



Welcome Home

to Deer Ridge Estates Evacuees

A State of Local Emergency is still in effect and active wildfires are still a concern nearby.

You are returning to an area that was affected or had the potential to be affected by wildfire. Returning home may be stressful and traumatic. This handout will help you know what to do and where to get help.

The Grande Prairie Regional Partnership (GPREP) members, including First Responders and municipal employees, have worked very hard to protect our communities. Whether on the ground or coordinating various activities behind the scenes, everyone played a part in protecting your lives, property, and livestock.

We would also like to take a moment to thank you for your patience and cooperation during the evacuation. This was a crucial part in helping our crews fight this wildfire.

Please exercise extreme caution and respect any restricted areas and any directions given to you by First Responders.

**If you notice a fire on or near your property, call 911,
and let them know you are in the Deer Ridge Estates fire zone.**

Questions or Concerns?

Please call the County of Grande Prairie Deer Ridge Estates Wildfire Call Centre at

1-780-830-5002 Operating Hours are 8:00 am – 6:00 pm until Friday, May 9th.

IMPORTANT:

**DO NOT DRIVE OVER ANY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING HOSES.
FOLLOW THE DIRECTION OF THE FIREFIGHTERS**

Fire Apparatus, water tanks, and equipment are still positioned in the area. Please avoid them. Dozer guards (fire breaks) have been created to limit the spread of fire.

Please be aware of activity in your area.

If you notice the residue of fire retardants on your property (red stains) use water or biodegradable household cleaners. Never use bleach to clean areas where fire retardants have been used. Please contact your insurance for additional information.

CAUTION: ASH PITS – An ash pit is a hole in the ground filled with ash, possibly containing hot embers beneath. They are often found near the base of trees and in areas with deep organic soil. Ash pits are a danger to residents and their pets and livestock returning after a wildfire has gone out. Residents returning to their homes are reminded to stay vigilant and be aware of this danger. If you find an ash pit, do not step in or around it. If you're concerned about its location or giving off a lot of heat, please contact Deer Ridge Estates Wildfire Call Centre at **1-78-830-5002**.

First steps when you return home:

- ▶ Wildlife may have taken shelter in/around your home, garage, or outbuildings. Leaving a door open will allow the animals to return on their own to their natural surroundings. Call a Fish and Wildlife officer at **1-800-642-3800**(24 hours) for animals that appear injured or unwilling to leave.
- ▶ If you see stray or deceased livestock in your yard, please call the Call County of Grande Prairie's Agricultural Services Department at **780-567-5585**.
 - ▶ Do not allow anyone to enter or play in areas damaged by fire.
 - ▶ There are many safety risks:
 - Pits filled with ash which can be deep and hot.
 - Burned trees and branches which can fall over at any time.
 - Burning roots can cause trees to fall.
 - ▶ If you smell gas, exit your home **IMMEDIATELY** and call ATCO Gas at **1-800-511-3447**.

- ▶ Check for electrical hazards such as exposed wires. Avoid contact with damaged or fallen power lines and poles. If there are any hazards, contact ATCO Electric at 1-800-668-5506 (24-hours).

When you walk through your door:

- There was a brief disruption in utility service during this event. Due to the short duration of the disruption, no damages are anticipated, however, it is recommended that residents check your gas, electricity, and water to make sure they are working and contact your utility providers if required.

Water: drinking and household use

- ▶ You should run all of your taps (hot and cold) for at least five (5) minutes to remove stagnant water out of your lines. You are able to drink, shower, do laundry, and use your water as you normally would.
- ▶ Check your water and sewer systems including sump pumps and livestock watering devices.
- ▶ Refer to the “Aquatera” reference material included in your Welcome Home guide for more detailed instructions.
- ▶ For information regarding private wells or cisterns please refer to the “Alberta Health Services Returning to Your Home” reference material included in your Welcome Home guide.

Cleaning

IF you have SMOKE CONTAMINATION, do not throw anything away until you contact your insurance company.

Disposing of food from your home

- Refer to the “Alberta Health Services Returning to Your Home” reference material included in your Welcome Home guide for tips for disposal of food.
- If disposal of your fridge and freezer is required, you may leave your food contained in the appliance and seal it shut with duct tape. Refer to the Waste Disposal section of this guide.

To assist with smoke decontamination or deodorizing inside:

- Wash interior walls and hard surfaces with a steam cleaner or white vinegar.
- Wash or dry clean clothing, linens, and bedding.
- Wash all movable items with a steam cleaner or microfiber cloth. This includes children's indoor toys.
- Disinfect and deodorize upholstery and fabric window treatments with spray deodorizing products available at most supermarkets. Do not use odor-masking sprays as they only cover up the problem and do not fix it.
- You can also steam clean items including carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture, and mattresses. Steam neutralizes the odor and carbon film left by forest fires.
- Consider having heating, ventilating and air conditioning units, and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash, and smoke residue. You can change filters when you first return home and then continue to replace them frequently.
- Refer to the "Alberta Health Services Returning to Your Home" reference material included in your Welcome Home guide for additional tips for cleaning your home.

Remember to keep all receipts for cleaning and other expenses to provide to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

To assist with smoke contamination or damage outside:

- Pressure wash or scrub exterior surfaces including walls, walks, drives, decks, windows, and screens.
- Wash all children's outside toys, play structures, and recreational equipment to remove any residual smoke and ash. Replace the sand in sandboxes with clean sand.
- Cut down and remove any trees around your property that have been damaged by fire.
- Wash your hands if they come in contact with ash.
- Refer to the "Alberta Health Services Returning to Your Home" reference material included in your Welcome Home guide for additional tips for cleaning your yard.

