 2023. However, 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.

1,115
STRUCTURE FIRES

2,736
OUTDOOR FIRES

INSPECTIONS

* We exceeded our annual target of 20,000 inspections. Our team's thorough assessments across various sectors, aligned with the BC Fire Code and Vancouver Fire Bylaw, ensure that safety standards are upheld. This achievement highlights our dedication to community well-being through proactive and consistent monitoring.

20,481
TOTAL INSPECTIONS

12.3%
VIOLATIONS PER
TOTAL INSPECTION

* We've observed violations in 12.3% of total inspections, highlighting areas where improvement is needed for enhanced safety and compliance.

5,806
CODE ITEM
VIOLATIONS

The top 5 violation items were:

- Fire Extinguishers
- Fire Alarm Systems
- Emergency Lighting
- Fire & Exit Doors
- Sprinkler Systems

520
MTIs ISSUED



* Issued Municipal Ticket Information (MTIs) totaling \$340,000 with the goal of improving compliance and enhancing fire life safety standards.



E 17

KEEP BACK 150M

Residential District Columbia
LD-1008



MAJOR RESPONSES

SECOND ALARM FIRE - 1500 ALBERNI STREET

On Monday, October 21st at 3:52pm, Vancouver Firefighters responded to a fire alarm activation at 1500 Alberni Street. While crews were investigating the alarms, another crew responding to the building saw heavy flames coming from the high-rise residential building at the 20th and 21st floors.

Firefighters went to the 20th floor to start firefighting and search operations on the affected floors. While the fire was growing, building material and glass were falling from the upper levels onto Nicola Street, igniting hedges and combustibles below.

The floors above the first floor were not sprinklered, which significantly contributed to the heavy and rapid fire spread to upper levels.

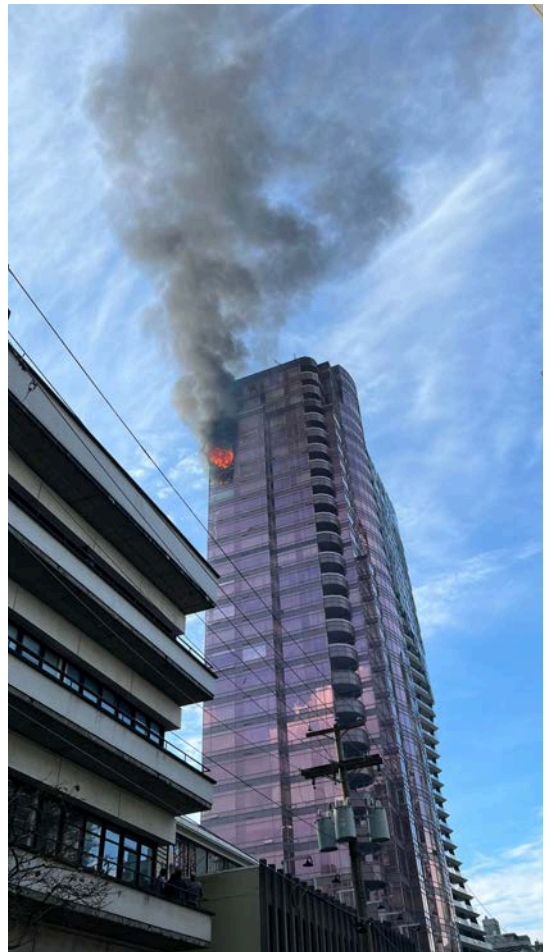
As a result of the fire, three units suffered heavy fire and smoke damage and were not habitable. Several units below sustained water damage from firefighting efforts and teams are on scene to assist in returning as many residents to their homes as possible. No injuries reported.

THIRD ALARM FIRE - 1000 BLOCK OF EAST PENDER STREET

At 7:49 pm on Monday, October 7th, Vancouver firefighters responded to multiple reports of a fire in the 1000 block of East Pender Street. On arrival, firefighters saw heavy flames coming from 3 residential homes, which ignited tall trees close by, extending flames 100 feet in the air.

