

2023 FIRE SEASON: PREPARE & BE AWARE

An East Kootenay Emergency Management Program Preparedness Guide

PLEASE BE SMART, PREPARED AND SAFE THIS SUMMER.

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

There are steps you can take now to help you and your family be ready in the event an emergency happens. You should have at all times:

- **An emergency plan that every household member knows.** The plan should include information on how to shut off electrical power and natural gas sources, safe meeting places, an out-of-province contact, and plans for pets/livestock.
- **An emergency supply kit that contains:** food, water, necessary medications, flashlights with extra batteries, personal toiletries, identification for each family member, some cash, insurance papers and any important family documents, and a change of clothes. Be prepared to be on your own for at least 72 hours, possibly longer.
- **A battery-powered or wind-up radio** that allows you to access weather warnings, updates and instructions from local media.
- **A plan for protecting your home** including the tools/items you may need to do so (sprinklers set up ready to turn on and leave, gas turned off, propane/fuel sources moved away from home, shut windows and doors).
- **A full gas tank in your vehicle.**

BE FIRESMART & REDUCE YOUR RISK

Taking action to FireSmart your property will dramatically decrease the risk of wildfire damaging your home. **And, it's easy to do!** The East Kootenay FireSmart Program follows the FireSmart BC and FireSmart Canada principles and is here to help guide you on how reduce your property's wildfire risk.

Learn more: engage.rdek.bc.ca/firesmart

In the East Kootenay we had 31 Nationally Recognized FireSmart Neighborhoods at the end of 2022. We currently have over 80 neighborhoods working on different stages of FireSmarting their homes and properties.

FIRE BANS AND RESTRICTIONS

All rural properties in the RDEK (outside municipalities) follow the Provincial fire bans and restrictions. Municipal residents should also contact their municipal office to see if there are additional restrictions in place.

Before doing any burning (including lighting a campfire), you should always check to make sure you know what bans or restrictions are in effect. Visit www.bcwildfire.ca, click on BANS & RESTRICTIONS and Current Restrictions. **We are located in the Southeast Fire Centre.**

Questions about restrictions should go to the Southeast Fire Centre at 250-365-4040.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

If it is a life safety issue, please call **9-1-1**.

These are the numbers to call to report wide scale events (like forest fires or floods).

These are 24 hour Provincial numbers that alert local emergency officials.

**IF YOU SEE SMOKE OR FIRE,
PLEASE REPORT IT.**

FOREST OR WILDLAND FIRES

***5555** (cellphone)

1-800-663-5555

Via the BC Wildfire app

FLOODING

250-489-9677

OTHER (spills, landslide)

250-489-9677

THE STAGES OF EVACUATION

1 STAGE 1 – EVACUATION ALERT

Residents are advised of the potential need for evacuation. The alert highlights the nature of the danger and that evacuation may be required at any time. Information will be provided at that time on where to go if the evacuation is ordered. Residents should prepare to evacuate and gather personal supplies necessary for several days.

In the event of imminent danger to property or life, the emergency responders may go straight to an "Evacuation Order" without an alert. This can sometimes be referred to as a "Tactical Evacuation."

If you are evacuated from your property you will not be able to re-enter until the evacuation order is rescinded. Security will be provided to the evacuation area to ensure no one re-enters until the order is rescinded.

2 STAGE 2 – EVACUATION ORDER

All persons in the affected area are ordered to leave the area and are provided again with the information required. Once evacuated you are not permitted to return until the order has been rescinded. If an evacuation order is issued, please get out.

3 STAGE 3 – EVACUATION RESCIND

All persons in the affected area are advised that the emergency is under control and the area has been declared habitable and the evacuation order has been rescinded.



If you plan on moving RV trailers or boats, the **ALERT STAGE** is the time to do that. Once an **Evacuation Order** has been issued there is **no time** to allow that to happen.

