



PARKSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



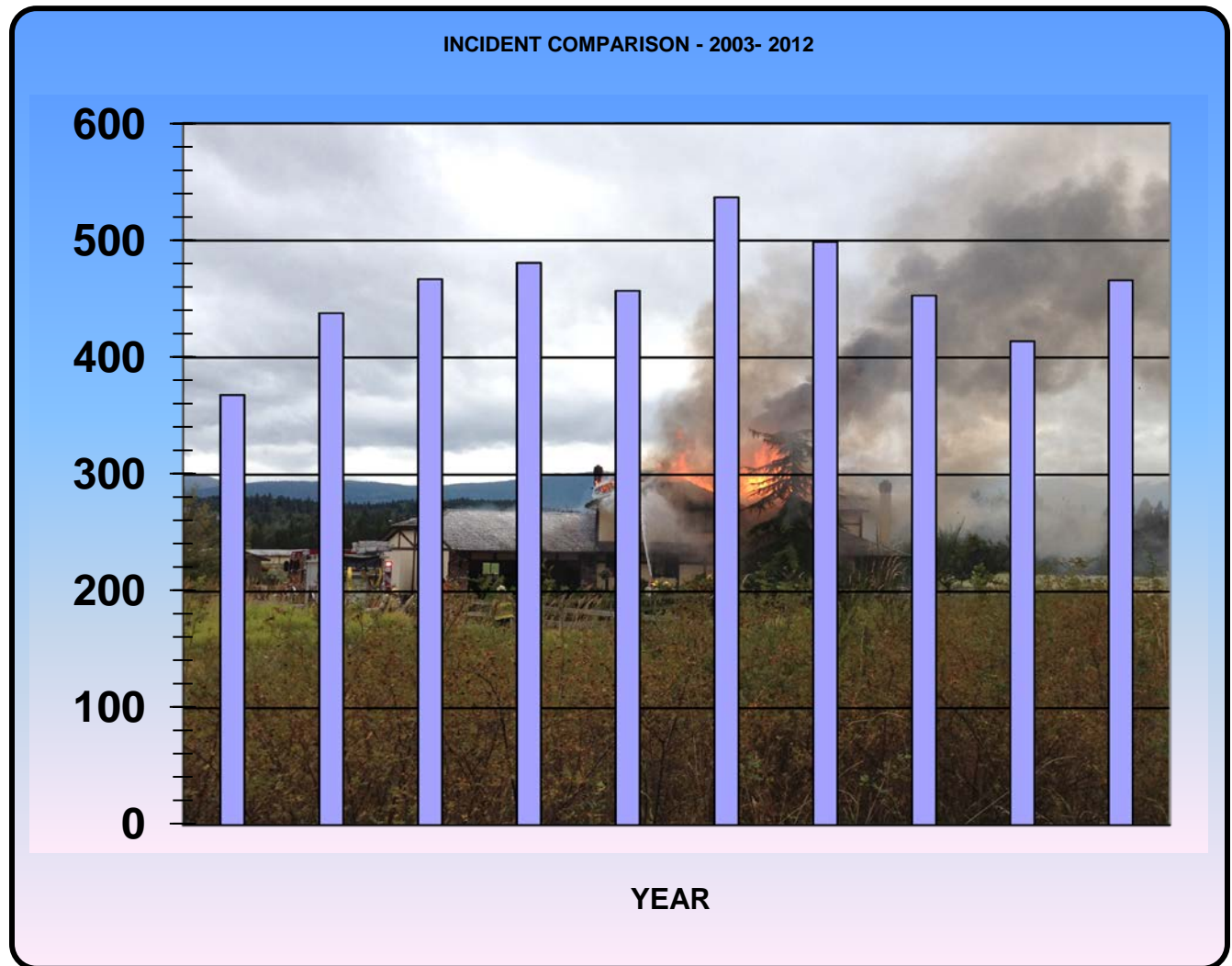
2012

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012**

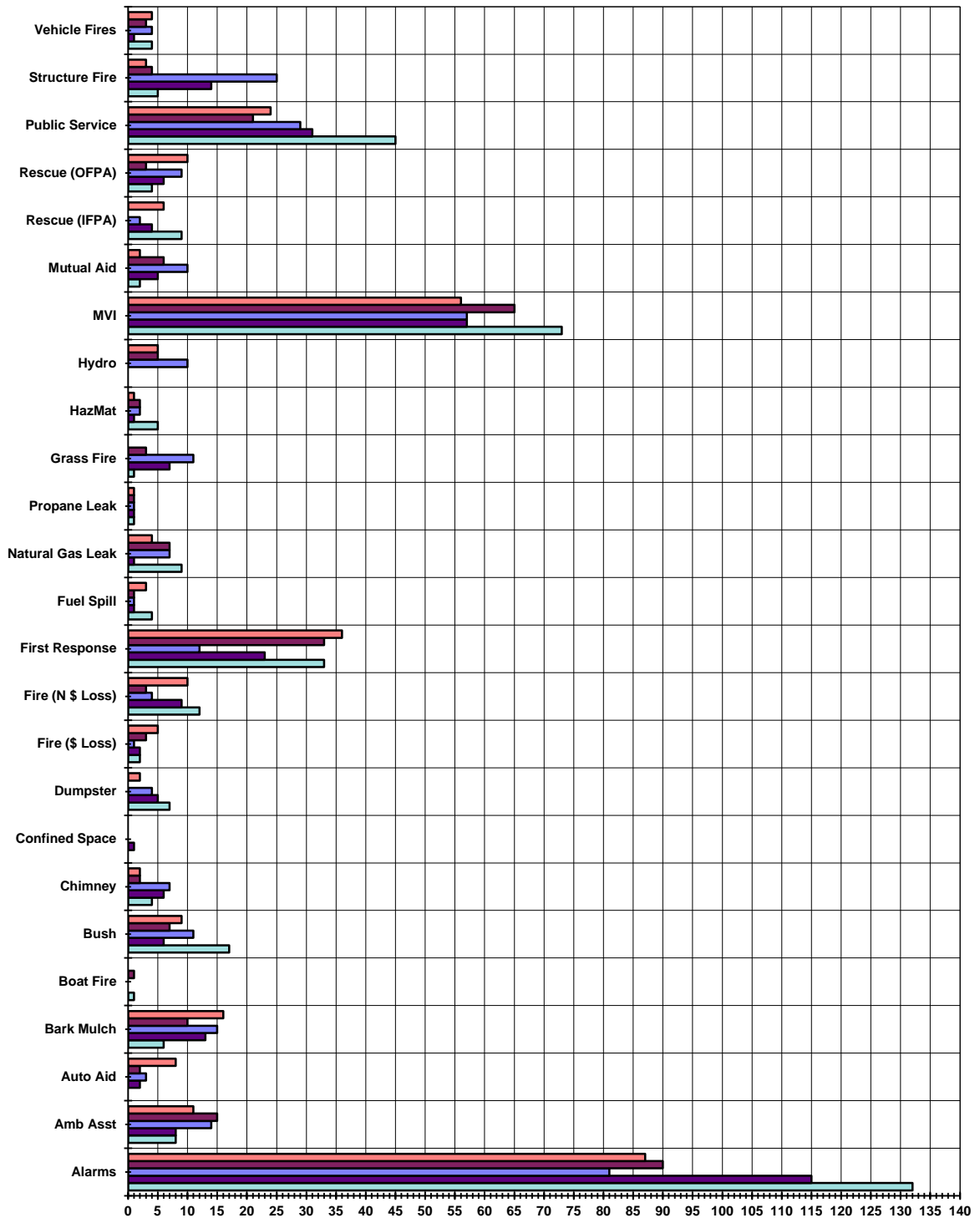
This department responded to 325 emergency calls during 2012 with another 140 recorded incidents including public education events, burning complaints, and equipment maintenance totaling 3196 person-hours. The total number of recorded incidents actually increased for the first time in four years. Accordingly, the number of man-hours required to deal with these incidents increased as well. On average, duration of recorded incidents was 58 minutes and with the average turnout of 8.6 members for emergency calls.