Firefighters on scene quickly began extinguishing the fire, protecting nearby structures, and conducting search efforts where possible. The fire was upgraded to a 3rd alarm, and 55 firefighters were on scene to contain the fire due to the number of structures involved and a ruptured gas line burning at the rear of a building.

As a result of the fire, 11 people were displaced and 2 people were treated on scene from smoke inhalation but did not require hospital transport. Because of the rapid spread of fires and dangers of toxic smoke, we urgently remind residents to always have a working smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each level of their home. A working smoke alarm is critical for early warning, giving you time to safely exit or reach an area of refuge.



MAJOR RESPONSES CONTINUED



AUGUST 6TH FIRES - 400 BLOCK OF EAST 10TH AVENUE & 3400 BLOCK OF WEST 41ST

On Tuesday, August 6, 2024, VFRS had one of the most challenging and complex string of structure fires in recent history.

Our on-duty crews were dealing with a second alarm structure fire at 414 E10th Avenue that began at approximately 4:30pm in the afternoon in the Mt Pleasant neighbourhood. This fire engulfed the third floor and several crews responded to successfully put out the active flames. Given the condition of the structure, the City's Chief Building Official ordered that it be demolished.

While crews were still directly involved in the Mt Pleasant fire, reports came in for a large fire at about 6:30pm, that broke out at 3477 West 41st Ave, involving the collapse of a construction crane. This was a 6-story wood frame residential building under construction. Embers from this fire ignited 9 additional fires, impacting residents and creating excessive smoke.

Emergency personnel, including VFRS, Vancouver Police, and BC Ambulance Service, arrived on scene immediately and began to put out the fires, provide medical services, and evacuate residents. All residents on the north and south side of West 41st Ave, between Blenheim and Collingwood and south side of West 40th Ave between Blenheim and Collingwood, were evacuated.

BC Hydro reported more than 419 people impacted by a related power outage, and Fortis BC has confirmed that 2 homes were impacted by a gas shut off.

VFRS is grateful for the support of the Burnaby Fire Department and Richmond Fire-Rescue, who dispatched personnel and firetrucks, and Crofton House School for providing space to process displaced residents.

The valiant efforts of our teams, the pump operators, the firefighters and the officers is what kept this fire from spreading to more of the neighbourhood and saved multiple homes. Due to the dry weather and severity of the fire there were upwards of 19 other properties damaged as a direct result of the fire, including 6 separate structure fires.



WINDICOR FIRE / RESCUE SERVICES
E1
KEEP BACK 150 M
VN-7386

Phở Quỳnh Express

EMERALD DENTAL

P PUBLIC PARKING →

No Left Turn sign with arrows pointing left and right.

REAL VIETNAMESE & CAMBODIAN FOOD

04531

CHALLENGES WE'RE FACING

There were many highlights that happened in 2024 that we want to celebrate, however, there are also many challenges that VFRS and our community continue to experience.

CALL VOLUMES

Call volumes increased by 2% in 2024, averaging 202 calls per day. Notably, alarm calls saw a 6% rise, reaching 43 per day. These growing demands are straining department resources, contributing to firefighter fatigue and burnout. As a result, staffing levels and budget remain critical factors in ensuring the safety of both our community and fire crews.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Since 2016, British Columbia has faced an ongoing opioid epidemic, resulting in a significant rise in overdose-related emergencies. In 2024, Vancouver firefighters responded to 7,799 overdose calls, accounting for 23% of all medical incidents. Firefighters are trained to administer naloxone, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug, which was used 882 times throughout the year.

SRO FIRES

The increasing number of fires in SRO buildings in recent years poses a significant safety threat, requiring proactive measures to reduce risks in these densely populated residences. Key initiatives include:

- **Fire Safety Training:** A "train the trainer" approach for SRO managers to enhance fire prevention knowledge.
- **Interdepartmental Collaboration:** Partnering with major metropolitan fire departments to share best practices.
- **Policy Adjustments:** Modifying billing policies and alarm sensitivities to reduce false alarms while considering by-law updates.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Working closely with BC Housing to improve fire safety measures.



