

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

Fire Services



Annual Report 2023



ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT
REGIONAL DISTRICT

ACRD Fire Services Annual Report 2023

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Introduction

I am honoured to present the 2023 Fire Services Annual Report for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD). This report brings together data and insights from the Bamfield, Beaver Creek, and Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Departments, highlighting their operations, achievements, and the unique challenges they face. Together, these departments work tirelessly to uphold the safety and well-being of our communities.

The commitment of our dedicated volunteers, who respond at any hour, is truly invaluable. They are the heart and soul of our fire services, devoting countless hours to making the ACRD a safer and better place to live, work, and enjoy.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the ACRD Board of Directors, administration, and staff for their steadfast support of our fire departments, Fire Chiefs, firefighters, and their families. Your commitment allows our teams to deliver their best in service to our community, often under challenging circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charlie Starratt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Charlie Starratt
Regional Fire Services Manager
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District



Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department

Message from the Fire Chief

Greetings from us folks at the end of the road!

It was a great year for Bamfield and the BVFD, but changing times bring about concerns for the future.

Here are some BVFD highlights from 2023:

Membership is steady with wonderful and dedicated volunteers. Even with the expected turnover, we still had 25 members over the course of the year, and we also added another full EMR to the roster. Although numbers diminished a bit by the end of 2023, we have new members in the wings!

We are thankful for the help the ACRD provided in acquiring the grant that will add 8 new sets of turnout gear to our supplies - we should see those early next year. Thank you to all who made that possible!

A new mini-pumper was ordered for the west side, and after some delays in supplies, we expect to receive it in early 2024. The photos look great!

Our old “air-raid” siren had stopped working and needed more than new electrical brushes to get it going again, so we decided to have it refurbished - and it looks great! We learned that it is model 01 from Federal Electric, from the mid-1930s! It’s a functional museum piece!

From hosting fundraising events like the salmon derby to teaching the local school kids about fire safety, BVFD is appreciated in the community, and we do our best to let the community know that we are there for them. We will plan for another fire extinguisher workshop next year.

The road to Bamfield has been paved! And as exciting as that might seem, there will definitely be some new challenges; with the smooth road, we can expect more vehicle traffic, congested parking areas and roads, more electric vehicles (which pose new firefighting challenges), and just more people, in general, taxing our infrastructure. Enforcement of our burning bylaw is a constant hurdle as people sometimes ignore campfire restrictions; most of the community cooperates, but there are always some who feel like



the rules don't apply to them. We are thankful for the help the bylaw officers can provide in these instances.

Finally, I'd like to say how much I appreciate the dedication and commitment of those who have volunteered to protect our village and help those in need; a department's success depends on its members. Without those volunteers, there would be no fire or first responder services. They have my utmost thanks and gratitude!

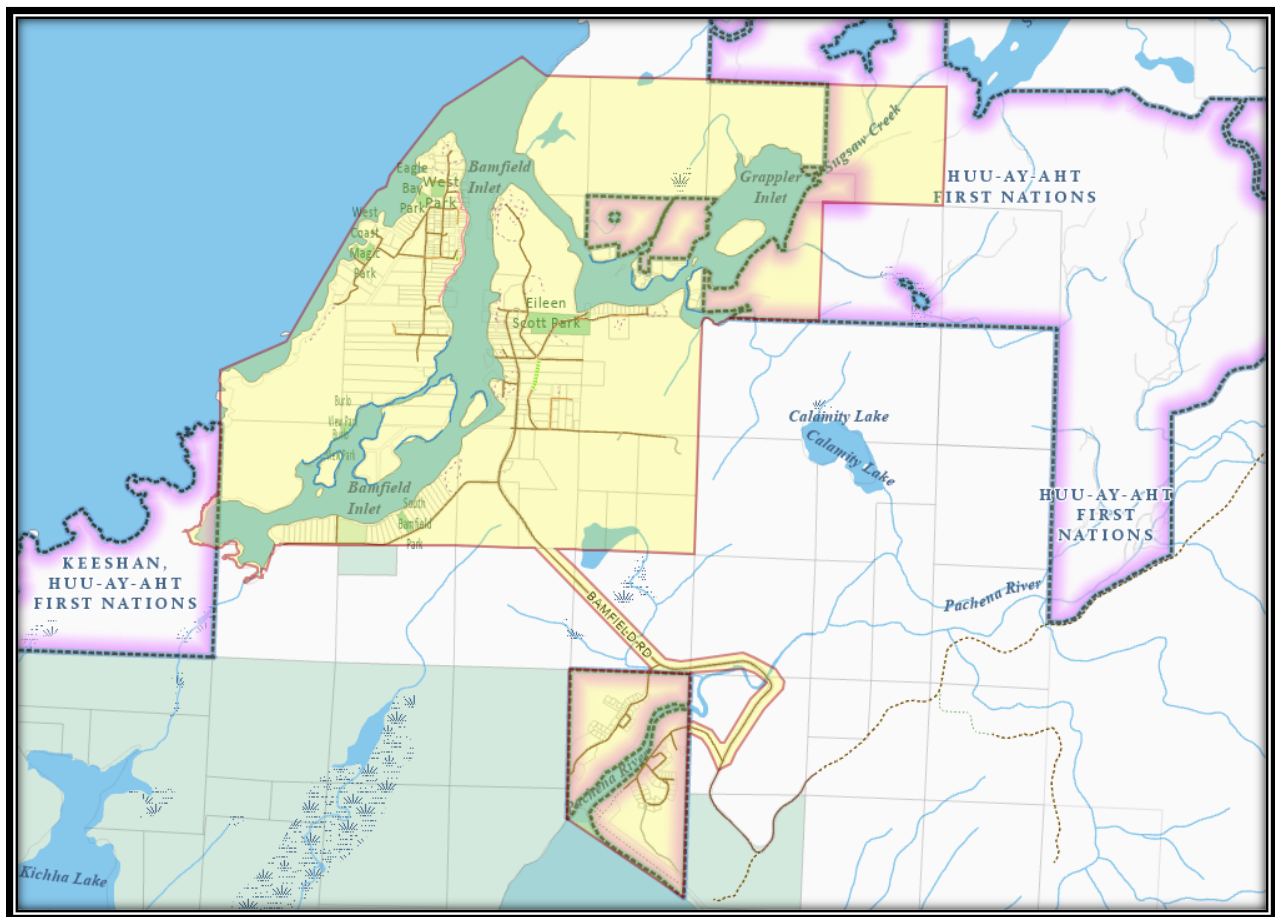
All the best for 2024!

Regards,
Phil Lavoie, Fire Chief



Bamfield Fire Protection Area

The Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD) provides service to the area shown on the map below, highlighted in yellow, including a portion of the road from Bamfield to Anacla. Services include exterior fire suppression, fire protection, fire prevention and medical incidents requiring first responder expertise. Bamfield also provides structural fire suppression and first responder services to Anacla by way of agreement between the Huu-ay-aht Government and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. This service agreement is a five-year term, expiring on April 2024. The BVFD service area includes 387 properties over 1201.49 hectares.



Services

Bamfield is an “exterior operations” department who are authorized to control and/or extinguish a fire from an external position to the building or object.

Approved services include:

- Defensive structural firefighting
- Basic first aid
- Forestry/ interface
- Vehicle fires
- Fireboat/ marine firefighting
- Emergency planning

BVFD provides medical services at the EMR level and patient transport to the community in accordance with its agreement with BCEHS.



Bamfield Facilities & Apparatus

Geographically, Bamfield is a fairly unique community as it has 2 sides (east and west) which are separated by an inlet. The east side has road access, while the west is accessed only by boat. Due to this separation, the BVFD must maintain 2 halls, each with a first-line pumper to fulfill the Fire Underwriter's Survey requirements. Also, as there are many properties adjacent to the water, BVFD also has a fireboat and boathouse.



