



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Community Safety Committee

**Date:** March 18, 2019

**From:** Tim Wilkinson  
Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue

**File:** 09-5000-01/2019-Vol 01

**Re:** Richmond Fire-Rescue Monthly Activity Report – February 2019

### Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled “Richmond Fire-Rescue Monthly Activity Report – February 2019”, dated March 18, 2019, from the Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue, be received for information.

Tim Wilkinson  
Fire Chief  
(604-303-2701)

Att. 2

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>  |                      |
| <b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>                            |                      |
|  |                      |
| <b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT /<br/>AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b> | <b>INITIALS:</b><br> |
| <b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>   |                      |
|  |                      |

## Staff Report

### Origin

This report provides Council with an update on Richmond Fire-Rescue (RFR) activities. RFR is reporting on its activities in support of its mission:

*We act as an effective team to proactively protect and enhance the City's livability by serving and educating our community, preventing harm and responding to emergencies.*

### Analysis

#### Community Involvement

RFR advances public safety awareness, education and community connections by providing valuable training activities, participation in community events and social media updates.

During February staff engaged with approximately 428 children and adults, while continuing to develop effective interagency relationships and partnerships within the community.

February 2019 events included:

- Safety presentations and hall tours with the following groups: Richmond Multicultural Helping Home, SUCCESS, Minoru Library, Covenant Court Senior's Housing;
- Career Presentation at Richmond and Steveston-London Secondary Schools; and
- Community outreach events with Emergency Programs, London Drugs, Richmond Family Place Pancake Breakfast and pink epaulette day for Anti-bulling day.
- The Laxa Family recognition event where this Richmond family who were the unfortunate victims of a fire in 2004, were able to meet and thank the firefighters who saved their lives. Brandon Laxa, the young man injured in the fire, has recently completed his firefighter training and is interested in joining the fire service. Both children have attended the British Columbia Professional Firefighter's Burn Camp each summer for the past 13 years.
- The Golden Dragon celebration for the Chinese New Year. The Fire Chief and the Officer in Charge Will Ng attended and dotted the eye of the dragon on behalf of the City of Richmond.
- RFR family celebration recognizing the successful completion of the initial orientation period for recruit firefighters. This celebration includes a firefighting skills demonstration and education for families regarding the health and well-being of new firefighters. This day also is a rite of passage in that the event symbolizes the move from trainee to operational firefighter.

Emergency Response

RFR’s goal is to respond to events in a manner where loss of life, reduction of property damage and protection of the environment is mitigated. In February 2019 there were a total 749 incidents, representing a seven per cent reduction in calls from February 2018 (Attachment 1).

The average time on scene for RFR crews was 31 minutes; this is an increase over the 27 minutes in 2018. This is due to the nature and severity of each call and the duration on scene.

In February 2019 there were 21 reportable fires to the Office of the Fire Commissioner; representing a 10 per cent increase from February 2018. The average figure for fires reported in February over the last five years, is 22, thus reportable fires in the month of February remains consistent with year-over-year trends.

RFR’s emergency fire response goal is to maintain fire to the room of origin. The room of origin standard is especially important in terms of fire loss increases some ten-fold once the fire leaves the room of origin. Fire damage and property losses during February 2019 are estimated at \$50,500. This total includes \$50,500 for building/asset loss and \$0 for content loss. The total building/asset and content value at risk was estimated to be \$3,167,210 and the total value preserved from damage was \$3,116,710. These numbers translate to 98 per cent of value protected (Table 1); this is the lower than the 99 per cent protected value observed in 2018.

**Table 1: Fire Calls By Type and Loss Estimates – February 2019**

| <b>Incident Type Breakdown</b> | <b>Call Volume</b> | <b>Estimated Building / Asset Value (\$)</b> | <b>Estimated Building / Asset Loss (\$)</b> | <b>Estimated Content Value (\$)</b> | <b>Estimated Content Loss (\$)</b> | <b>Estimated Total Value Preserved (\$)</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Residential:                   |                    |  |   |                                     |                                    |   |
| Single family                  | 1                  | 550,000                                      | 5,000                                       | -                                   | -                                  | 545,000                                     |
| Multi family                   | 8                  | 2,528,200                                    | 500   | 26,010                              | -                                  | 2,553,710                                   |
| Commercial / Industrial        | 4                  | -  | -   | -                                   | -                                  | -   |
| Outdoor                        | 3                  | -  | -   | -                                   | -                                  | -   |
| Vehicle/Vessel                 | 5                  | 63,000                                       | 45,000                                      | -                                   | -                                  | 18,000                                      |
| <b>Totals*</b>                 | <b>21</b>          | <b>3,141,200</b>                             | <b>50,500</b>                               | <b>26,010</b>                       | <b>-</b>                           | <b>3,116,710</b>                            |

