

Coastal Fire Centre

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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 36

Hectares burned: 236

Human-caused: 36

Lightning-caused: 0

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: Not Restricted

Category 2: Not Restricted

Category 3: Not Restricted

Forest Use Restrictions: No Ban

[Prohibitions section of bcwildfire.ca for full](#)

Coastal Initial Attack Crews

Provincially, the British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) maintains a total of 140 Initial Attack Crews, which consists of 443 personnel (some crews consist of 4 persons).

There are 22 Initial Attack Crews located strategically throughout the 16.8 million hectares that makes up the Coastal Fire Centre. All Initial Attack Crew names begin with the word Coast – Unit Crews do not.

Fire Zone	Number of Initial Attack Crews	Crew Names
Fraser (includes Haida Gwaii)	4	Coast Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta
Pemberton	4	Coast Echo, Foxtrot, Golf and Uniform
Sunshine Coast	3	Coast Hotel, India and Whiskey
North Island/Mid Coast	5	Coast Juliet, Kilo, Lima, Mike and November
Mid Island	3	Coast Oscar, Papa and Tango
South Island	3	Coast Quebec, Romeo and Sierra

Strategically Located: Pre-positioning Crews

Within the Coastal Fire Centre there are several offices and bases staffed at various times, and at various levels, depending on forecasted weather and preparedness levels.

The administrative office for the Coastal Fire Centre is located near Parksville on Vancouver Island. It is the Regional Wildfire Coordination Centre (RWCC) and the central hub for the BC Wildfire Service on the Coast, including Vancouver Island and the lower mainland.

There are six zone offices including:

- South Island Zone office at Cobble Hill,
- Mid-Island Zone office at Errington,
- North Island/Mid Coast Zone office at Quinsam near Campbell River,

- Pemberton Zone office,
- Sunshine Coast Zone office located in Powell River
- Fraser Zone located at Cultus Lake.

- Port Alberni
- Sechelt
- Haig Base near Hope
- Squamish



During periods of heightened activity or forecasted need, a further four seasonal bases are available for the Zones to staff. These bases are located at:

- Boston Bar
- Queen Charlotte City
- Port McNeill
- Bella Coola

Below is a link to a webinar hosted by Emergency BC that BC Wildfire Service took part in with our Indigenous partners on Community Funding for Wildfire:

There is some good information in this presentation so feel free to listen and if you have any questions you can contact Celina Dorame at cdorame@fnps.ca to be included on the invite list for upcoming webinars.

How Initial Attack Crews Respond to Fires

In British Columbia the challenging landscape combined with the harsh wildland fire environment requires knowledgeable, prepared personnel. The BC Wildfire Service has 1,100 Type 1 firefighters who annually respond to nearly 2,000 fires on behalf of the province of B.C. The type or types of crew deployed to fight a wildfire depends on a variety of factors including location, terrain, size and fire behavior.

Initial Attack (IA) firefighters operate as three-person crews. These well-trained, physically fit and highly mobile crews may be moved rapidly throughout the province to new fires. Initial attack crews are usually the first on the scene of a new wildfire, and can be dispatched by helicopter or vehicle, depending on access to the fire. IA crews must be able to be deployed by helicopter if needed, and as this is a requirement of the job, they are required to be under 200 pounds in weight.

Once at the fire, the crew assesses the scene and decides what fire fighting tactic to use depending on the values at risk and what rank the fire is burning at. If applicable, the crew will contact the operations staff in the office, who will refer to the Fire Management Plan, which is a document containing the essential elements of actions necessary to save human life and property and minimize fire danger.

If the fire is deemed beneficial to land management objectives in the area, it is suitable for the crew to modify the goal of immediately extinguishing the fire. This fire would then be referred to as 'modified response', and the fire would be monitored to ensure it continues to benefit the land base and does not threaten life or property, rather than being immediately extinguished.

If the fire is a threat and needs to be immediately extinguished, the crew will begin fighting the fire.



