



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For further information, contact:
communications@mapleridge.ca

BC Supreme Court Order Enforcement Continues at St. Anne Camp

Maple Ridge, BC: On Friday, February 8 the BC Supreme Court granted the City of Maple Ridge the authority to address the long-standing fire and life-safety issues at the St. Anne site identified by both the Maple Ridge Fire Department and, more recently, the Provincial Fire Commissioner.

On Friday, February 22, when the Fire Department arrived at the site, the electrical service panel for the camp was exposed to the elements and the electrical connections were tampered with, creating a significant life safety risk. BC Hydro was asked to turn off the power to the site due to the tampering. This has occurred on a number of occasions, and despite numerous warnings, the power supply to the camp continues to be tampered with, creating a risk of electrocution. A photo of the panel is included at the end of this release.

In addition to the electrical panel tampering, the Fire Department personnel noticed the smell of propane in the area. An inspection of the fenced off area around the propane tanks supplying gas for the warning tent revealed that the lock had been cut and that one of the 80 lb tanks had been tampered with to refill small 20lb BBQ tanks. This represented an extreme fire hazard and the Fire Department called the gas supplier for a repair. A photo of the condition of the propane tanks is included at the end of this release.

The propane supplier arrived on site and noted that this was not the first time that the tanks had been tampered with and elected to remove their tanks from the site. This action was not requested by the City.

The City will work with BC Housing to determine how these services can be restored in a safe fashion.

On Saturday, February 23, enforcement of the BC Supreme Court Order began with inspections of all of the tents and structures to remove ignition sources and accelerants that pose a life and fire safety hazard on the site.

On Saturday, seventy-five propane tanks were located during the inspection. Fifty of the tanks were 20lb and 30lb tanks commonly used for BBQs, and there were four tanks ranging from 50 to 100lbs that are often found on RV and camper units. The inspections revealed portable gasoline containers, solvents, paint, gas lawn mower, a gas chainsaw, leaf blower and numerous portable BBQ and patio heaters. All of these items were removed from the site and safely disposed of.

On Sunday, February 24, work continued on the enforcement of the BC Supreme Court Order. Additional propane tanks, fuel cans, patio heaters and a gas powered generator were located during the inspections. They were removed from the site and disposed of.

Maple Ridge Fire Department and Bylaw staff exhausted all efforts to gain voluntary compliance for the safety inspections on a specific wooden structure. The Fire Department was unable to gain entry to the structure and reported a violation of the Court Order to the RCMP. City staff stood down today's operations to allow the police to deal with this situation.

For more information on the RCMP's actions please visit the Newsroom section of their website at <http://ridgemeanows.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/>.

"The City greatly appreciated the support of the RCMP today and professionalism that they demonstrated in the performance of their duties," said Mayor Morden.

Work will continue on Monday regarding the inspection of tents and structures on the site, debris scattered around the site and the proximity of tents and structures to the fence, and to each other, to bring the site in compliance with the Court Order.

