



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For further information, contact:
Howard Exner at 604-463-3055
hexner@mapleridge.ca

Maple Ridge Fire Department Serves Fire Order Regarding Tent Encampment

Maple Ridge, BC: On Monday, September 24, the Maple Ridge Fire Chief, in his capacity as a local assistant to the Office of the BC Fire Commissioner, issued a Provincial Fire Order to the City of Maple Ridge and Province of British Columbia relating to fire and life safety issues at the tent encampment located upon City-owned and Provincially-owned lands at 223 Street at St. Anne Avenue. The Provincial Fire Order provided that specific fire and life safety deficiencies described in the Order must be addressed within 24 hours.

Obligations upon the encampment occupants to address the fire and life safety issues at the camp have been in place since November 2017, when a Consent Order was issued by the BC Supreme Court. The Court Order laid out the obligations of the camp occupants to address fire and life safety issues as identified by the Fire Department.

The Fire Department has conducted regular inspections of the camp seeking compliance with the Court Order. The City and BC Housing have made support available to the camp occupants to achieve this goal. Despite a consistent commitment by the City and BC Housing to provide support and resources to help the camp occupants address the fire and life safety issues identified in the inspections, the fire and life-safety hazards at the encampment have persisted and worsened over time.

On Tuesday morning, September 25, City Staff members arrived on the site to work with camp occupants to meet the terms of the Provincial Fire Order. Fire Department personnel have also been on site to provide specific instructions to identify the work that needs to be done to meet the terms of the Fire Order.

“Today, with the cooperation and assistance of the camp occupants, was the greatest progress that we have attained to address the fire and health safety issues on the site. We will continue to support our colleagues from the City who have been working with the camp occupants to address the terms of the Consent Order and Provincial Fire Order. We will report the results of the cleanup to Chief Exner at the end of the day,” said Assistant Fire Chief Doug Armour.

“The Fire Department and City staff who have been inspecting this site over the last year have been frustrated by the lack of commitment and cooperation by camp occupants to address the fire and life safety issues on the site,” said Maple Ridge CAO Paul Gill. “The occupants have an opportunity and the support from the City and BC Housing to make the encampment safe by allowing the necessary work to be completed, and the hope of the City is that they will do so. If compliance with the Fire Order is not achieved and maintained on the site, I will take steps to seek further authority from the BC Supreme Court to address these safety issues.”