



Area Evacuees

Returning Home

A State of Local Emergency is still in effect for your area, with a 4-hour evacuation notice as 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.

First Responders have worked very hard to protect our communities. We are grateful to them and everybody in the community who has played a part in keeping life and livestock safe.

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 there is an active fire within 30 m (100 ft) of your home, call 911, let them know you are in the fire zone and leave the area immediately.

A fire crew will be sent to your location.

Questions or Concerns?

Please call Yellowhead County EMERGENCY Coordination Center at 1-833-334-4630

(Active only while the event is in progress.)

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

YOU MAY NOTICE:

- Fire Apparatus, water tanks, and equipment may still be positioned in the area. Please avoid them.
- Coloured flagging marked 'SPU' may be on several properties. Do not remove these while there is still fire activity in your area.
- A wide dozer guard and fire break are being dug around edges of the fire to limit the spread. 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.

Areas affected by wildfires can still be a High-Hazard area.

Trees and power poles and lines that have been impacted by the fires can still be a hazard, as well as ash piles on your property.

Take all necessary precautions when returning to your property and follow the instructions of the local municipality and first responders. If you have any concerns, please contact your local municipality at 1-833-334-4630.



Damaged or Lost Structures Caused by the Wildfire

Please make sure you contact your insurance company for any requirements they may have.

Contact your insurance representative as soon as possible.

Document as much detail as you can about the damage to your property and take photos and video of the damage. Ask for a claim file number. Request replacement policy copies if they were lost in the fire.

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.

Debris removal is usually detailed in a homeowners' policy.

This typically covers the cost of removing the debris, dismantling, or pulling down the damaged parts of the structure, or removing materials to get into the building or structure. Do not remove any items or alter the structure until your adjuster says it's OK to do so.

If you have a question about debris removal or anything else regarding a homeowners insurance claim, contact your insurance company. If you can't remember who your provider is, or you for more details for how to deal with structural damage or loss, contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada to help understand fire insurance coverage.

1-844-227-5422 (toll-free) askibcwest@ibc.ca <http://www.ibc.ca/ab/>

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 livestock in your yard, please call the ECC line at 1-833-334-4630
- ▶ 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 your utility provider or 911.
- ▶ Check for electrical hazards such as exposed wires. Avoid contact with damaged or fallen power lines and poles. If there are any hazards, contact FORTIS at **1-866-717-3113** (24-hours).

When you walk through your door:

- ▶ Check your gas, electricity, and water to make sure they are working and contact your utility providers if you need to restore service.

***If you have had a utility disruption, contact your utility company.
Do not attempt to restore any gas or electricity.***

Electricity

- ▶ If the electricity in your home is off, please check your main electric panel and breaker.
- ▶ Simply moving any tripped switches to the 'on' position may restore electricity.
- ▶ If this doesn't restore electricity to your home, call Fortis at **1-866-717-3113** (24-hours)

Natural gas

- ▶ The natural gas crews are going door to door to restore service.
- ▶ If they can not restore service, they will leave contact information on site.
- ▶ If you need help relighting your appliances, call your natural gas provider.
- ▶ Natural gas service provider contacts are listed at the end of this document.

Water: drinking and household use

- ▶ You should run one of your taps for 1-3 minutes to refresh the taste of the water. 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.
- ▶ If you have a private septic system, check the area around your system for damage or sewage leaks. Contact a sewage disposal professional if you find damage to your septic system.

Disposal of Damaged Items or Structures Caused by the Wildfire

- ▶ Please, also first contact your insurance company regarding any specifics that they may have for the removal of debris caused by the wildfire.
- ▶ Parkcourt, Wildwood and Peers can take construction debris and metal.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-restore-your-home.aspx>

Cleaning your yard and property

Firefighting crews may have disrupted parts of your property during firefighting efforts to restrict fire movement and damage to your property. Please contact 1-833-334-4630 with any concerns or other issues.

How do I clean up smoke damage, ash, and soot?

- ▶ If you will be doing the cleaning, wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves, and boots. Learn more about protecting yourself and your family when you return home after a wildfire.
- ▶ Follow your local guidelines to find out how to dispose of hazardous materials including ash. Call 1-833-334-4630 for more information.
- ▶ Follow the tips below to clean smoke damage and soot from different parts of your home.

