



Corporate Report

NO: R119

COUNCIL DATE: May 18, 2005

REGULAR

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **May 12, 2005**
 FROM: **Fire Chief** FILE: **3900**
 SUBJECT: Fire Bylaw Amendment

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council receive this report.
2. That Council direct staff to prepare the necessary bylaw amendment and bring the necessary bylaw amendment forward for adoption.

BACKGROUND

The BC Building Code and BC Fire Code are closely related. The Building Code establishes a satisfactory standard of fire, life and health safety for the design and construction of new buildings, and any subsequent alterations made to them. The Fire Code establishes an acceptable standard for fire and life safety in existing buildings.

The occupant load of a building, or part of a building, is determined at the design stage according to section 3.1.16 of the BC Building Code. This is based on the use of the building, or part of the building. The Building Permit is issued based on this occupant load. It is the Fire Department's responsibility to determine the occupant load of a building, or part of a building for occupancy approval once construction is completed. This is done according to Section 2.7.1.3 of the BC Fire Code which specifies that the occupant load shall be the number determined according to the BC Building Code, or the occupant load for which means of egress are provided, whichever is the **lesser**.

DISCUSSION

Accurate and consistent occupant loads are required by the Liquor Inspector for the issuance of liquor licences, by the RCMP and Fire Department to determine whether an establishment is over-crowded and by establishment owners to properly monitor and ensure adequate safety levels are maintained for their patrons. Section 2.7.1.4 of the BC Fire Code requires the posting of a maximum occupancy notice near the principal entrances to assembly occupancies with an occupant load exceeding 60 persons.

RECOMMENDED CHANGE

Add a new permit provision to Surrey Bylaw #10771 to require all applicable occupancies to post an occupant load as determined by the BC Fire Code. The permit application would require certified drawings to be submitted to the Surrey Fire Service for review and a site inspection. The application fee for occupant load permits of 150 persons or less would be \$300.00 and for occupant load permits in excess of 150 persons \$500.00.

CONCLUSION

A fair, simple and consistent process for determining the safe occupant loads in Surrey buildings would benefit all stakeholders, including business owners, RCMP, Liquor Licensing Inspectors, Fire Inspectors and, most of all, the public that

visits these occupancies. This process is similar to that used successfully in the City of Vancouver and other jurisdictions.



Len Garis
Fire Chief

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