Basic Training: S-100

Before anyone can work in a wildfire environment, they must have a basic understanding of wildfire behaviour, suppression, terminology and, most importantly, safety. This includes not only firefighters, but also support staff, such as medics and pilots. Completion of the S-100 is also mandated by WorkSafeBC for workers involved in forestry operations.

The S-100 course is the minimum level of training required to fight wildfire in the province. A two-day, 16-hour program provides a day of classroom learning followed by a hands-on day in the field, learning the basics of wildland firefighting. The S-100A is a four-hour refresher and is all that is required if you have taken either course within the past five years. Both courses are valid for one year from date of delivery. The BCWS [Wildfire Training](#) page on bcwildfire.ca has information on these and other courses.

When a wildfire starts, industry and the public can help by prompt and accurate reporting to our fire reporting line (1-800-663-5555 or *5555). The dispatch will guide you through initial fire assessment with questions about the location, size and smoke characteristics of a fire, along with wind, fuel, terrain and values at risk. Crews will reassess these same elements when they arrive on scene.

Fire line workers must understand the basics of fire and all the factors that influence its behaviour. The Fire Triangle lays out the three necessities for a fire to burn: oxygen, heat and fuel. All suppression tactics aim to break the triangle by removing one or more of these factors. For example, dousing a fire with water removes heat; building a control line removes fuel; smothering a fire with soil or foam removes oxygen. Firefighters must be familiar with suppression principles, fire attack methods, and the many techniques and equipment used to break the Fire Triangle.

In B.C., firefighters adhere to what is known as the “10:00 a.m. concept,” whereby crews aim to control any new fire by 10:00 a.m. the morning following discovery. After 10:00 a.m. rising temperatures combine with dropping humidity to increase a fire’s potential to spread. Crews meet this suppression goal more than 90 per cent of the time.

Fighting wildfires is a dangerous activity, but education and communication go a long way towards mitigating the many hazards. The S-100 course provides the basics, but it is only the first of many BC Wildfire Service courses that promote wildfire knowledge, effective suppression and safety. For more information on employment opportunities and wildfire training, visit the BCWS [Employment & Contract Opportunities](#) page.

The BCWS follows the national system of rating fire danger, the [Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System](#) (CFFDRS). The CFFDRS considers a wide array of factors: moisture levels, available fuels, weather conditions and topography to name a few. Using a series of detailed indices, this system helps fire fighters predict how easily a fire will start and how it will behave if it does. The science behind fire ignition and behaviour is fascinating and complex.

Basic Training: S-100 Cont.

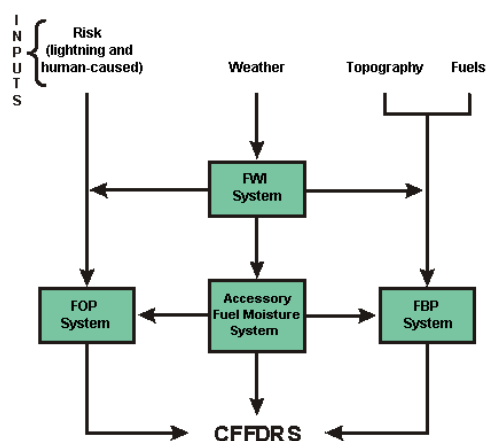
The BCWS website contains more detailed information on [wildfire behaviour](#) and the [wildfire ranking scale](#). Understanding the factors that affect fire is essential to worker safety on the fire line.

The first responsibility of all fire fighters is to prevent injury to themselves and others. The S-100 course emphasizes safety in all aspects of wildfire fighting. The many hazards touched on, in addition to fire behaviour, include helicopters, heavy equipment, the physical environment, pumps, chainsaws and other tools. Throughout the course, communication is highlighted as a main strategy to avoid hazardous situations. When on a fire, the BCWS organizes according to the Incident Command System (ICS) which provides common terminology and a clear chain of command. Morning briefings clearly outline the goals for the day as well as channels for communication and potential dangers. Safety zones and escape routes are emphasized. Fighting wildfires is a dangerous activity, but education and communication go a long way towards mitigating the many hazards. The S-100 course provides the basics, but it is only the first of many BC Wildfire Service courses that promote wildfire knowledge, effective suppression and safety.

