



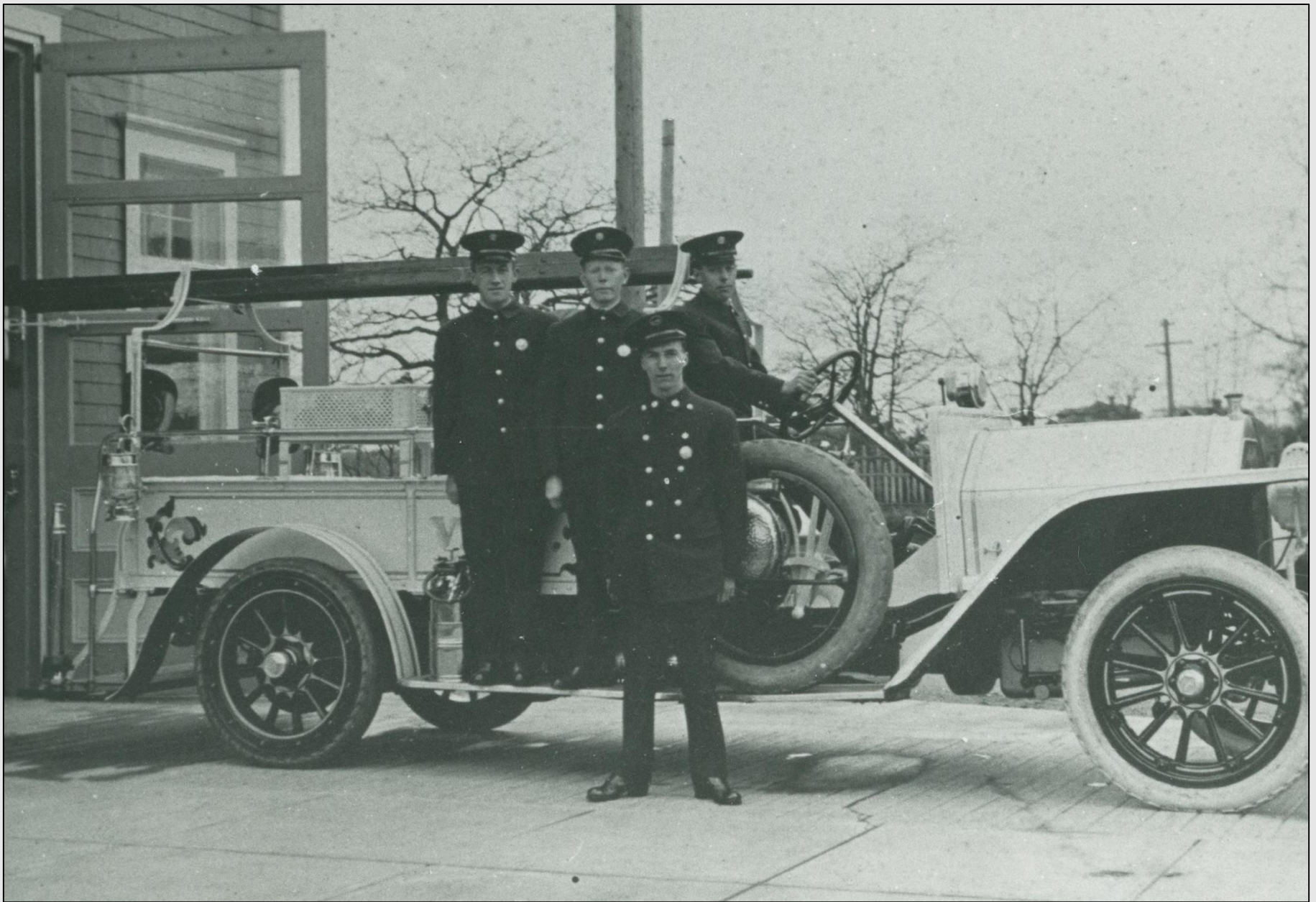
In 2019, the Saanich Fire Department celebrated its centennial. This exhibit was produced through a collaboration between Saanich Archives and the Saanich Fire Department in honour of this milestone.

The exhibit was displayed during the centennial year at the Fire Hall and at the Saanich Centennial Library.

