

## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Justice

### **Improving fire services in B.C.**

VICTORIA – In order to continue to improve fire services in B.C. and protect the safety of communities and families around the province, government is taking action in response to the Fire Services Liaison Group (FSLG) Report.

These actions are set out in the newly released report entitled “Improving Fire Services: The Office of the Fire Commissioner’s Response to the FSLG Report” and include:

- Establishing a fire services advisory committee and taking steps to strengthen the Office of the Fire Commissioner’s core mandate.
- Contributing to, and enhancing, existing training programs.
- Continuing to provide guidance and advice on training standards to local authorities and in fire suppression to fire departments.
- Implementing measures to strengthen owner/occupier responsibility, inspection system flexibility
- Improvements to the Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner system, as well as improvements to enforcement and education relating to the Fire Services Act and BC Fire Code.
- Undertaking a survey of fire departments and establishing a fire department registry.
- Helping identify and disseminate information on best practices.
- Reviewing reimbursement rates for rescue tasks and wildfire mobilizations
- Reviewing pre-authorization procedures and help to clarify pre-authorization procedures.

The FSLG delivered its original report, “Public Safety in BC: Transforming the Fire/Rescue Service,” to the B.C. government in 2010. It contained 14 recommendations for improving the provision of fire and rescue services throughout British Columbia. Twelve of these were directed at the B.C. government and two were directed to local governments.

Following this, the government of B.C. created the FSLG Report Leadership Group to assist the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) in identifying, by Oct. 31, 2012, the most effective and cost-efficient ways to respond to these recommendations, which are laid out in today’s report.

## Quotes:

### **Shirley Bond, Minister of Justice and Attorney General –**

“The fire commissioner and I are keenly interested in building on and making any appropriate improvements to the existing framework of fire services delivered in B.C. The Leadership Group has spent two years researching, consulting and deliberating on the best ways to improve fire services in B.C. with an eye to how we can best do this in an environment of fiscal restraint.”

“I am confident the steps our government will take to respond to these recommendations will serve to improve and sustain our world-class fire and rescue services in the province, while still being fiscally prudent.”

### **Fire Chiefs Association of BC president Len Garis –**

“Today’s announcement brings about a commitment made by the government on the behalf of the fire service of British Columbia to implement recommendations developed by key members of the fire service under the guidance of the immediate past presidents of the BC Fire Chiefs, Steve Gamble and Richard Laurie.”

“These commitments will ensure our transitioning fire service will develop into an evidence-based, progressive, and modern organization.”

## Quick Facts:

- The FSLG report was initiated in 2007 with \$1.275 million from the B.C. government and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
- Chaired by the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC, the FSLG's membership includes representatives from the BC Fire Training Officers' Association, the Fire Prevention Officers Association of BC, the Volunteer Fire fighters' Association of BC, and the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Association.
- The FSLG Report Leadership Group includes representatives of the above associations in addition to representatives from the OFC, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Local Government Management Association of BC, Wildfire Management Branch, BC Ambulance Service, and the Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia

## Learn More:

View today’s report online: [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/firecom/pdf/ofcfslg.pdf](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/firecom/pdf/ofcfslg.pdf)

See the original 2009 FSLG report, “Public Safety in BC: Transforming the Fire/Rescue Service”: <http://fslg.ca/>

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