

## Unoccupied and Abandoned Properties Bulletin

### General Overview

The Surrey Fire Service Community Property Safety Team (“CPST”) has implemented an effective model to address distressed properties, resulting in a reduced number of fires within unoccupied/abandoned buildings in Surrey. These properties often attract unauthorized activity, posing significant public safety risks and requiring frequent responses from police, fire, and by-law services. The CPST’s objective is to mitigate these risks by engaging property owners, informing them of their obligations, and issuing administrative orders when necessary.

### What is an Unoccupied/Abandoned Building?

The *Surrey Abandoned Properties By-law, 2007, No. 16394* (the “*Abandoned Properties Bylaw*”) defines an “Abandoned Property” as follows:

“...any building, structure or improvement which is unoccupied by the owner or any tenant or occupier lawfully entitled to occupy the building, structure or improvement for a continuous period of over thirty (30) days within a consecutive forty-five (45) day period.”

If a building, structure or improvement is unoccupied in a manner consistent with this definition, the CPST considers it to be unoccupied/abandoned. The CPST collaborates with property owners to ensure compliance with regulations aimed at securing such buildings, thereby reducing fire incidents within Surrey.

### Owner Responsibilities

The *Abandoned Properties Bylaw* outlines the duties of persons that own unoccupied/abandoned properties in Surrey, including specific requirements for securing and safeguarding these properties against unauthorized access, occupation, vandalism, intentional damage, or fire hazards. Given the heightened risks associated with unoccupied/abandoned properties, adherence to the security standards established by the City of Surrey is imperative.

### Required Actions

Owners of unoccupied/abandoned properties are urged to contact the CPST for guidance on how to bring their properties into compliance with the *Abandoned Properties Bylaw*. The CPST will provide support and address any inquiries regarding the necessary steps to ensure properties are secured to the City of Surrey’s standards. For assistance, please reach out to the CPST via email at [CPSTeam@surrey.ca](mailto:CPSTeam@surrey.ca) or by phone at 604-591-4770.

We appreciate your cooperation in mitigating the risk of fires in unoccupied/abandoned buildings. These risk reduction efforts help to improve fire safety outcomes.

**For information about our program and the bylaws associated with CPST see the links below:**

- [Abandoned Properties Bylaw, 2007, No. 16394](#)
- [Surrey Fee-Setting Bylaw, 2001, No. 14577](#)
- <https://www.surrey.ca/about-surrey/surrey-fire-service/community-property-safety-team>