The following chart shows the trends of the total incidents that the department has dealt with on an annual basis.



The chart on the following page is a comparison of the number and type of calls responded to for the period 2007 – 2011.

5 YEAR EMERGENCY CALL COMPARISON  
2008- 2012



The following is a brief description of the most common incidents that the department typically deals with on a day to day basis.

### **ALARMS (Accidental and Malicious)**

While the number of calls for Alarms increased for the first time in two years. Calls for Alarms ringing or False Alarms continue to be the largest part of the department's call volume (18.4%). Calls for alarms decreased slightly from 90 in 2011 to 86 in 2012. As calls for alarms ringing may be considered "nuisance" calls, it is important that this department still responds as it does to any other type of call. While the vast majority of these calls are confirmed as a result from cooking or other minor cause of smoke or dust, past history has shown that responding efficiently to this type of call has helped to reduce the damage from an actual fire due to the early alert to the fire department.

It is anticipated that these types of calls will continue to be a significant percentage of calls for the department due to the fact that more and more homeowners are installing residential alarm systems to help protect their property as well as an increase in the number of systems installed in commercial properties. The vast majority of the calls for alarms ringing are to residential occupancies. In most cases, the homeowner is unaware of steps to be taken to prevent these types of calls and in most cases the fire department does not have to respond to the same residence. In these cases, the department provides the homeowner with some tips on how to prevent the false alarms from occurring in the future. Some new commercial buildings tend to have a brief period of alarm calls as they sort out some technical issues when the building is first commissioned. This results in a number of calls initially especially when the building is in the final stages of construction and partially occupied.

### **MOTOR VEHICLE INCIDENTS**

Response to Motor Vehicle Incidents (MVI's) account for 12% of the department's call volume. The number of Motor Vehicle Incidents that the department responded to in 2012 was consistent with 2011 levels. In most cases, the Duty Officer responded to the incidents and was able to deal with the situation without calling out a crew for further assistance. The fire department is requested to attend these types of incidents to provide scene safety for other responding emergency agencies.



## **RESCUE/EXTRICATION CALLS**

The number of rescue/extrication calls increased from 3 in 2011 to 16 in 2012. PVFD provides rescue/extrication services outside of our Fire Protection area, typically the Inland Hwy and the Errington FPA, and has done so since the mid 1970's. In particular, the department is dealing with scenes that are a result of higher speeds with vehicles going off the road. These types of incidents result in significantly more damage to the vehicle and making rescue of the occupant more challenging. As traffic volumes continue to rise within the area, the potential for continued increases for extrication calls is very real.



## **MEDICAL AID/FIRST RESPONSE/AMBULANCE ASSIST CALLS**

The number of requests for First Response/Medical calls in 2012 remained close the the 2011 levels. The department was requested by BCAS to respond to 47 First Response/Medical/Assist calls. Presently, the fire department only responds to these calls under the following criteria: Echo type calls, BCAS is delayed more than 15 minutes, upon request by on scene crew for additional support. In 2009, the City of Parksville signed an agreement with the Emergency Health Service Commission to provide both the authority and indemnification for the department to respond to these types of calls. While the call volume for this type of incident is relatively low it is critically important that the department maintain the necessary skills required to aid in these calls. Not only does it allow us to serve the public, it is also for the protection of the membership who respond to all types of emergency calls.

## **DOLLAR LOSS FIRES/STRUCTURE FIRES**

The department was only required to respond to three structure fires in 2012 and six fires with some type of dollar loss. Even with the low incident rate for these types of calls, it is the type of incident that the department must prepare for in order to reduce the impact of the fire and also to provide members with the necessary skills to perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner. It is this type of high profile incident that the department is measured against in determining how efficient and skilled the members are.





## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

The Public Service category covers a wide variety of incidents. These would typically include Duty Officer responses to enquiries or concerns from the public such as problems with smoke detectors, smoke odors, etc. While the nature of these calls is typically minor in nature, the expectation from the public is that a representative of the Fire Department will be able to come out and assist them with their concern. These types of calls provide the department with an opportunity to educate the public on the particular issue.

## **AUTOMATIC AID**

The department entered into an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Town of Qualicum, Errington Fire Dept, and Coombs/Hilliers Fire Dept. This Agreement was established to ensure sufficient resources are initially dispatched to pre-determined buildings in each area. In particular, this agreement is used to ensure the potentially needed resources are sent to Care facilities, High-Rise buildings, and other buildings considered to be high risk for the particular fire department. As this was the second full year that the Agreement has been in place, it appears that the it is working as intended. Parksville responded to 8 separate incidents in Qualicum, while Qualicum and Errington responded to 4 separate incidents in Parksville. While each of these calls were minor in nature, the additional initial response would have a significant impact on the overall outcome should there be an event that turns out to be more than "alarms ringing".

## **MUTUAL AID**

The department responded to 2 requests for Mutual Aid from other departments in 2012 versus 6 requests in 2011. While the calls that were responded to had significant potential, the overlying reason for the requests are for additional manpower to properly deal with the situation. This is due to the fact that all fire departments in the area are feeling the "crunch" when it comes to the attraction and retention of volunteers. The availability of members, particularly during daytime hours is a strain on all departments in the event of a significant event in the community.



The Mutual Aid Agreement was updated during 2011 to include some new requirements for member departments to train together on a more regular basis in order to improve fireground operations. Without an effective Mutual Aid Agreement in place and a strong working relationship with member departments no one jurisdiction could cost effectively be able to handle larger incidents on their own.

#### **EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

Weekly equipment checks continued throughout the year in order to ensure that all equipment was checked on a regular basis. This requires extra effort and time by all the department members to ensure that equipment is in good working order and is put away properly.

#### **RESPONSE TIMES**

The average response time for an emergency call in the Fire Protection District was 5 minutes 52 seconds. This is the time from the initial page until the arrival of the first unit, -- the Duty Officer in most cases. This time varies slightly depending on the location of the incidents responded to. The muster time for a crew to respond to the fire hall, crew the apparatus, and begin a response is an average of 6 minutes 43 seconds. The driving time to an incident is totally dependant on its location. The only variable in the driving time is the traffic or weather conditions. These times are consistent with past years and seem to be acceptable for the type of operations that the department is currently able to provide.

#### **MEMBERSHIP/STAFFING**

Membership changes continue to happen within the department. The department again had to bring in a new recruit class to fill vacant spots created by the departure of members.

In May of 2012, the department brought in a smaller recruit class than the previous year to date. A total of 5 new members were brought in to bring the roster up to a full complement. As of the end of 2012, all of these members are still with the department. As is usually the case, some of the members left the department due to moving from the area, or lack of available time to commit.

The department currently has 36 members (not including the Fire Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chiefs.) Currently, 62% of the volunteer membership has less than 5 years experience. This has a significant impact on the department's ability to respond to certain situations. While the experience level is low, the willingness and effort is high. In order to combat the lack of experience level in the newest members, the department continues to use an aggressive training program proven to be successful in bringing the newest members up to a level where they can perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner. These new members, along with the current members, continually display a keen interest in taking any and all training made available to them in order to improve their skill levels.

The following chart gives a breakdown of the current experience level of the department:

|      | Less than 1 year | 1 – 5 Years | 5 – 10 Years | 10 – 20 Years | 20 Years + |
|------|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 2012 | 5                | 19          | 5            | 7             | 3          |
| 2011 | 8                | 14          | 7            | 7             | 2          |
| 2010 | 6                | 12          | 10           | 5             | 2          |
| 2009 | 6                | 13          | 11           | 5             | 1          |
| 2008 | 6                | 16          | 10           | 5             | 1          |
| 2007 | 8                | 12          | 7            | 5             | 1          |
| 2006 | 5                | 14          | 5            | 4             | 4          |

#### **FIRE HALL EXPANSION PROJECT**

The Fire Hall Expansion project has been completed and in operation for the past year. Members are pleased with the completed project and the ability to function out of the hall has proven to be quite a bit easier than the previous facility.

