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The Kersley Volunteer Fire Department's new fire truck. (Cariboo Regional District - Facebook photo)

Majority of volunteer firefighters complying with CRD vaccine policy

CRD says 90 per cent of firefighters in compliance

MELISSA SMALLEY / Jan. 20, 2022 3:35 p.m. / NEWS



About 90 per cent of the volunteer firefighters in the Cariboo Regional District's 14 halls are in compliance with a workplace COVID-19 vaccine mandate that took effect earlier this week, according to a CRD release.

The CRD board voted at a special meeting Wednesday to uphold the implementation of the policy, after recommending last Friday that Chief Administrative Officer John MacLean defer it for two months.

“The special board meeting was called over concerns about the vaccination requirement impacting volunteer firefighters at 14 fire halls under CRD jurisdiction,” Thursday’s release states. “As of today, roughly 90 per cent of volunteer firefighters in the regional district have met the requirement and the region’s emergency response planning continues as before.”

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The vote against deferring the policy implementation was held after more than two hours of in-camera discussions by the board, the details of which have not been made public.

The CRD release states that board Chair Margo Wagner asked the directors to reconsider the deferral motion from Friday’s meeting.

One hall in the Red Bluff – South Quesnel area has not yet provided vaccine declarations for its members, according to the release. On Thursday, a social media post was circulating showing a sign outside of the Kersley Volunteer Fire Department saying the hall was closed.

“Emergency response in that area is currently being handled through mutual aid agreements with other volunteer halls and the City of Quesnel Fire Department,” the CRD release states.

