



## Structure Fire at Ocean Terrace Apartments

On the evening of July 6, the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department responded to a major fire at the Ocean Terrace apartment building at 240 Island Highway West. All residents and pets were evacuated safely. The four story building contained 32 units with 38 residents and four visitors affected by the fire.

In addition to response from the Parksville Fire Department and through a mutual aid agreement, fire departments from Qualicum Beach, Errington, Coombs, Dashwood and Nanoose Bay responded as well to the apartment fire. About 57 firefighters were utilized throughout the evening and into early morning, July 7.

Parksville Fire Chief Marc Norris stated, "We are extremely pleased and fortunate there were no injuries to residents or emergency services personnel which in large part is due to the highly-trained and dedicated City of Parksville volunteer firefighters and the immediate exceptional support from our neighbouring mutual-aid departments."

The apartment building has been secured and ongoing security for the building will be provided by Footprints Security. Unfortunately due to the extent of damage to the building, displacement of residents is expected to be long-term. Fire investigations will begin on July 10 and it will be necessary to obtain a structural assessment prior to residents being allowed back in the building to remove the majority of personal items. Where possible, Parksville firefighters are attempting to assist residents to acquire a few important, much needed items from their suites.

In conjunction with the fire department response, Emergency Management Oceanside mobilized and began lending assistance to displaced residents on site and an Emergency Support Services centre was activated at 9.30 pm at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre to assist people with services such as transportation, lodging, meals and incidentals. ESS continued to provide assistance on July 7 and the ESS office will be open on Saturday, July 8 and Sunday, July 9 from 11 am to 4 pm to provide continued assistance and support to displaced residents. Emergency Management Oceanside is a regional approach to providing emergency support should it be required in the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and the surrounding Regional District of Nanaimo. In this situation, the regional collaboration proved to be extremely successful in supporting residents as well as emergency service personnel.

Fire Chief Norris pointed out this apartment fire demonstrates the importance of immediately leaving a building when a fire alarm is activated. This is particularly significant in a multi-residential building when it may take a few minutes to get out of the building.

### Help for Ocean Terrace Residents

For those of you wishing to help, the Salvation Army will coordinate donations. Cash donations should go to the Salvation Army and designated as "Ocean Terrace Fire Victims". Donations of household items, toiletries and clothing should be dropped off at the Salvation Army thrift store at 192 Island Highway West and donations of furniture to the Salvation Army warehouse.

The Salvation Army is also gathering information on accommodations - people willing to allow one or two evacuees to stay in a spare bedroom. Some compensation would likely be available and/or people willing to take in one or more pets for up to two months so the owners can access housing that does not permit pets. If you can help, please contact Earl Blacklock, Manager of Community Ministries, Salvation Army Parksville, 250 240-4711.

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### For more information:

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