



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire safety reminders for Vernon businesses

As winter continues to settle in and temperatures drop across the North Okanagan, the City of Vernon, Vernon Fire Rescue Services, and Vernon North Okanagan RCMP are offering important safety reminders to local businesses.

Firefighters and police have attended several fires this fall and winter, which have been started inside commercial bins or near commercial buildings. Many times, the fires have contained garbage or recyclable materials.

“We do not have definitive information to understand why each of these fires were started; we don’t know if they were for mischief purposes, or in an attempt for someone to stay warm,” said Fire Chief David Lind. “However, we do know that a fire near or against a building can quickly lead to significant property damage or risk to human life, and simple steps can be taken to considerably reduce that risk.”

Piles of garbage and recycling left outside for a period of time can pose a serious fire hazard. Therefore, businesses are asked to keep their exterior spaces tidy and place garbage and recycling bags outside as close to pick-up as possible. If businesses use a commercial bin service, they’re asked to keep lids closed and bins away from buildings as best as possible, while still keeping them on private property.

“While these fuel sources could be attractive to someone looking to start a fire to keep warm, preventing stockpiles of combustible materials may also deter those with nefarious intentions,” said Constable Chris Terleski, Media Relations Officer for the Vernon North Okanagan RCMP. “Arson is often a crime of opportunity, which is all the more reason for businesses to take these proactive steps to address and reduce areas of risk to their and neighbouring properties.”

Recently, the City of Vernon adjusted its garbage and recycling collection times to begin at 10:00 a.m. in Downtown (BIA) laneways and alleys. This allows BIA customers to place their bags outside the morning of collection, rather than placing them the night before.

Here are some additional tips to help keep people and property safe:

- Place bags closely together and bundle cardboard together (2’ x 3’ x 6”).

- If a bag is missed during collection, bring it back inside until the next designated collection day and time.
- **Do not leave pallets outside;** have them collected or dispose of them immediately. The City's waste collection contractor does not collect pallets.
- Help your neighbours. Assist with tidying recycling if it becomes scattered prior to collection.

For more information on commercial waste collection in Vernon, please visit www.vernon.ca/commercialwaste.