For more information on employment opportunities and wildfire training, visit the [BCWS Employment & Contract Opportunities](#) page.

RESOURCES

- [BCWS Wildfire Training](#)
- [Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System](#)
- [Wildfire Behaviour](#)
- [Wildfire Ranking Scale](#)
- [Employment & Contract Opportunities](#)



FireSmart Work Bee Declared Huge Success! Submitted by Donnie Carmichael

The Powerderview Strata in Whistler held a FireSmart work bee on Saturday, June 20, 2020. Even though it rained (poured at times) it was a fantastic community spirit building volunteer event. Twenty-nine owners / family members show up and everyone worked extremely hard from 9:00am till 4:00pm with an hour lunch break at noon.

Residents cleared slopes behind the structure, thinning and removing dead and dying vegetation in areas close to structures. Several loads of chipped material had to be hauled away.

The event included lunch for all those who took part. Many who were involved in the day also contributed food, beverage and pop-up tents.

A member of the neighbouring strata also took part in order to learn what was necessary to be a 'FireSmart' community.



Fire Weather Forecast

SYNOPSIS: (Today-tomorrow) A very wet system crossing the southern zones today bringing some hourly rainfalls of over 5 mm. Total rainfall for many stations will be over 20 mm. Northern edge of the system from Beaver Creek to near Toba Camp but the circulation around the low pressure centre could spread the rains up to a Quinsam to Scar Creek line by this afternoon. By that time the rains will cover all the way east to Manning Park. The upper low controlling the pattern will head into the southern interior late today and the heavy clouds will move off the coast and the rain will end. And once it ends a drier northerly circulation will move in to bring partial clearing by midnight. Saturday sees a mix of clouds and sun and no shower activity but somewhat warmer temperatures. Afternoon highs should return to near the long term normal for the time of year—the low 20s. Humidity remains quite high and winds reasonably light.

OUTLOOK: (Sunday-Tuesday) The mini-dry spell continues Sunday and Monday with a weak high pressure ridge maintaining a mix of sun and clouds and afternoon temperatures in the low to mid 20s. By Tuesday the next low is on the coast and we are back into the rain.

6 TO 10 DAY: (next week) Yesterday the long range forecast charts showed A ridge popping up next week but the forecast has not panned out. Current projections show an ongoing series of upper lows reaching the coast and bringing continued cool wet weather.

Coastal News

All initial attack firefighters must be hover exit certified each year. On a unit crew, any personnel under 200 pounds can undergo the training to be certified in hover exiting. Typically a handful of unit crew members are certified each season. Hover Exit training has now been completed for the 2020 season.

Fitness testing, that was postponed earlier in the season, has now been reimplemented with crews undergoing the process in smaller groups. Passing the fitness test is required to be eligible to work as a firefighter. It is also mandatory for any firefighters deployed out of the Province under an agreement with the Canadian Interagency Firefighting Centre (CIFCC).

Fire Activity remains low due to the rainfall experienced in June but July should see temperatures rise above normal according to Environment Canada: https://weather.gc.ca/saisons/prob_e.html.

Amendments have recently been made to the Wildfire Regulations. For more information go here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/prevention/prevention-industry-comm-ops/>

