



Media Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update: Downtown Vernon structure fire

(as of July 4 at 4:00 p.m.)

Vernon Fire Rescue Services remains on the scene of a major structure fire in Downtown Vernon. Heavy equipment was brought in to demolish the walls of the building so firefighters could gain better access to the interior and attack hot spots.

Demolition of the building is expected to be complete by 8:00 p.m. today, and then the site will be fenced and secured.

Due to ongoing work in the area, 30th Street will remain closed overnight between 28th and 30th Avenues and will be reopened tomorrow morning. However, 29th Avenue is expected to be opened late this evening.

Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) thanks everyone for their patience and understanding while this emergency response work has been completed. In particular, VFRS thanks the Armstrong Spallumcheen Fire Department for providing additional apparatus and personnel to assist with the fire suppression efforts, as well as all the other responding agencies who provided service throughout the day.

The investigation into the cause of fire is with the Vernon North Okanagan RCMP, so no further updates will be provided by VFRS.

(as of July 4 at 9:00 a.m.)

Vernon firefighters remain on scene of a major structure fire in downtown Vernon this morning (Tuesday). The fire was first reported at approximately 2:30 a.m. in the 2800-block of 30th Street.

Information about the scene has been clarified and additional details have become available.

Road closures

The following roads are closed to traffic and pedestrians (see map below):

- 30th Street between 28th and 30th Avenues
- 29th Street between 28th and 30th Avenues
- 28th Avenue between 29th and 30th Streets

Please avoid the downtown core if necessary and find alternative travel routes.

Fire response update

Crews have confirmed that only one structure with multiple units (each containing a separate business) was involved in the fire. Crews have contained the fire, keeping it from spreading to adjacent buildings. The Kekuli Centre apartment remains evacuated as a precautionary measure.

“The roof of the structure that was involved with fire has collapsed, making it difficult for firefighters to attack the interior of the building,” said Deputy Fire Chief Alan Hofsink. “Heavy equipment is now being brought down to the site to assist with tearing down walls. This will help crews gain better access to the interior so they can attack hot spots. Crews will remain on scene for several more hours.”

City utility workers attended the scene to clear storm drains of debris and BC Hydro is helping to restore electricity to nearby buildings that lost power a few hours ago.

“At this time, no injuries have been reported. The fire is suspected to be suspicious and Vernon North Okanagan RCMP is leading the investigation,” said Hofsink.

Air quality concerns

Due to the size and scope of the fire, heavy smoke has blown across a large portion of the community. Residents may notice smoke entering their homes or businesses. If this is the case, you are encouraged to turn off air conditioning units and close all windows until the smoke can clear from the area.

Vernon Fire Rescue Services would like to thank all of the agencies and organizations that have assisted with the response this morning. Your time and efforts have been greatly appreciated.

