

Van Anda Fire & Rescue – January 2025 Newsletter

2024 CALL OUTS

- 0 structure fire
- 2 small fires put out easily
- 4 wildfires
- 3 burning complaints
- 29 medical calls
- 2 minor motor vehicle incidents
- 7 Duty Officer calls
- 4 Fire Chief calls
- Total of 51 calls

3 new members joined the department in 2024.
Welcome to the team!

Fire Chief: Mark Robert
Deputy Chief: Paul Nilsen

Fire Fighters: Andrew Turner
Colin Duffy
Dominic Galon
Jacob Doyle
Joe Winnig
Kevin Schwenk
Marianne Segers
Matthew Nordli
Ravyn Godwin
Sylvia Praught
Zachary Goldman

Training Completed in 2024

Members completed training for Emergency Medical Responder First Aid, S-100 Wildfire (BC Wildfire Service recognized Basic Fire Suppression and Safety), Live Fire exterior and interior firefighting at the facility in Lund, and a chain saw operator's course.

VAFD and Gillies Bay Fire Department train together often and work well together at incidents. Training with GBFD this year included live fire training on Texada – 2 boats and 2 structures.



Equipment Upgrades

We purchased a fire blanket for vehicle fires. Some electric vehicles may take up to four hours to put out with just water. With the blanket and water, it can be put out much faster by cutting oxygen out of the fire triangle.

Other upgrades include a new first aid kit, a new O2 tank, SCBA facemasks, tools and supplies for the fire and rescue vehicles, and forest fire fighting equipment.

Community Emergency Preparedness Grant

The 2023 grant funds were received in 2024 (\$24,644). These were used for S-100 forest fire fighting training, turnout gear, a 1200 USG portable water tank with carry case and ground tarp, Mark-3 pump package (including suction hose, foot valve, fuel line, and fuel can), protective jackets and vests, forestry shovels and axes, and other forestry gear.

Wildfire Skid Donation

The Texada Fire Fighters Association received a donation of a wildfire skid. This is a self-contained 1200L tank, a wildfire pump, and a section of hose on a skid that fits in the back of a pickup or on a trailer. The donor, GlobalMedic, were donating a number of these units across Western Canada, and we were lucky enough to get one.

Contact info: Fire Chief Mark Robert phone or text 604-414-9662 or email firechief@vananda.ca

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Merging Fire Departments

Van Anda and Gillies Bay Fire Departments looked more at merging, but it seems there is no way to do this while keeping full control of the FDs on Texada. Along with training together, both are now part of the Texada Fire Fighters Association.

Increased Fire Protection Area

20 property owners outside the Van Anda Improvement District (ID) applied to become part of the ID. 6 now have Fire Protection in place. Both Texada's Fire Departments (FDs) will respond to a fire on their properties. 6 other owners decided not to proceed after being informed of the estimated increase to their Rural Property Tax for funding the FD. We are waiting for confirmation from the remaining owners to continue with their applications.

The FDs of Van Anda and Gillies Bay have an agreement in place for immediate response to fires in both IDs. Fires within the boundaries of either ID are attended to by both FDs without delay. Our FDs cannot attend fires outside the IDs, unless called in by Forestry. Forestry will not act on structure fires or request FD assistance until the fire has spread to the forest. This means valuable time is wasted, which could lead to a disastrous situation.

Annual Burn Ban

We heard your comments and suggestions, and the Fire Regulation Bylaw was changed this year to be clearer about burning restrictions and match up with those in Gillies Bay.

General Information

The Fire Department and Firefighters continue to assist BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) with patient movements and transport.

Mark Robert accepted the position of Fire Chief. Mark was Acting Fire Chief since Mike Craggs left. Phone or text Mark at 604-414-9662 or email firechief@vananda.ca

Please think about becoming a volunteer member and helping your community!

A couple of hours a week are all you need to become a volunteer firefighter:

- ✓ No previous experience necessary.
- ✓ All gear and training provided at no cost.
- ✓ Accident insurance coverage (new – 24/7 coverage, not just while performing fire fighter duties).
- ✓ Practice once a week for two hours with occasional weekend training.
- ✓ CRA tax benefit.
- ✓ More firefighters means lower home insurance costs for everyone in Van Anda.

Anyone interested in joining is welcome to attend a practice. These are held on Monday nights beginning at 6:30 pm. (This may be changed to weekends to accommodate shift workers.) You don't have to live in Van Anda to join.

Phone or text Fire Chief Mark Roberts for more information at 604-414-9662 or email firechief@vananda.ca

Training

Hall training focuses on practical skills, hazard awareness, SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus), ropes and pulleys, pumper skills, hydrant hookup with truck pressurization, traffic control, and radio use. First Responder medical scenario training is ongoing, as is forest fire fighting training.

Training away such as Live-Fire, EMA accreditation, Critical Incident Stress Management, Air Brakes endorsement, and Class 4 endorsement on Driver's License is paid for by the Fire Department and costs such as travel, food, and hotel are also covered.

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