- **Public Education:** Launching awareness campaigns to inform residents and property managers.
- **Enforcement Actions:** Intensifying prosecutions against non-compliant SRO operators.

To curb the growing number of fire incidents, urgent and targeted measures—including advocating for restrictions on the indoor use and sale of fire-prone items—must be pursued across government levels. Additionally, an in-depth study with Darkhorse Analytics aims to identify key issues and develop data-driven solution.



VANCOUVER FIRE RESCUE SERVICES



E2



VANCOUVER FIRE

HONOURING CAPTAIN RON HEGEDUS



Captain Ron Hegedus passed away on August 16, 2024, after a courageous battle with occupational cancer.

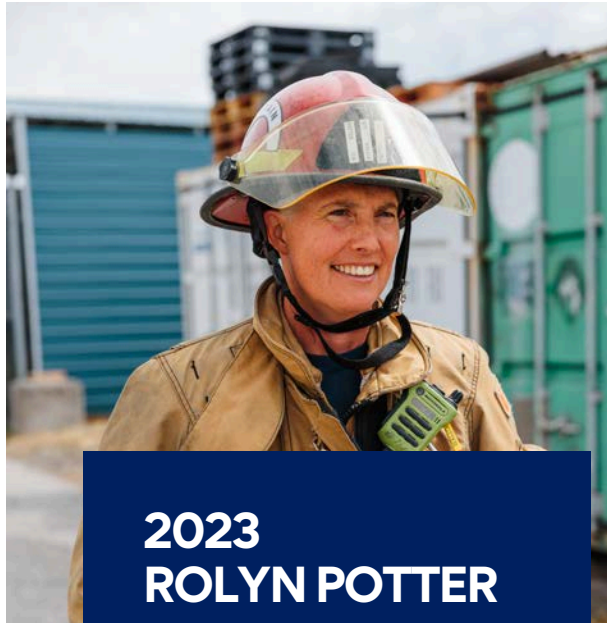
“Capt. Hegedus was more than just a firefighter — he was a true hero who met every challenge with courage and commitment,” said Mayor Ken Sim. “Ron’s legacy isn’t just about service and sacrifice; it’s a powerful reminder of the incredible impact one person can have on an entire community.”

“Capt. Ron Hegedus was a proud Vancouver firefighter for over 24 years,” said VFRS Fire Chief Karen Fry. “Tragically, he succumbed to his battle with cancer, a disease that he contracted as a result of his career. As a City and department, we will continue to honor his sacrifice and continue to do everything we can to reduce cancer risks for firefighters. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and colleagues.”

President Katrina Davison of IAFF Local 18 also paid tribute to Capt. Hegedus, saying, "Ron was more than just a colleague — he was a friend, mentor and leader to us all. His warm presence, both in the halls and beyond, will be deeply missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him."



FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR



2023
ROLYN POTTER

Fire Captain

Captain Rolyn Potter, a dedicated member of VFRS since 2000, has been recognized for her exceptional leadership and commitment to the community. An acting Battalion Chief and technical rescue specialist, she has been instrumental in preserving VFRS's legacy and advancing its mission.

A strong advocate for diversity and inclusion, Captain Potter supports employee resource groups like Pride, BIPOC, and the Women's Committee. Her passion for training and mentorship has shaped new recruits and strengthened the Officer Development Program. Captain Potter's dedication and leadership make her a deserving recipient of this honor.



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 kept busy throughout the community in 2024, with everything from charity events and safety presentations to fire hall tours for the community. As 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.