East Side Fire Hall (352 Pachena Road)

The East Side Fire Hall serves as the department's main fire hall. It has two truck bays, an office, a meeting space, a kitchen, an emergency program office, and washrooms with shower facilities. The hall also possesses a large event space on the main floor where BVFD and community functions are held. A 22kW emergency power generator and above-ground diesel fuel tank for apparatus re-fuelling are located next to the hall.

The East Side Fire Hall is home to 3 apparatus:

- 1 pumper truck
- 1 utility vehicle
- 1 Emergency Medical Response Unit (EMRU)



West Side Fire Hall (164 Bond Street)

The West Side Fire Hall is not accessible by road. It has two narrow truck bays, a small office, and minimal space for equipment storage. This hall is not a functional space for hosting activities or meetings, however, it provides storage for the apparatus and equipment, including:

- 1 pumper truck
- 1 quick attack vehicle



Boathouse (211 Nuthatch Road)

Bamfield has unique challenges as it is separated by two inlets, has a high volume of marine activities and possess many homes situated along the waterfront. The boathouse is located a short distance from Hall 1 in Port Desire. It is well-built and allows for easy access from the dock to the BVFD fireboat, which is equipped with a pump, hoses and monitors.

- 1 Fireboat

Personnel

With a permanent population of less than 300 people between both Bamfield and Anacla, recruiting and retaining members can be challenging. Although Bamfield has a small population, there is a strong attachment in the community to the Department as we are a community-focused group that actively participates in local events and activities.

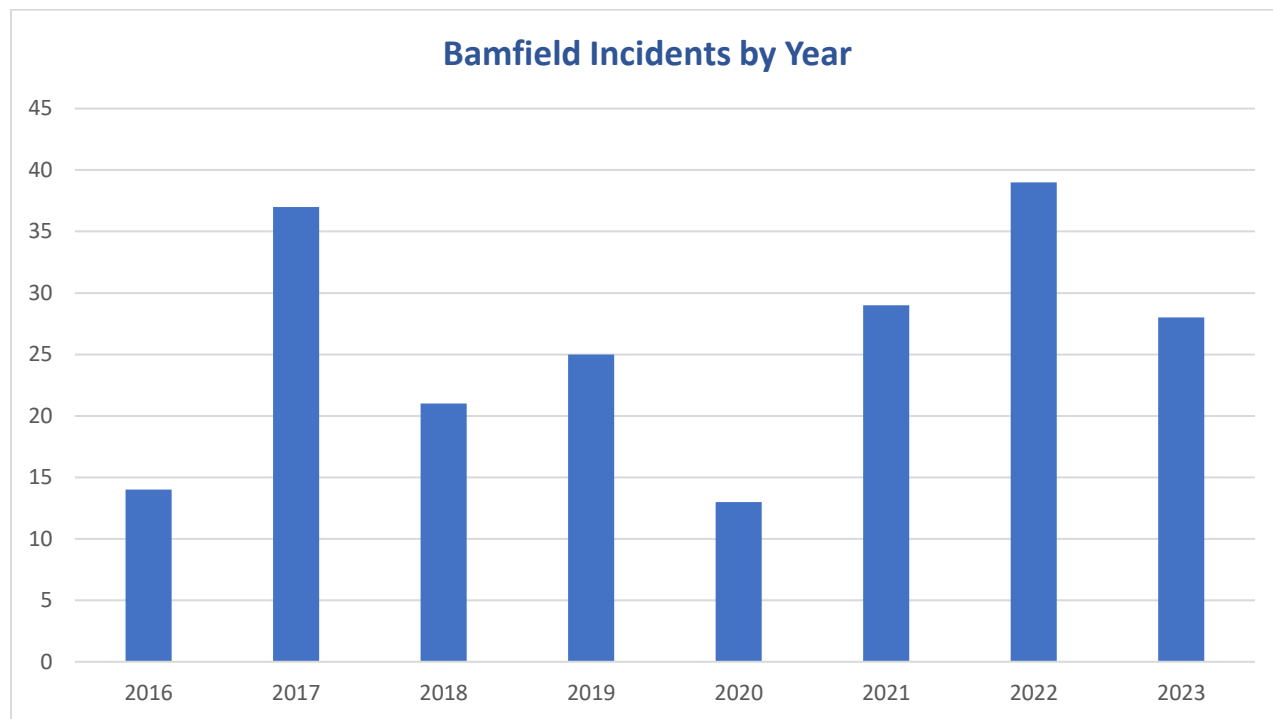
New members are required to commit a minimum of at least one year of service before beginning the onboarding process.

The Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department had 25 members in 2023. The department's structure is:

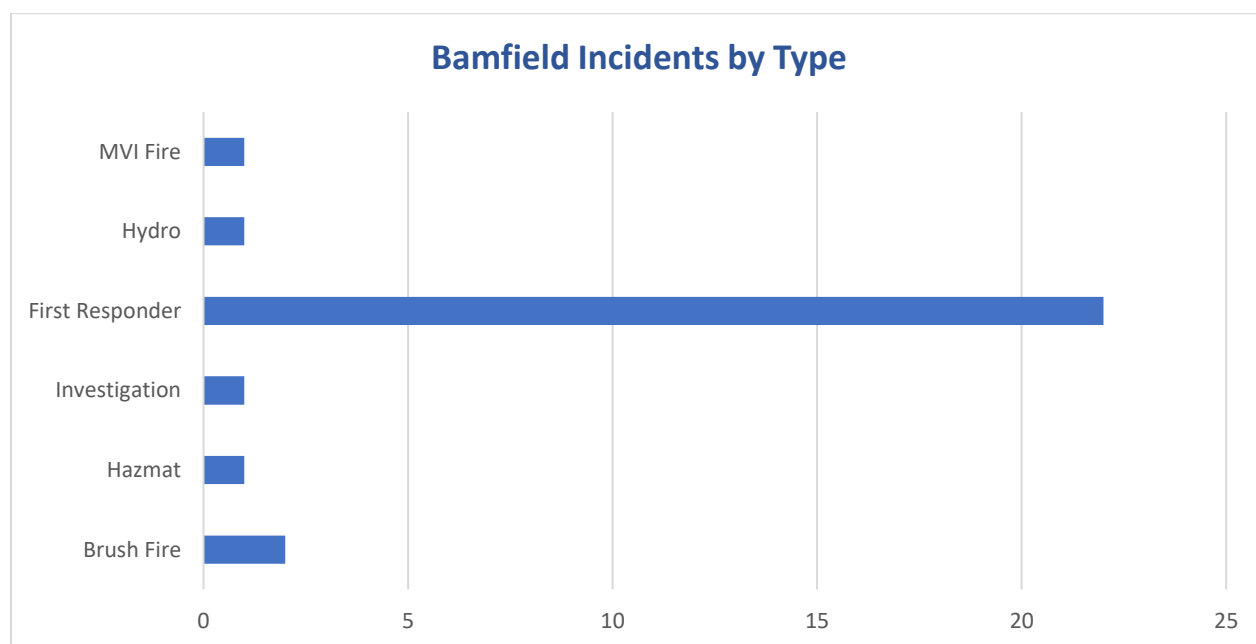
- 1 Fire Chief
- 2 Deputy Chiefs
- 4 Captains
- 9 Firefighters
- 9 First Responders

