
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Emergency Management BC

New Fire Safety Act aims to modernize fire safety regulations in B.C.

VICTORIA – New legislation was tabled today to modernize the regulatory framework for fire safety in British Columbia.

The *Fire Safety Act* will replace the *Fire Services Act*, legislation that has not had substantial updates since 1979.

The new act will:

- improve fire code compliance monitoring by making it risk-based;
- enable local authorities to appoint fire safety personnel to carry out fire inspections, investigations and evacuations;
- establish an administrative enforcement model to address non-compliance issues in a more timely and effective manner; and,
- shift to a risk-based approach for compliance monitoring in municipalities.

The *Fire Safety Act* takes into account a full range of feedback received through an extensive consultation process, including ideas generated in previous efforts to update the legislation. The most recent consultation group included representation from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Local Government Management Association, the Fire Chiefs' Association, Fire Training Officers Association, Fire Prevention Officers Association of BC, Volunteer Fire Fighters' Association of BC, BC Professional Fire Fighters' Association, and Wildfire Management Branch.

Quotes

Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness, Naomi Yamamoto –

“The new act will result in a manageable and streamlined out-of-court enforcement system with administrative penalties aimed at improving compliance. And it will provide local authorities with the power to evacuate or close a building where there is immediate danger to life and/or property. It also streamlines the fire inspection and investigation process. Simply, this new legislation will improve fire safety in B.C.”

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Todd Stone –

“The goal of the *Fire Safety Act* is to modernize the legislation and to make improvements to help ensure the safety of British Columbians. What is under consideration takes into account the collective work of a number of previous efforts to update this legislation – the *Fire Services Act* was last updated 20 years ago and these would be the first significant amendments proposed in over three-and-a-half decades.”

Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia president, Timothy Pley –

“The Fire Chiefs’ Association of BC applauds the adoption of the new *Fire Safety Act*. This legislation provides local governments with new and better tools with which they can provide for fire safety within their communities. The adoption of a risk-based model of fire code compliance monitoring will help local governments apply their fire prevention and inspection efforts where the need exists, preventing fires and providing for life safety where the fire risk is highest. Local governments are now empowered to exercise local government authority in mitigating imminent fire risk rather than the older system of referring those concerns to the provincial government for action. Local governments will now be able to take immediate mitigation actions when imminent life safety risks are found. This means safer communities for citizens and for the firefighters serving within those communities.”

Learn More:

Office of the Fire Commissioner: <http://bit.ly/1UvS1Wb>

Media Contact:

Media Relations
Government Communications and Public
Engagement
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
250 356-8241

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