



## Media Release

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 22, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: Christy Poirier, Manager, Communications & Grants

TELEPHONE: 250-550-3539

---

### **City and VFRS closely monitoring wildfire situation, ready to respond as needed**

In light of the ongoing wildfires throughout the interior of BC, the City of Vernon and Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) want to reassure community members they are closely monitoring the situation both locally and regionally, and are prepared to respond as needed.

“Over the last several weeks, VFRS has provided both personnel and apparatus to help with firefighting efforts in the southern and central regions of the Okanagan. We’re honoured to be part of the coordinated response efforts being provided by fire services from across the province and beyond, and are very proud of the work our crew members are doing,” said Fire Chief David Lind.

“Although we’ve been sending resources outside the community to help neighbours, we want to reassure residents in Vernon that if we have an emergency event happen here, we are resourced and ready to respond immediately.”

### **EOC and ESS Reception Centre update**

The City of Vernon’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) remains activated at a level 3, supporting its Emergency Support Services (ESS) Reception Centre, while also monitoring the fire situation in the Central Okanagan and Shuswap regions. The City has remained in close contact with neighbouring communities, BC Wildfire Service and the Province of B.C.

Since August 17, Vernon’s Reception Centre has welcomed and registered more than 1,000 evacuees, most of whom have come from the areas around West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, Westside Road, Kelowna and Lake Country. Some evacuees have also come to Vernon from the Shuswap area, near the Adams Lake fire.

“In addition to monitoring fire activities, the City has been diligent to review its own emergency response plans and staff are ready to act if something happens locally,” said Chief Lind.

### **Residents inquire about sprinklers on roofs**

Since the Central Okanagan fires began, the City and VFRS have received questions about installing sprinkler systems on the roofs of properties and whether they would impact the local water supply.

“We know sprinkler systems can help save properties in the event of a wildfire, but we need to be very careful about how they’re used,” said Chief Lind. “If you install a sprinkler system on your property, **do not turn it on before evacuating during an emergency.** Doing so could strain the water supply for your neighbourhood, potentially hindering firefighting efforts.”

Instead, residents should follow the manufacturer’s instructions for sprinkler installation and **leave a hose stretched down at ground level for Structure Protection crews to utilize.** These dedicated teams will source water from an appropriate supply, ensuring the necessary resources are available for fire suppression.

If a wildfire happens in our area and you are placed on Evacuation Alert, please be ready to leave at a moment’s notice. If you receive an Evacuation Order, leave your home immediately, allowing firefighting crews to concentrate their efforts on fire suppression without delay, ensuring the safety of our community.

“Once again, we thank all the emergency responders, volunteers and community members who have stepped up during these difficult times,” said Chief Lind. “Together we are navigating this wildfire season with resiliency and unity.”

### **Stay up-to-date**

For updates and information regarding wildfires and emergency response activities, visit the following websites:

- BC Wildfire Service: [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)
- Central Okanagan Emergency Operations: [www.cordemergency.ca](http://www.cordemergency.ca)
- Columbia-Shuswap Emergency Program: [www.shuswapemergency.ca](http://www.shuswapemergency.ca)
- City of Vernon: [www.vernon.ca](http://www.vernon.ca)
- City of Vernon Alertable app and local emergency notifications: [www.vernon.ca/alertable](http://www.vernon.ca/alertable)