



FRIAA Community Fireguard Program

Lands Operations Division Regulatory Process and Requirements

Program Context

The Community Fireguard Program, delivered by FRIAA on behalf of the provincial government, helps at-risk communities construct fuel-reduction corridors (fireguards) to reduce wildfire risk (alberta.ca). Municipality or community project proposals are submitted to FRIAA for review and approval.

The planning and endorsement of a Community Fireguard project follows a defined review process managed by FRIAA on behalf of Forestry Division, Forestry and Parks.

Trigger for Lands Operations Involvement

For any Community Fireguard proposal endorsed by FRIAA that requires vegetation management of a fireguard, an application for a formal Vegetation Control Easement (VCE) under the *Public Lands Act* is required (refer to [PLAR Table A1](#)).

Indigenous Consultation

FRIAA's approval of the Fireguard project and granting of funds to the municipality informs the requirement for a VCE authorization for vegetation management of fireguards. As such, the file number for FNC pre-consultation assessment submissions to support the VCE disposition application can be assessed as 'No Consultation Required'.

Should the lands within the fireguard be used for other land uses or purposes not identified or addressed during the planning of the fireguard, further or additional indigenous consultation may be required as per the Government of Alberta's consultation policies and guidelines.

Application System & Key Steps

- Use the Electronic Disposition System (EDS) to submit your application for a VCE. (alberta.ca)
- In the EDS application:
 - Select disposition type VCE – Vegetation Control Easement. (alberta.ca)
 - Under "Purpose/Activity Type", select Fire Hazard Management/Fireguard and in comments, reference the project is related to an endorsed FRIAA Community Fireguard project.
 - Attach a plan (via Plan Confirmation Service – PCS) showing the area of public land involved. (alberta.ca)
 - Include the File Number for consultation (FNC).
- All other normal application requirements apply, including any required consents from existing disposition holders.

Key Regulatory Considerations

Since Community Fireguard proposals go through an established government review process where money is granted to develop these projects, subsequent regulatory processes should be efficient to support the endorsed project.

A VCE provides the authority for vegetation management. For VCE disposition applications, the Crown portion of the timber damage assessment (TDA) fee, normally collected as an additional application fee, is waived for VCEs associated with FRIAA Community Fireguard projects. However, where a VCE or portions thereof fall within a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) area, the FMA holder also has the right to seek compensation for lost timber value through TDA values. Should the proponent wish to assess options of reduced TDA fees, these discussions can be held with the FMA holder. VCE applicants require FMA and quota holder consent for their application.

When fireguard construction or maintenance involves vegetation management on public land, Lands Operations Division will review the application in consideration of the following criteria:

- Access to the site.

- Impacts to trails, recreation values, wetlands and watercourse crossings.
- Soil disturbance, erosion control, debris disposal and salvage of timber if applicable.
- Longer-term maintenance of the fireguard can include conditions tailored to vegetation-control methods (e.g., mowing, mulching or grazing).

Next Steps Checklist

- Confirm your FRIAA proposal has been endorsed by the FRIAA Expert Panel. (friaa.ab.ca)
- Obtain consent to withdrawal and negotiate compensation with FMA holder, if identified on the LAT report.
- Prepare and submit your VCE application, including the FNC file number and any consent of an FMA holder. (alberta.ca)
- Contact your local Lands Operations office with any district-specific questions.
- Upon issuance of VCE, proceed with clearing and maintenance under the approved plan and conditions.

Contacts and Resources

- For EDS guidance: see the Electronic Disposition System overview and user-guide. (alberta.ca)
- For background on the FRIAA Community Fireguard community program, see Government of Alberta wildfire prevention & mitigation page. (alberta.ca)
- For questions regarding submitting a VCE application, contact lands.applications@gov.ab.ca.
- Local Lands Operations Division office: contact details available on the Alberta Forestry & Parks website (alberta.ca)
- For FRIAA program details (eligibility, deadlines), see FRIAA website. (friaa.ab.ca)