



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2019 #19-15

For further information, contact:  
[communications@mapleridge.ca](mailto:communications@mapleridge.ca)

## **City Returning to BC Supreme Court to Address Fire Risks**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** On Wednesday, February 27 the Maple Ridge Fire Department responded to two new fires at the St. Anne Camp site.

The Fire Department responded to a report of a tent fire on the site at 2:12 pm. When firefighters arrived at the site witnesses reported that there had been an explosion, so the fire crew controlled the fire at a distance due to the risk of further explosions. A 20 pound propane cylinder was seen venting and burning gas. Firefighters controlled the scene until gas was depleted from the tank.

The tent where the fire started and an adjacent tent were fully destroyed. Tarps and an adjacent structure were also melted and burned. Several trees were damaged due to heat and the large fireball that emanated from the tent. Once the site was contained, the investigation to understand the scene began and is ongoing. There were no reported injuries to anyone in the camp or to the first responders who arrived at the scene. Preliminary information is that one 20 pound propane cylinder fully ruptured accounting for the large ball of flame that witnesses reported at the site. In addition to the large cylinder, there were a number of smaller one pound cylinders found on the site that had exploded and split, which may account for the reports of multiple explosions.

At approximately 10:00 pm security personnel at the camp reported a second tent fire. The Fire Department responded to the site and, once again, controlled the fire at a distance due to the risk of accelerants. The tent where the fire originated was fully destroyed and an adjacent tent and cedar hedge also sustained substantial damage.

Once the site was contained after the evening fire, the investigation began to determine what caused the fire and that investigation is also still ongoing. A propane cylinder and propane appliances were found in the remains of the tent where this fire originated. There were no

reported injuries to anyone in the camp or to the first responders who arrived at the scene for the second fire.

Last week the City began the enforcement of the BC Supreme Court Order on the site and removed approximately 100 propane tanks plus gasoline canisters, generators and other ignition sources and accelerants from the site. The work was obstructed by people posing as camp occupants and working to hamper the Fire Department and Bylaws personnel from their work to enforce the Court Order.

The two fires on Wednesday, February 28, and the evidence that a significant quantity of ignition sources and accelerants have been reintroduced to the site has reinforced a decision by the City of Maple Ridge to return to the BC Supreme Court. The City is requesting remedies to address the obstruction of City workers in carrying out the terms of the Court Order and for mechanisms to ensure the safety of City workers who are conducting work on the site.

The recent fires highlight the need to have the site brought into compliance with the fire-safety orders which are at the heart of the BC Supreme Court Order. The significant risk of ignition sources and accelerants on the site is an unacceptable risk in our community. The safety of camp occupants, the surrounding neighbourhoods and the first responders are the highest priority for the City.

The City of Maple Ridge is working with the Province to address long term problems around the availability of housing and health care supports. Earlier in the week Council reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring a safe community for everyone as well as doing their part to ensure that the necessary support services are available and accessible for those that need them. In addition, the City is committed to sustaining the work to address the fire safety issues on the site while the legal process moves forward.