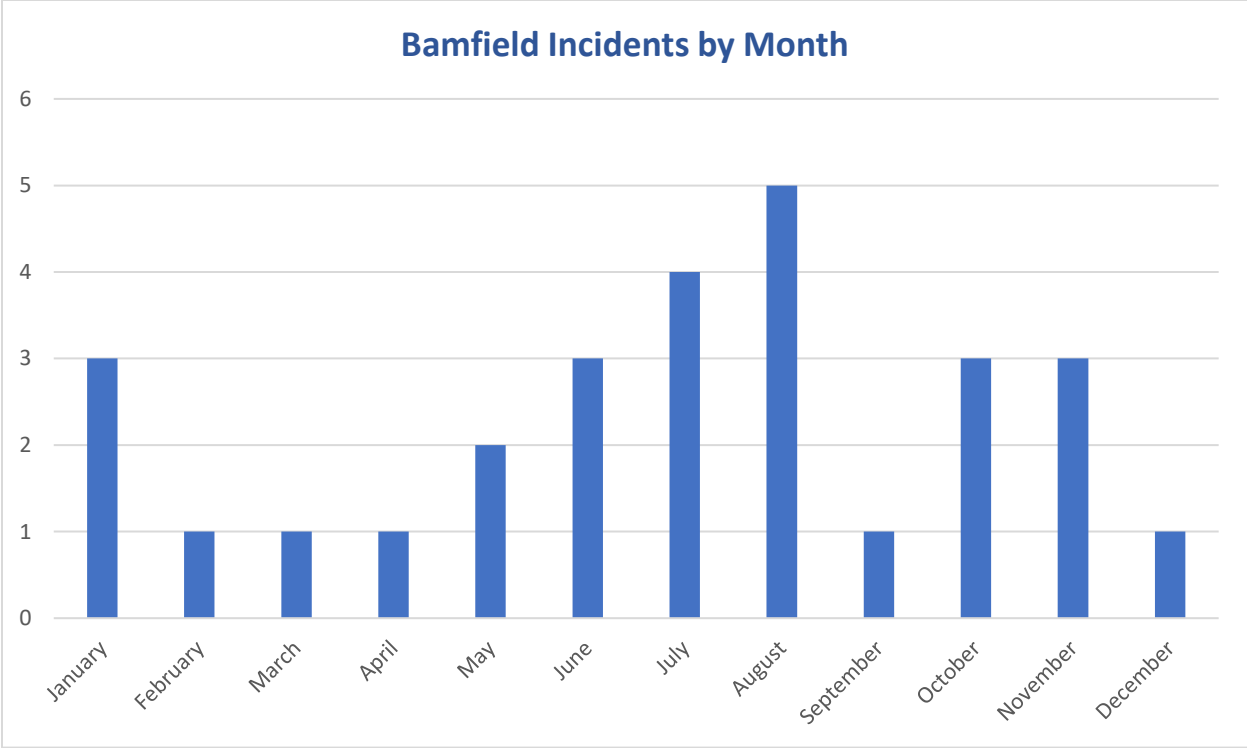


Incidents



In 2023, Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department responded to 28 incidents, with first responder calls making up the vast majority at 79%.





Together, the summer months of June, July and August represent the greatest number of incidents in Bamfield, followed by January, October and November.



Training

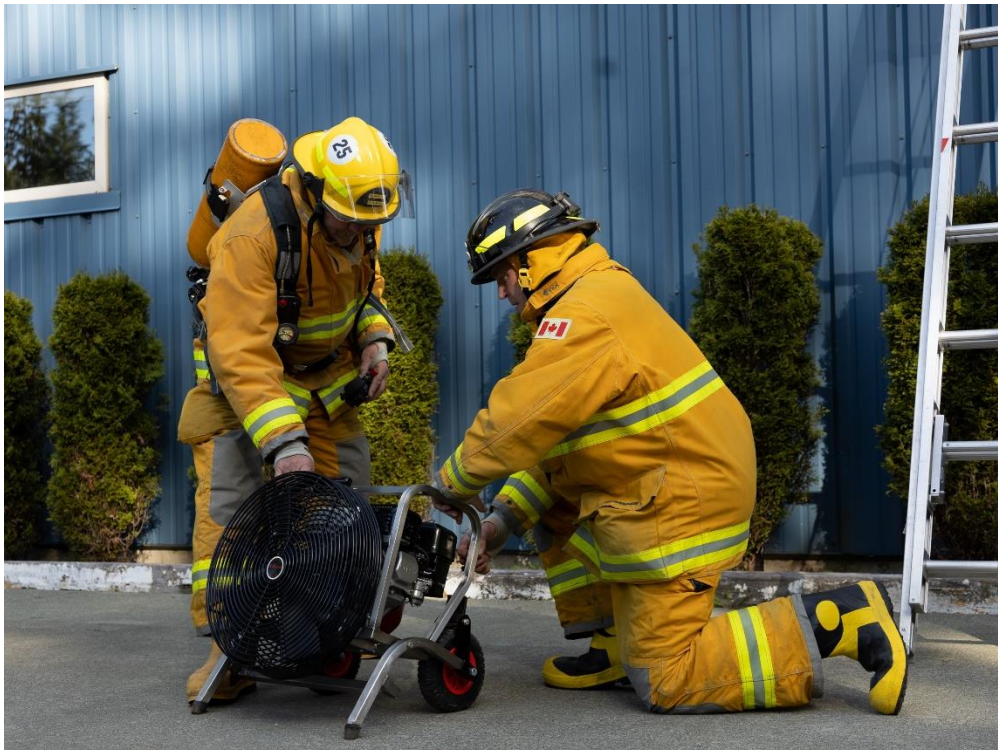
Members of the Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department participated in a total of over 790-person hours of training in 2023.

Some of the training topics include:

- SCBA
- Ladders
- Apparatus driving
- Appliance Handling
- Property conservation
- Exterior Firefighting
- Residential scenarios
- Team dynamics
- Overhaul
- Wound management
- Patient extraction
- EMR and FR certification
- S100/ 185 wildfire training
- Fire boat handling and dock scenarios



Required training is provided by the Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (VIERA). All members attend weekly training practices to maintain their skills, knowledge and competencies.



Public Education & Community Events

The Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department is a small department with big community spirit!

- This year we, once again, participated in our local Canada Day Boat Parade; there used to be a regular, road parade led by the fire truck, but COVID forced a change and the Bamfield Canada Day Boat Parade was born! It has become a welcomed annual event!
- Our annual Salmon Derby was a great success! People came out from all over and we sold nearly 400 tickets!
- We also assisted with the weigh-in stations for the PORT Alberni Salmon Derby and the Bamfield Tuna Shootout.
- The BVFD has been putting on a Halloween Dance for many years. This year, DJ Smoothie entertained us with his mix and live saxophone!
- In October, we paid a visit to the Bamfield Community School to discuss fire safety with the kids
- Chimney fires are the #1 fire call in our area! Every spring and fall we remind folks about the importance of cleaning and inspecting their chimneys by posting our PDF on the subject to the local community social media Facebook page.



Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department



Message from the Fire Chief

Hello everyone,

As we reflect on 2023, I'm pleased to share that our department responded to a total of 139 incidents. These included medical aid calls, AMA calls with our partners, motor vehicle incidents (MVs), and fire calls.



One of the most significant changes for our department this year was the addition of a full-time chief. This role is crucial for more effective management of our fire services, ensuring compliance with legislated codes, and implementing requirements outlined in the Fire Service Act, which will come into effect in 2024.

In terms of membership, we saw fewer applications from within the district in 2023, with more coming from outside the area. We successfully secured grant funding for equipment and training. Additionally, Beaver Creek fire personnel were deployed to assist with the interface fires in West Kelowna, with three members from Beaver Creek and one from Sproat Lake contributing their efforts for a seven-day period.

Our community events were a great success. We held our first-ever Easter egg hunt for children, enjoyed a well-attended Halloween fireworks display, and continued our annual Christmas food drive and Santa Claus drive-by. Each year, these events improve thanks to the support and generosity of our community.