If your property has been impacted by aerial Fire Retardant

Some homes may be covered in aerial fire retardant following wildfire suppression efforts. If your property has been impacted (typically indicated by a red coating or residue). The retardant is generally biodegradable, but it can still cause staining and may be harmful to ingest or come into contact with.

To remove, use water, mild soap, and scrubbing or power washing to remove it, and wear gloves and eye protection during cleanup. Dispose of any contaminated garden produce or drinking water, and thoroughly clean areas accessed by children or animals.

Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible to discuss potential damage, cleanup support, and coverage options.

Please refer to the supporting documentation , for additional information. (Alberta Health Services: Aerial Fire Retardant and Return to your Home Following a Wildfire Evacuation).

Utilities working in the area

ATCO Electric will be working in the area over the next five days to replace power poles and other infrastructure damaged during the fire. Please be mindful of their presence and follow all posted signage for your safety.

Insurance information

IF YOU ARE INSURED:

Take the following steps:

- Call your insurance representative and/or company and follow their instructions.
- Assess and document the damage. Taking photos can be helpful.
- List all damaged or destroyed items.
- If possible, assemble proofs of purchase, photos, receipts, and warranties. Take photos of the damage and keep the damaged items unless they pose a health hazard.
- Keep all of the receipts related to cleanup, and if you've been ordered to leave your home, keep the receipts for your living expenses.
- Ask your insurance representative what living expenses you're entitled to be reimbursed for and for what period of time.

IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED:

For information on available assistance, check with:

- Government of Alberta [310-4455](tel:310-4455)
- Canadian Red Cross [1-888-800-6493](tel:1-888-800-6493) or www.redcross.ca

If you can't remember who your provider is, or can't reach your insurance provider, contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada to help understand fire insurance coverage.

Rob de Pruis, Liaison at IBC (Insurance Bureau of Canada)

Phone: [1-587-337-3200](tel:1-587-337-3200) (toll-free) Email: redpruis@ibc.ca Website: www.ibc.ca/ab

Refer to the media release from the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC): [IBC Media Release](#) included in this guide.

Do I need permits to begin repairing my house?

Depending on the extent of the damage, permits may be required. There are a number of different licenses and permits that the municipality administers.

Please visit <https://www.countygp.ab.ca/en/business-and-development/building-permits.aspx> for more information or contact the County of Grande Prairie Planning Department or Safety Codes Department at [780-538-9842](tel:780-538-9842).

Air quality

People with breathing difficulties may want to delay returning home until the air quality improves.

For more information visit [Latest Alert For: Air Quality Alert \(weather.gc.ca\)](https://weather.gc.ca)

Mental health

- ▶ For those impacted by the Alberta wildfires, AHS has supports and resources in place to help you through these challenging times.
- ▶ Go to www.ahs.ca/wildfire or call the Mental Health Help Line 24/7 at **1-877-303-2642**.
- ▶ For health advice or information on health services, *including mental health services*, call Health Link at 811 or **1-866-408-LINK** (5465)
- ▶ For professional, emotional support and/or referral to community resources contact the Lifeworks Community Crisis Support Line at **1-844-751-2133** (24 hour).

If you are having a medical emergency, call 911 right away.

FireSmart your home

- ▶ You may notice upon your return that flammable items on the outside of your property may have been moved away from your home (for example propane tanks, ATV's). This was done to further protect your home from fire.
- ▶ Complete a scan around your home and property and take steps to remove combustibles.
- ▶ Check vents on the roof, foundation and exterior walls to prevent embers from entering your home.
- ▶ Refer to the "Last-Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire" reference material included in your Welcome Home guide.

Handy phone numbers:

Deer Ridge Estates Wildfire Call Centre	1-780-830-5002
Alberta Health Link	811 or 1-866-408-5465
ATCO Electric	1-800-668-5506 (Emergency) 1-800-668-2248 (Customer Call Centre – 24 hours)
ATCO Gas	310-5678 (7 am – 7 pm Monday-Friday) 1-800-511-3447 (After hours emergency line)
Aquatera	780-532-3996
County of Grande Prairie Planning & Safety Codes Department	780-538-9842
Fish & Wildlife	1-800-642-3800 (24 hours)
GP Networks	780-882-6623
Insurance Bureau of Canada	1-587-337-3200
Mental Health Help Line	1-877-303-2542 (24/7)
Lifeworks Community Crisis Support Line	1-844-751-2133 (24/7)
TELUS Mobility	*611 on your TELUS mobile phone or 1-866-558-2273
TELUS Internet	1-888-811-2323

For all other inquiries, please call the County of Grande Prairie Call Centre at 1-780-532-9722.

Supporting materials

- Alberta Health Services – Returning to Your Home
- Aerial Fire Retardants and Return to Your Home Following a Wildfire Evacuation
- FireSmart – Last-Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire
- FireSmart Home Ignition Zone
- Insurance During Wildfires

Reopening Buildings, Homes, and Businesses After a Wildfire

If your home or business has been directly affected by a wildfire and you would like to consult with a public health inspector, contact Environmental Public Health by phone at 1-833-476-4743 or online using the Environmental Public Health web portal at <https://ephisahs.ahs.ca/create-case>.

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Protect Yourself

When assessing and cleaning your establishment or home, wear personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the hazards. This could include a respirator, gloves, and/or other protective clothing. People with asthma or respiratory conditions should only spend short periods in areas contaminated with ash and soot and wear respiratory protection.

Health Impacts

- Smoke can irritate the skin, nose, throat, lungs and eyes and cause coughing and wheezing. Soot and ash can cause symptoms including eye and skin irritation and respiratory issues.
- If you have respiratory symptoms such as coughing, move away from the area, take any prescription inhalers as directed, and seek medical attention promptly if you are having trouble breathing.
- For more information on the health effects of wildfire smoke, please see [Wildfire Smoke and Your Health](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-smoke-health.aspx) (<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-smoke-health.aspx>).