The success of the expansion project can be seen by the increased use of the facility by the various emergency service partners.

#### **APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT**

No major changes in apparatus or equipment occurred in 2012. Plans for a new pumper truck to replace E41 were completed and will be sent out in early 2013.



## TRAINING

### THE TRAINING OF FIREFIGHTERS IS CRITICAL IN PROVIDING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE, SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE AND SAFETY.


















The Parksville Volunteer Fire Department has an intensive training program which is comprised of a comprehensive mix of emergency service delivery related subjects.

There are multiple levels of fire, medical and specialized training delivered and/or attended throughout the year. Training includes items such as, education to obtain or maintain a license or credential, recruit training, new response concepts, skills maintenance, special technical rescue training, and other training as necessary.

Training occurs at regular weekly practices held each Monday night and at extra training sessions offered on weekdays/weekends, both locally and non-local, throughout the year. The focus of training continues to be firefighter and public safety in turn providing for a professional and effective fire service for the citizens and visitors served by the Parksville Fire Department.

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#### 2012 Training Highlights:

-  **Eight (8)** members completed an 11 month Recruit Training program (200 hours)
-  **Five (5)** members began the 11 month Recruit Training program.
-  **Seven (7)** members completed initial First Responder Emergency Medical Attendant training. (40 hours)
-  **Five (5)** members recertified as First Responder Emergency Medical Attendants. (24 hours)
-  **Two (2)** members completed technical rope rescue training. (100 hours)
-  **Three (3)** Automatic/Mutual Aid practices were held with neighboring departments.
-  **Four (4)** members completed the Hazardous Materials Operations course (4 days)
-  **Eight (8)** members completed the Auto Extrication Operations course (2.5 days)
-  **Four (4)** Officer Training Days were attended by PVFD Company Officers and Senior Firefighters.
-  **Six (6)** members attended the Fire Rescue Company Officer Program. (2 days)
-  **Six (6)** members completed their Emergency Vehicle Driver Operator evaluations.
-  **One (1)** member completed Fire Service Instructor Level 1. (2.5 days)
-  **Three (3)** members completed Fire Officer Level I certification. (120 hours)
-  **Six (6)** members completed their NFPA 1001, FFII, certification for Firefighter Professional Qualifications. (300 hours, over 2 to 3 years)
-  **Five (5)** members completed Hazmat Awareness training. (1 Day)
-  **Five (5)** members attended the Live Fire 301 program. (1 Day)
-  **Seventeen (17)** members completed the Emergency Scene Traffic Control course.

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#### 2012 Training Comments:

Members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department continued to show dedication through their commitment to participation in training. Fire Hall renovations caused some nuisance in terms of regular training throughout 2011 however PVFD members met all challenges head-on which translated into a successful training year.