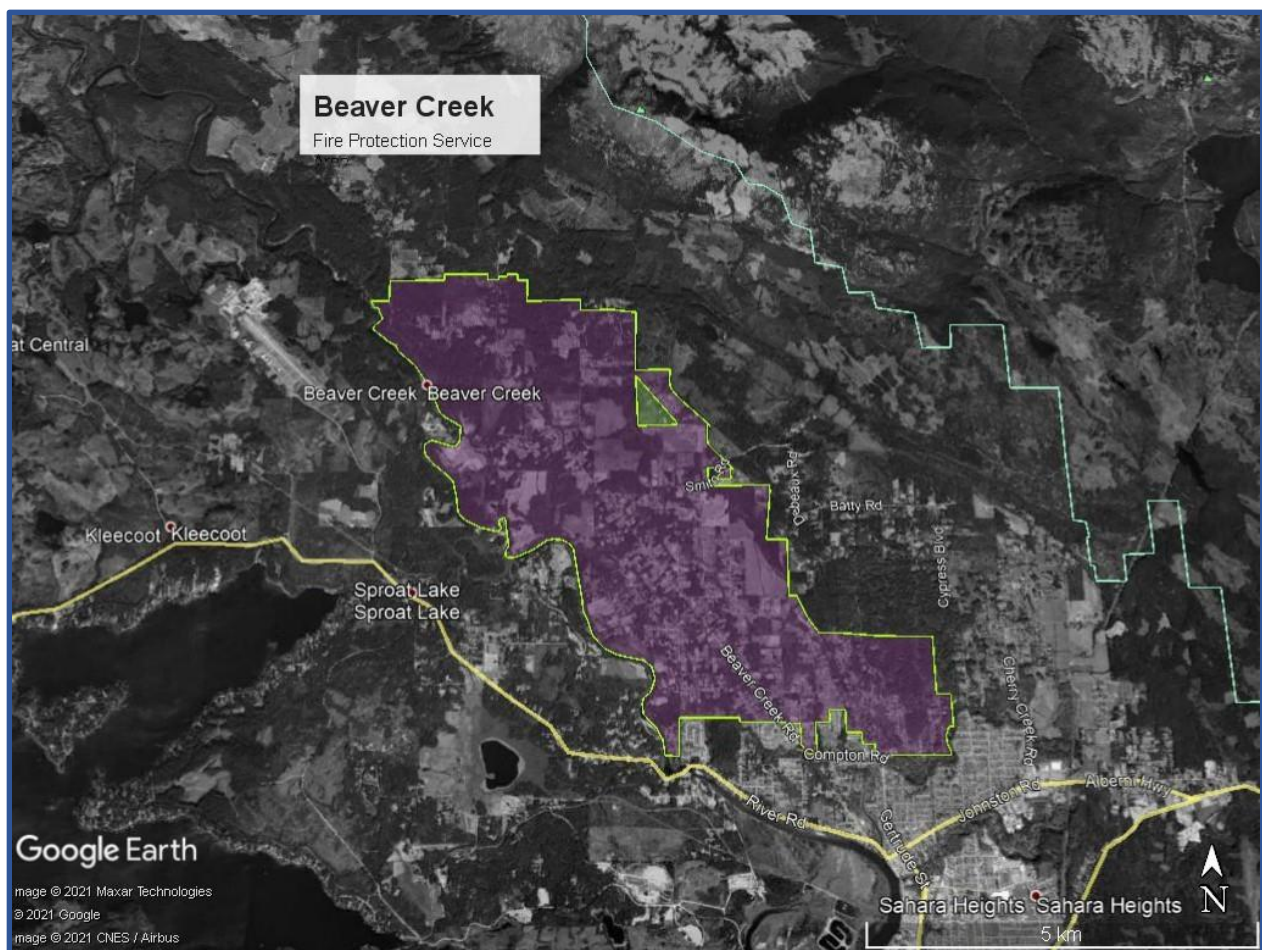
As we move into 2024, we have already surpassed our call volume from the previous year. Our membership has grown, bringing more experienced members with NFPA 1001 certifications and paramedic backgrounds. We also have a strong group of new recruits keeping our training officers busy. This progress aligns with our vision of providing exemplary service and effective emergency responses to our community.

Thank you all for your continued support!

Best regards,
Mike Kobus Fire Chief

Beaver Creek Fire Protection Area

The Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department (BCVFD) provides service to the area highlighted in the map below. They are responsible for protecting an area of 2408.47 hectares in size, serving a population of 2946 and 1328 properties. The BCVFD provide fire protection, fire prevention, vehicle rescue and medical assistance in the jurisdiction. Further, they also assist the Port Alberni Fire Department, Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department and the Cherry Creek Volunteer Fire Department, when required, through established reciprocal mutual and automatic aid agreements.



Services

The Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department operates at a “full service” level, including exterior and interior firefighting activities and consisting of the following approved services:

- Defensive and offensive structural firefighting
- Medical first responder
 - FR level
 - AED
 - Spinal management
- Vehicle rescue
- Technical rescue
- Low-slope rope rescue
- Hazardous materials (awareness level)
- Forestry/ interface
- Vehicle fires



Beaver Creek Fire Hall & Apparatus

Beaver Creek Fire Hall (6038 Beaver Creek Road)

Beaver Creek Fire Hall is a two-storey building with four bays. It has separate ground-level access to the office/administration area and is equipped with a 150kW power generator. The hall has several offices and a large, upstairs meeting room with kitchen amenities.



Firefighting Apparatus

The Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department is proud to offer exemplary service to our community, with a diverse fleet of specialized equipment. Our apparatus's includes structural engines, a medical response truck, and a versatile rescue vehicle with low slope capabilities with compressed air foam system for combating car fires and structure fires.



Engine 55 (Frontline Engine)



- 1 Duty Officer Vehicle (Truck 54)
- 2 Engines (51 & 55)
- 2 Rescue Trucks (50 & 52)

Our older Engine #53, equipped for forest fire emergencies and ready for any other critical response. Your dedicated Firefighters undergo extensive training, including driving and pump operation, as well as Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO) training to ensure they are prepared for any situation.

Your safety is our priority, and we're committed to providing exceptional service with the best equipment and trained professionals.



Rescue 52 (Rescue and Extrication/Wildfire)



Engine 51 (Structural Engine)



Rescue 50 (First Responder/ Medical)

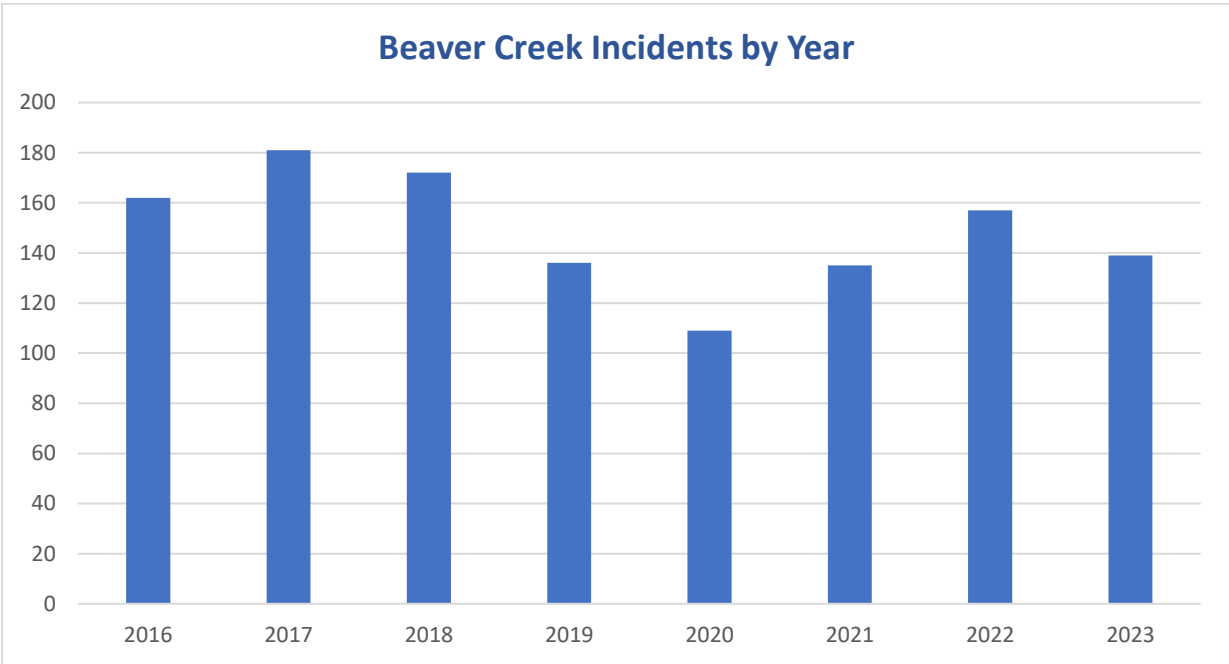
Beaver Creek Personnel

The Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department has 31 active members, consisting of:

