

Vacant Home Check Program Policy

5C.018

Section: 5.0 Environmental & Protective Services
- C. Protective Services

Authority: General Manager of Environmental & Protective Services

Statement

The Municipal District of Bonnyville (M.D.) strives to reinforce a sense of security and comfort for our residents and their properties within the municipality when they are away from home for an extended period of time.

Purpose

To establish the guidelines for Administration to govern the M.D. Vacant Home Check Program (VHCP) in order to ensure uniform delivery of the program to all users.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- (1) “Homeowner” means the individual(s) listed on title as the owner(s) of the property, or a renter in possession of a valid Rental Agreement endorsed by both the renter and homeowner;
- (2) “Medical Recipient” means a homeowner or immediate family member who is receiving overnight medical treatment outside of the M.D.
- (3) “Primary Residence” means a residence that is situated within the M.D. that is normally occupied by the homeowner or a renter for more than 9 months in a calendar year;
- (4) “Rental Properties” means residences situated within the M.D. where the homeowner is not the primary resident, and the property generates revenue for the homeowner;
- (5) “Secondary or Seasonal Residence” means a residence situated within the M.D. normally occupied by the homeowner for less than 3 months in a calendar year.

Policy

- (1) General
 - (a) The VHCP is not meant to replace a residential alarm system, monitoring company, or other security measures. It should be considered as an added service option for increased home protection.
 - (b) The M.D. shall not accept any responsibility or liability for damages or loss resulting from participation in this program.
 - (c) The VHCP is not to be mistaken with routine patrols that are conducted throughout residential communities which are normal practice for M.D. Peace Officer’s.
 - (d) Dedicated patrols under the VHCP shall be conducted once at any time within a 48-hour period, duties permitting.

- (e) Only the main residence and one adjacent garage may be included in the VHCP. All accessible doors will be checked to ensure they are locked. Any unlocked doors not indicated on the form will be reported to the local representative.
 - (f) Residences approved for the VHCP will be patrolled for a maximum period of four (4) continuous weeks and for a maximum of two (2) periods per calendar year.
 - (g) Residences belonging to medical recipients may be admitted into the VHCP outside of these guidelines at the discretion of the Director of Public Safety or his/her designate.
 - (h) This program is designed to assist those on an extended absence, not to form part of an ongoing security practice.
- (2) Eligibility
- (a) Primary residences situated within the boundaries of the M.D. will qualify for inclusion into the VHCP pending approval from the Director of Public Safety or his/her designate.
 - (b) Rental properties situated within the boundaries of the M.D. may also qualify for inclusion into the VHCP but must include the expressed consent of both the homeowner as well as the renter.
 - (c) Secondary or seasonal residences situated within the boundaries of the M.D. are not admissible to the VHCP, however these areas remain a focus for routine and irregular patrols for Public Safety.
 - (d) Commercial properties situated within the boundaries of the MD are not admissible to the VHCP but remain a focus for routine and irregular patrols for Public Safety.
 - (e) Homes that are currently under construction are not included as part of the VHCP due to the inherent danger associated with M.D. Peace Officers walking around a construction site.
 - (f) Residences that are currently vacant and for sale are not considered a primary residence and do not qualify for the VHCP.
- (3) Application
- (a) Those wishing to be considered for inclusion to the VHCP must fill out the Vacant Home Check Program Release of Liability form (*Attachment A*) and submit it to M.D. Public Safety.
 - (b) The results of the application will be made available to the applicant within 48 hours of the application being received.
 - (c) If approved, it will be the homeowner's responsibility to ensure all of the M.D.'s requirements as outlined in the Vacant Home Check Program Release of Liability form are met before their home patrols begin.
- (4) M.D. Peace Officer
- (a) M.D. Peace Officers conducting a VHCP shall notify dispatch of their location and request a 5-minute timer.
 - (b) Where possible and practicable, two or more M.D. Peace Officers are encouraged to conduct VHCP's near one another or in tandem.

