



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Council Briefed On City Response to December 20 Windstorm

**Maple Ridge, BC:** On Monday, January 14 Maple Ridge Council received a briefing on the City's response to the December 20, 2018 windstorm.

"On behalf of Council and our citizens, I want to thank all of our staff for their rapid and professional response to the windstorm. While there was some significant damage to property, the good news is that there were no injuries to our citizens or first responders working in the field," said Mayor Morden. "Despite some citizens being without power for an extended period of time, those who are part of the water and sewer system had uninterrupted service during the outage, which is a testament to the robust systems we have in place and the dedication of City staff."

Maple Ridge Fire Chief Howard Exner reported that the windstorm resulted in the highest call volume in the department's history with a total of 130 calls for service. Chief Exner explained that when these large call volumes occur, the department prioritizes the responses based on life safety impacts.

"These storm events, which are increasing in frequency, require a lot of human resources. Downed trees blocking roads or blown across powerlines represent significant fire and life safety risk," said Chief Exner. "It is important the public understands that safety is our #1 priority and that in the early hours of a wind event, the power lines are still energized and the risk of electrocution is real."

Mayor Morden added "The access to my street was blocked by a downed tree, and when it was safe, my neighbours and I were escorted through the closed section of the road so we could get to our homes. On behalf of our first responders, it's important that everyone respect the barricades during an emergency event. Your life could depend on it."

The Operations Department received 190 calls for service on December 20, identifying 148 separate locations requiring service. Operations crews attended all of the calls for service by 9:00 pm on December 20, and by Sunday, December 23, all roads had been reopened throughout the community.

“In addition to outside calls for service, City crews had to manage the loss of power to the City’s water and sewer pump stations. Back-up generators are permanently located at some of our key water and sewer locations; however, we had to deploy portable generators throughout the community to ensure that citizens had uninterrupted access to water and sewer services throughout the windstorm. The generators were also used to power the traffic lights at key intersections when the back-up power systems were depleted,” said Director of Engineering Operations, James Storey. ” As of January 14, there are half a dozen sites where we are still doing some cleanup work.”

Mr. Storey estimated that the City’s response to the windstorm cost approximately \$70,000, and that a third of that may be reimbursed through the Provincial Emergency Response Program.