Outside of your home

- ▶ Use a hose, sprayer, or pressure washer on the outside of your home, driveway, walkway, vehicle, patio, deck, and outdoor furniture. Rinse off your air intake vents and air conditioner carefully. Do not use air hoses or leaf blowers to clean exterior surfaces because you could blow more ash and soot into your house. Before rinsing the exterior of your home, contact your local municipality to make sure there are no water or sewage restrictions.
- ▶ If you have a private septic system, check the area around your system for damage or sewage leaks. Contact a sewage disposal professional if you find damage to your septic system.

How do I clean up my lawn, gardens, trees, and plants?

- ▶ Rinse fire retardant off trees, shrubs, and plants if possible.
- ▶ Soak up any puddles or standing water that has fire retardant materials with soil or sand.
- ▶ Regularly wet down your garden and lawn until the smoke and ash have been diluted or reabsorbed into the air. Ash and soot on plants will continue to smell smoky for some time.
- ▶ If you choose to fix or put in new lawns, you can re-sod or reseed grassy areas.
- ▶ Consider adding new, clean soil to gardens if you suspect or know the area was damaged by the fire.
- ▶ Don't eat fruits and vegetables that were growing in your garden during the fire.
- ▶ Compost from bins that were closed during the fire can be kept and added into your soil as usual. Do not use compost from bins that were open during the fire.

For more information visit:

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-restore-your-home.aspx>

Ash Pits and Dangerous Trees

Recent reports from firefighting ground crews indicate that there are several large ash pits and dangerous trees throughout the burn area that pose a significant threat to public safety. We are reminding the public to please stay out of the bush within the burn area. Ash pits have been reported to be up to 5 – 6 feet deep and are actively burning underground.

Additionally, the fire has compromised the ground and root systems of trees within the burn area; these dangerous trees are susceptible to falling over and can cause serious injuries.

Cleaning

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

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 microfibre 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 odour-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 odour 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.

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.

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.

Phone: 1-844-227-5422 (toll-free)

Email: askibcwest@ibc.ca

website www.ibc.ca/ab/

Insurance information

IF YOU ARE INSURED:

Take the following steps:

1. Assess and document the damage. Taking photos can be helpful.
 2. Call your insurance representative and/or company.
 3. List all damaged or destroyed items.
 4. 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.
 5. 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.
 6. Ask your insurance representative what living expenses you're entitled to be reimbursed for and for what period of time.
- ▶ For health advice or information on health services, *including mental health services*, call Health Link at 811 or **1-866-408-LINK** (5465).

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

Air quality

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

For more information visit <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/news/air.aspx>

https://ecalertme.weather.gc.ca/warning-latest_en.php?ualert_id=17718&alert_code=SAS

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**.

Food Disposal and Fridge & Freezers

Take stock of the foods in your home. Your fridge and freezer may have been without power for some time now. Take plenty of photos and write down an inventory of the contents of your fridge(s) and freezer(s).

Determine if you had a power outage and how long it lasted:

- A full chest freezer will keep food frozen for up to 2 days
- A half-chest freezer will keep food frozen for 1 day
- A cooler or fridge will keep food cold for 4 hours.

Be safe. If in Doubt, Throw it out!

Check if your refrigerator or freezer is damaged. If your refrigerator or freezer was damaged by the fire and is not working, contact the insurance company about coverage as an eligible expense, and your municipality about its safe disposal.

If your refrigerator or freezer was not damaged by the fire and continues to work, take the following steps to clean refrigerators and freezers:

- Remove everything from the refrigerator or freezer.
- Use paper towels or rags to wipe up spills and leaks and dispose of them with the food waste.
- Wash out the appliance with warm, soapy water.
- Disinfect the refrigerator or freezer with a strong bleach solution (1 tsp household bleach per 4 cups water).
- Use latex or rubber gloves if you have sensitive skin that may be irritated by the bleach solution.
- To remove odors, wipe out the appliance with a mixture of water and baking soda, or keep a box of baking soda in the appliance. You also may want to air out the appliance for a few days before plugging it in and using it again. Secure doors in an open position to provide air flow and keep children away.
- Wait until the refrigerator has returned to 4°C or freezer has returned to -18°C before restocking with food.