418

Community Events

48

Fire Extinguisher Training Events





VANCOUVER FIRE RESCUE

A9280

HIJET

Beautiful British Columbia
SF 1077

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT



New Firefighter
Recruits Trained

44



Staff Completed Fire
Officer Training

87



Staff Completing
Supervisory and Admin

69



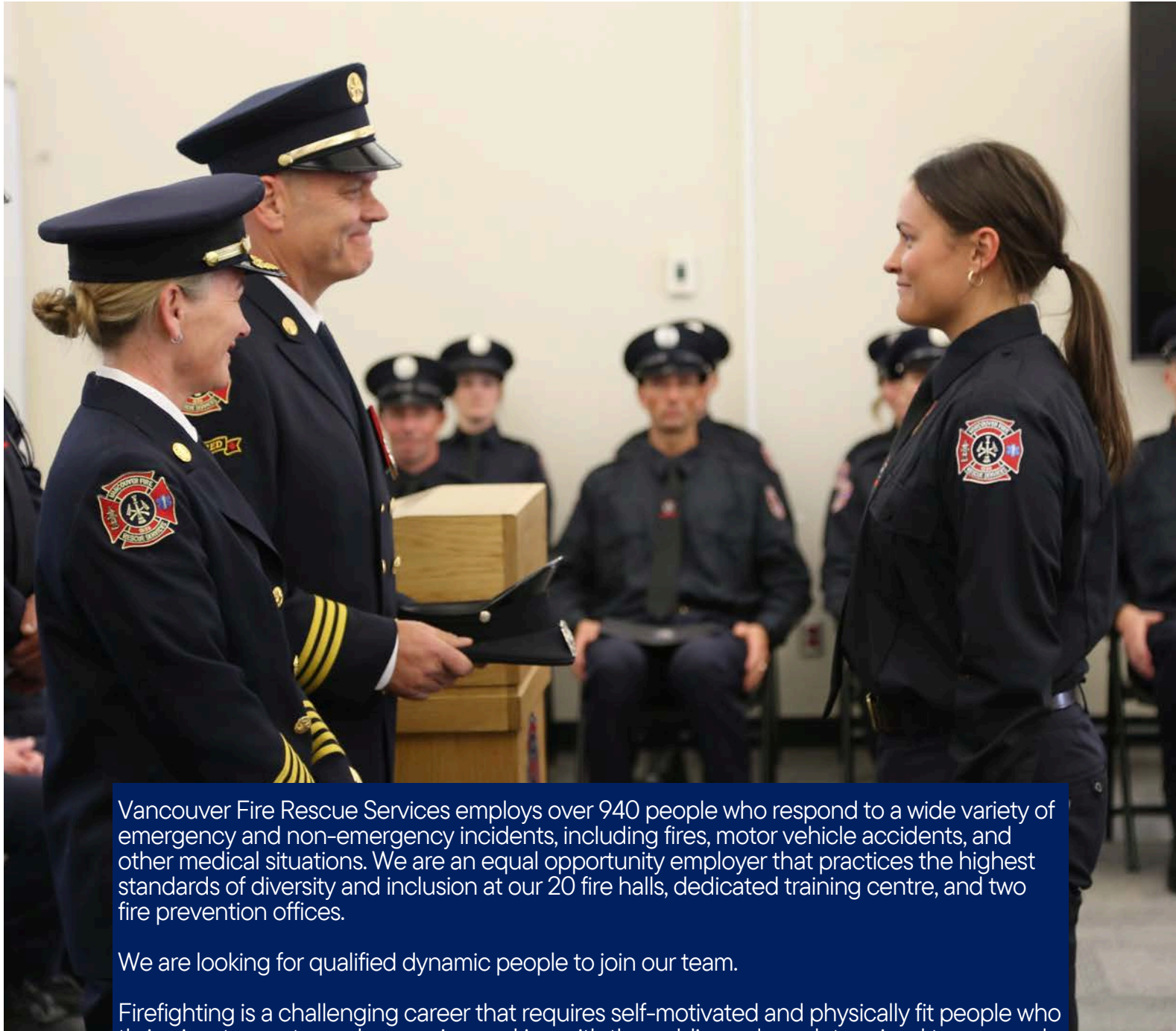
E 8
KEEP BACK 15



British Columbia
LD-1005

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

JOIN US



Vancouver Fire Rescue Services employs over 940 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 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





CITY OF
VANCOUVER

For more information:

Visit: 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



CHAPMAN RD