BC WILDFIRE SERVICE & WILDFIRE TERMINOLOGY

In the event of a wildfire, the BC Wildfire Service is the lead response agency. For the most current information on the status of wildfires and fire restrictions or bans, visit www.bcwildfire.ca or download the BC Wildfire app.

When new fires break out, they are classified as **out of control**. The stage of control describes the level of control that the BC Wildfire Service has of the fire, not the fire's behaviour. Therefore all new fires are **out of control** until they are **being held**, **under control** or **out**. When new fires are reported they may appear on the interactive fire map; however, if they are quickly extinguished, they will be removed.

FIRE STAGES OF CONTROL:

OUT OF CONTROL: Describes a wildfire that is not responding (or only responding on a limited basis) to suppression action, such that the perimeter spread is not being contained.

BEING HELD: Indicates that (with the resources currently committed to the fire) sufficient suppression action has been taken that the fire is not likely to spread beyond existing or predetermined boundaries under the prevailing and forecasted conditions.

UNDER CONTROL: The fire has received sufficient suppression action to ensure no further spread of the fire.

OUT: The fire has been extinguished.

FIRE RESPONSE TYPES:

FULL RESPONSE: The wildfire requires immediate initial attack and/or sustained suppression action until the fire is declared "out".

MODIFIED RESPONSE: The wildfire is managed using a combination of suppression techniques, including direct and indirect attack, and monitoring to steer, contain or otherwise manage fire activity within a pre-determined perimeter (to minimize costs and/or damage and to maximize benefits from the fire).

MONITORED: The wildfire is observed and assessed to determine the appropriate response option to minimize social disruption and/or significant impacts on values and resources, while achieving beneficial ecological, economic or resource management objectives.

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THINGS TO
REMEMBER

1



PEOPLE & PETS

2



MEDS, VITAMINS, GLASSES

3



CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS, CASH

4



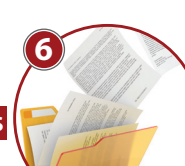
PHOTOS & MEMORABILIA

5



COMPUTERS/HARD DRIVES

6



IMPORTANT PAPERS/PHONE #s

YOUR PERSONAL EVACUATION PLAN

- Have a designated meeting location outside of the hazard area. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated. If an "Evacuation Order" has been given, the information provided will include the location of the designated ESS reception centre.
- Know several different escape routes from your home and community. The evacuation order as well, will outline the designated travel way for the particular event.
- Plan for your pets. If you have pets or livestock you should also have an evacuation plan for them; methods of transport, location to move them to, etc.
- Create a "Family Communication Plan". This plan should designate an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. Put their numbers in your wallet and phone.

Learn more:  prepared bc 

STAY INFORMED

Being aware and informed about what is going on in your area can help you be better prepared and ready to act in an emergency.

When emergencies happen, it is CRITICALLY important that you trust only verified information sources.

If you want to share information, please be smart about what you share. Check dates of all social media posts before sharing and share only current information. Share information that is verified from a trusted source. In an emergency, the rumour mill can put lives at risk.

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

In an emergency, having good information is key. Here are some great resources:

- **PREPARED BC:** www.preparedbc.ca
- **WILDFIRE INFORMATION:**
 - www.bcwildfire.ca
 - www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo/
- **ROAD CONDITIONS/CLOSURES:** www.drivebc.ca
- **GENERAL INFO:** www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/

4 WAYS TO GET EMERGENCY INFO

1. **LOCAL MEDIA**
2. **RDEK FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/eastkootenay
3. **RDEK EMAIL GROUP:** www.rdek.bc.ca/about/email_group_sign_up
4. **RDEK WEBSITE:** www.rdek.bc.ca

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Various methods will be used to advise residents in the event of issued evacuation alerts or orders.