- (c) Should an unsecure premise be located, the M.D. Peace Officer will contact the local representative indicated on the Vacant Home Check Program Release of Liability form and investigate whether the property was left unsecured in error.
- (d) While conducting their risk assessment and speaking with the local representative, if the M.D. Peace Officer feels the property may have been subject to a criminal act (e.g. broken window/door frame, etc.) they will immediately notify the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and remain on site from a safe distance until the RCMP arrive.
- (e) While M.D. Peace Officers are not required to enter a property, if the local representative is present and there are no obvious signs of criminal activity, and the M.D. Peace Officer is requested to assist, they may enter the property together in order to secure the premises.
- (f) At the request of the local representative, M.D. Peace Officers may secure the premises (e.g. lock any unlocked doors) provided they are not required to enter the premises alone.
- (g) Under no circumstances are M.D. Peace Officers permitted to enter an insecure residence or outbuilding alone, even if the homeowner or local representative requests it.
- (h) If the premise is snow-covered or otherwise unsafe to enter for the patrol, the M.D. Peace Officer shall notify the local representative as such and request that they remediate the issue before patrols will resume. The Director of Public Safety or his/her designate are to be notified if this happens and it must be documented on file.

Policy Review

Within five (5) years from date adopted / amended / reviewed.

For administrative use only:

| | |
|--|---|
| Related Documentation: (plans, bylaws, policies, procedures, etc.) | Attachment A: Vacant Home Check Program Release of Liability Form |
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Vacant Home Check Program Policy: ATTACHMENT A

5C.018

Municipal District of Bonnyville Vacant Home Check Program Release of Liability Form



**Municipal District of Bonnyville
Public Safety Department
Vacant Home Check Program
Release of Liability**



*****Please carefully read the following Release of Liability for participation in the Vacant Home Check Program. Be sure you fully understand the contents before signing. If the property is rented, signatures of both the owners and renters are required*****

I/We, the undersigned, have requested that the Municipal District of Bonnyville Public Safety Department provide a property home check of my/our premises during the period of _____ to _____.

I/we understand that this service will be provided only on a “when-available” basis, to a maximum of once every 48 hours. I/we recognize that it is I/our responsibility to keep the property clear of snow or debris, and that the M.D. Peace Officers have the authority to terminate future property checks if they deem the property to be unsafe. Further, I/we acknowledge and recognize that the Municipal District of Bonnyville Public Safety department cannot guarantee that the property will not suffer any injury or loss. I/we further acknowledge that I/we have established no special relationship, nor is there a special duty owed to me/us by the Municipal District of Bonnyville Public Safety Department and or the Municipal District of Bonnyville. In consideration of the Municipal District of Bonnyville Public Safety Department performing this property check, I/we do hereby release, acquit, forever discharge and hold harmless the Municipal District of Bonnyville, its Peace Officers, employees, agents, assigns, and successors from any and all liability for any and all claims of damages, demands, and causes of action that exist or could arise, or other remedies against the Municipal District of Bonnyville, its Peace Officers, employees, agents, assigns and successors as a result of any damage or other incident to or on my/our property by third persons during the period of _____ to _____.

Signature(s)

Date



Municipal District of Bonnyville
Public Safety Department
Vacant Home Check Program
Release of Liability



Name: _____ Phone #: _____
Print Name

Address: _____

Date Leaving: _____ Date Returning: _____
Resident must notify Public Safety Office upon return

Alarm System: Yes No Alarm Company: _____
 Phone #: _____

Emergency Contact Information (Who should the M.D. Peace Officer call to confirm there is a problem?)

| | | |
|-------|---------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Has Key: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Name: | Phone # | |
| _____ | _____ | Has Key: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Name: | Phone # | |
| _____ | _____ | Has Key: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Name: | Phone # | |

Vehicles on Site during Checks:

Location: _____ Make/Model: _____ Colour: _____
 Location: _____ Make/Model: _____ Colour: _____
 Location: _____ Make/Model: _____ Colour: _____

Lights:

Will the property have any lights left on? If yes explain. Yes No



Municipal District of Bonnyville
Public Safety Department
Vacant Home Check Program
Release of Liability



Will anyone be at the property caring for pets, plants, etc.? What time of day will they be at the house?

Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Additional Comments:

Signature of home owner/occupant

Date

If you come home early or expect to have someone stay at the house, please call 780-812-3332 to advise.

The collection of personal information on this document is governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act as well as other provincial enactments. The M.D. has legal authority to collect information to assist in the operations of municipal programs and services. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the content of this document, please feel free to contact our *FOIP Coordinator at the M.D. of Bonnyville, 4905 – 50 Avenue Bonnyville, AB T9N 2J7 P: 780-826-3171 F: 780-826-4524.*

Office Use Only

File Number: _____

Ward: _____

Area: _____