

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 22, 2025

**RE:** **Fire Services Standard Operating Guideline: Third-Party Wildfire Resources in the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen**

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### **Administrative Recommendation:**

THAT the Board approve the attached Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen Fire Services Standard Operating Guideline: Third-Party Wildfire Resources.

### **Purpose:**

The Purpose of this report is to provide guidance and support to the RDOS Rural Fire Departments when responding to wildfire situations where the insurance company has deployed resources, either employed or under contract, to reduce the risk to wildfire.

### **Business Plan Objective: (Tie to current RDOS Business Plan)**

Strategic Priority 4.2 Support Protective Services

### **Background:**

In recent years there have been insurance companies that have employed trained personnel to enter into Evacuation Alert and Order areas to mitigate the potential loss of homes due to wildfire. Recently staff received an announcement from the BCAA Insurance announcing that they now have wildfire property defence program that may deploy on-site services that aim to protect private property from wildfire damage.

These third-party responders enter into the response zones to achieve their objectives. Although this is a positive step for residents, these third-party resources may interfere with the Rural Fire Departments response. In order to give the rural Fire Departments the ability to manage their response effectively, they need to be able to direct these resources effectively.

BC Wildfire Service has also developed Standard Operating Guidelines to support their response to these third-party responders, which was used to develop the RDOS Standard Operating Guideline.

### **Analysis:**

It is imperative that Rural Fire Departments have the authority:

- To act as Incident Command within the Fire Protection Area
- To ensure the Fire Departments resources and equipment are not interfered with
- Can request information and documentation to verify the third-party resources are actually employed or contracted by the insurance company and the property owner

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- That the third-party resources adhere to standards outlined in the Standard Operating Guideline.
  - That the third-party resources mission is limited to providing pre-wildfire loss intervention and post-wildfire loss intervention services.
  - That under Evacuation Order situations the third-party resources have authorization from the RDOS Emergency Operations Centre.

**Financial Implications: None**

**Alternatives:**

The Board could choose to defer the Standard Operating Guideline.

**Communication Strategy:**

If approved, the Standard Operating Guideline will be provided to all Rural Fire Departments where the RDOS is the Authority Having Jurisdiction. The Fire Chiefs will be directed to ensure a copy of the Standard Operating Guideline is readily available during response in the event they need to use it.

Staff will also share the Standard Operating Guideline as an example to all the Bridgade Departments within the RDOS.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting?      No

**Respectfully submitted:**

*"Deborah Jones-Middleton"*

D. Jones-Middleton, Senior Manager of  
Protective Services