

Fact Sheet

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Keremeos Fire Hall replacement

The issue:

The Keremeos Fire Hall is more than 80 years old, was not originally designed as a fire station, and no longer meets modern fire service standards. Assessments by the Fire Underwriters Survey (2022) and WorkSafeBC (2023) highlight critical issues:

Key issues include:

- **Unsafe Location:** Positioned on a sharp curve at the base of a hill with poor visibility and located in a floodplain, increasing risks during emergencies.
- **Space Limitations:** Insufficient room for modern fire trucks, decontamination, storage, and essential services.
- **Site Constraints:** Lacks space for vehicle maneuvering and encroaches on neighboring property for storage.

Overall, the fire station is outdated, unsafe, and inadequate for current fire service demands. Identifying and securing a suitable site for a new fire station for the Keremeos and District Volunteer Fire Department (KDVFD) will ensure efficient, effective, and sustainable fire response services for the community.

Key parameters for a new fire hall location:

A new fire hall in Keremeos must be positioned on stable, flood-free land with optimal access for volunteers and response efficiency. It should enhance service levels, ensure compliance with building/fire codes, and minimize risks from wildfires, floods, and hazardous material incidents.

1. General site considerations

- Must balance urban, rural, and agricultural needs within the response district.
- Must consider natural and human-made hazards, including flood plains, highways, and wildland fire risks.
- Should avoid direct exposure to wildfire threats, while accounting for wind-driven embers.
- Needs to be geotechnically stable for a large, essential service building.

2. Accessibility and firefighter response time

- The site must be easily accessible and provide parking space for volunteer firefighters to ensure rapid response.
- Should be near but not directly on major roadways to enable safe and efficient vehicle deployment.
- Needs to support large vehicle movement for emergency response and training.
- The site must be positioned to optimize response range and minimize travel time for firefighters.
- Proximity to high-traffic areas should be carefully considered to prevent delays due to congestion.

3. Infrastructure and service needs

- Access to water/sewer services or alternative solutions (e.g., wells, septic fields).
- Adequate space for training, equipment storage, and departmental operations.

4. Fire department response standards

- Must meet post-disaster construction standards as per BC Building Code.
- Maintain or improve response times to ensure insurance coverage remains favorable (properties within 8 km of a fire hall are considered protected).

5. Risk factors to mitigate

- Flooding risks:
 - The current fire hall is in a floodplain; the new site must be on higher ground outside inundation zones.
- Wildfire and interface risks:
 - The new station should be built to wildfire-resistive standards and avoid high-risk areas exposed to wind-driven embers.
- Hazardous material and highway risks:
 - Avoid locations near hazardous material spill zones or high-risk highway corridors (e.g., Highways 3 and 3A).

For further information, please visit the interactive website project page at rdosregionalconnections.ca, titled “Keremeos Fire Hall Station Relocation” or contact RDOS Communications.

Scan the QR code to go directly to the project page:

Contact:

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