



Media Release

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For immediate release

New recruitment program for RDCK volunteer firefighters

Nelson, BC: Starting December 1, 2023, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) will implement a new structured recruitment program for volunteer firefighters. The goal of the program is to create a regional approach to training that will see volunteers train as a cohort and ready for active duty in a quicker time frame.

In the past, each fire department has been responsible for recruiting and training their own firefighters. Under the new program, the goal is to hold a recruitment drive twice a year and train the incoming volunteers at a “RDCK Fire Training Academy” before sending them off to their respective fire departments.

“By controlling the intake process, we believe this is the quickest way to get volunteers trained and ready for active duty,” said Tristan Fehst, RDCK Regional Deputy Fire Chief. “Normally it takes about 64 hours of training to get a volunteer up to speed and ready to join a department. In our current system, this can take anywhere from a couple of months to years to complete depending on the volunteer’s schedule. With our new program, the objective is to create an accelerated process by hosting weekend boot camps and additional evening training, which will get volunteers ready to join a department much quicker.”

There are currently [16 volunteer fire departments operating out of 17 fire halls](#) within the RDCK. All RDCK fire departments must have a minimum of 15 volunteers, but ideally that number is 20 plus per department.

Starting December 1, the RDCK will be holding a six-week recruitment drive with an application deadline of January 12, 2024, looking for volunteers from everywhere from Balfour to Yahk to join the first cohort of the new recruitment program.

“We are always on the lookout for outstanding, community-oriented residents to join our team. This is a great opportunity to learn valuable skills, provide a service to your community, and work with a great group of people,” said Fehst.

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer firefighter? For more information or to apply, go to www.rdck.ca/volunteer.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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