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## 2012 Training Statistics

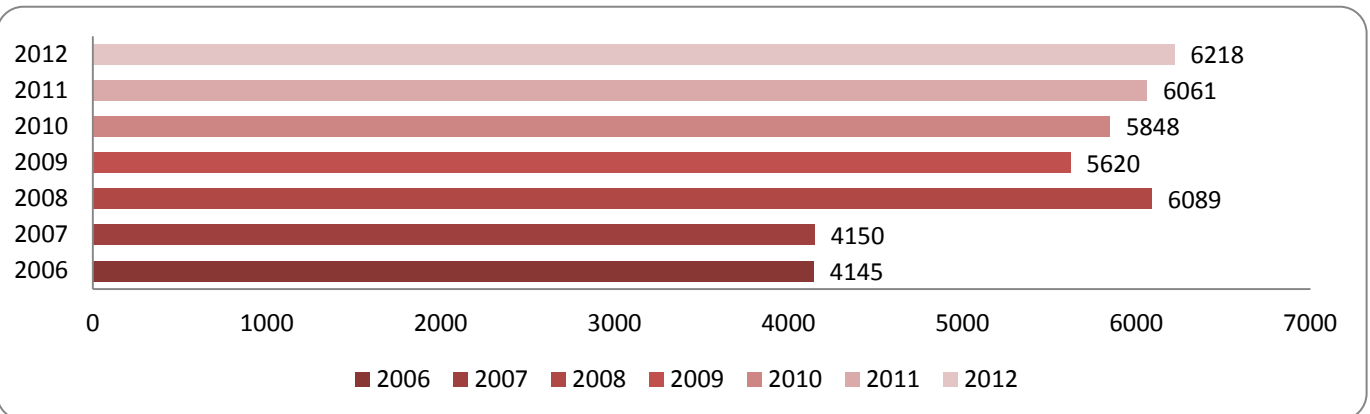
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| TRAINING STATS 2012 |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Month               | Total |
| Person Hours        | 6218  |
| Sessions            | 355   |

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## Historical Training Statistics

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## 2013 Objectives:

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- 📌 Complete change over to Red Cross First Responder Program.
- 📌 Complete orientation & familiarization training for Engine 42 prior to putting apparatus into service.
- 📌 Complete Training Tower Capital Project.
- 📌 Complete High-Rise training session.
- 📌 Host Pumps and Pumping course.
- 📌 Focus on Company Officer Development.

## **FIRE INSPECTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM**

The Assistant Chief's role within the department is to conduct fire and life safety inspections as outlined in the Fire Services Act and in accordance with the City of Parkville bylaws and policies and to coordinate and administer the department's public education program. The Assistant Chief is also responsible for Fire Cause Determination and Investigation as outlined in the Fire Services Act.

## **2012 FIRE INSPECTION AND LIFE SAFETY PROGRAM**

| <b>Inspection Program</b>                | <b>2012</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>2008</b> |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Inspectable Occupancies (Approx.)</b> | 795         | 787         | 769         | 742         | 725         |
| <b>Inspections Due (Approx.)</b>         | 496         | 483         | 458         | 335         | 287         |
| <b>Inspections Completed</b>             | 353         | 500         | 369         | 407         | 438         |

The number of inspectable properties is continuing to grow combined with the number of inspections being conducted at the business license level; it is placing a greater demand on the time allotted for conducting annual inspections. Over the past year we have been also been requested to conduct more inspections during the construction of building projects as well as consultations in renovation projects and systems upgrades. Conducting these types of inspections allows for a greater amount of compliance and assists with the preplanning of buildings.

The implementation of the FDM Mobile Inspection software has helped in getting the inspection program back on track. Over the last year the Assistant Chief was able to identify over 300 lost inspections that had not been recorded due to previous problems with software integration.

The number of commercial kitchen installations has increased over the last couple of years. Commercial Kitchen installations as well as building renovations and upgrades are increasing due to the aging building stock that is in the Fire Protection Area. These inspections have not been tracked in the past as an inspection on a consistent basis. These types of inspections are now being tracked as an actual inspection so as to get a more consistent statistic on the types of inspections being performed.

## **COMPLIANCE / NON-COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

Unsatisfactory inspections have dropped due to a more consistent and regular inspection frequency. Damaged fire separations, improper door lock hardware and extinguishers that are either missing or are past due for servicing as well as electrical overloading and storage are still the most common problems found during unsatisfactory inspections.

Fire Safety Plans (in accordance with the BC Fire Code) and their maintenance are still a problem that many building / business owners are struggling to keep current. To this end, we are currently considering the implementation of a Fire Safety Plan template that will be available online at [www.pvfd.ca/fire](http://www.pvfd.ca/fire) prevention. This will allow for a fillable form that will help owners comply with provincial regulations and assist the Department with incident pre-planning.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

To date our enforcement procedures are still restricted to a provincial order through the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Corrective orders have not been a common occurrence in the past years, but there are businesses that are in violation of current codes and the need for corrective orders may be needed in the near future. The process is time-consuming and can be prohibitive in the time it takes to gain compliance. A new system of municipal code enforcement could prove to be a benefit to gaining full compliance with local business and building owners.

