



## FIRE CHIEF ORDER ISSUED AT COACHMAN APARTMENTS

*City of Terrace taking actions to enforce the order due to life safety risks*

Today, the City of Terrace is posting a Fire Order on the doorways of the privately owned Coachman apartment building at 4204 Sparks Street due to numerous deficiencies identified during an inspection on January 8, 2024, that go against the City of Terrace's Fire Prevention Bylaw as well as the British Columbia Fire Code. This means the building is not safe for occupancy and the City will begin securing the building as soon as reasonably feasible. A team including Fire Chief Chad Cooper, Bylaw and Community Safety Officers, representatives from 'Ksan Society, and members of the RCMP will be conducting a walkthrough this afternoon to document the current conditions, speak with tenants in person, and post and distribute notices on the property.

On January 28, 2024, the Fire Chief's Order was delivered to the executor of the property owner's estate. The order gave 24 hours to immediately evict any occupants of the building, disconnect the main building power, mitigate any fire hazards, and secure the building against unauthorized entry. The executor is in agreement with the order and supports the City's actions to vacate and secure the building.

In early 2023, the City of Terrace building inspectors and fire department advised all tenants to leave the Coachman apartment building due to its unsafe conditions, including lack of running water, black mould, structural disrepair, and other hazards. With help from 'Ksan Society, BC Housing, and the City of Terrace, among many others, all residents were able to secure alternative accommodation—many at the former Mumford's Lodge, which the Province of BC purchased in April 2023 specifically for these displaced tenants. However, some tenants chose to remain despite offers of alternative housing and have been living in the derelict building ever since.

The building has remained in disrepair over the last year; since the courts did not appoint an executor to the property owner's estate until mid-2023, the City faced significant delays in proceeding with the next steps in securing the building. Recently, the City's Bylaw and Community Safety Officers and the RCMP have been called to the building with more frequency due to ongoing safety concerns and increased trespassing by additional individuals. Following the latest inspection, the City is able to move forward with additional intervention. Today, outreach workers from 'Ksan Society are speaking to the remaining two tenants, who have alternative housing secured. Outreach workers will be assisting persons who are trespassing on the property with transportation to Joe's Place, 'Ksan, or other locations as required to ensure everyone is out safely. The City's bylaw staff will be assisting with the transport of belongings.

“The Fire Department’s inspection of the Coachman apartment building revealed serious fire and life safety deficiencies that pose significant risks to occupants. It is imperative that we intervene promptly to mitigate potential emergencies that could occur due to these conditions. This initiative is a collaborative effort among various City departments, the RCMP, and ‘Ksan, underscoring our unified commitment to ensuring public safety. We are tackling this situation with a strategic blend of safety measures and compassion. The community’s well-being is our top priority, and we will continue to work diligently to safeguard our residents,” said City of Terrace Fire Chief Chad Cooper.

“The Coachman apartment building has deteriorated into an extreme safety hazard, offering no protection should a fire break out. This intervention is crucial at this point to ensure no one is living in such unsafe conditions. We are grateful for the assistance from ‘Ksan and other partners in ensuring the swift relocation of all affected by the fire order,” said Mayor Sean Bujtas.

Following today’s events, anyone in the building is expected to move out immediately. The next steps involve disconnecting the power and then returning with a contractor to board up the building to prohibit unauthorized entry.

Additional background information: [Ministry of Housing News Release - April 28, 2023](#)

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