



**RDOS Area “D” Governance Study
Fact Sheets
October 2015**

FIRE PROTECTION & EMERGENCY SERVICES

➤ **What services are provided?**

Fire protection

Fire protection for Area “D” involves combination of service delivery models and service providers. The RDOS operates three volunteer fire departments that serve portions of Area “D”. They include the Kaleden, Okanagan Falls and Willowbrook Volunteer Fire Departments. Each department is comprised of a fire chief, an assistant chief and approximately 15 paid on-call firefighters.

Each volunteer fire department is authorized to provide fire protection services. Kaleden and Okanagan Falls fire departments are further authorized to provide:

- fire prevention program (public education)
- auto extrication/road rescue services
- first responder services
- rescue services (still water rescue, low angle rescue)

Okanagan Falls also provides fire inspections and marine rescue services.

Other fire protection services within Area “D” include the following:

- a service agreement between the Penticton Indian Band (PIB) and the City of Penticton provides fire protection for PIB-owned lands in the northern portion of Area “D” adjacent to Area F, west of the Okanagan River and including the Penticton Regional Airport. The RDOS does not contribute to this service.
- Apex Mountain Resort is served by the Apex Fire Brigade Society, a non-profit community-initiated society operated and funded through donations from the local community, independent of the RDOS. A 2007 referendum to establish a regional district volunteer fire department at Apex did not gain the support of the community.

Areas outside of the fire service boundaries for the RDOS volunteer fire departments, service agreement areas or the Apex Fire Brigade Society receive no fire protection service.

Emergency Services

The RDOS is the lead local government authority for emergency management throughout the Okanagan-Similkameen region, including all of Area “D”. This includes an emergency plan for the entire regional district, an emergency services supervisor, an element of local planning, training and coordination specific to Area “D”, and an annual contribution agreement for regional Search & Rescue. The RDOS also provides 911 emergency telephone service for the entire regional district.

➤ **Who delivers the service?**

Fire protection

With respect to the regional district volunteer fire departments, the service area boundaries are as shown in Figure 1 on page 2.

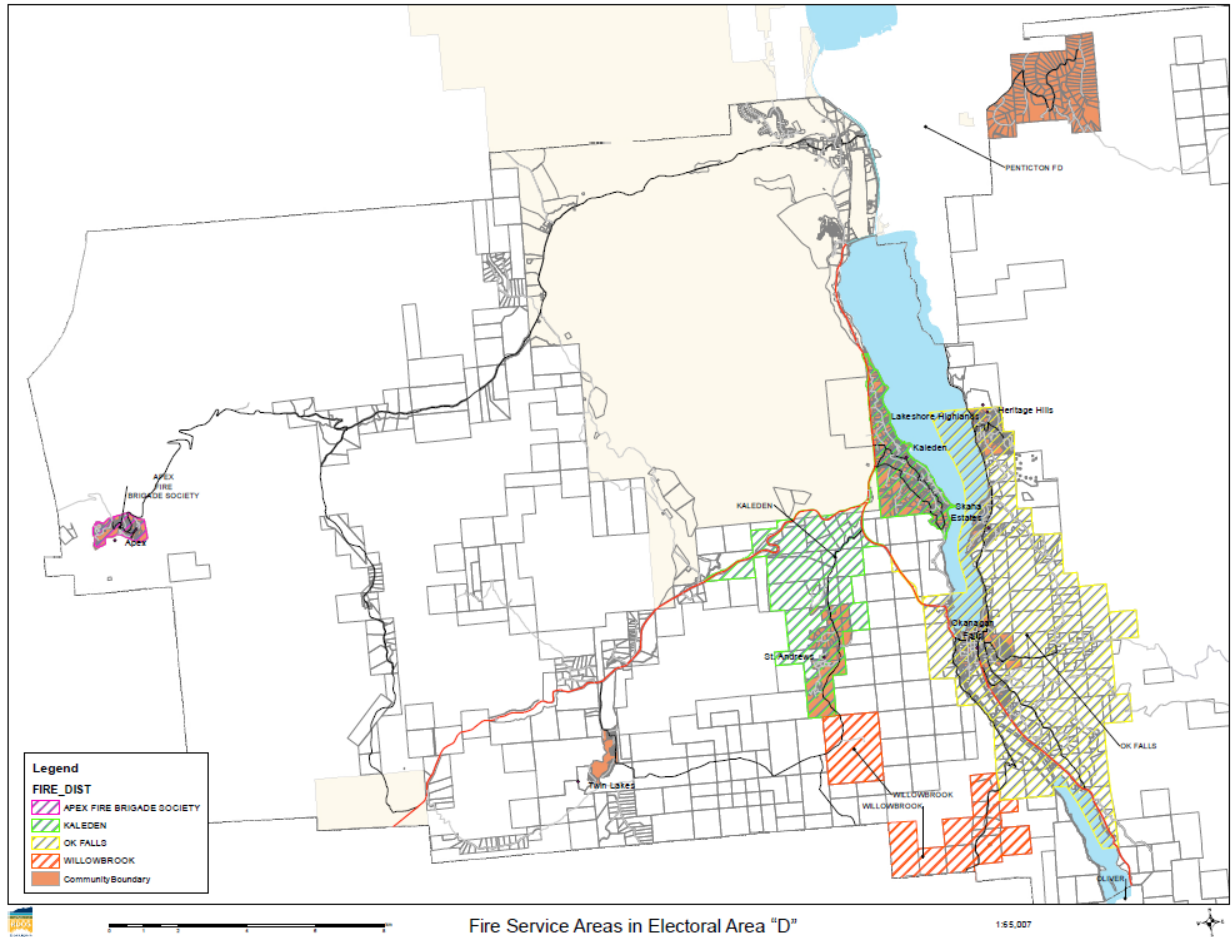
Briefly, Kaleden VFD delivers fire protection services to the communities of Kaleden, as well as Twin Lakes, Kaleden Acres and St. Andrews (auto extrication service extends just past Twin Lakes); Okanagan Falls VFD serves the communities of Okanagan Falls, Vaseux Lake, Skaha Estates and Heritage Hills; and Willowbrook VFD provides service to nine properties within Area “D” on Green Lake Road, and to the Dominion Observatory through a service agreement with the Government of Canada.

