

Attachment 5
*2025 Budget Departmental Memo -
Emergency Management Office
and Fire Department*



Memorandum

To: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: November 25, 2024

From: Erin Williams,
Fire Chief

File:

Subject: Emergency Management Office and Fire Department: 2024 Accomplishments and Highlights, and 2025 Priorities

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The Fire Department had another active year of emergency responses and is on pace to achieve a new all-time high for responses to emergency incidents. The department was also very engaged with many other activities, which are outlined below.

Emergency Response and Public Service Activities

- Firefighter's skillsets were upgraded to Emergency Medical Responders to expand the scope of service to the community at medical aid emergency responses and support the Emergency Monitoring Center to increase capacity and resiliency of front line emergency response staff.
- A high-angle technical rescue service program was introduced to provide rapid access to high-angle rescue services and avoid expenditures from contracting these rescue services to other municipalities or businesses.
- The Fire Department collaborated with the Police Department to establish a boat response program to provide fire and rescue services to the foreshore and river.
- A Second Responder program was established which connects people whom have experienced a toxic drug event with supports to reduce the number and risk for death from a future similar event.
- A Take Home Naloxone replacement program which sees firefighters replace Take Home Naloxone kits to members of the public who used them to revive people who experienced a toxic drug overdose so they are prepared to assist with a future event.



NEW WESTMINSTER

- In collaboration with “Warming the Homeless”, a charitable organization, firefighters distribute a kit with necessities for unsheltered people to keep warm on cold nights when they are unable to access shelters.
- A new drone program was launched to help search for missing people, and assess emergency scenes as well as inspect dykes during high-water events.
- Seven new firefighters were recruited which resulted in a significant reduction to overtime expenditures and improved service to the community.
- Chief officers supported and provided Operational Oversight and Coordination services to BC Wildfire Service in their Provincial Regional Office located in Kamloops with financial reimbursement to the City and allowed for valuable experience in managing large emergency incidents.
- Emergency Management Office (EMO) extended and completed the One Cool Room program which established cooling rooms in select high-risk multi-family residents as a part of the Accelerated Heat Program.

Public Safety, Public Education and Public Engagement

- A female youth firefighting program was hosted in conjunction with Camp Ignite to encourage young women to consider a career in firefighting.
- A youth firefighter program for New Westminster youth was hosted to expose them to the career of firefighting.
- A new “Pumpkin Drop” for charitable event was established in collaboration with the Firefighters’ Charitable Society. Due to its success, it now will be an annual event.
- EMO, in collaboration with SFU hosted clean air workshops to allow facilitate a DIY Air Filter Cleaner for those most affected by wildfire smoke.
- EMO hosted Emergency Preparedness Sessions for New Westminster Residents.

2025 PRIORITIES

The Fire Department is planning for the future! In addition to working on a long term Master Plan, the Department is planning and implementing several external and internal technological updates and upgrades.



NEW WESTMINSTER

- Planning for the Provincial wide NextGen 911 program which will see an upgrade to the functionality of 911 services in New Westminster and the Province.
- Where current infrastructure can accommodate this, some fleet vehicles will transition to electric vehicles to align with the City's Climate Action initiatives.
- Implementation of a new cancer screening program for firefighters to identify firefighting related cancers early.
- Emergency Management Office will review its emergency response plans with a view to ensuring they are culturally appropriate for Indigenous populations.

The Fire Department will continue to focus on its core services during 2025 but will also strive to support the community with active participation in events or activities that are important to the community, while continuing to work with other City departments to support City and Council initiatives and priorities.