Contact Information

Report a Wildfire: *5555 on a cell or 1 800 663-5555

Wildfire Information Line: 1 888 3FOREST

Burn Registration Number: 1 888 797-1717

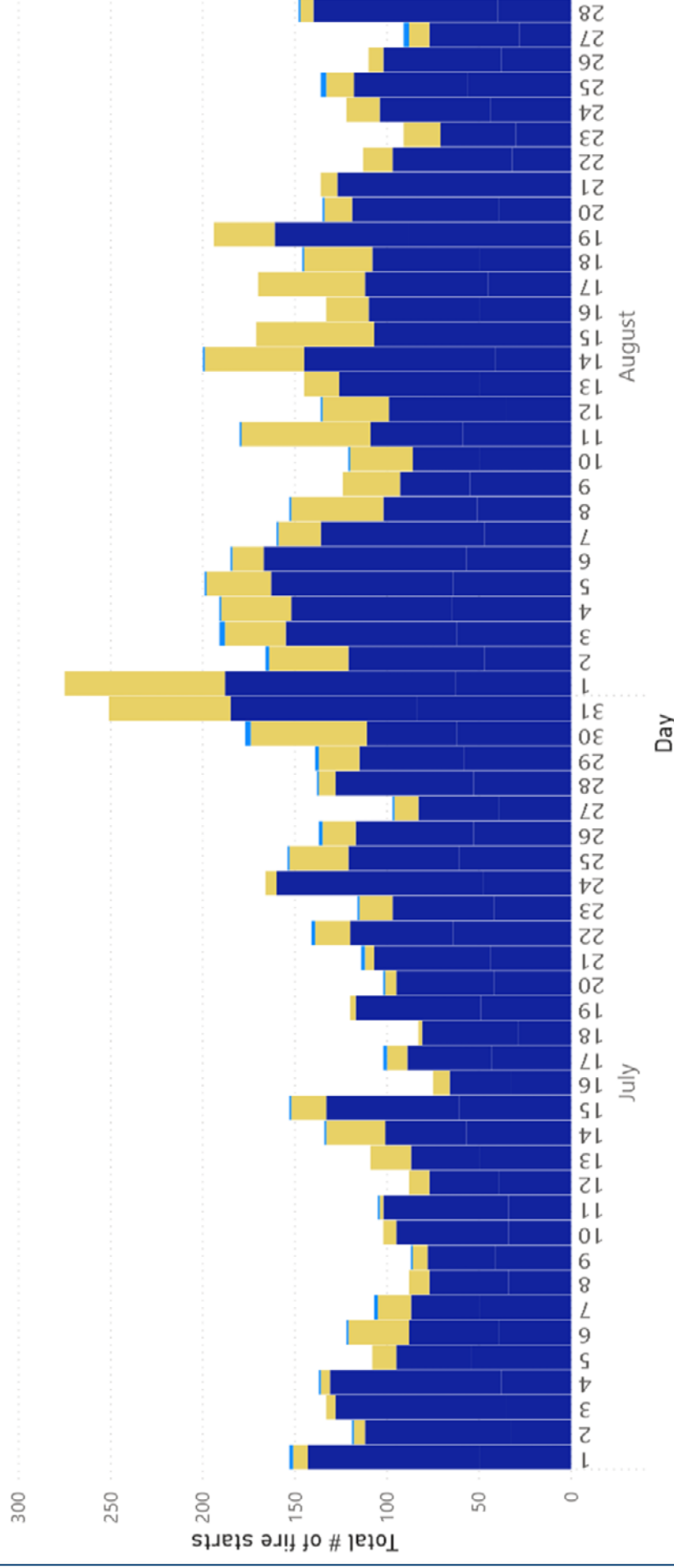
Information Officer Phone Number: 250-951-4209

Information Officer Email:

BCWS.COFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca

Fire Start Causes from 2010-2019 by Time of Year

Suspected Fire Cause ● Human ● Natural ● Undetermined



Fire Causes by Day - Cumulative 10 Year Totals

Above is a graph that shows human-caused and natural fires starts averaged by day over the last ten years. Note the spike in fire starts on August 1st. This is a good reminder to be cautious with any fire, particularly at the height of summer. August 1st is often a day when a high number of people are recreating but it is also interesting to note the spike in lightning caused fires on this day.

Post Creek Prevention Project

The Fraser Unit Crew conducted work near Post Creek, a small community near Chilliwack Lake. The focus was on clearing and thinning along a treeline to create a fuel free zone.