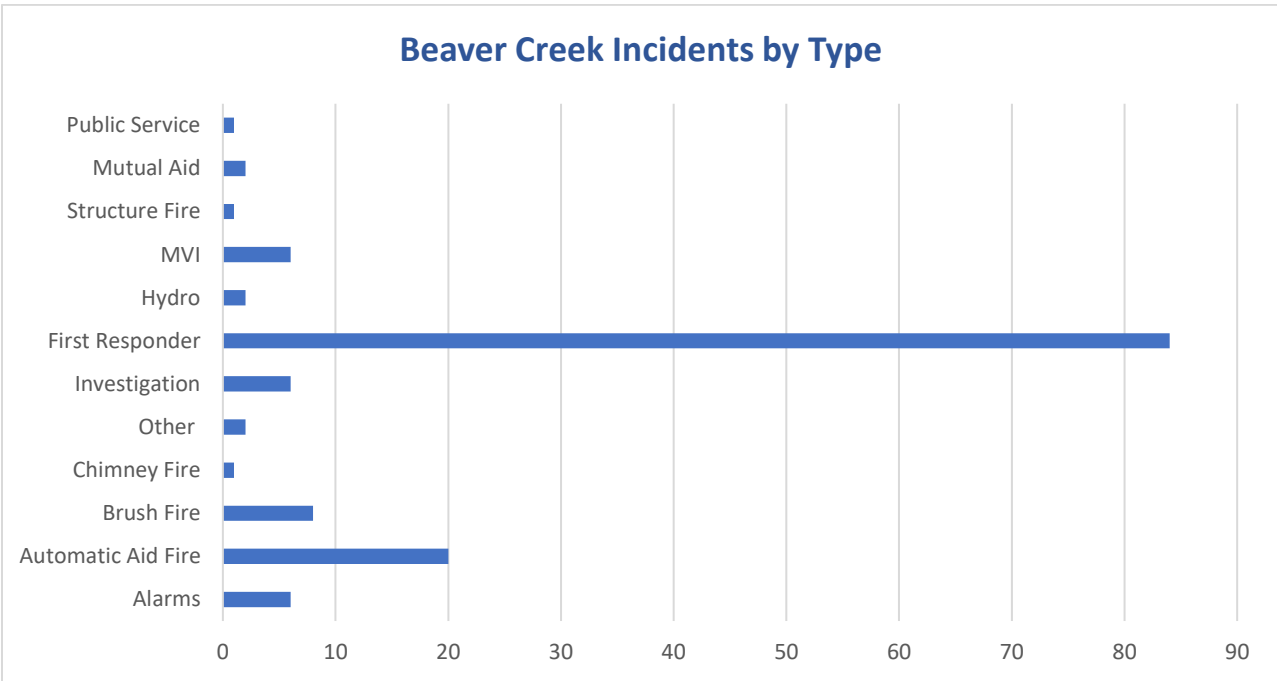
- 1 Fire Chief
- 1 Deputy Fire Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 3 Captains
- 2 Lieutenants
- 1 Training Officer
- 8 Firefighters
- 7 Interior members
- 7 Exterior firefighters

