

Fire & Emergency Services Bylaw

RECOMMENDATION:

That “Fire and Emergency Services Bylaw No. 4395” be referred to Council for approval, along with any necessary amendments to accompanying bylaws.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report outlines the proposed repeal and replacement of the existing Fire and Emergency Services Bylaw No. 3880. The updated bylaw, No. 4395, aligns with modern fire safety regulations and enhances fire prevention and suppression measures. The proposed bylaw adopts the *Fire Safety Act* which requires the introduction of risk-based compliance monitoring, improved enforcement mechanisms and cost recovery measures to enhance fire safety and emergency response capabilities.

BACKGROUND

The existing Fire and Emergency Services Bylaw No. 3880 was enacted in 2014 and has since become outdated due to advancements in fire safety standards, updates to the *Fire Safety Act*, and evolving community needs. The current bylaw does not adequately address modern fire prevention, compliance, and enforcement measures, limiting the Fire Department’s ability to effectively mitigate fire risks.

Many municipalities have modernized their fire bylaws to enhance enforcement, compliance monitoring, and public safety measures. The proposed bylaw reflects these best practices and provides a more effective framework for fire protection in Port Coquitlam. The proposed bylaw also ensures alignment with provincial fire regulations and includes sections that will reduce potential legal conflicts.

Furthermore, the updated bylaw incorporates provisions for cost recovery, allowing the City to recoup expenses related to fire inspections, false alarms, and emergency responses to non-compliant properties. This will help ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and that property owners take greater responsibility for fire safety compliance.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Fire and Emergency Services Bylaw No. 4395 introduces several key improvements over the existing bylaw. One of the most significant changes is its alignment with the *Fire Safety Act* and modern fire codes. By incorporating the latest standards from the British Columbia Fire Code and Building Code, the new bylaw ensures that all fire safety regulations within the municipality remain current and legally compliant. This will improve consistency in fire safety practices for buildings, businesses, and public spaces.

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Another important enhancement in the proposed bylaw is the introduction of a risk-based compliance monitoring system. This system establishes a structured approach to fire inspections, prioritizing properties based on their risk levels. By proactively identifying and addressing high-hazard occupancies, the Fire Department can more effectively allocate resources and reduce the likelihood of fire-related incidents.

The bylaw grants the authority to require updated fire safety plans for multi-tenant buildings and construction sites while also clarifying the regulations for storing combustible materials in close proximity of buildings and parkades. Additionally, it mandates that property owners regularly maintain fire hydrants and other critical fire suppression infrastructure to ensure it remains operational and effective.

The new bylaw expands the authority of the Fire Chief and Fire Department, allowing them to issue compliance orders, mandate evacuations, and enforce fire safety measures more effectively. Additionally, a new section addressing the hazards of using shipping containers for storage has been added to mitigate fire risks associated with improper use.

New sections on fire watch and forest fire response have been added to clarify the Fire Chief's responsibilities and authority in managing and reducing fire hazards. Additionally, a key requirement mandates the installation of fire alarm panels on the exterior of multi-tenant industrial and commercial buildings, improving response times and enhancing emergency effectiveness.

In addition to enhancing fire prevention and suppression, the new bylaw introduces a comprehensive cost recovery and fee structure. It identifies the fees associated with fire re-inspections, fire investigations, and multiple false alarms. Fire response costs for non-compliant properties, large scale events, and mutual aid can now be recovered, ensuring that the financial burden is not placed solely on the municipality. The bylaw clarifies that vacant and fire-damaged buildings be secured at the owner's expense, preventing further hazards.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed bylaw introduces cost recovery measures that will help offset expenses related to fire inspections, enforcement actions, and emergency responses.

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OPTIONS (✓ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	That the bylaw be referred to Council for approval.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Request additional information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Bylaw 4395: "Fire & Emergency Services" (proposed)

Attachment 2: Bylaw 3880: "Fire & Emergency Services" (current)

Attachment 3: Bylaw 4400: "Fees and Charges Bylaw" (proposed)

Attachment 4: Bylaw 4398: "Bylaw Notice Enforcement" (proposed)

Attachment 5: Bylaw 4399: "MTI Amendment" (proposed)

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