



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## City Returns to BC Supreme Court to Address Camp Safety

**Maple Ridge, BC:** The City of Maple Ridge has filed an application with the BC Supreme Court to seek Court authority to address significant fire safety issues at the camp located at St. Anne Avenue on 223 Street.

City staff, in conjunction with the Maple Ridge Fire Department, has been conducting regular weekly inspections of the site regarding health and safety issues.

The City previously sought to achieve and maintain fire safety compliance on the property through a Consent Order of the BC Supreme Court, which was issued in November of 2017. The occupants of the property have not upheld the terms of that Consent Order and have made efforts to prevent the City from carrying out these terms.

On September 24, 2018 the City was served with a Provincial Fire Order due to the unresolved fire safety issues on the site. City workers attended the site over the next number of days to make efforts to comply with the Provincial Fire Order. On October 19, 2018 the Provincial Fire Commissioner issued a revised version of the initial Order. While there was some limited success in removing empty fuel containers and quantities of flammable materials, the occupants of the camp have consistently rejected efforts aimed at fully meeting the terms of the Consent Order and the October 19, 2018 Fire Order.

In recent months, activity in the camp has included the unauthorized construction of wooden structures, tampering with the electrical systems of the on-site washroom and shower trailer and the observation of numerous fuel containers on the property. Such activities have been identified by the Maple Ridge Fire Department as creating serious fire and life safety risks on the property. Despite consistent attempts by the City and Maple Ridge Fire Department to address fire hazards on the property, the site continues to contain fire accelerants and unsafe combustible items.

The City has applied to the BC Supreme Court to seek the authority of the Court to ensure that the fire safety requirements previously imposed through the Consent Order and the Provincial Fire Order are achieved and maintained on the property. The application will also seek an Order to better identify those living in the camp that do not have housing or shelter in order to understand how many people who are living on the property require assistance in obtaining housing.

“The Maple Ridge Fire Department has expressed grave concerns about the construction of wooden structures, improvised electrical connections and the collection of fuel containers on the property,” said Maple Ridge Mayor Mike Morden, “Fire safety standards are enforced throughout the community to ensure the safety of both individual citizens and the community as a whole. The Fire Safety Regulations contained in the original Consent Order were developed in collaboration with, and with the agreement of, the camp occupants. The occupants have not abided by the agreement they made to keep the property fire safe, and the City must now return to the Court to ensure that these standards are complied with.”