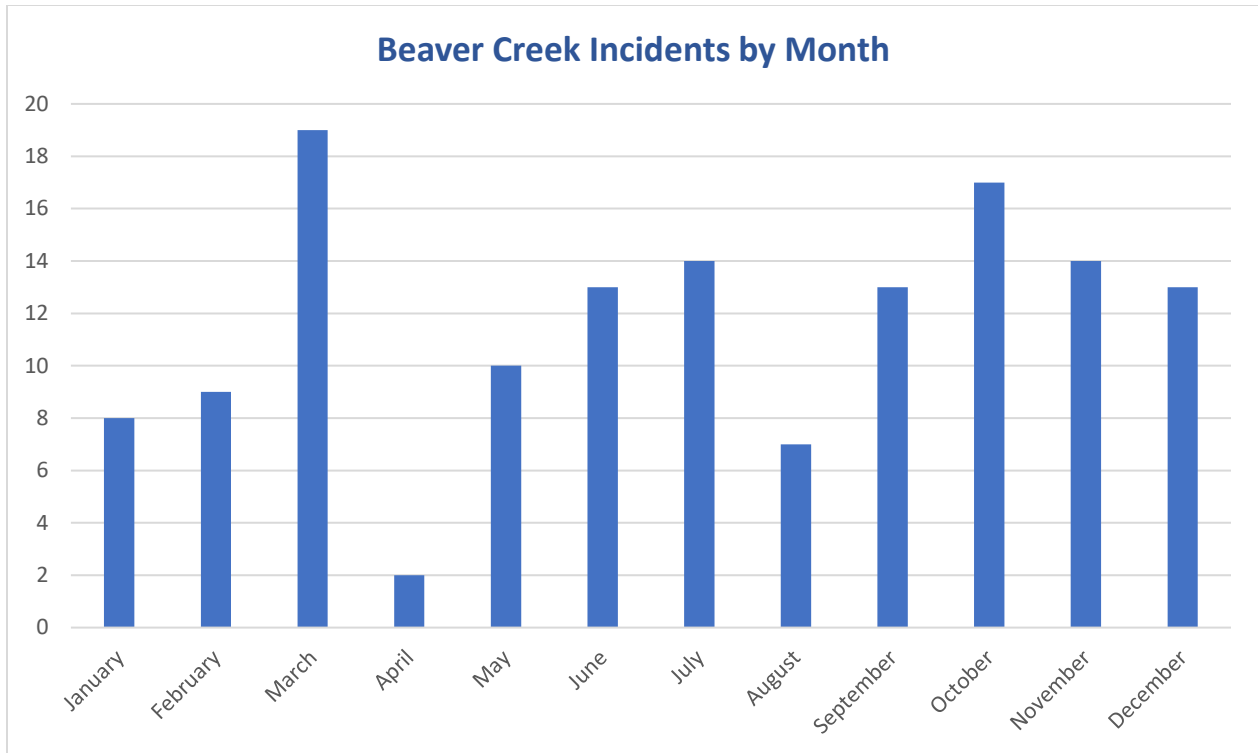


Incidents

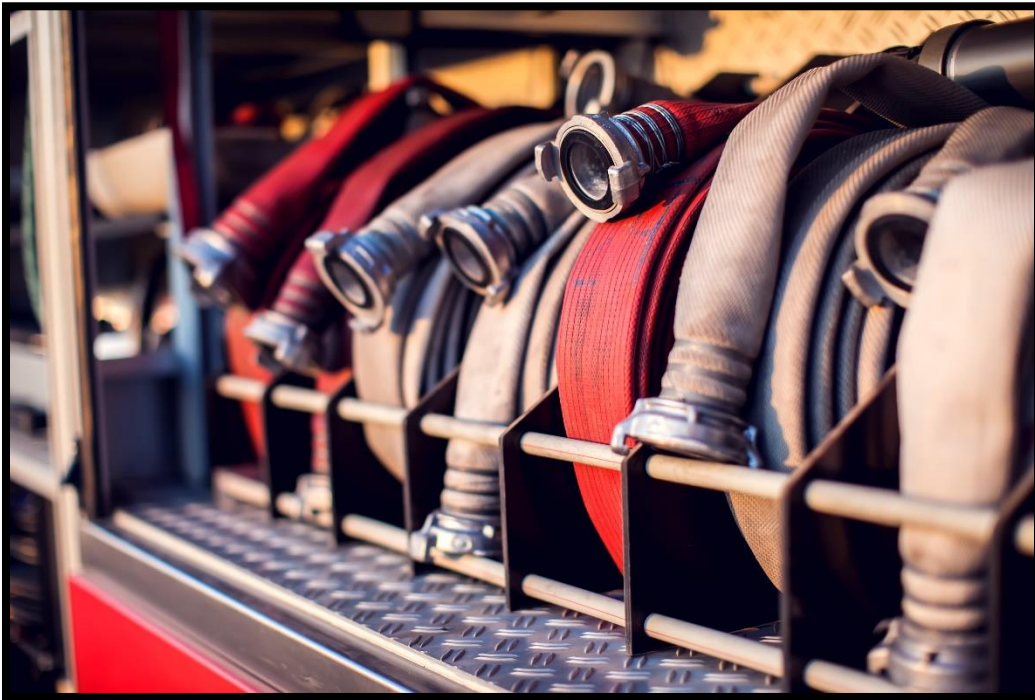


In 2023, Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department responded to 139 incidents. The vast majority of calls were first responder incidents, accounting for 60% of all call-outs. Automatic aid fire calls made up 14%, while other fire-related incidents comprised 8%.





The Beaver Creek department experienced its busiest month in March, followed by its quietest month in April, while the fall season saw a high number of responses.



Training

In 2023 we were able to offer more local training to include Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) awareness and RIT Tech certification. We provided Engine Boss training for members to be a part of wildland firefighting. Members of the Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department participated in a total of approximately 1455-person hours of training in 2023. This included weekly skills training to meet the requirements of the Office of the Fire Commissioner's Playbook and NFPA 1001 as well as specialized training in subjects such as:

- Fire Officer training
- First Responder and CPR training
- Exterior and interior training working towards their full- service certification through Justice Institute of BC (JIBC)
- Pumps and pumping
- Engine Boss (wildfire training)
- RIT Tech Training



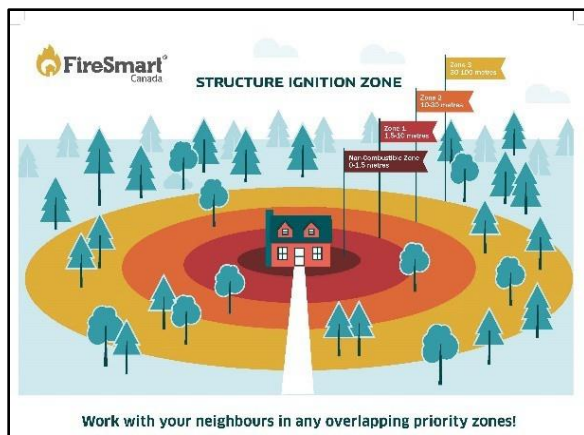
Public Education & Community Events

The BCVFD is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of residents in the Beaver Creek electoral area and willingly cooperates with other regional and municipal fire departments to provide further assistance and support when needed. The Department seeks opportunities to protect the community through public education and eagerly takes part in community events annually. BCVFD members are dedicated to the well-being of the Beaver Creek District and are always looking for ways to give back to the community.

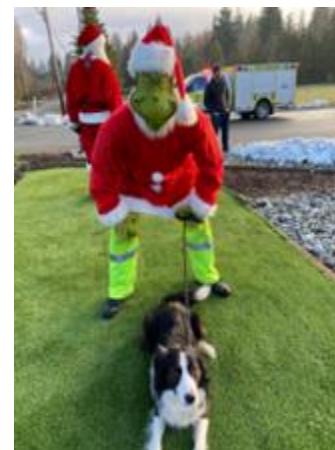
We are incredibly grateful for the support and generosity of our community in 2023. Thanks to you, we had a fantastic year of events, including our Easter egg hunt, the annual Halloween fireworks, and our Santa Food Drive. These successes are a testament to the incredible support we receive from Buy Low Foods and the Beaver Creek community and the public at large.

None of these events would have been possible without the communities unwavering contributions and donations. Your kindness and the tireless efforts of our volunteer firefighters truly make a difference, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has played a role in making these events so memorable.

Fire Smart Program



Halloween Fireworks



Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department

Message from the Fire Chief

Last year, the Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department (SLVFD) made a tough decision to partially decommission Fire Hall 2. This decision was based on a fire hall assessment by Dave Mitchell & Associates. Changes in regulations and available firefighters led to the recommendation that we decommission Faber Rd. Fire Hall and move the firefighters to Hall #1 on Lakeshore Rd. As difficult a decision as this was, it was necessary in order to keep the Lakeshore Fire Hall open to maintain coverage for residents west of Lakeshore Rd.



We had a busy summer, with one-third of our annual calls coming between June and August. We had three first responder calls, involving Air Ambulance, with SLFD establishing landing zones. In fact, on one of those calls, the SLVFD assisted Alberni Search and Rescue with an injured swimmer by providing access to our newly completed dock and ramp on Faber Rd. We were able to provide a much safer location to land the boat as opposed to Sproat Lake Provincial Park boat launch which is a very busy location in the summertime. We then used the ball field at Cougar Smith Park as a Landing Zone, where the patient was transferred to a waiting air ambulance.

Considering the extreme heat wave and very dry summer last year, we had a very quiet year for bushfires in our area, and we had only one small shed fire for all of 2021. A relief to Sproat Lake residents.

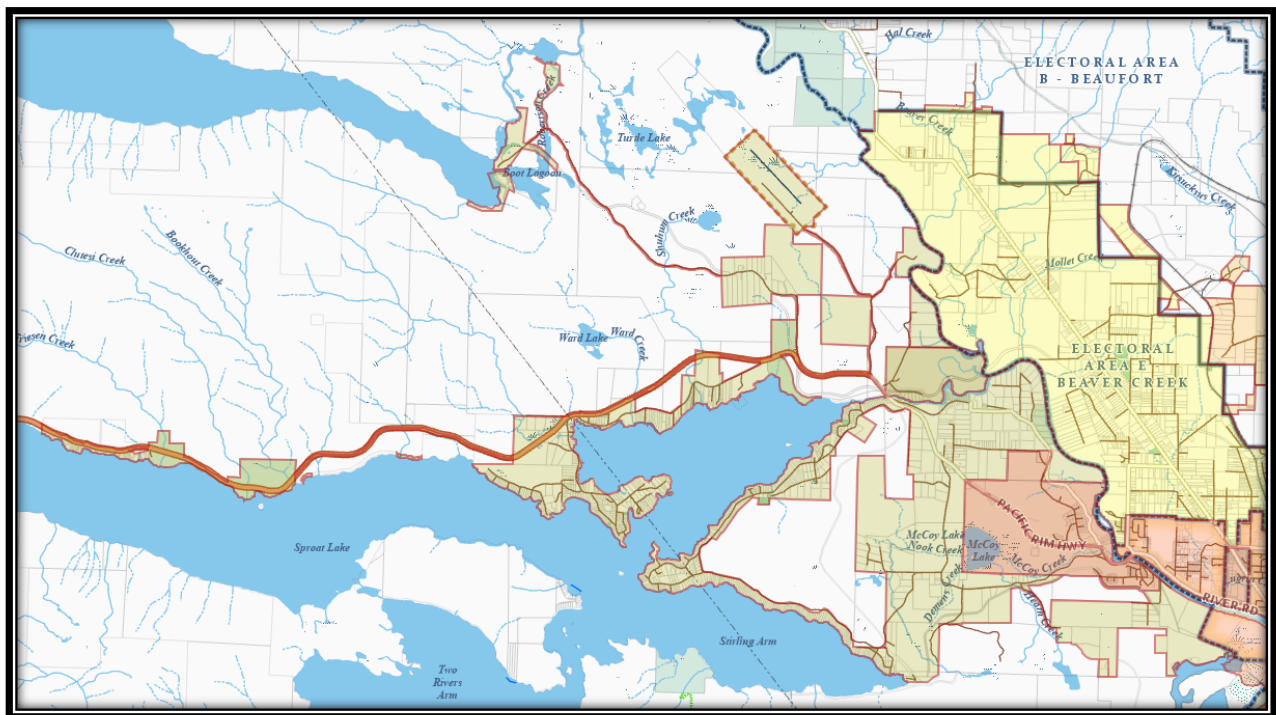
COVID-19 has continued to influence our training and response protocol, but with a little flexibility and patience, we have managed to maintain both our training and ability to respond to emergencies.