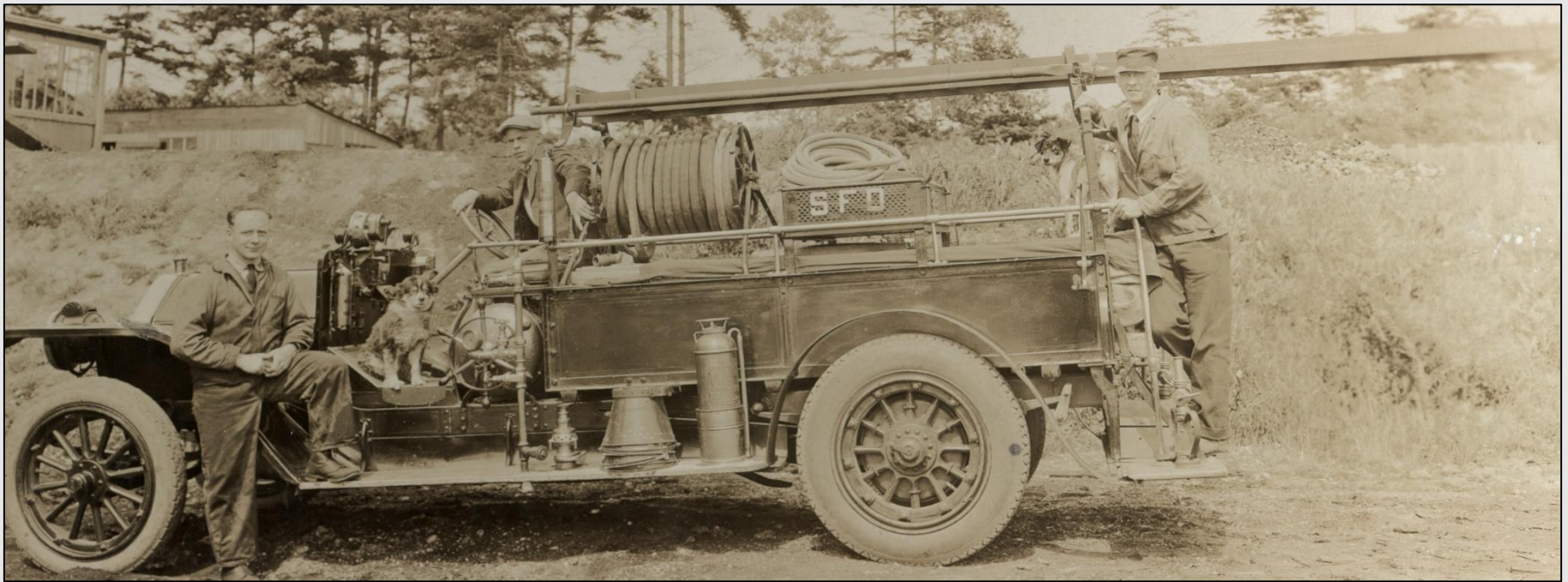
1919

Until **1919**, fire protection in Saanich was provided by the City of Victoria Fire Department. Under increasing pressure from taxpayers to provide protective services, the municipality bought a truck and 1,000 feet of hose, and rented a building at the corner of Carey and Saanich Roads (the current site of Uptown Shopping Centre).

John G. 'Jack' Little was appointed Fireman-in-Charge and, in March 1919, Saanich No. 1 Fire Hall was officially inaugurated. Saanich Fire Department received 25 calls that year.



*Saanich's first fire truck, 1919 (1980-004-001)*



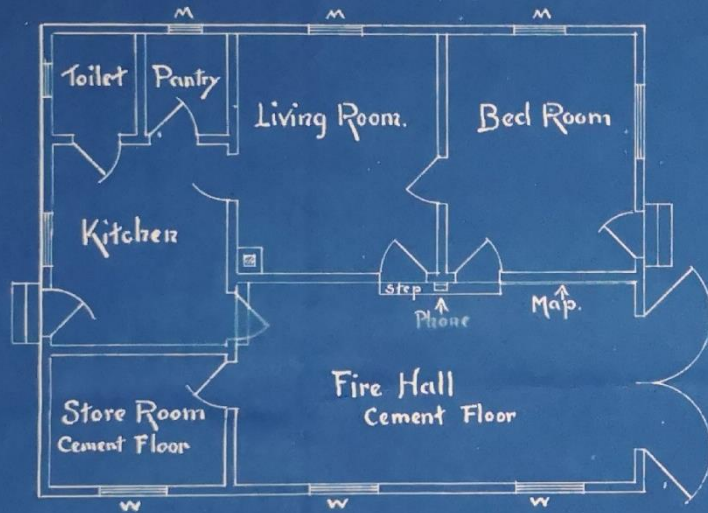
Saanich Fire Dept.'s 1912 Russell Knight converted passenger car, 1924 (2009-026-014)  
Bert Lock, Charles Grant, Jack Little, and two dogs