## **CURRENT PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

The programs that we have been running in the past are still proving to be effective in our goal of public fire safety. These programs are:

- Preschool – Grade 3 Programs
- Community Safety Net – provided us with enough material to educate 600 students
- Fire Prevention Week: this past year's theme was "Have 2 Ways Out"
- Kids Fest
- Youths and Explosives presentation
- Smoke Detector and CO Alarm Program

While the programs that are being delivered are consistent and applicable, the need for updated materials and new programs is becoming a priority. The Assistant Fire Chief as well as the Department's Public Education committee, have delivered 45 events over the past year totaling 521 person-hours of time dedicated to public education.

## **NEW PROGRAMS:**

This year saw us bring in a couple of new programs. As mentioned earlier, we have been approached by several groups that have asked for education in fire safety. We will continue to be promoting these programs in the future. The programs are:

- Fire Safety for Older Adults
- Preschool "Home Fire Safety" interactive display

## **FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

Section 9 of the Fire Services Act requires that the Fire Department investigate and report on fire cause determination. The Assistant Chief investigated a total of 4 fires in the past year. One fire was determined to be arson and the turned over to the RCMP, and 3 fires were determined to be accidental.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and TRAINING**

In 2012 the Assistant Fire Chief attended several training sessions. Courses or training included:

- Regular weekly training sessions with the fire department; Monday night 'fire practice'
- Technical Rescue Team practices,
- Parksville Fire Department Officer Training Days,
- Regular attendance at 'Training Tuesdays' and at HR focused training, organized by the City,
- Incident command level training as well as skills maintenance training organized by the Deputy Fire Chief,
- Marina Fire Fighting for Land-Based Firefighters
- Attendance at the Annual Fire Prevention Officer's Association seminar in Sooke, BC.

The Assistant Fire Chief serves the BCFPOA as Zone 1 Director and helps coordinate and organize the Annual Conference as well as Zone 1 meetings.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

In a continuation from the situation in 2011, work continued developing the City's Emergency Program time permitting. Training and infrastructure development continue with the hope of working towards exercises to refresh skills and identify areas needing improvement in the program.

A lot of effort was spent on rebuilding our Emergency Support Services Team (ESS). The number of volunteers had dwindled down to a number where it would have been difficult to muster enough people for any response. Recruiting has brought our team up to a level where we will be able to initiate a response if required. This program is regional in nature and we have volunteers from all over Dist. 69. The focus in 2012 was to review all of the contents in the reception centers and ensure that the supplies were up to date and current. This project has been completed in the Parksville Reception Centers and it still ongoing in other area of the district.

In addition to the Emergency Communications Team, the City also benefits from the volunteers in Emergency Social Services. The Emergency Program Coordinators within District 69 worked together in 2011 to review and change the ESS program. There have been significant societal changes to the way people volunteer their time. We have noticed this in the form of reduced volunteer support of ESS. This program has been



significantly changed with the addition of a new volunteer director who has a professional history in volunteer recruitment to address the declining volunteer base that we rely upon.

The Emergency Communications Team (ECT) spent time on training with the new Communications trailer that was completed. Testing was done to select the ideal location to set up the trailer and equipment in the district to ensure reliable communications to essential locations in the district and province.



## CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department as well as all of the dedicated volunteers associated with the Emergency Program for their continued support to myself and staff. Their dedication to ensuring the citizens of the City of Parksville are assisted in times of need, and the professionalism in which they carry out their duties, are qualities the community and they themselves can be proud of. Special thanks to the Officers of the P.V.F.D., who have worked tirelessly throughout the year. We are fortunate to have a core of Officers whose commitment, skills and dedication are the cement of this department.

Respectively Submitted

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Doug Banks, Fire Chief

