

# NEWS RELEASE

CITY OF  
PORT ALBERNI



## Alberni Valley Multiplex Ice Plant Out of Operation

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**Port Alberni, BC – April 16, 2025** – The city’s chiller, a component of the ice plant in the Alberni Valley Multiplex, has been taken out of operation due to a leak detected within the system.

On Sunday, April 13, 2025, the City of Port Alberni was alerted to a technical issue with the Alberni Valley Multiplex ice plant, the refrigeration system responsible for creating and maintaining ice surfaces in the facility. Out of an abundance of caution, the city immediately shut down the ice plant, closed the facility, alerted Technical Safety BC, and engaged Fraser Valley Refrigeration, its certified contracted technician, to assess the plant’s operations.

Upon arrival, technicians with Fraser Valley Refrigeration began safely isolating components of the plant and pumping brine out of the system and into secure holding tanks. This process is still underway. When complete, the holding tanks will be transported out of the valley for safe disposal by a certified third party. As a result of this action, ice in the Weyerhaeuser rink has been lost.

“While the exact cause of the issue is still undetermined, it is clear that the chiller has suffered its second catastrophic failure in six years,” said Willa Thorpe, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture. “It is deeply disappointing to lose ice during the Bulldogs’ playoff run. The city was proactive in replacing the Multiplex’s aging chiller in 2019 and to be faced with this second shutdown so early in its service life is frustrating to say the least. However, the public’s safety is our top priority and as such, city staff acted swiftly and professionally to remove the chiller from service,” concluded Thorpe.

As the technicians continue their work, dry floor recreation activities at the Multiplex have resumed for scheduled users. However, the loss of ice has resulted in the Alberni Valley Bulldogs moving their home games for round two of the 2025 Rogers BCHL Playoffs to Frank Crane Arena in Nanaimo.

Technical Safety BC, an independent organization that oversees the safe installation and operation of technical systems and equipment in British Columbia, is working closely with the city and Fraser Valley Refrigeration to ensure the proper procedures and protocols are followed as the city continues to assess the plant and determine how best to move forward.

“The City of Port Alberni is sorry for the inconvenience this service interruption has caused. We thank those affected for their patience and understanding as we work to develop a long-range strategy that will get ice back in the Multiplex,” said Mike Fox, CAO with the City of Port Alberni.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the spring of 2019, the City of Port Alberni installed a new chiller in the ice plant in the Alberni Valley Multiplex.

In November 2019, six months after commissioning the new chiller, it suffered its first failure resulting in a facility shutdown.

On March 5, 2020, the ice plant received its Certification of Compliance from Technical Safety BC, allowing the city to reinstall ice in the facility. Since that date, there have been zero lost-time days at the facility.

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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