## General Rules & Regulations #54:

*“Great care should be taken in the selection of firemen. The applicant should realize the responsibility being placed upon him and should respond to training readily. Much will depend upon the general intelligence of a fireman. Determining factor in the selection of men to become firemen is their desire to serve. Only those who sincerely desire to aid their fellow men in an extreme emergency and at great risk to their own lives can be relied upon for efficient service”.*

The Corporation of the District of Saanich  
Fire Department Rules & Regulations, 1939

SUGGESTION FOR A  
SUBURBAN FIRE HALL



Scale  $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$



J.G. Little  
1922

Blueprint for a suburban fire hall designed by Saanich's first fireman-in-charge, John G. Little (B-160)

# 1930S-1940S

In **1931**, H.T. Lock was appointed as the first Fire Chief of the Municipality.

In **1934**, the Victoria Fire Department decided to withdraw emergency fire assistance and, in **1938**, a second piece of fire-fighting equipment was purchased.

By **1944**, the Department consisted of one Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief, and thirteen Firemen and had three trucks, one inhalator, and one car.

On 1 August **1946**, the Department adopted the 2 platoon, 4 day week system, working 48 hours. Now, all members of the department were required to hold First-Aid certification.

In 1916, there were 170 fire hydrants in Saanich; by **1946**, there were 421.

In **1947**, Fire Hall No. 2 on Hamsterly Road was built by the Municipality under the direction of John G. Little.



*Saanich No. 1 Fire Hall, 1939 (1978-001-045)*

*Harry Greenwood, Fred Parkinson, Chief Bert Locke, Art Snelling (on truck), Frank Miller, Charlie Webb*



Practicing with life saving equipment, 1941 (2006-014-021)

*“Shortly after starting, when I had been an Alarm Operator for only four days, there was a building fire. This happened on the night shift. Everyone had gone to the building fire except myself when the phone rang again and I was told there was a big bush fire at Gordon Head. So... as I did not know what to do... I phoned the closest member of the Department who was Tom Jennings on Rowland Avenue. I told him I was going on and he said I should take the tank truck, pick him up and we would both go to the fire. When we got to Cedar Hill Road, the whole sky was lit up and the fire was threatening some houses! Enlisting some of the neighbours, Tom and myself got the fire under control. No one was left in the Hall – no one to answer the alarms and the phone until the rest of the crew got back from the building fire. You did what you could in those days.”*

Fire Chief Harold Gains,  
From oral history interview, 1979  
Describing first weeks on the job in 1946



EXAMINATION PAPER

1. Name two types of Fire pumps in the Fire Department.
2. What is the capacity gallons per minute of the the following pumps, Nos. 1, 4 and 5.
3. Name three sizes and types of fire hose used in this Department.
4. What are the lengths and types of ladders on No. 1 Truck.
5. Name the three parts of a ladder.
6. How far should the butt of the ladder be placed from the building of a 40 foot ladder extended 35 feet.
7. Give the names of the Gas mask and smoke mask on No. 1 Truck.
8. Give the name of the hose clamp on No. 1 Truck.
9. Give the sizes of the tips of the three 2½ nozzles on No. 4 Truck.
10. Give the sizes of the large suction hoses on the following trucks, Nos. 1, 4 and 5.
11. Give the sizes of the three large salvage covers on No. 1 Truck.
12. Name three schools in the No. 3 Fire Hall area.
13. Name three schools in the No. 1 Fire Hall area.
14. What capacity is the Booster tank on No. 2 Truck.
15. Name the 2 two pumps on No. 3 Truck.
16. What amount of hose is carried on No. 3 Truck.
17. Name two hydrant fittings.
18. Name three types of extinguishers.
19. Name three salvage tools.
20. Give the capacity per gallon per minute of the Fire King Pump and Bickle trailer pump.
21. Give the length of the two Booster hoses on No. 2 Truck.
22. What does H<sub>o</sub> and H<sub>p</sub> on the inhalator stand for.
23. What is the Bowline on the Bite used for.
24. The permit fees for Oil burner equipment are fir Domestic burners? Commercial Burners? and Range Burners?
25. How far should a range or stove be placed from a wall or woodwork.
26. How far from any woodwork should a stove pipe be installed.
27. According to Fire By-law of Saanich regarding chimney fires, what is the By-law?
28. Name three different types of hydrants.
29. Why is it necessary to ventilate a building that is on fire.
30. Give the phone number of No. 2 Hall at East Saanich Road.
31. How is it necessary to ventilate a building that is on fire.
32. What is a two into one Siamese fitting used for.
33. Explain the use of sill hook.
34. Why are tormentors used.
35. Explain a reverse laying of fire hose.
36. What is a pumper Siamese used for.
37. What is a leader Siamese used for.
38. Explain the use of the double make and double female couplings.
39. Explain the use of hose clamp.
40. Explain the use of reducer 5" by 2½".

