

BIOGRAPHY

Len Garis
Fire Chief, Surrey Fire Service
City of Surrey, British Columbia



Surrey Fire Chief Len Garis joined the Surrey Fire Service in 1998 and has worked in the fire service and related fields since 1980. In 2010, he was appointed as an Adjunct Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley's Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research and in February 2011 Chief Garis became an Adjunct Faculty member in the Part-time Studies Program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. June 2013 he was appointed as an Affiliated Research Faculty at John Jay College of Criminal Justice / The Christian Regenhard Centre for Emergency Response Studies in New York. In June of 2011 he was elected as President of the Fire Chiefs' Association of B.C and currently serves as the Past President. He has also been a member of the FIREfighting in Canada editorial advisory board since 2005.

Chief Garis believes strongly that long-range vision, planning and innovation can reduce costs, improve efficiency and ultimately enhance services and public safety. This notion is supported by international studies, including Rising to the Challenge, a 2008 report by the United Kingdom's Audit Commission on improving fire service efficiency, and Global Concepts in Residential Fire Safety, a 2009 report by System Planning Corporation's Tri-Data division about best practices in Canada and other countries.

In April of 2009, Chief Garis provided evidence for a study on the state of organized crime in Canada to the Standing Committee on Justice & Human Rights. In November 2009, Chief Garis testified to the Standing Senate Committee on the topic of Bill C-15, to increase the minimum mandatory sentencing for serious drug offences.

On behalf of the City of Surrey, Chief Garis regularly initiates scientific research and data-collection with the objective of developing alternate methods to address public safety challenges and improve service delivery and efficiencies.

Several of these initiatives have garnered awards and recognition for the City of Surrey in the past decade, including the Union of B.C. Municipalities Community Excellence Awards (for four different programs), a Flame Award from the Fire Chiefs' Association of B.C., a Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Award for Public Safety, and recognition from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. In 2013 Chief Garis was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to Canadians and the ICMA Community Health & Safety Award.

By continuing to bring innovative programs to Surrey and share them with other communities, Chief Garis is working to achieve his vision of a modern, progressive fire service – one that is led by evidence-based decision-making and is unfettered by traditional insular perspectives.