Breathing protection

- A multi-layered approach is recommended to reduce the health effects of wildfire smoke. This includes staying indoors with doors and windows closed as long as temperatures remain comfortable, cleaning indoor air, and

- minimizing outdoor activities are all important actions you can take. Properly fitting personal protective equipment like N95, KN95 or P100 respirators may also help further reduce exposure to small particles in wildfire smoke.
- Look for “NIOSH 95” on the package. When correctly fitted, an N95 respirator blocks approximately 95 percent of particles that are 0.3 microns or larger.
 - Purchase respirators at hardware, safety/construction supply businesses and home improvement centres.
 - Respirators can add physical stress to a person by making breathing harder. Individuals who doubt their ability to wear a respirator should consult with their physician.
 - If you cannot locate N95 respirators, a well-fitting dust mask may provide some protection during cleanup. Many ash particles are larger than those found in smoke, and a dust mask can reduce the number of larger particles inhaled. Dust masks are not recommended to prevent exposure to the smaller particles found in smoke.

How to Self-Fit N95 Respirators:

Always read and follow the manufacturer’s directions when using a respirator.

- The respirator must cover the nose and mouth to keep you from breathing in dust and ash.
- If the respirator does not have a snug fit, it will not work correctly. The correct fit of the respirator requires contact with smooth skin. Respirators will not work effectively for people with facial hair such as a beard or moustache.
- Always use both straps on the respirator to hold it in place to keep air from leaking around the respirator.
- Do a user seal check, including positive and negative pressure checks, to verify that you have correctly put on the respirator and adjusted it to fit properly.
 - Negative pressure check - Place both hands completely over the respirator and inhale sharply. Be careful not to disturb the position of the respirator. The respirator should pull into your face. If air leaks around your face or eyes, adjust the nosepiece and straps, and repeat the negative pressure check.
 - Positive pressure check - Put your hands over the respirator and breathe out sharply. If your respirator has an exhalation valve, be sure to cover the exhalation valve when you exhale. No air should leak out of the respirator

if the respirator fits properly. If air leaks, re-adjust the nosepiece and straps and repeat the positive pressure check.

Other Hazards

- Use a flashlight to look for hazards. If you detect or suspect any source of heat or smoke, notify the fire department immediately.
- Watch for hazards, including:
 - Slip, trip and fall hazards from unstable structures or wet and slippery surfaces;
 - Sharp objects such as metal pieces, concrete or wood;
 - Ash, soot and demolition dust;
 - Hazardous materials such as workplace chemicals, kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, pesticides, paint, batteries, and fuel containers which have been partially damaged or destroyed;
 - Propane cylinders for heating or from a BBQ.

Initial Considerations

- Try to create an inventory of items inside and outside the buildings damaged by fire, smoke, chemicals, soot, or ash. Do not throw away damaged goods until your insurance company's representative advises, if applicable.
- Take plenty of pictures of your property and all damaged goods.

Fire Retardants and Fire Residues

- If aerially fire retardant has been applied:
 - Avoid consuming food or water that was potentially contaminated with fire retardant residues.
 - Dispose of garden produce and drinking water that has been exposed to retardant or residues.
 - Thoroughly rinse cisterns or other drinking water holding tanks that may have been exposed to retardant or residues.
 - Wash outdoor equipment with clean water and detergent to remove residual fire contaminants.
 - NEVER use bleach to clean off the retardants, as the reaction between bleach and fire retardants will produce harmful and explosive gasses.

- Thoroughly flush your eyes and wash your skin with water and a gentle soap solution if you have direct contact with fire retardant, soot, ash, or smoke.
- Additional information on fire retardants can be found online at [Aerial Fire Retardants and Return to Your Home Following a Wildfire Evacuation](#) and [Human health risks associated with aerially applied fire retardants : screening level risk assessment](#)

Check Your Utilities

- Check that electricity, hot and cold running water, sewage system, and gas utilities are correctly working. Contact your utility provider if you are unsure if the utilities are safe to use.
- Do not try to use any electrical appliances or power outlets that may have come in contact with fire, water, or fire retardant until they have been checked and cleared for use by a qualified electrician.

Use Your Water Supply Safely

After returning from an evacuation, you should flush your water lines to remove stagnant water by running all hot and cold water taps for five minutes. If your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a more extended period.

- Your facility or home may be under a boil water advisory. If you are unsure, please check with the municipality or the service provider. Visit [Using water at home during a boil water advisory](#) for information on how to use water safely.
- When a boil water advisory is in effect, boiled water should be used for drinking, preparing foods, brushing teeth, or cleaning food contact surfaces.
- Boil water information for the below-listed types of public facilities is also available at [Coping with Emergencies | Alberta Health Services](#):
 - [Acute Care Health Sites](#)
 - [Community-based Health Care Settings](#)
 - [Schools](#)
 - [Child Care Facilities](#)
 - [Food Establishments](#)
 - [Swimming Pools](#)
 - [Personal Service Facilities](#)
- Once the boil water advisory is lifted, be sure to:

- Flush all hot and cold water-using fixtures by running the taps for five minutes. If your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a more extended period.
- Ensure equipment with water line connections, such as post-mix beverage machines, auto-fill coffee/tea makers, instant water heaters, ice machines, etc., are emptied/discarded, flushed, cleaned, and disinfected according to the manufacturer's recommendations before use.
- Flush, drain, clean and disinfect cisterns that contained the affected water source. See [How to Clean and Disinfect a Cistern](#).
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle per the manufacturer's recommendations before use.
- Consider draining and refilling water heaters if there was loss of electricity or gas for an extended period of time, or if water heaters have been set to below 45°C/110°F. Information on flushing water heaters is available at [How Do I Flush My Water Heater?](#)
- If you notice any issues with your water supply, contact your municipality or water provider for assistance.