\*The dollar losses shown in this table are preliminary estimates. They are derived from RFR’s record management system and are subject to change due to delays in reporting and confirmation of actual losses from private insurance agencies (as available).

Significant Events

Fire crews minimized harm and limited fires to the place of origin in these notable February 2019 incidents:

- February 2, 2019 – Pedestrian Stuck on No. 3 Road. Arriving RFR crews quickly used the Jaws of Life to remove the patient trapped underneath the vehicle. The patient was taken to hospital by BC Ambulance staff. All three RFR crews who attended were provided with Critical Incident Stress Management de-briefing.

- February 4, 2019 – Residential fire on Westminster Highway. On arrival RFR crews found clothes dryer on fire in an apartment suite. The fire was extinguished, but had caused damage to the unit. A nearby sprinkler head had activated, which initially controlled the fire spread. Crews accessed the fire to provide final extinguishment and then provide assistance with water cleanup and smoke evacuation from the premises. There were no reports of injuries. The fire investigation found the event to be accidental with lack of duct work cleaning acting as a factor in the ignition of the fire.
- February 5, 2019 – Residential fire on Buttermere Drive. The Incident Commander created a multi layered operational plan where the first arriving crew attended to a patient with first and second degree burns; this person continues to have medical interventions provided by the British Columbia Professional Firefighters Burn Ward located at Vancouver General Hospital. Second arriving crews were assigned to attack the fire with a Class A wetting agent “Cold Fire” was employed to extinguish and cool the contents of a fire which was located within a fire place. A Thermal Imaging Camera was used to check fire spread and no further hot spots were found. BC Ambulance crews and a Fire Investigator attended. The fire investigation found this event to be accidental in nature with human failings as a contributing factor as the person who lit the fire was using an accelerant to start the fire.
- February 6, 2019 – Hazmat incident on Princeton Avenue. Arriving RFR crews provided rapid intervention rescue standby for a chemical decontamination. Over a period of multiple hours, RFR crews operated on-scene and provided service which allowed the RCMP ‘E’ Division’s Clandestine Laboratory Team to locate, remove and decontaminate a deceased person from inside of the residence. RFR crews provided a safe working environment for the attending BC Coroner and subsequent transportation of the body to the Vancouver General Hospital morgue. Decontamination of the Haz-Mat crews and RCMP Clandestine Laboratory personnel was carried out by RFR’s portable Aeroclave Decontamination units.

The Aeroclave Decontamination tool has been in RFR service for over a year in the Emergency Vehicle Technician’s Branch. The tool is used each time a vehicle is serviced; it is also decontaminated through a cabin fogging process. The portable tool was essential during the recent Haz-Mat incident where multiple vehicles, personnel, structure and a body were found contaminated. It decontaminates a body in a way which removes the hazards but leaves all evidence intact. The system also allowed portable decontamination as well as safe and dignified removal of a body.

- February 8, 2019 – Fire at a Long Term Care Facility on Mellis Drive. Arriving crews found smoke on the second floor of the property. RFR crews provided assistance to evacuate the patients. A Thermal Imaging Camera was used to locate the source of the smoke. The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system was shut off to stop the spread of smoke. Crews provided ventilation to the second floor and an electrical engineer was called to locate the source of the issue. Once the source was isolated and the second floor ventilated, RFR crews provided assistance in returning the patients back to the second floor. There were no injuries reported. A Fire Investigator attended and the investigation found that the facility ventilation system had malfunctioned creating the smoke, once the system was shut down the smoke dissipated and patients were assisted back to their rooms.