Saanich Fire Dept. ca. 1949

1950s

In **1950**, Fire Hall No. 3 on Shelbourne Street was built.

In **1954**, new radio equipment was installed.

*“I had not been here long when we had a grocer’s fire on Judah Avenue. I was put into the alarm room because I was a junior and when a fire call came in I was relieved by a senior fire fighter and I rode the tail board of the fire truck. On this particular day, my relief was late and by the time I got out of the alarm room the truck had left. Needless to say I was shaking in my boots when I walked Bill Bryant, the master mechanic. I explained my predicament to him and he said “don’t worry son”, and smuggled me in the back way. I felt I had made it. However Chief Joe Law was not as dumb as I thought he was and I was not long back when I got a call to the Chief’s office and got a real dressing down from him.”*

Orville McGregor

From oral history interview, 1985

Describing first week on the job in 1954

## CONFLAGRATION!

# Whose Fire Was It Anyhow?

Victoria  
B.C.  
May 22  
1952

Both Saanich and Esquimalt fire departments sent their equipment screaming to the Gorge Bridge Tuesday.

Saanich firemen leaped to lay hoselines from the Gorge Road; Esquimalt's crew raced up Tillicum.

Then, for a moment, there was confusion. The fire was on the bridge across the Gorge. Somewhere, right in the middle, an imaginary line divides the Saanich and Esquimalt municipalities. The equipment of one cannot very well attend a fire rightly belonging to the other.

Saanich firemen, however, made the gracious gesture.

An Esquimalt fireman, like a cavalier, sprang forward and ground with his heel the smouldering woodwork.

A cigarette butt had burned a little patch in the bridge's wooden timber.

*“On Saturday mornings we always used to wash the floors at the Fire Halls. When you put the suction hose into the sump you were supposed to tie it down so the pressure of the water would not bring it up, but one particular Saturday they did not tie it down and then the outlet hose somehow or other got loose. I was standing there and got soaked so bad I even had to put my underwear in the furnace room to dry out. We had a lot of fun! We used to have a water fight every Saturday morning. We washed our own vehicles then.”*

Joe Robbins

From oral history interview, 1982  
Describing his experiences in the 1950s

22 May 1952



*Dick Gibson in fire alarm room, 1960s (1981-022-022)*

## Firemen in Saanich To Have Radio Link

A NEW aid to the Saanich Fire Department — the two-way radio — will be in operation shortly.

Fire Chief Joseph Law said the improved radio service will aid the department greatly, especially at this time of year when grass and bush fires are so frequent.

Five sets are being installed in two cars and three trucks. Sending and receiving equipment will be located in the Douglas Street hall.

Prior to the new system, Saanich had only a single mobile set which was connected with the police radio system. The new system is independent.

*9 July 1950*

# 1960S-1970S

In the **1960s**, Saanich Fire Department introduced an ambulance service and by the **1970s**, was a leader in the ambulance and rescue field. Saanich was the first Fire Department in Canada in which members administered drugs and used specific life support equipment to aid heart attack victims.

In **1978**, a new fire station was built at Royal Oak and in **1979**, a water rescue and safety program were introduced.

# Saanich Leads North America With Electronic Life Saving Equipment

by Chief J. Sutherland

The report of the group looking into "Out-of-Hospital" medical services. These units require the services of a physician. It is notable that Saanich ambulance as a vehicle for the emergency. He chose Saanich ambulance as a vehicle for the emergency.



