

Fire Suppression and Cost Recovery Policy

5C.001

Section: 5.0 Environmental and Protective Services
- C. Protective Services

Authority: Council

**Administering
Department:** Environmental and Protective Services

Statement

The Fire Services of the Municipal District of Bonnyville (M.D.) will respond to property or personal loss fires and emergency wildfire incidents to stop the forward spread of fire. Further, the Fire Services are authorized to recover costs related to a Fire Service response.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the cost recovery of fire suppression services as provided by the municipality's Fire Services while responding to property or personal loss fires, wildfire, and ground fires (sub-surface fires), and fires that are not considered a municipal Fire Service responsibility. Such fires include but are not limited to:

- (1) Brush and brush piles;
- (2) Prairie or running fires;
- (3) Non-permitted fires during the permit season;
- (4) Hay/straw piles;
- (5) Peat moss (ground fires); and
- (6) Grass.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- (1) "Chief Administrative Officer" (CAO) means the Chief Administrative Officer of the M.D. appointed by Council, or their authorized delegate;
- (2) "Council" means the duly elected Council of the M.D.;
- (3) "Fire Services" means fire services as defined in the M.D. Fire Services Bylaw.

Policy

- (1) Fire Suppression
 - (a) The Fire Services' primary responsibility is to assist in the preservation of life and property and to reduce injury or destruction due to fire.
 - (b) Fire Services will initially respond to:
 - (i) Emergency wildfire incidents to contain and control the forward spread of the fire; and

- (ii) Wildfire incidents, wildfire overhaul, and ground fires, but their extinguishment shall be the responsibility of the landowner or persons in control of the land, not Fire Services.
 - (c) The *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* and the M.D. Fire Services Bylaw provide authority for the M.D. to order the owner or person in control of the land involving a ground fire, to control the situation.
 - (d) The landowner or person in control of the land is responsible for extinguishment of hotspots and ground fires within the fire perimeter.
 - (e) If the landowner or person in control of the land is unable to successfully extinguish hotspots and ground fires within the fire perimeter, the M.D. may take all necessary steps to eliminate the hazard.
- (2) Cost Recovery
 - (a) The M.D. may charge fees to residents and ratepayers within the municipality in accordance with the M.D. Master Rates Bylaw as follows:
 - (i) To the owner(s) or occupant of the parcel of land and to the owner(s) of the property for fire response services inside the boundaries of the M.D. where Fire Services have engaged in fire suppression activities.
 - (ii) To the owner(s) or occupant of the parcel of land and to the owner(s) of the property for the costs of any materials used, and third-party costs where the M.D. has engaged in any response service for any duration of time.
 - (b) The M.D. may request proof of fire suppression insurance coverage, or lack thereof, as contained in their insurance policy from the owner(s) or occupant of the parcel of land.
 - (i) If proof of coverage, or lack thereof, is provided, the M.D. will only invoice the resident or ratepayer for the coverage provided for in their policy at the time of the incident.
 - (ii) If the resident or ratepayer declines to provide proof of coverage, or lack thereof, the M.D. will invoice them for full recovery of the costs incurred.
 - (c) In all cases, unless provisions under Section (4) of this policy have been activated, cost recovery charges must be paid within 60 days of receipt.
 - (d) Collection of unpaid cost recovery charges will be processed in accordance with the M.D. Fire Services Bylaw.
- (3) Notification, Reporting and Invoicing
 - (a) For the M.D. to recover costs associated with fire suppression, a process of reporting through the Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority (BRFA) has been established as follows:
 - (i) Upon being dispatched to fight a fire, the BRFA shall deploy in accordance with their standard operating procedures.
 - (ii) Upon the conclusion of the deployment, the BRFA shall note the circumstances and details concerning the deployment on a Cost Recovery Form.

- (iii) Once completed, the Cost Recovery Form shall be forwarded to the General Manager of Environmental and Protective Services, or their designate, for review and initial approval of charges associated with the cost recovery process.
- (iv) Upon approval by the General Manager, the form shall be reviewed by the CAO and given final approval prior to being submitted to Finance for invoicing.
- (v) The rates charged for Fire Services shall be applied for the period commencing from when the equipment leaves the base facility until it is deemed back in service, rounded to the next one-half hour.
- (b) Other costs may be charged for items including, but not limited to:
 - (i) Replacement of foam;
 - (ii) Meals and refreshments;
 - (iii) Fuel;
 - (iv) Lost or damaged equipment and/or clothing;
 - (v) Fire investigation costs; and/or
 - (vi) Specialty firefighting services.
- (c) Costs billed to ratepayers shall follow the rates as established by the M.D. Master Rates Bylaw.
- (4) Appeals and Special Considerations
 - (a) Landowners and persons invoiced by the M.D. for costs involved in extinguishing a fire may submit a request to Council for the fees to be waived.
 - (b) Council may approve such a request as follows:
 - (i) Where no insurance for property or personal fire loss exists:
 1. cost recovery shall not be pursued relating to the specific incident under appeal;
 2. cost recovery shall be pursued, but for a different amount as determined by Council at that time; or
 3. cost recovery shall be pursued according to the initial invoice.
 - (ii) Any other circumstance shall be at Council's discretion.
 - (c) Requests to Council to waive fees are to be made in writing within 30 days of the invoice date.

Review Period

Within five (5) years from date adopted / amended / reviewed.

For administrative use only:

Previous Policy Number: (prior to July 24, 2019)	20.23.01
Related Documentation: (plans, bylaws, policies, procedures, etc.)	Form: Cost Recovery Form Bylaw: Fire Services Bylaw Bylaw: Master Rates Bylaw