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REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 09, 2025

SUBJECT: *Fire Safety Act* – Designation of Fire Safety Inspectors and Fire Investigators

ISSUE SUMMARY

To designate positions to serve as fire safety inspectors and fire investigators for the Capital Regional District (CRD), in accordance with the *Fire Safety Act* (FSA).

BACKGROUND

The FSA, which received Royal Assent in 2016, was finally brought into force as of August 1, 2024, superseding and replacing the *Fire Services Act*. Under the FSA, the CRD must designate fire safety inspectors and investigators.

The FSA obliges the CRD to provide border-to-border fire inspection capabilities and fire investigation services, which is a new requirement for all regional districts.

Staff put forward the initial list of designated fire inspectors and investigators for the region to the Electoral Area Committee in November 2024. Since that time, the CRD has received confirmation from the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) that border-to-border fire inspection and fire investigation services responsibilities of regional districts includes the improvement districts and unincorporated areas within the geographical borders of the district, in addition to current CRD fire protection service areas.

The training qualification standards for fire investigators and fire inspectors are set by the OFC. The standards have been released, including processes for recognition through assessment of prior learning; however, the training sessions have yet to be offered by the OFC. Staff will work closely with the individual departments to assist designated individuals in meeting qualification standards through the prior learning assessments and training sessions as they become available.

Designation of Fire Inspectors

The CRD Board, as a local authority, must “designate in writing persons or a class of persons as fire inspectors to conduct fire safety inspections”. Any person or class of persons so designated must meet the “applicable standards established by the fire commissioner”. For a regional district, the designations that it makes must, in aggregate, cover the entirety (geographically) of the unincorporated areas for which it is responsible.

Under section 9 of the FSA, any person designated as a Fire Inspector may undertake a fire safety inspection “for the purpose of determining compliance with the FSA or regulations in the following circumstances”:

- on receiving a complaint
- if believed advisable by the Fire Inspector, without receiving a complaint
- on the request of an owner or occupier of premises; and
- as part of any compliance monitoring program that may be established by a regional district

Designation of Fire Investigators

The CRD Board, as a local authority, must “designate in writing persons or a class of persons as fire investigators to conduct fire investigations”. Any person or class of persons designated must meet the “applicable standards established by the fire commissioner”. For a regional district, the designations that it makes must, in aggregate, cover the entirety (geographically) of the unincorporated areas for which it is responsible.

Under section 26 of the *FSA*, fire investigators are granted broader powers than fire inspectors. They may enter property or premises at any time in connection with an investigation, including land or premises where the fire has occurred, or which are proximate to the incident, to conduct the investigation. Fire investigators have a wide range of authority in connection with their investigations, as detailed in the *FSA*.

The updated list of fire inspectors and fire investigators for the CRD found in Appendix A reflects the addition of the improvement district service areas, consistent with OFC direction, as well as naming and designations of fire officers for CRD fire service areas. Additionally, the FireSmart Coordinator designation as a fire investigator and inspector has been rescinded, as the role was no longer required to deliver those services on behalf of the CRD.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the persons or class of persons identified in Appendix A be confirmed as fire safety inspectors and fire investigators for the electoral areas within the Capital Regional District.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Electoral Areas Committee direction.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

If the CRD designated personnel are unavailable or require support, the CRD may initiate a request for support from the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) at no cost to the CRD. The OFC has stated that this arrangement will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

CONCLUSION

The CRD Board, as a local authority, must designate in writing persons or a class of persons as fire inspectors and fire investigators to conduct fire safety inspections and fire cause investigations throughout the unincorporated areas.

RECOMMENDATION

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the persons or class of persons identified in Appendix A be confirmed as fire safety inspectors and fire investigators for the electoral areas within the Capital Regional District.

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Designation of Fire Inspectors and Fire Investigators for the Capital Regional District - Effective July 9, 2025 – List