Best regards,
Fire Chief Mike Cann

Sproat Lake Fire Protection Area

Established in 1965, the Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department (SLVFD) provides service to the area highlighted in green on the map below, as well as providing structural fire protection services to the Kleekhoot Indian Reservation No. 2, by way of agreement between the Hupacasath First Nation and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. They are responsible for protecting an area of 2428 hectares in size, serving a population of 1843 and 1412 properties. This is a challenging area to cover from a fire perspective, as there are only 10 fire hydrants connected to a stable water supply in the entire district.

The SLVFD provides fire protection, fire prevention and first responder services in their jurisdiction and also assists the Port Alberni Fire Department, Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the Cherry Creek Volunteer Fire Department, when required, through established reciprocal mutual and automatic aid agreements.



 Sproat Lake Fire Protection Area

Services

The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department is categorized as an “interior operations” service level department. With this designation, the Department may enter a fire-involved structure or object to undertake fire suppression activities or conduct rescue operations. Interior operations are generally limited to smaller structures, single-family dwellings and vehicles, except where specific hazard assessments and pre-incident planning have been undertaken. The approved emergency services provided by the Department include:

- Defensive and offensive structural firefighting
- Medical first responder
 - C, D, E, Lift assists
 - AED
 - Spinal management
- Low-angle rope rescue
- Hazardous materials (awareness level)
- Forestry/ interface
- Vehicle fires

While structure fires are not the majority of the yearly call volume, they are, without a doubt, the most complex incidents. Medical calls represent the majority of calls throughout the year; most members are trained and certified as Medical First Responders. Their training provides the necessary skills to effectively respond to motor vehicle incidents and allows members to ensure the comfort and well-being of patients until paramedics arrive on the scene.

With their low-angle rope rescue training, members can use rope, pulley and stretcher systems to access, package, and remove trauma patients from the bottom of slopes less than 45 degrees in incline.



Sproat Lake Facilities & Apparatus

The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department has three fire halls in their jurisdiction, however, only two are currently maintained for fire responses.

Hall #1 (10605 Lakeshore Road)

This hall has three bays, approximately 40 feet in length and is equipped with 14 turnout gear stalls, a turnout gear laundry unit and a modest size training/meeting room. It has been seismically upgraded and houses two apparatus:

- Tender 48
- Tender 45
- Engine 41
- 1943 Jeep Willies 4x4 - equipped with a pump and hose reel (used for ceremonial purposes only)



Hall #2 (9501 Faber Road)

Hall 2 has been partially decommissioned and no longer provides fire response. Its fire response apparatus has been redistributed to other locations. Hall 2 currently serves as a training site and is used exclusively for First Medical Response (FMR). It houses the following apparatus 40 for FMR calls:

- Rescue 40
- Structural Protection Unit 401
- Engine 47 (note: Engine 47 has been removed from frontline service and placed in reserve. There is no plan to replace this unit.)



The hall has a total of 4 bays. The two on the lower level are used for storage the two on the main floor have storage for 15 sets of turnout gear and training props. The hall has a meeting room and is equipped with audio-visual equipment that can be used for classroom training purposes. There is a lengthy dock and launching area on the lake adjacent to the fire hall. Hall 2 is subject to a 10-year lease, renewed by the ACRD, and it is anticipated that the hall will be fully decommissioned around 2036.

Hall #3 (7667 Pacific Rim Highway)

Named as the Harold Bishop Fire Hall, Hall 3 is the SLVFD's main fire hall. It has two apparatus bays, a training/meeting room and offices for administration, fire prevention and the chief officers. The main floor includes two apparatus bays, the SCBA air compressor and cascade filling system, turnout gear laundry and 20 turnout gear stalls. The Fire Chief's office and a small storage room are also located on the main floor. The second floor includes offices for fire prevention and administration, a full kitchen, an open fitness room and a large room used for classroom training and meetings.



The hall has been seismically upgraded and houses the following apparatus:

- Tender 43
- Engine 49

The SLVFD has three fire halls and eight apparatuses: three pumpers, three water tenders, a structural protection unit, and one rescue truck. Additionally, there is also the 1943 Willies Jeep 4x4 that is used for ceremonial purposes.



Personnel



The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department has 33 active members in total, consisting of:

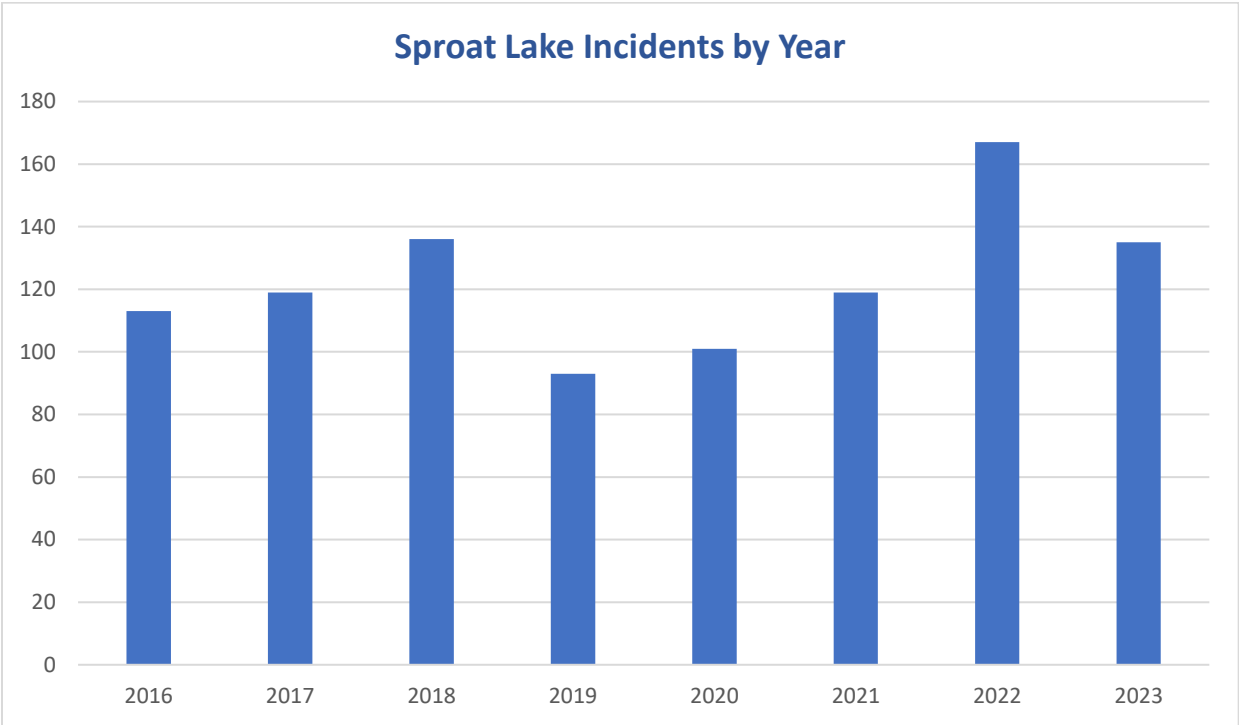
- 1 Fire Chief
- 1 Deputy Fire Chief
- 1 Fire Prevention Officer
- 1 Training Officer
- 3 Captains
- 2 Lieutenants
- 1 Safety Coordinator
- 18 Firefighters

SLVFD members are divided among two fire halls, with firefighters overseen by a Captain and a Lieutenant at each hall.

