



## Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
3400 – 30 Street  
Vernon, BC  
V1T 5E6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 28, 2021

MEDIA CONTACT: Christy Poirier, Manager, Communications & Grants

TELEPHONE: 250-550-3539

---

### **Vernon Fire Rescue readying itself for increased risk of wildfire conditions**

Emergencies can happen anytime and Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) is taking steps to ready itself for the height of wildfire season and reminding citizens and visitors about the important things we can all do to keep each other safe.

Already this year, fire departments across the North Okanagan have responded to multiple grass, wildland and structure fires and the fire danger rating has fluctuated between low and high at various times.

“The risk of wildfire can change quickly, particularly when we are experiencing extreme heat like we’ve seen this week,” said Fire Chief David Lind. “We need to practice fire safety all the time, and when high heat and sunshine are drying out the region, we need to pay even closer attention to our activities. If people are spending time in the mountains, around lakes, in camping areas, or on trails, it’s paramount that everyone does their part to prevent human-caused wildfires to protect themselves, our communities and our emergency responders.”

To prepare for this year’s wildfire season, VFRS has recently acquired a Structure Protection Unit (SPU); a cargo trailer equipped with pumps, hoses and sprinkler heads that can quickly and easily be installed on the eavestroughs of homes or other structures to keep several buildings wet for a prolonged period of time.

Additionally, the department has received and put into service a new Wildland Urban Interface (or bush) truck, designed to go off-road and provide more resources where larger fire trucks could not gain access.

“Having these new resources makes our department more agile in its emergency response and gives our firefighters the tools to handle a variety of larger scale or wildland-urban interface events,” said Chief Lind.

Throughout the summer season, VFRS will also adjust its operations, as necessary, to have firefighters stationed at Fire Station 3 during higher risk periods.

“Residents in the Predator Ridge area may notice career and auxiliary firefighters working and training out of Station 3 at various times when the fire danger rating is listed as *extreme*,

particularly during the hottest part of the day when fire behaviour can be more aggressive,” said Chief Lind.

“This intermittent staffing during higher risk periods is just one of the risk controls used to protect the Predator Ridge area. In addition to this, most buildings have sprinkler systems, open areas are landscaped and irrigated, and there are active Block Watch and FireSmart programs in place.”

The City of Vernon would like to thank the public for helping to prevent wildfires. To report a wildfire, call the BC Wildfire Service at **1 800 663-5555 toll-free** or **\*5555 on a cellphone**. For the latest information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions and more, visit [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca).





*Above are images of VFRS members being trained on the new SPU equipment with the assistance of Bill Wacey, Structure Protection Coordinator and Structure Protection Specialist III, BC Wildfire Service. Thank you to St. John Ambulance for providing its facility for training purposes.*