Discard items impacted by smoke, heat, ash, and chemicals

- Heat, smoke and lingering chemical residues from combustion can damage food, medicines, cleaners, cosmetics, and other toiletries.
- After inspection of your fire-damaged building, items may require disposal. Before disposing of items, make sure that you inventory those items as part of your fire insurance claim and take pictures of all items for your insurance records.

Food

- Take stock of any food in your facility or home that you can see.
- For insurance purposes, take plenty of photos and write down an inventory of the contents of any fridges and freezers.
- Discard:
 - Food stored in refrigerators and freezers **IF** the temperature was warmer than 4°C at any time.
 - Please note that the temperature may have exceeded 4°C when the power was disrupted and then returned to 4°C.
 - Any spoiled food, even if the fridge always remained at 4°C.

- Open foods.
- Fire or smoke-damaged foods like dry goods (i.e., flour, sugar, spices, etc.) even if the package isn't open.
- Fire or smoked-damaged food products in plastic or paper-based packaging as the material is porous.
- Fire or smoked-damaged food products with caps and lids as they may not stay airtight.
- Unrefrigerated raw vegetables or fruits.
- Canned food where the can is bulging, rusted or dented.
- **If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Clean and sanitize the exterior of all canned foods before opening to ensure the contents are not contaminated when opened.
- Follow current local guidelines on where you can discard food waste

Fridges and Freezers

- If your fridge or freezer was exposed to smoke and soot, you may be able to clean away the dust and soot from your appliances. However, if soot or smoke has entered through any openings, it could have damaged the internal components which may pose a safety and fire hazard. It is recommended that you:
 - Follow all guidance from your municipality regarding assessment, replacement and disposal of appliances.
 - Contact your insurance company to determine if you need to replace your fridge or freezer and whether you have coverage for this.
 - You may also be advised to consult a professional appliance technician to determine if the appliance is still safe to use or if it needs to be replaced.
- If your fridge or freezer was not damaged in the fire, clean and disinfect it after disposing all of the unsafe and spoiled foods. To do this:
 - Unplug the fridge and freezer.
 - Rinse or blow out (using an air hose) the coils and compressors.
 - Clean the inside of the appliance with soap and water, then rinse with clean water.
 - After cleaning, sanitize the interior with a bleach and water mixture. Mix 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) of household bleach per 4 cups (1 L) of water.
 - Leave the doors of the fridge and freezer open to let them dry out.
 - Once the fridge and freezer are dry, reconnect the power.

- Wait until the inside temperature of the fridge reaches 4C before refilling it with food.
- Wait until the freezer is cold enough to freeze food before refilling it.

Clean building and facilities:

Restoration contractors:

- As much as possible, work with and through your insurance company. They will know reputable restoration and cleaning contractors who can help you understand the proper standards.
- If you choose a restoration contractor, check their references and certifications.
- If questions or issues arise, contact the Service Alberta Consumer Contact Centre (the toll-free number is 1-877-427-4088). They can help provide you with more information about various consumer issues.

Building exterior and outdoor areas

- Scrape fire ash and soot remaining on your property as much as possible, place it in plastic bags or other containers to prevent it from being disturbed, and take it to a landfill. Wear personal protective equipment to protect yourself. Wet down remaining fire debris and/or fire retardant before removal.
- If the building was destroyed by fire, the restoration company will look after this for you as they begin the demolition and recovery process.
- Use a hose, sprayer or pressure washer on the building exterior, parking lots, walkways, vehicles, and outdoor furniture.
- Be careful when using pumps, pressure washers or generators in enclosed spaces. Carbon monoxide may be present in confined or poorly ventilated areas where pumps, generators, or pressure washers operate.
- If you have a private septic system, check the area around your system for damage, like sewage leaks. Contact a sewage disposal professional if you find damage to your septic system.
- Outdoor equipment may contain fire retardants that can be toxic to fish and some plants and may make people and pets sick if ingested. They can also cause eye irritation, dry skin and stinging to cuts and scrapes on your skin.
- Wash outdoor equipment with clean water and detergent to remove residual fire contaminants. To clean windows and glass, use clean water and a razor blade tool to help to remove the sticky residue.

- NEVER use bleach, as the reaction between bleach and fire retardants will produce harmful and explosive gasses.
- To remediate lawns, you can re-sod or reseed grassy areas.
- Consider adding new, clean soil to gardens if you suspect or know the area was impacted.

Air Circulation

- Consult a professional to clean, restore and restart any building heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- Get the air moving inside the building by using a fan and open windows, providing there is no smoke or air quality advisory for the area. Also, be careful with open doors and windows during windy conditions to prevent any ash/debris from the fires from entering the building.
- If available, use an air cleaner with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) or MERV-13 filters to remove small particles. For portable air cleaners, follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement, filter changes and room size.
- Portable air cleaners can filter out particulates from wildfire smoke and allergens, viruses, and chemicals associated with particulate matter. Building a Corsi-Rosenthal Box is an inexpensive option for facilities that cannot improve air filtration or ventilation by changing their HVAC system. Here is a YouTube video on how to build one:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXa8auzKx9Y>
- Ozone generators do not function as "air cleaners" despite advertising claims.