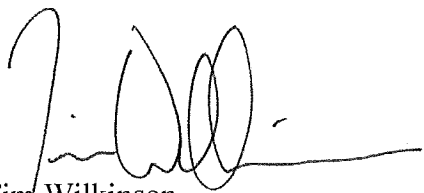
- February 8, 2019 – Technical water rescue at Palmberg Road. RFR crews responded to an animal and a RCMP officer in distress located within a frozen pond. Arriving crews assisted the RCMP Officer out of the water. RFR crews used a water rescue rope and broke through the ice allowing access to the animal and then the teams were able to pull the animal back to shore. BC Ambulance Crews attended. There were no injuries reported. The animal was taken to Richmond Animal Protection Society for further care.
- February 19, 2019 – Kitchen fire on No. 2 Road. Arriving crews saw smoke coming from the interior of a unit. Crews proceeded to the kitchen area and aggressively attacked the fire extinguishing it with water. A Thermal Imaging Camera was used to check of spread of fire to ensure it was fully extinguished. No injuries were reported. Emergency Social Services were called to assist the displaced family. A Fire Investigator attended and concluded the fire was accidental in nature.
- February 22, 2019 – Technical rescue at River Road. Responding crews provided technical assistance for a partially submerged vehicle in the river. RFR rescue teams conducted a search of the vehicle to ensure that no occupants were found within the vehicle. RFR crews using chains, a tow rope and fire apparatus removed the vehicle from the river. A further search of the area was carried out by RCMP and the Coast Guard. The vehicle was removed from the site by a towing service.
- February 27, 2019 – Gas leak on Shellbridge Way. Crews responded to a cut gas pipe on the north side of a commercial building. The gas was shut off and the property evacuated. Fortis Gas attended. RFR crews used their gas detection devises to ensure that the building was safe to occupy prior to staff returning back into the building.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Conclusion**

RFR monitor activities to identify trends and create programs to respond to emerging trends.



Tim Wilkinson  
Fire Chief  
(604-303-2701)

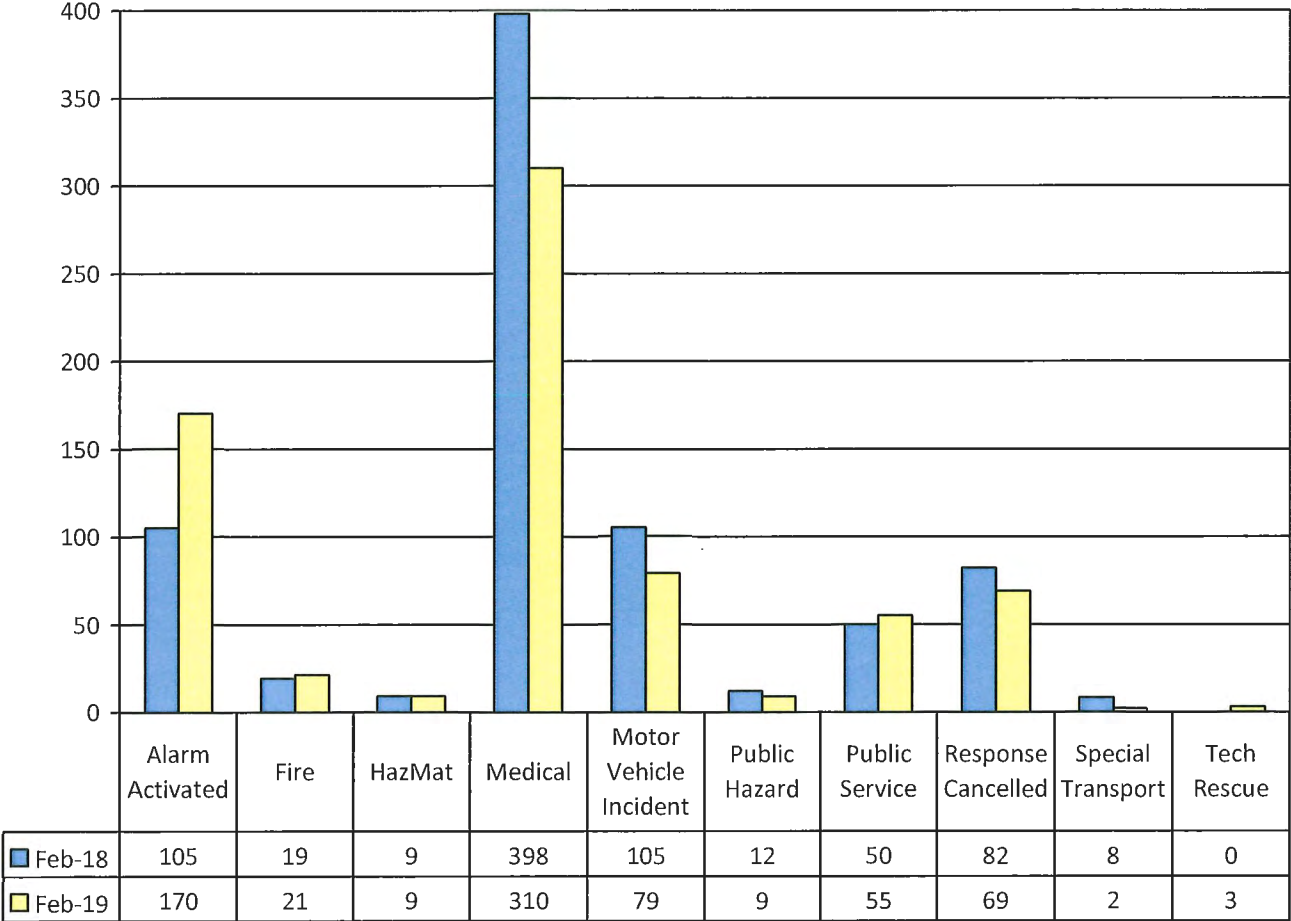
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- Att. 1: Suppression Activity  
2: Location of February's Fire, Medical and MVIs