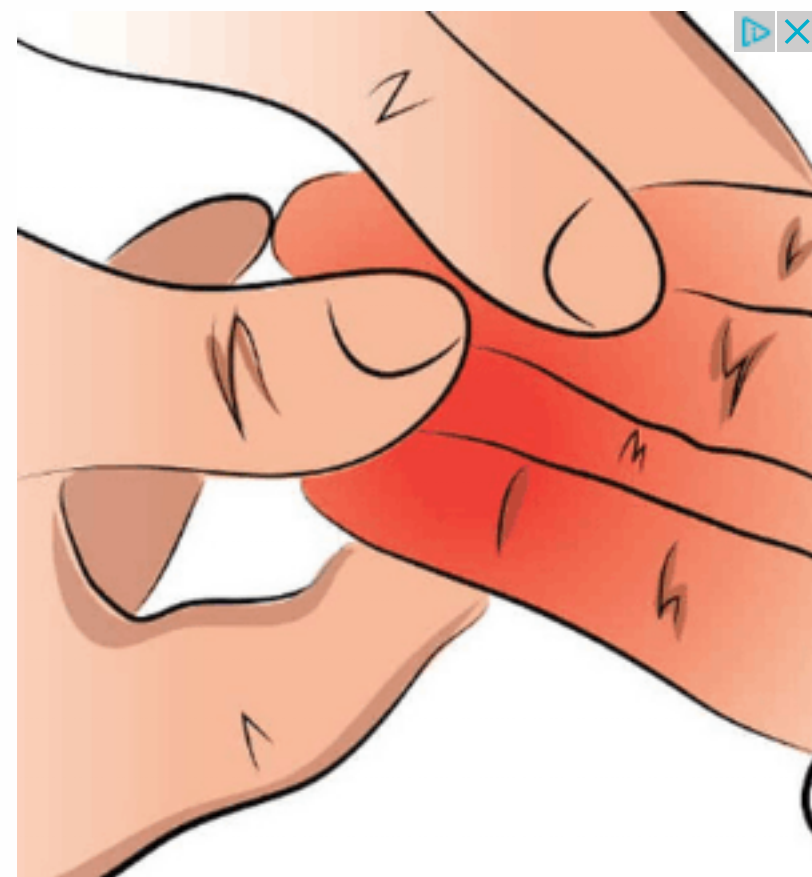
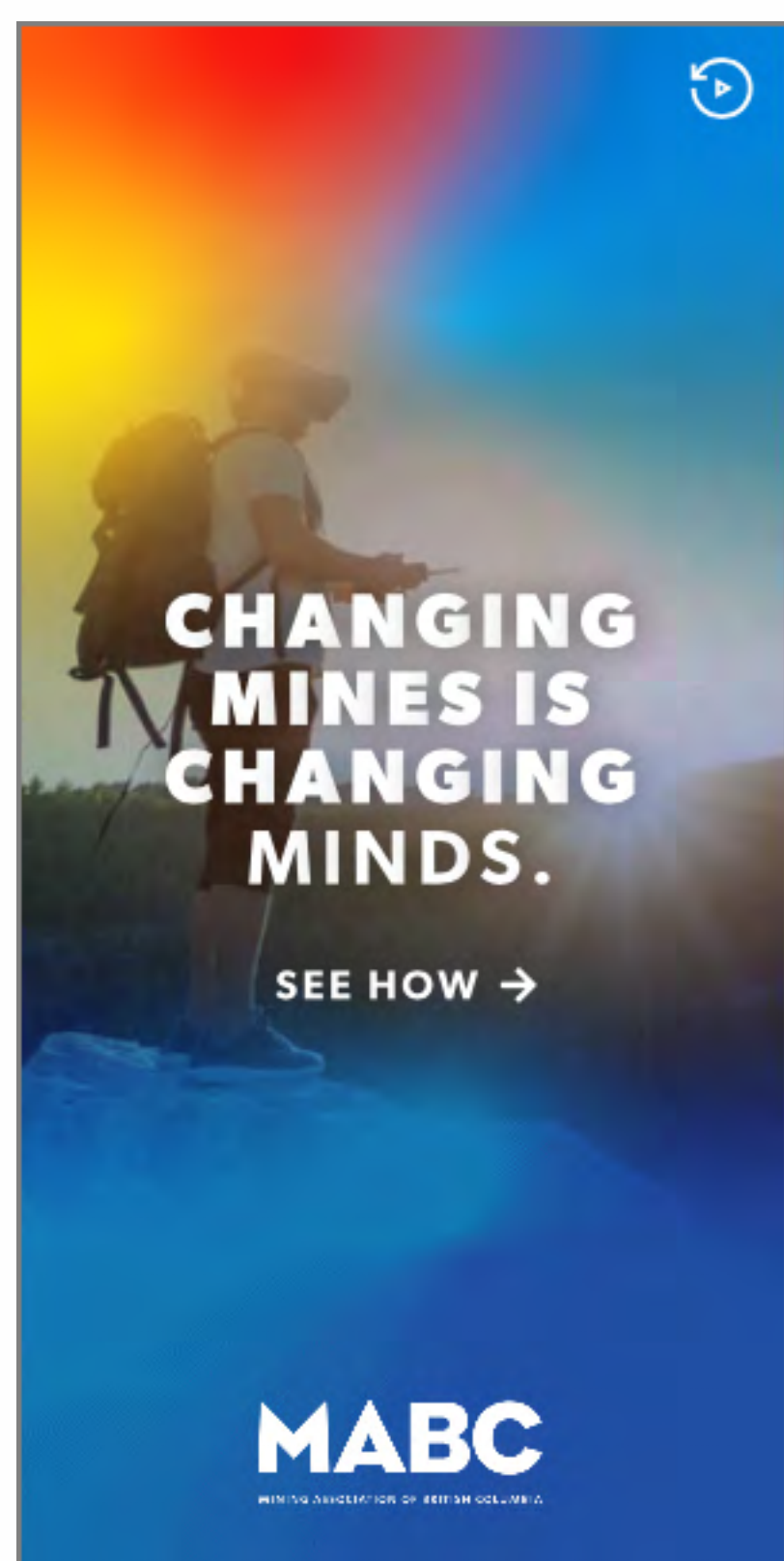
Last week, the Lone Butte fire chief posted a statement online saying their hall would no longer attend medical first responder calls due to insufficient staffing.

The decision to implement the workplace policy, first announced in November, was made “after careful consideration of legal, health and emergency response factors,” the release states.

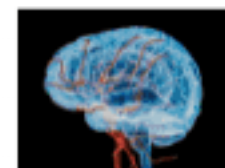
It added the CRD will be “redoubling” its recruitment efforts for the volunteer fire halls throughout the region.

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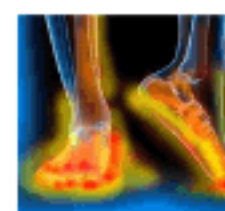
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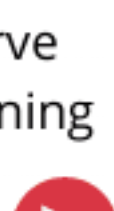
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