Interior surfaces

- There may be smoke damage and soot in the building after the fire. Contact your insurance company and fire restoration company as soon as possible.
- The fire restoration contractor will be able to give you more information about the following:
 - Preventing further damage.
 - Determining which things can or cannot be adequately cleaned.
 - Thoroughly cleaning and deodorizing the building before people are allowed back in.
- Use personal protective equipment as appropriate, such as respirators, rubber gloves, rubber boots, long-sleeved shirts and pants.

- Wash all interior surfaces with a mild detergent or appropriate cleaning solution and rinse thoroughly. Include all locations where there is any ash, dust or fire odour.
- Wash the interior of the windows thoroughly.
- Wet wiping or mopping is safer and more effective than dry or dust mopping.
- Only a vacuum with a “HEPA” filter can catch ash particles. Using unfiltered vacuums will only move the ash around the building. Change your HEPA filter frequently.
- Ash left in place is reduced into smaller particles and becomes harder to remove from carpets and surfaces.
- Wash and clean all ash-contaminated items with mild detergent, changing the water frequently.

Fabric, carpets, and furniture

- Soot is oily and can stain carpets, curtains, and soft furnishing, and it must be removed before you try to clean or deodorize those items.
- Steam clean carpets, drapes, and curtains, changing the water frequently.
- Furniture may be difficult or almost impossible to clean if it is upholstered, especially if the smoke odour has permeated into these furnishings.
- Furniture may be steam cleaned or may need to be replaced.
- You can clean and rinse good-quality wood furniture.

Electronics

- Contact your insurance company for information about restoring/replacing electronic devices.
- Otherwise, it is recommended that you carry all electronic equipment outside and “blow out” the components with an air hose before the equipment is turned on. Ash can cause static charges.
- Consider unplugging, rolling out, or rinsing the coils and compressors on refrigerators and freezers (they must dry entirely before repowering).
- During a fire, indoor materials may end up in drainage systems and partly block them or sit there and rot. Carefully flush and disinfect floor drains and sump pits. Some physical scrubbing may be needed to get greasy dirt and grime off surfaces that can release pollutants into the indoor air.

Repair water damage:

- If the building was damaged by water, you will need to get rid of all excess water to prevent the potential for mould growth.
- Check any water-damaged or water-stained surfaces and appliances for damage. Clean and disinfect indoor surfaces with a 1:10 parts household bleach to water solution (6 tsp bleach in 1 cup water or 5 mL bleach in 45 mL water). Outdoor surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water only.
- Dry all wet items as soon as possible.
- Dry or remove wet or waterlogged carpeting as quickly as possible, including the underlayment.
- You may need to use a dehumidifier to help remove excess moisture from the air inside the building.
- Let your insurance company and restoration contractor know as soon as possible if you find any visible mould growth or smell mould inside the building.
- If you discover a small amount of mould (typically under 10 square feet) and you wish to complete the work yourself, you can find more information here: [Managing Indoor Mould](#).

Additional Considerations for Food Facilities

Food

- Information on safe food practices is described above on page 5 and 6.

Water

- Food facilities on cisterns and wells should submit bacteriological samples for analysis and receive acceptable results before reopening. Please contact your local Community Health Office for drop-off times or call 1-833-476-4743 or email us at <https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/>.
- Information on where to pick and drop off water samples can be found online. [Environmental Public Health - Water Sample Bottle Pick-up and Drop-off - InformAlberta.ca](#)

Assess, Clean and Sanitize Equipment

- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all sinks before using them.
- [Assess all equipment, including refrigerators, coolers, freezers, ice machines](#) and meat slicers. If they are to continue to be used, clean and sanitize according to the directions on making sanitizing solutions below.
- Ensure all refrigerated storage (refrigerators and coolers) can maintain temperatures of 4°C or less.
- Use a commercial dishwasher or three-compartment sink to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment, dishes and utensils using potable water. Ensure dishwashers are achieving the required temperatures and sanitizer concentrations.
- Clean and sanitize all food surfaces, including food preparation counters, seating tables and chairs, shelving, and other food-related storage areas with potable water.
- Ensure equipment is in good working order, as per manufacturer's specifications. Repair or replace severely damaged equipment.

Sanitizing Solutions

- Cleaning and sanitizing will remove debris, soot, harmful microorganisms, and chemical residues that could pose a food safety risk. The first step is to remove dirt, dust, and residues physically. Cleaning equipment and surfaces with a solution of non-reactive cleaners (e.g., dish soap) and potable water will allow sanitizers to effectively remove harmful bacteria.

- Chemical sanitizers include:
 - chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100–200 ppm (approximately one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of potable water), or
 - quaternary ammonium at a concentration of 200 ppm, or
 - other approved sanitizers.

Before Opening to the Public

- Verify that all refrigerated and freezer display cases, walk-in refrigerators, and walk-in freezers can consistently maintain proper temperatures. Refrigeration units must keep foods less than 4°C, and freezers must keep foods frozen. Ensure all refrigeration or freezing equipment maintain adequate temperatures before placing replacement food items in the units.
- Verify that all equipment used for food preparation (e.g., cooking, cooling, and reheating) can operate according to the manufacturer's specifications/instructions.
- Ensure handwashing basins, including in washrooms, are operational, stocked with hand soap and paper towels, and are accessible.

Additional Considerations for Child Care Facilities and Schools

Food

- Food spaces and equipment must be appropriately cleaned and sanitized if you provide meals, including snacks, to children at your facility. Review the information for food facilities included in this document.

Clothing, Bedding, Plush Toys, etc.