**Calls for Service Volumes**

The following chart provides a month to month comparison regarding incidents occurring in February 2018 and 2019. In February 2019, there were a total of 727 incidents, compared to 788 in February 2018. This represents a decrease of seven per cent.

**Table 3: February 2018 & 2019 Calls for Service Volumes**

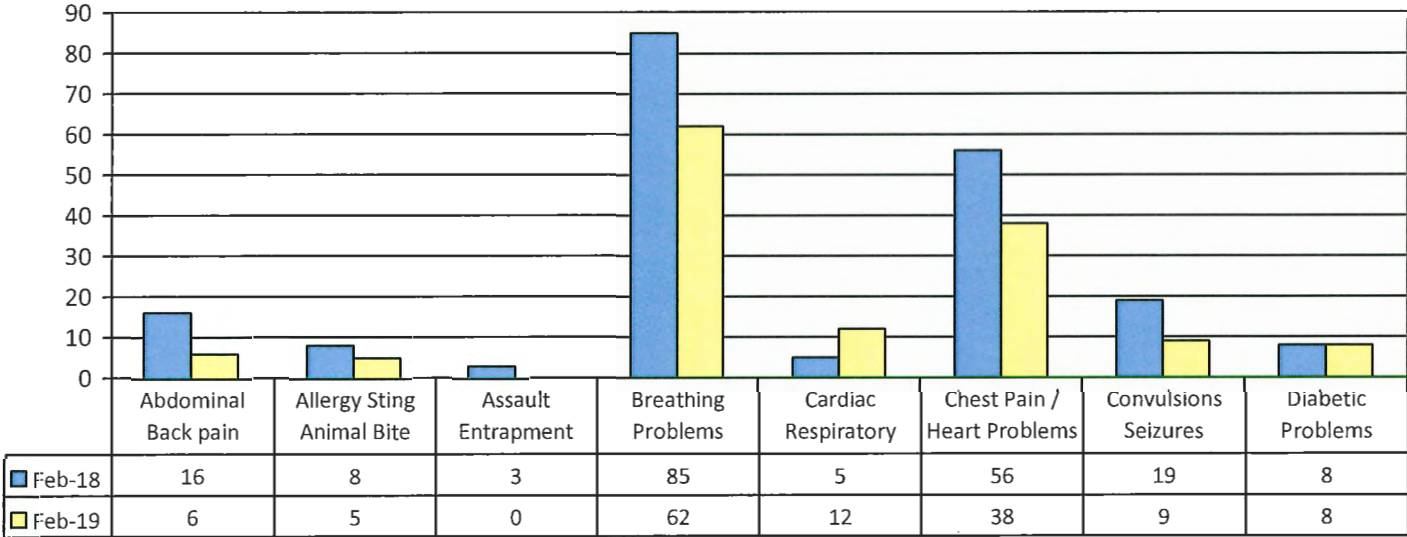


**Call Type Legend:**  
*HazMat*: includes fuel or vapour; spills, leaks, or containment  
*Medical*: includes: cardiac arrest, emergency response, home or industrial accidents  
*Public Hazard*: includes: aircraft emergency, bomb removal standby, object removal, or power lines down  
*Public Service*: includes: assisting public, ambulance or police, locked in/out, special events, trapped in elevator, water removal

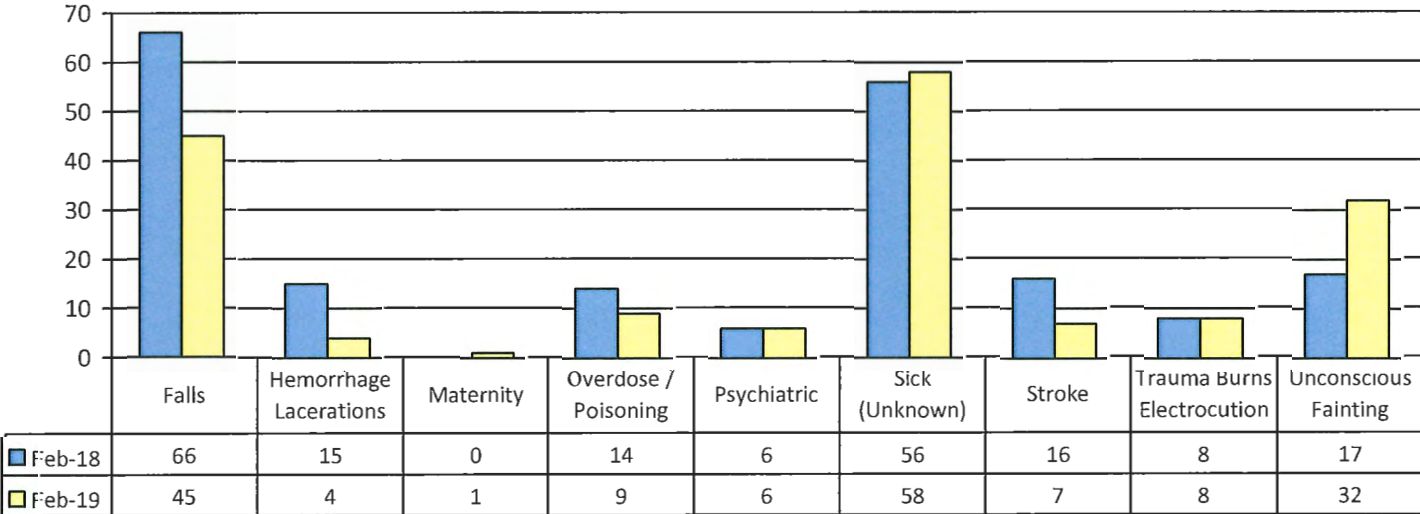
**First Responder Totals**

Medical first responder incidents comprised 42 per cent of the total emergency responses for RFR during the month of February 2019. A detailed breakdown of the medical incidents for February 2018 and 2019 is set out in the following table by sub-type. There were a total of 310 medical incidents in February 2019 compared to 398 in February 2018, a decrease of 22 per cent.

**Table 4a: February 2018 & 2019 Medical Calls by Type**



**Table 4b: February 2018 & 2019 Medical Calls by Type**



## Fire Investigations

The fire investigation statistics for February 2019 are listed below:

| <b>Table 5: Total Fire Investigation Statistics – February 2019</b> |                   |                   |                     |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|   | <b>Suspicious</b> | <b>Accidental</b> | <b>Undetermined</b> |
| Residential - Single-family   | -                 | 1                 | -                   |
| Residential - Multi-family  | -                 | 6                 | 2                   |
| Commercial/Industrial   | -                 | 2                 | 2                   |
| Outdoor   | -                 | 2                 | 1                   |
| Vehicle   | -                 | 2                 | 3                   |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>-</b>          | <b>13</b>         | <b>8</b>            |

RFR investigators report all suspicious fires to the RCMP, while working alongside RCMP staff to address potential risks to the community.