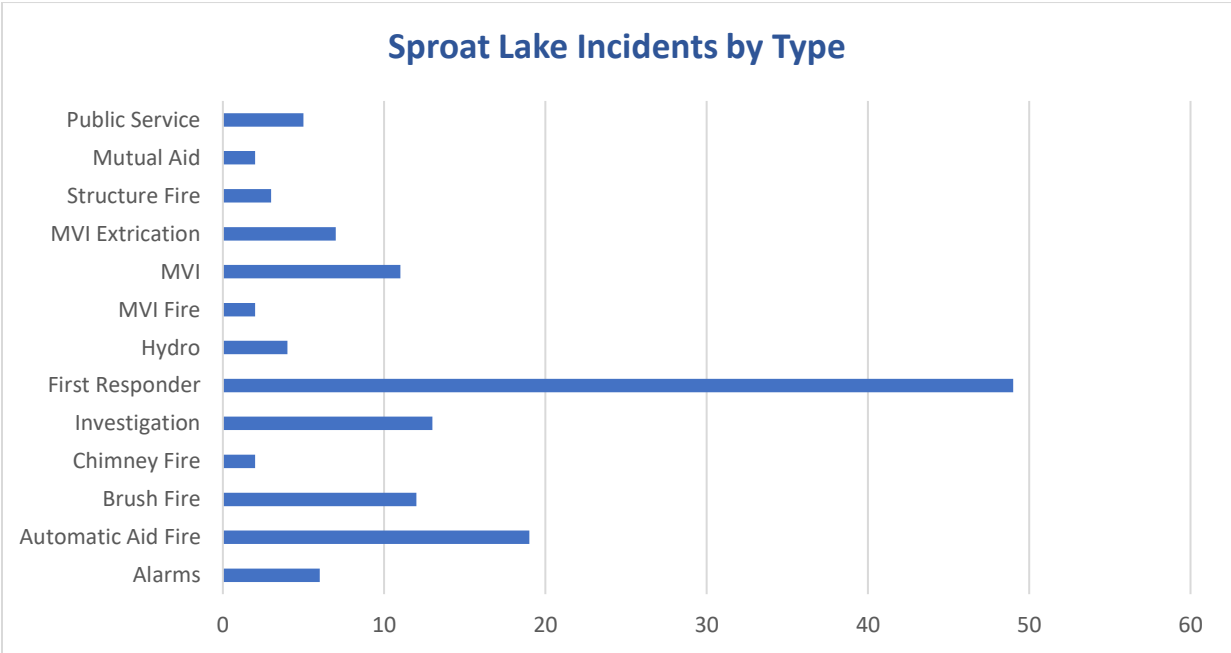
Hall 1 has 12 members and Hall 3 has 21 members.

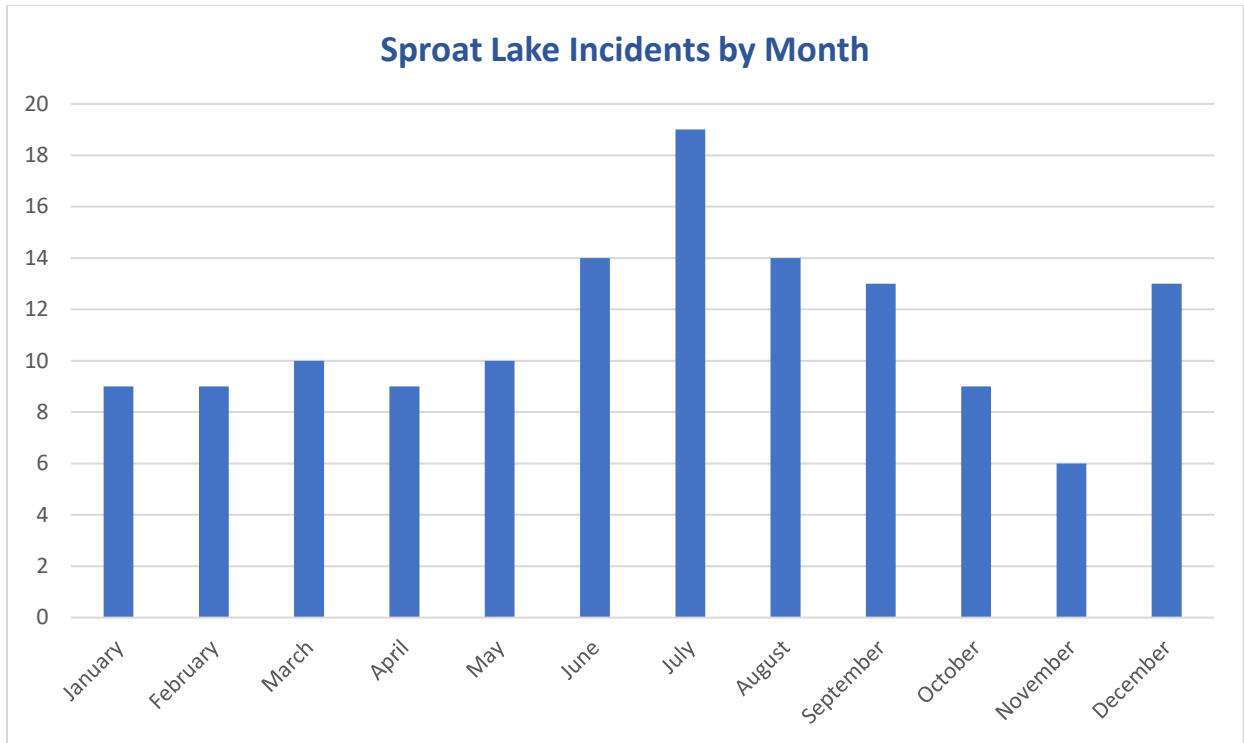


Incidents



In 2023, the Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department responded to 135 incidents. First responder incidents account for 36% of the call outs, with 14% related to automatic aid and 15% involving motor vehicle incidents.





The summer months from May through to September represented the busiest time of year for the Sproat Lake department, with November being the least busy.



Training

The SLVFD take great pride in delivering training that encourages the development of compassionate, skilled and proficient women and men. To ensure that all members maintain their skills, knowledge and competencies, it is required that they attend weekly training practices. Additional courses and required training are provided by the Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (VIERA).

Members of the SLVFD participated in approximately 5,000-person hours of training.

All members regularly train on Tuesday night, and our newer members work on their NFPA 1001 on Thursday nights with help from some of our dedicated members.

Specialty training in 2023 included:

- Auto Extrication
- First responder
- Fire Service Instructor 1, for training our members
- VIERA Evaluator course
- Fire officer 1 course
- Duty crews also rotated shifts to complete four-hour work bees and training events on Saturdays.

Further to this training, another important task for the Department is equipment training. The equipment on each apparatus is inspected for wear and damage after use and monthly to ensure its readiness for response. In addition, all the fire hoses are tested regularly for wear, damage and leaks. This process involves removing all the hoses from the apparatus, pressure testing it and checking each connection before reloading it on the trucks for future use.

Public Education & Community Events

The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department is actively involved in community activities and looks for opportunities to give back when possible. The SLVFD is dedicated to the preservation and safety of the area surrounding Sproat Lake and Great Central Lake and is committed to the welfare of residents in their electoral area. They willingly cooperate with other regional and municipal fire departments to provide additional support and safety to our region when requested. The Department participates in community events annually to increase fire safety awareness and improve community spirit and well-being.

As our summers are becoming increasingly hotter and more intense, wildfires are more prevalent than ever before. The BCVFD works closely with the ACRD FireSmart Coordinator to educate residents on how to improve their resilience to the impacts of wildfires.