The RDOS volunteer fire departments are signatory departments to a mutual aid agreement that also includes fire departments in Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton, Princeton, Summerland, the Hedley Improvement District, the Oliver Fire Protection District, and the Osoyoos Rural Fire Protection District whereby any one of them may, in situations where the resources of their own fire

department are insufficient, request assistance from the others to bring the situation under control.

there are 4 volunteer SAR teams: Keremeos, Oliver/Osoyoos, Penticton and Princeton. These four separate teams combine their efforts to

Figure 1 - Fire Service Boundaries in Area D



Emergency Services

Emergency planning, coordination and preparedness initiatives are delivered on a region-wide basis to all electoral areas and municipalities within the regional district by the RDOS, overseen by an Emergency Services Supervisor who reports to the Manager of Community Services.

Operation of the 911 service is contracted to the Regional District of Central Okanagan in partnership with E-Comm – an emergency communication centre located in the Lower Mainland. The current agreement with E-Comm is valid until November, 2019. 911 fire calls for the South Okanagan-Similkameen region are relayed to a secondary dispatch centre at the Kelowna fire hall.

Within the boundaries of the Regional District

provide mutual aid service throughout the region. Calls for service from Area “D” are generally responded to by Penticton Search and Rescue. The RCMP with jurisdictional authority is responsible for all SAR activity within their catchment areas. Municipal and provincial governments also contribute towards SAR operations within the Okanagan-Similkameen region.

➤ **Who makes decisions?**

Fire Protection

Within the regional district fire departments, the fire chief has complete operational responsibility and authority over the Fire Department subject to the administrative direction and control of the RDOS Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Decisions regarding the regional district volunteer fire services, including decisions pertaining to

budget and capital expenditures are made by the RDOS Board of Directors, in consultation with the fire chiefs, Community Services Manager and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Emergency Services

For emergency services, as a region-wide service, all decisions are made by the full Board of Directors.

► What is spent by RDOS on the services?

The 2015 total budget for each of the regional district volunteer fire departments and emergency services are as outlined in Figure 2.

Service Component	Cost ¹
Kaleden VFD	\$257,189
Okanagan Falls VFD	\$353,243
Willowbrook VFD	\$56,654
Emergency Planning (region-wide)	\$214,700
911 Telephone System (region-wide) ²	\$1,827,874
Total	\$2,709,660

¹ Cost estimates are from adopted 2015 budget figures
² 2015 was estimated at a higher than usual cost for this service due to a telephone system upgrade. Estimated cost in subsequent years is approximately \$750,000

The net cost to Area “D” for emergency services are shown below. These costs are specific to emergency services and planning – general administrative costs are not included.

Service Component	Cost
Emergency Planning (includes SAR)	\$14,266
911 Emergency Telephone Service	\$42,658
Total	\$56,924

In addition to the service costs, there are also operating reserve accounts created for most

services, and others require capital reserves as well. It is useful to consider the amounts that the region has set aside for future expenditures.

Service	Reserve Total ¹
Kaleden VFD	\$351,255
Okanagan Falls VFD	\$598,248
Willowbrook VFD	\$3,947
911 Telephone System (region-wide) ²	\$156,978

¹ Reserve totals are as at the end of 2014.

► How are the costs recovered?

Fire Protection

The cost of each RDOS volunteer fire department is raised primarily through property taxes. The costs of each department are allocated to the participating area on the basis of converted assessment, including land and improvements. The cost of auto extrication services outside of a fire department boundary is funded provincially using a task number assigned by Emergency Management BC.

Emergency Services

The cost of emergency planning is shared equally throughout the region, and the costs are raised primarily through property taxes based on assessed value (land and improvements). Tax requisitions for 911 emergency telephone services are based on the assessed value of improvements only.

► What is the cost to the typical resident?

The tax impact on areas within Area “D” receiving fire protection from an RDOS volunteer fire department and/or emergency services is shown in Figure 5. The amount owing is based on a home valued at \$325,000.

For example, a residence valued at \$325,000 in Kaleden would pay approximately \$223 in taxes for fire protection for 2015, along with \$3.12 for

emergency services and an estimated \$9.03 for 911 emergency telephone service.

**Figure 5
Cost Impact on Typical Residence
2015**

Service	Tax Req.¹	Res. Rate	Owing²
Kaleden VFD	\$218,129	0.6873	\$223
Okanagan Falls VFD	\$293,243	0.3812	\$124
Willowbrook VFD	\$50,154	0.8722	\$283
Emergency Services	\$165,170	0.0096	\$3.12
911 Telephone ₃	\$506,874	0.05553	\$9.030

1 Tax requisition amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee
 2 Impact is calculated on a home assessed at \$325,000
 3 Rate is only calculated on improvements (not land value); assumes 50% of the average house value of \$325,000 represents improvements.