Check the food in your home and discard:

- Any food that has spoiled, even if the cooler remained at 4°C at all times.
- Frozen foods that have thawed must be discarded. Once thawed food should not be refrozen.
- Fire or smoke damaged foods like dry goods (i.e. flour, sugar, spices, etc.) even if the package isn't open.
- Unrefrigerated raw vegetables or fruits.
- Foods that were stored in porous containers (e.g. cardboard, foam containers, etc.).
- Canned food where the can is bulging, rusted or dented.
- Jarred foods and home canned items, as the heat from the fire likely compromised the safety seal.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-restore-your-home.aspx>

Livestock and Pet Mortality Management

Livestock producers may need to coordinate of carcass disposal, regulated by the Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation of the Animal Health Act, Appendix A. Dead animals must be disposed of in an acceptable manner within 7 days of death. Mortalities can be composted, incinerated, buried, rendered or naturally disposed.

For clarification on any proposed disposal method, please contact the Inspection and Investigation Section by calling 310-FARM or 403-755-1474 (toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000).

In the very unfortunate circumstance where a family pet has been lost, the risk to humans from animal contact is low if proper precautions are taken

- Practice proper hand washing and utilize personal protective equipment such as latex gloves when handling the remains.
- Secure and remove the remains to avoid attracting other animals or pests.
- Contact your veterinarian or municipality for proper handling of the remains.

Handy phone numbers: PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER

Yellowhead County Social Services – Evacuation Contact Number	1-833-334-4630 <i>(Active only while the event is in progress)</i>
Alberta Health Link	811
ATCO	1-800-511-3447 / 310-5678
AltaGas Utilities	1-866-222-2068
Fortis Alberta	310-WIRE (9473)
Trans Alta	403-267-7110
TELUS Mobility	*611 on your TELUS mobile phone or 1-866-558-2273
TELUS Internet	Toll-free 1-888-811-2323
Yellowhead Gas Co-op	780-723-4214

Wildfire Evacuee Information: Mental Health and Addiction Support

If you're struggling or need someone to talk to, help is available.
Please consider reaching out to one of the following resources:

<p>211 Alberta</p> 	<p>211 Alberta is a 24/7 crisis line and single point of contact for digital supports and services near you – no matter where you are in the province.</p> <p>Call or text INFO to 211 or visit ab.211.ca.</p>
<p>Counselling Alberta</p> 	<p>Counselling Alberta offers affordable virtual and in-person counselling services to Albertans in need.</p> <p>Call 1-833-827-4230 or visit counsellingalberta.com.</p>
<p>Mental Health Help Line</p> 	<p>Alberta Health Services (AHS) provides 24/7 confidential support, information and referrals to Albertans experiencing mental health concerns.</p> <p>Call 1-877-303-2642 or visit ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes.</p>
<p>Indigenous Support Line</p> 	<p>This confidential AHS helpline helps First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in the North Zone access culturally safe support and connect to health services.</p> <p>Call 1-844-944-4744 from noon to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday.</p>
<p>Kids Help Phone</p> 	<p>Kids Help Phone provides 24/7 access to counselling and crisis services for children, youth and young adults.</p> <p>Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868.</p>

Psychologists' Association of Alberta



The Psychologists' Association of Alberta provides up to three free sessions with a psychologist to those impacted by the wildfires, including evacuees and first responders.

Contact the [Disaster Response Network](#) at 780-424-0294 or paa@paa-ab.ca.

Addiction Help Line



AHS provides 24/7 confidential support, information and referrals to Albertans experiencing addiction and mental health concerns.

Call 1-866-332-2322 or visit ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes.

Virtual Opioid Dependency Program



The Virtual Opioid Dependency Program offers same-day treatment for Albertans struggling with opioid addiction, including opioid agonist treatment medications.

Call 1-844-383-7688 seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or visit vodp.ca.

Text4Hope



Text4Hope provides encouragement through daily text messages to help Albertans develop healthy coping skills and build resiliency during stressful times.

Text HOPEAB to 393939 to subscribe.

811 Health Link



Health Link is a single point of contact for health advice and information on health services.

Call 811 or 1-866-408-LINK (5465) or visit myhealth.alberta.ca.

For more information on the emergency and supports for evacuees, visit alberta.ca/emergency.



Supports for Albertans during stressful times

Receive free daily messages to provide support and build coping skills

To subscribe text: **HopeAB** to **393939**

 www.ahs.ca/text4hope



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