## Hazardous Materials

| <b>Table 6: HazMat Calls By Type – February 2019</b> |                |
|--|----------------|
|  | <b>Details</b> |
| Natural Gas / Propane Leaks (small)                  | 6              |
| Unclassified   | 3              |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>9</b>       |



Figure 1: Location of reportable fires attended in February 2019 (total 21)

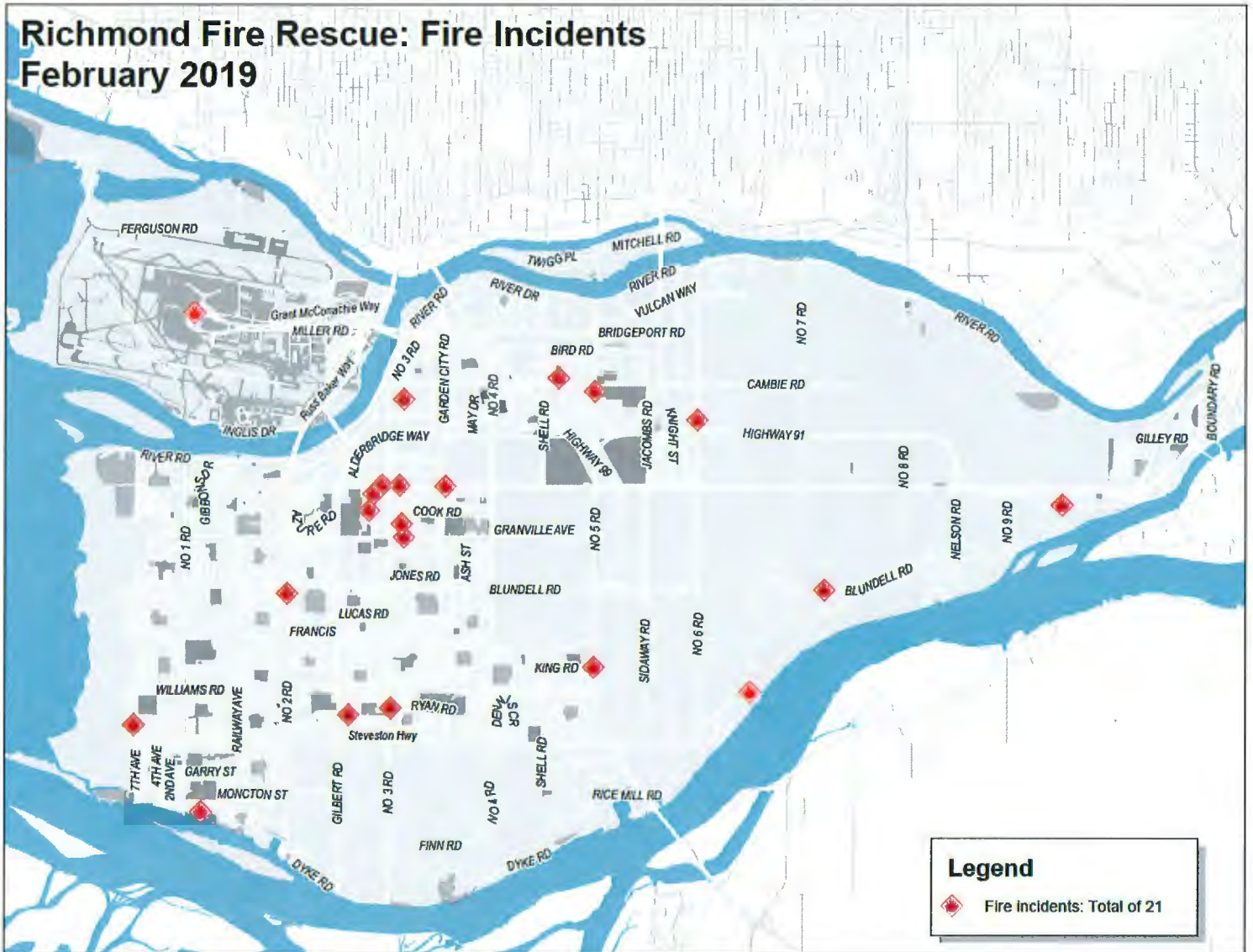


Figure 2: Location of medical calls in February 2019 (total 310)