Clipping: Dogwood Star, 14 August 1969

Photo: Display of ambulance equipment at No. 1 Fire Hall, 1971 (2006-014-041)

Chief Harold Gains, Terry Erskine, Whitey Seversen, Paul Smith, Trevor Hughes, and Dan Marchessault (on stretcher)



*Demolition of No. 1 Fire Hall, 3681 Douglas Street, 1964 (1980-015-094a)*



Cub Scouts visiting Saanich Fire Hall during fire prevention week, 1969  
(1981-022-014a)

*“I had my first ambulance call on my very first day of work. I thought “Oh my God, I’m really in for it now”. It was a kind of scary situation, but as it turned out the kid was not badly injured. I worked on the ambulance from 1963 to about 1976, and in 1976 I became an officer so then I was just assigned to a firetruck.”*

Earnest Lindner,  
From oral history interview, 1989  
Describing first day on the job in 1963



# 1980S-2019

The **1980s** and **1990s** saw the expansion of the fire inspection and prevention programmes in an effort to minimize life and property loss caused by unwanted fires. The Saanich Fire Department also became involved in the new BC Fire Academy in Vancouver by actively supporting its main purpose: uniform training of fire service personnel in BC.

**Today**, the Saanich Fire Department remains a leader in educating the public in fire safety, continuing to monitor and establish new legislation and regulations that encourage fire protection, and improving equipment, training, and safe fire suppression methods.



*Saanich fire truck outside Lansdowne School as part of fire prevention education, 1980s (2006-014-063)*



Debra Brash/Times-Colonist

### Cool gift

Saanich firefighters Monday donated 64 turkeys to Salvation Army, delivered by Lindsay

White, front, with Ian Farrell, Jack Thame and Army majors Cassell Garnet and Leo Porter.

*Times Colonist, 21 December 1993*



Ray Smith/Times Colonist

### Afterglow

Relax, these Saanich firefighters really do mean to burn down the house. It was all part of a live fire training drill that also called for a break for a group photo. The house, at 3984 Holland Ave., was built around 1892. The current owner, Ed Rankin, will build greenhouses on the property. The Old house was not structurally sound enough to keep standing.

Times Colonist 27 November 1998,  
page C1

## Saanich's female firefighters blazing a trail in capital region

Katie DeRosa / Times Colonist

October 25, 2014



Bonnie Fiala, left, and Heather Jaques, were recently hired by the Saanich Fire Department. "It was important for us, from Day 1, that it is an equal playing field — that we're being evaluated the same and we want to be treated the same as all the other recruits," Fiala says. [Photograph By Adrian Lam, Times Colonist]

## Saanich firefighters school more than 1,000 kids in fire safety this spring

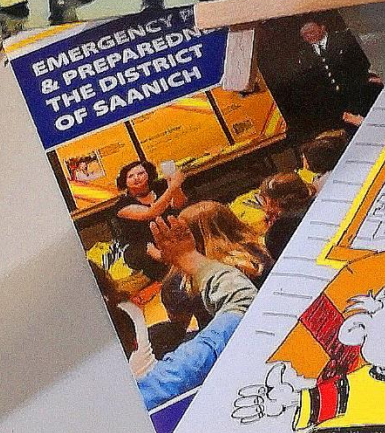
Saanich News

April 2, 2015

Since 2007, the Saanich Fire Department has presented the annual Learn Not To Burn program to 550 classes and 15,500 students



Saanich Fire Fighter Craig Bradford teaches students at Campus View elementary for the Learn Not to Burn program.



*"I had a job probably that anybody in their right mind would definitely want. I had the pleasure of working with people, around people that anybody would want if they only knew what they were missing."*

Brian Ruddock  
 From oral history interview, 1993  
 Joined Saanich Fire Department in 1965



# SAANICH FIRE DEPARTMENT, 1919-2019

To learn more about the history, values and vision, and current programs of the Saanich Fire Department visit [saanich.ca/fire](http://saanich.ca/fire).

Working on your own research project? Visit [saanich.ca/archives](http://saanich.ca/archives) or contact us at 250-475-5494 ext. 3478, [archives@saanich.ca](mailto:archives@saanich.ca).



*Saanich Fire Department high angle rescue training, 2000s  
(2006-014-004)*