- Launder all affected clothing, plush toys, bedding, and costumes. You may require numerous rinse cycles to extract the soot, ash, and smoke. Consider laundering offsite using a machine tagged for heavy contaminants at a laundromat. These are usually marked as “oilers.”
- Professional assistance is recommended to remove soot and smoke odour from mattresses.
- Do not save books, paper materials, plush toys, or mattresses if they become wet from the building’s fire suppression system or firefighting activities. They are too difficult to clean, sanitize, and dry before mould problems occur.
- Vacuum or damp-wipe books, cardboard, and other paper materials. If heavily damaged, they may need to be discarded.
- Furniture may be difficult or impossible to clean if upholstered, especially if the smoke odour has permeated into these furnishings. Upholstered furniture may be steam cleaned or may need replacement.
- Absorbent materials such as disposable diapers should be considered unusable if open to contamination. If the materials are contaminated with fire retardant or soot, discard the item as it cannot be cleaned.

Clean and Sanitize Toys and Equipment

- Clean and sanitize all toys and equipment. Refer to the directions on making sanitizing solutions below.
- Use a commercial dishwasher or three-compartment sink to wash, rinse, and sanitize non-plush toys or toys without electronic components using potable water. Ensure dishwashers are achieving the necessary temperatures and sanitizer concentrations.
- **Before washing toys and equipment**, run the dishwasher empty through the wash- rinse-sanitize cycle three times. This practice will flush the water lines and clean and sanitize the dishwasher’s interior.

- For equipment such as sleeping mats and cots, where the material is impervious to moisture, these materials must be clean and sanitized prior to use.
- Chemical sanitizers include:
 - chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100–200 ppm (approximately one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of potable water), or
 - quaternary ammonium at a concentration of 200 ppm, or
 - other approved sanitizers.

Outdoor Play Equipment and Surfacing

- Use a hose or pressure washer to wash outdoor playground equipment impacted by soot or other contaminants including fire retardants [Aerial Fire Retardants and Return to Your Home Following a Wildfire Evacuation \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](#).
- Inspect all surfacing for contaminants. Spray down and remove visibly contaminated loose material fall surfacing (e.g., sand).
- Inspect the playground before allowing play by using a form like *Inspection and Maintenance Program for Playspaces* available here <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eph-inspection-maintenance-playspaces.pdf>.
- Do not allow children outside for outdoor play/recess until the play area and equipment have been assessed for contaminants and safety.
- Monitor the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) to determine whether it is safe for children to play outdoors by using resources available on [Air Quality Health Index – Resources | Alberta.ca](#) . Consider vulnerabilities such as the age of children, pre-existing health conditions like asthma, etc.

Water

- Follow other drinking water instructions in this document. Make sure fountain faucets are cleaned and flushed before use.

Additional Considerations for Personal Services

Personal service facilities include facilities that provide hair styling, hair removal, manicures and pedicures, facials and skin care services, tanning, piercing, tattooing and other services that enhance, preserve or alter the client's appearance.

Equipment and Instruments

- The operator must inspect and assess all equipment and instruments in the facility. All equipment and devices affected by heat, ash, chemicals, smoke, soot, or water must be discarded or cleaned and disinfected as appropriate.
- Remove and discard items exposed to heat, ash, chemicals, soot, water, and smoke, such as the following.
 - Single-use items
 - Lotions, cosmetics, disinfectants, and other similar supplies
 - Things where the packaging has been compromised, and you do not have the equipment to disinfect them effectively.
 - Follow current local guidelines on where hazardous waste be discarded.
 - Items to be cleaned and disinfected/sterilized must be disassembled at the cleaning step.
 - Remember to thoroughly clean and disinfect all sinks before using them.
 - Soot is oily and can stain cloth materials and must be removed before you try to clean or deodorize cloth items.
 - Launder or dry clean all affected cloth (e.g., sheets, gowns, towels). You may have to run numerous rinse cycles to extract all materials. Consider laundering offsite using a machined tagged for heavy contaminants at a laundromat. These are usually marked as "oilers."

Additional Considerations for Health Care Clinics

Community-based Health Care Settings (CHCS) include but are not limited to clinics offering medical, dental, podiatry, acupuncture, and chiropractic services. The advice below is not intended to replace any guidelines or recommendations required by the professional regulatory body overseeing the operation.

Equipment & instruments

- The operator must inspect and assess all equipment and instruments in the facility. All equipment and devices affected by heat, ash, chemicals, smoke, soot, or water must be discarded or cleaned and disinfected/sterilized as appropriate.
- Medical device reprocessing (MDR) areas should be re-commissioned. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the MDR area and ensure tabletop sterilizers undergo operational requalification:
 - Operational requalification testing of both dynamic air removal and gravity sterilizers shall be conducted by running three consecutive cycles using biological indicator challenge tests.
 - Dynamic air removal (vacuum) sterilizers shall be tested with three consecutive air removal (Bowie-Dick) tests in an otherwise empty sterilizer.
- Use new single-use medical devices until the MDR area in the office has been re-commissioned.
- Review practices for MDR in the office to ensure that all aspects can be completed as required before considering commencing reprocessing activities.
- Reprocess (clean and sterilize) all packaged reusable instruments and instrument sets before use.
- Remove and discard items exposed to heat, ash, chemicals, soot, water and smoke, including:
 - Medicines, vaccines, disinfectants, alcohol-based hand rub, and other similar supplies (Follow local requirements for any medical waste)
 - Items where the packaging has been compromised.
- Contact your insurance company for information about restoring/replacing electronic devices.

Insurance During Wildfires

During major wildfires, insurance companies may initiate temporary limitations on the sale of new policies in areas under imminent threat.

Consumers who want to change their coverage levels during a wildfire may face difficulties. **However, renewals of existing policies will continue to take place, regardless of the wildfire threat.**

Many policies include a 'Declaration of Emergency Endorsement', which extends the expiration date of policies when an emergency is declared by government, and ensures that the existing policy stays in force until an emergency order is terminated.