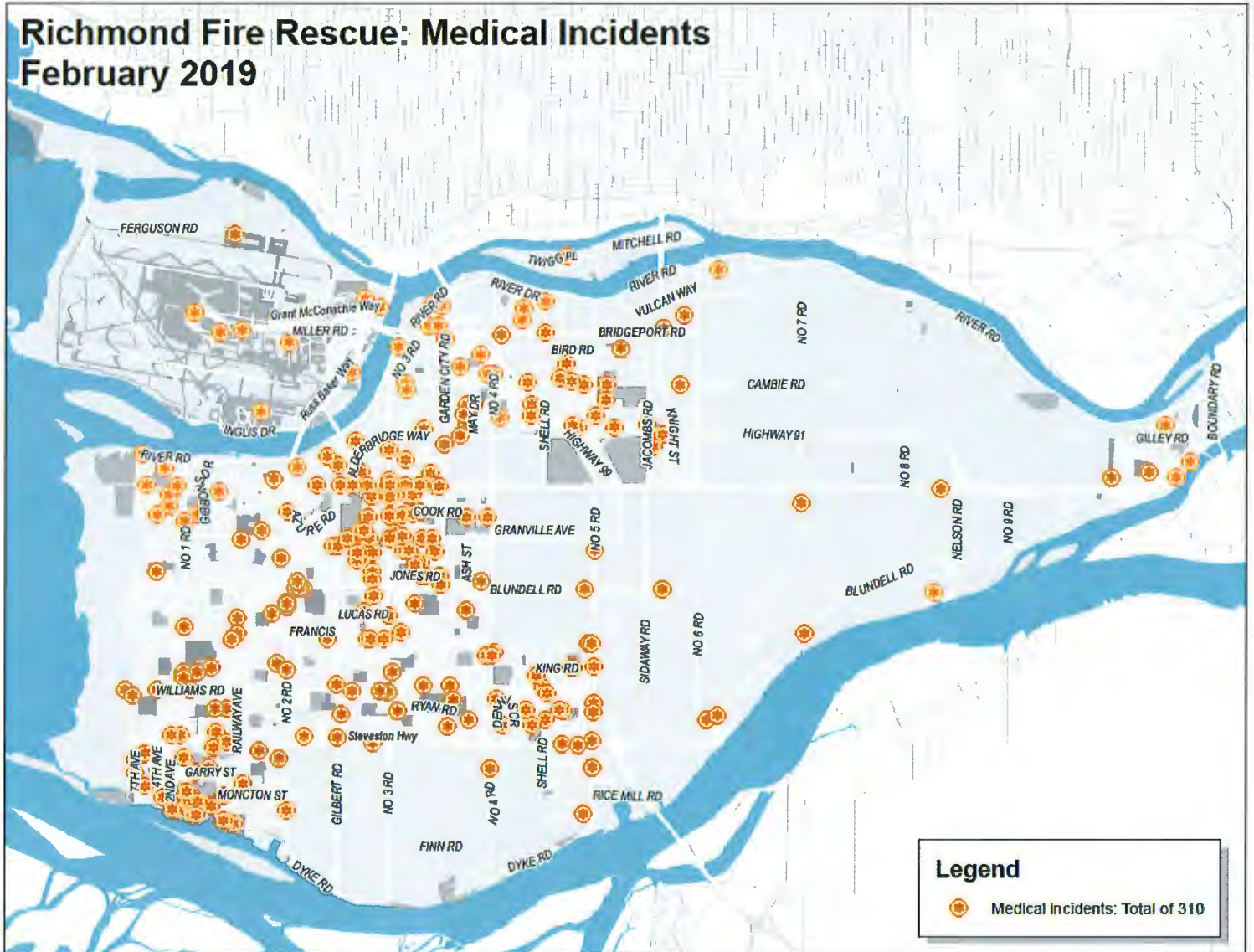


Figure 3: Location of MVI calls in February 2019 (total 79)