- **LOCAL MEDIA** will broadcast or publish alerts or orders.
- **EVACUATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**, see back page of this newsletter to sign up for this new service.
- **DOOR TO DOOR** canvassing will be performed by emergency personnel, such as local firefighters, RCMP, or Search and Rescue.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA** – the RDEK Facebook page will be used to give information to the public. To like our page, visit www.facebook.com/eastkootenay
- **E-MAIL** – the RDEK provides ongoing emergency information to everyone who has signed up for our e-mail list. To join, visit www.rdek.bc.ca

EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES

Emergency Support Services (ESS) provides basic support to people affected by an emergency or disaster, and is delivered by local Red Cross ESS volunteer teams.

When people are forced from their homes due to an emergency (like wildfire) our Red Cross ESS volunteers step in to provide basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter.

ESS is available for up to 72 hours immediately following the emergency, allowing affected residents the time to make more long-term arrangements and begin the recovery process.

Depending on the situation/emergency, ESS may also be extended.

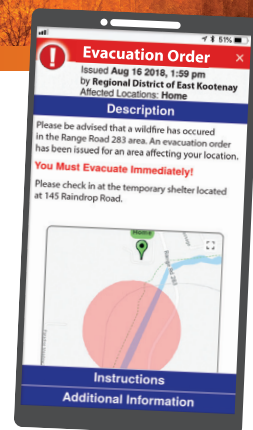
For large scale responses, in addition to providing basic needs, ESS may also assist with family reunification, emotional support, and transportation. The goal of ESS is to help people re-establish themselves as quickly as possible following a disaster. ESS volunteers provide a critical service during emergencies and we are so grateful to all those volunteers on our Red Cross ESS teams around the East Kootenay.

JOIN US! If you care about people, have a desire to help others, and are a team player, please consider joining our ESS team. Training is provided and being an ESS volunteer gives you a chance to give back to your community when they need it most. To learn more visit engage.rdek.bc.ca/ess or contact Simran Sandhu at 250-489-6908.

REGIONAL EVACUATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ENS)

If you haven't signed up for the regional ENS, you are urged to sign up. Powered by **Voyent Alert!** the system will keep you informed in case of evacuation orders or alerts during critical events such as wildfires, floods or hazardous materials incidents. This is a different system than the Provincial Alert Ready, which sends a text to cellphones in a specific range. **Please sign up for the Regional ENS.**

The service is **free** and available to everyone in the East Kootenay including municipalities, rural areas and First Nations. Visitors of the region can also sign up to be alerted in case of an emergency.



TRACK MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

The Evacuation Notification System (ENS) allows you to mark multiple locations such as *Kids' School, Summer Cabin or Mom's House* along with your own place of residence. Critical incidents that affect any of your marked locations in the East Kootenay will be forwarded to you along your preferred communication channel (even if you are in a different location).

COMMUNICATIONS YOUR WAY

Register online to receive alerts via text/SMS alerts or voice messages. Or download the **Voyent Alert!** app for your Android or iOS devices.

NO MESSAGE FATIGUE

Smart alerting capabilities ensure that you will only be notified when a communication is relevant to you or one of the locations you are tracking.

SIMPLE REGISTRATION

Registration for this service is provided by the RDEK and is free, simple and anonymous.

how to register:

SMS/TEXT OR VOICE DIAL USERS

Register online at: <https://ca.voyent-alert.com/vras/register.html>

Choose "My Locations" to pin your locations to receive voice or text based alerts.

MOBILE APP USERS

Download and install the **Voyent Alert!** app from the Apple App or Google Play stores.



Remember to add at least one location when you register

AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WILDFIRE SEASON PREPAREDNESS

To help prepare for the wildfire season, there a number of steps agricultural producers and farmers can take, including:

- Complete a farm or ranch wildfire preparedness plan - this will help you be better prepared to take effective action during a wildfire event
- Identify and undertake risk reduction activities to lessen the risk on your property (such as removing fuels or setting up sprinklers)
- Determine a safe place to relocate animals when a hazard threatens
- Check with insurer to determine your policy is up to date and check for coverage for unexpected loss

The Climate and Agricultural Initiative BC has extensive resources available for the agricultural sector, including workbook templates, videos and more: <https://www.climateagriculturebc.ca/issues/wildfire>