It's important to remember that the purpose of insurance is to protect you from unforeseen events. It is important to have coverage year round, and not wait for wildfires to occur before trying to secure insurance protection for your home and property.

Some examples of the limitations/restrictions that may be put in place for areas facing a threat from wildfire include:

- New policies
- Deductible changes
- Alterations to insured limits
- Major changes to existing policies

Since these restrictions are temporary, they do ease as the threat decreases.

Does a Provincial State of Emergency impact everyone's ability to obtain a new insurance policy?

No. If a "State of Emergency" is declared by the province, only the areas that are under imminent threat are commonly subject to temporary restrictions or limitations on the sale of new coverage.

If you are considering, or are in the process of buying, a new home in an area currently deemed at risk from wildfires:

- ▶ Consider adding a condition 'subject to property insurance' clause in the offer
- ▶ See if you can delay the possession date, until the threat passes and coverage can be placed on the policy
- ▶ Shop around. Insurers have different limitations/ restrictions for properties in threatened areas
- ▶ Ask your broker or agent what options may be available to secure insurance for the home
- ▶ Ask if you can add the new home onto your existing policy, instead of trying to secure a new insurance policy with a different provider.

More insurance questions?

Call your insurance representative, visit ibc.ca/bc or contact IBC at **1-844-2ask-IBC** (1-844-227-5422) or AskIBCWest@ibc.ca
[@insurancebureau](https://www.instagram.com/insurancebureau)






What to Do After Disaster Strikes



Questions about insurance? Call us.

Insurance Bureau of Canada
Toll-free: 1-844-2ask-IBC
(1-844-227-5422)

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This information is accurate as of June 2022.

 **IBC**
Insurance Bureau
of Canada



After a disaster hits your home or place of business, you might have no water, no electricity, no gas and no phone service for days. Or you may need to temporarily relocate. **What do you do? This guide helps answer that question.**



Stay Safe

Local officials will let you know if you're allowed to return home after a disaster. **Never enter a building if you hear it shifting or making unusual noises.** If you're concerned about the structural safety of your home, it's best to seek alternative shelter and wait for a building inspector or contractor to check your home and declare it safe before you enter.

If your home is safe to enter, don't turn off utilities such as water or gas unless pipes or appliances are damaged or leaking. If you do turn them off, don't turn them back on. Wait for a qualified technician to do so.

Insurance letter requirements

You need to submit a letter from your insurance company. The letter must be on official letterhead, be signed by an authorized agent, and include the following:

- Name(s) of the insurance policy holder(s).
- Policy and/or claim number.
- Name, phone number of the insurance broker or agent.
- Date of loss.
- Date on which the broker or agent was notified of the loss.
- Address of the damaged property (legal land descriptions) for all affected sections of land.
- Type and cause of the damage or loss.

Your insurance letter must also include a clear indication of what was covered and what was not covered and why along with:

- A complete list of what damages were covered, including settlement amounts for all equipment and property.
- Any damages not covered should be outlined, including the reason that part of your claim was denied.
 - Was part of your claim denied because the damage was due to flood?
 - Was part of your claim denied because you did not have a sewer back-up endorsement, or because the sublimit on your policy was reached?

✓ Last-Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire



Evacuation Tips

Monitor conditions and follow the advice of local authorities. **If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately.**

Review your evacuation plan for your family and pets.

- Visit www.getprepared.gc.ca for helpful tips and evacuation plan templates.

Have your “**ready to go kit**” (emergency kit) ready and stocked with cash, portable radio, prescription medications, eye glasses, change of clothes, pet food, flashlights and batteries, etc. Make sure your phone numbers, insurance information and other important documents for your go bag are current.

- Visit www.getprepared.gc.ca for a more complete list of emergency supplies.

Before evacuating:

- Turn off air conditioning.
- Turn off your electricity and gas.
- Close all doors, garage doors and windows. If weather seal or doors have gaps, seal with duct tape.



Quickly address outside surroundings

Complete a scan around your home and property and take steps to remove combustibles.

Remove leaves, pine needles and other debris from your roof and gutters.

Mow grass and weeds within 10 metres of the house to 10 centimetres in length, or less.

Clear all dead plants, leaves, and weeds within 10 metres of your home. Maintain a 1.5 metre non-combustible zone around your home and deck by sweeping or raking down to mineral soil, rock or concrete.

Move combustible items, such as toys, patio furniture, cushions, decorative items, firewood, and potted plants, that are on and under your deck and within 10 metres of your home. Move all combustible items into your home or garage.

If you have a propane tank located on your property:

- Propane tanks should be moved to 10 metres away from structures.
- Remove weeds and other debris from area around large stationary propane tanks so there is no combustible material near tank.

If you have a combustible fence that attaches to your home:

- Secure gate in an open position.
- Clear vegetation and debris along both sides of combustible fence lines.



Check around the house

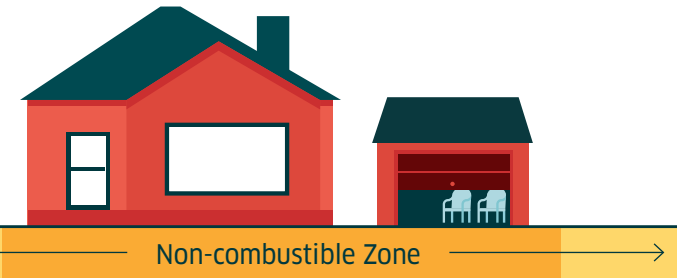
Check vents on roof, foundation and exterior walls to prevent embers from entering your home.

Check your attic and foundation (crawl space) vents to see if they are screened and in good repair. Use duct or metal tape to temporarily cover damaged vents and those with 3 millimetre mesh screening.

If you store cardboard boxes and other easily ignited materials near a vent in your attic or crawl space, move them as far away as possible from vent(s).

- Another option is to place tape over vent(s) at these locations. Be sure to remove tape when you return home.

Cover dryer vents and wall-mounted make-up air openings for furnaces with a plywood cover, metal tape or duct tape.



Visit www.firesmartcanada.ca for additional resources and information.



Make the Call

- After you've determined that you and the members of your household are safe, **contact your insurance representative as soon as possible.** Most insurers have 24/7 claims reporting. Provide as much detail as you can about the damage to your property and include photos of the damage. Ask for a claim file number.
- Your insurer will assign a claims adjuster. They will coordinate to survey the damage to your property and settle your claim. The claims adjuster can also provide guidance and answer questions about the claims process and settlement.
- Be sure to raise any questions you have regarding deductibles, coverage limits or repairs.
- If you're unable to reach your insurance representative, contact your insurer's claims department directly. If your policy was lost or destroyed in the disaster, ask your insurance representative for a copy of your policy.
- If your home is unfit to live in, speak to your insurance representative about what **additional living expenses your insurance covers** and for what period of time. Keep receipts for additional expenses such as meals and hotel stays.

- Provide both your insurer and insurance representative with every phone number and email address where you may be contacted. If you must leave your home, post this information visibly on your property so that authorities or insurance representatives on the scene can reach you.



Document All Damage and Prevent Further Damage

- Take steps, when safe to do so, to prevent further damage to your property. For example, cover furniture with tarps and board up broken windows as soon as you can – even if you haven't yet met with a claims adjuster. **Under your policy, it is your responsibility to take action to minimize further damage to your property and its contents.**
- **Take numerous photos** and/or videos to document how things look before you begin cleanup or temporary repairs.
- **Create an inventory of what was damaged or lost**, including item descriptions and their estimated cost. The more detailed your list is, the better.

- **Salvage whatever you can.** Unless damaged items pose a health hazard, keep them – the claims adjuster may want to see them. Make sure to photograph all of the items that you dispose of.
- **Keep receipts for cleanup and repair expenses.**
- **Make copies of all documents**, receipts, photos and videos that you give to your insurance representative. Document the date and time of every call or correspondence with the adjuster and insurance representative.



Clean Up and Repair

- **Maintain good hygiene and safety practices during cleanup efforts.** To avoid injury, be sure to use appropriate protective gear.
- Throw out any food, including canned items, that has come into contact with floodwater or has been exposed to smoke, heat or soot. **Check refrigerated and freezer foods for spoilage.** Keep a list of any food items you throw out and take photos of them to share with your insurance claims representative.

- **Be cautious when signing repair contracts.** Contractors should be licensed and/or certified, insured and reputable. If you get estimates from different contractors, be sure to check references and credentials. **Discuss payment terms before you sign anything.** Your insurer will likely provide a list of preferred contractors to handle specific types of loss; for example, water damage or fire.
- **Ask contractors to provide written contracts containing detailed work descriptions** and warranties for work completed and materials used. If the work is covered by your insurance policy, make sure the claims adjuster approves the scope and cost before the work begins.
- Depending on the type of policy you have, your insurer may offer to repair, replace or reimburse you for damage.
- **If you have any concerns with your claim, first speak to your claims adjuster.** If an agreement can't be reached, refer to your insurer's website to learn about their dispute resolution process.



HOME IGNITION ZONE

EXTENDED ZONE
10 m to 30 m

INTERMEDIATE ZONE
1.5 m to 10 m

IMMEDIATE ZONE
0 m to 1.5 m



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THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT MAY IMPACT YOUR PROPERTY'S RISK TO WILDFIRE

Check out the *FireSmart Begins at Home Guide* for an in-depth look at how you can build wildfire resiliency.

IMMEDIATE ZONE 0 m to 1.5 m

The Immediate Zone is a non-combustible area that starts at the house and extends to a 1.5 metre perimeter around the home and attached structures, including decks. Reduce the chance of wind-blown embers igniting your home by starting with these proactive steps:

- Choose non-combustible building materials when constructing or renovating your home.
- Clear vegetation and combustible material down to mineral soil and cover with non-combustible materials like gravel, brick, or concrete.
- Avoid planting woody shrubs or trees. If any are present, prune and maintain them regularly.

INTERMEDIATE ZONE 1.5 m to 10 m

Elements in the Intermediate Zone are managed so they don't transmit fire to your home. Here are a few actions you can take to reduce your home's vulnerability:

- Plant fire-resistant vegetation and select non-combustible landscaping materials.
- Avoid incorporating any woody debris, including mulch.
- Keep combustible items like firewood piles, construction materials, patio furniture, tools, and decorative pieces out of this zone.
- Move trailers, recreational vehicles, storage sheds, and other combustible structures into the Extended Zone. If that is not possible, store firewood inside your mitigated garage, shed, or other ember-resistant structures.
- Create a non-combustible ground cover, like a gravel pad, underneath and 1.5 metres around trailers, recreational vehicles, and sheds.

EXTENDED ZONE 10 m to 30 m

The goal in the Extended Zone is not to eliminate fire, but to reduce its intensity. If your property extends into this zone, a few important steps you can take include:

- Selectively remove evergreen trees to create at least 3 metres of horizontal space between the single or grouped tree crowns.
- Remove all branches to a height of 2 metres from the ground.
- Regularly clean up accumulations of fallen branches, dry grass, and needles to eliminate potential surface fuels.
- Continue to apply these principles if your property extends beyond 30m. Work with your neighbours in overlapping zones and seek guidance of a forest professional if affected by other conditions, like steep slopes.

Get started on your FireSmart journey!

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