

# INFORMATION SESSION – BC WILDFIRE SERVICE

NAVIGATING THE BC WILDFIRE SERVICE WEBSITE: [WWW.BCWILDFIRE.CA](http://WWW.BCWILDFIRE.CA)

BC Wildfire Service  
Coastal Fire Centre  
April, 2021



# JURISDICTION – COASTAL FIRE CENTRE

The province is divided into six regional fire centres: Cariboo, Coastal, Kamloops, Northwest, Prince George and South East. Each fire centre is responsible for wildfire management within its boundaries. More information about specific fire centres and jurisdictional response is available [here](#).

The Coastal Fire Centre, located in Parksville on Vancouver Island, coordinates wildfire suppression and prevention across south coastal B.C., the most heavily populated area in the province.

This area encompasses approximately 16.5 million hectares of land, extending west of the highest point on the Coast Mountain range from the U.S./Canada border at Manning Park to the northern border of South Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, the Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast, Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and Haida Gwaii.

The presence of six distinctly different microclimates in the area gives rise to vastly different fuel types and fire danger ratings. Much of the terrain in the Coastal Fire Centre is steep and rugged with thick brush, large timber and large bodies of water and, with over 75% of the population of B.C. living in this area, there is a high potential for interface fires that affect homes, cabins, watersheds, communication towers, transmission lines, roads and other infrastructure.





What is happening?  
Where do I go for information?  
What can you tell me?  
(Slides 4-7)



How do I find out whether a  
open fire prohibition is in effect  
in a particular area?  
(Slide 8)



Common questions and  
contact information  
(Slides 9-17)

This information session was developed to show you where you can get “real time” information from the BC Wildfire Service about wildfires, fire prohibitions and other valuable information that applies to you and your region.



Where to go for information:

[www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)

On the main page of the BC Wildfire Service website, there are links to:

**Interactive Wildfire Map (B.C. Wildfire Dashboard)** – a graphic overview of the current wildfire situation in B.C.

**Wildfires of Note** – details about “interface” fires (i.e. fires that affect communities or infrastructure) and/or larger fires.

**Current Wildfire Activity** – an overview of the current situation

**Information Bulletins** – media releases can be found here

The screenshot shows the homepage of the British Columbia Wildfire Service website. The header features the BC Wildfire Service logo and a navigation menu. The main content area is titled "Wildfire Service" and includes a banner for the "Update: BC FireSmart Manual" with a "Download now!" link. Below the banner is a search bar for the Wildfire Service. The "Popular Resources" section contains three columns: "Wildfires of Note" with a description and a photo of a firefighter, "Interactive Wildfire Map" with a description and a map of BC showing wildfire locations, and "Emergency Info BC" with a description and a photo of a smartphone displaying emergency information. On the right side, there is a "Fire Danger Rating" section with a map of BC showing fire danger ratings and a "View Fire Danger Ratings" link. At the bottom right, there is a "Contact Us" section with links to "Report a wildfire", "Fire information line", and "Burn registration line".

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Home > Public Safety & Emergency Services >

## Wildfire Service

**Update: BC FireSmart Manual**  
Learn about the FireSmart program and identify changes you can make to help protect your home and neighbourhood from wildfire.  
[Download now!](#)

Search Wildfire Service  
Enter a keyword or phrase to search

### Popular Resources

#### Wildfires of Note

Find the latest information on wildfires that are particularly visible or pose a threat to public safety.

#### Interactive Wildfire Map

View the location and details of all active wildfires in B.C., as well as Fire Centre boundaries.

#### Emergency Info BC

B.C.'s hub for disaster information, from evacuation alerts and orders to response and recovery resources.

### Fire Danger Rating

British Columbia Wildfire Service  
DAILY Danger Rating  
15 OCT 2018 (12:00PM)

Fire danger ratings indicate how easily fires can start and spread in an area.

[View Fire Danger Ratings](#)

### Contact Us

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

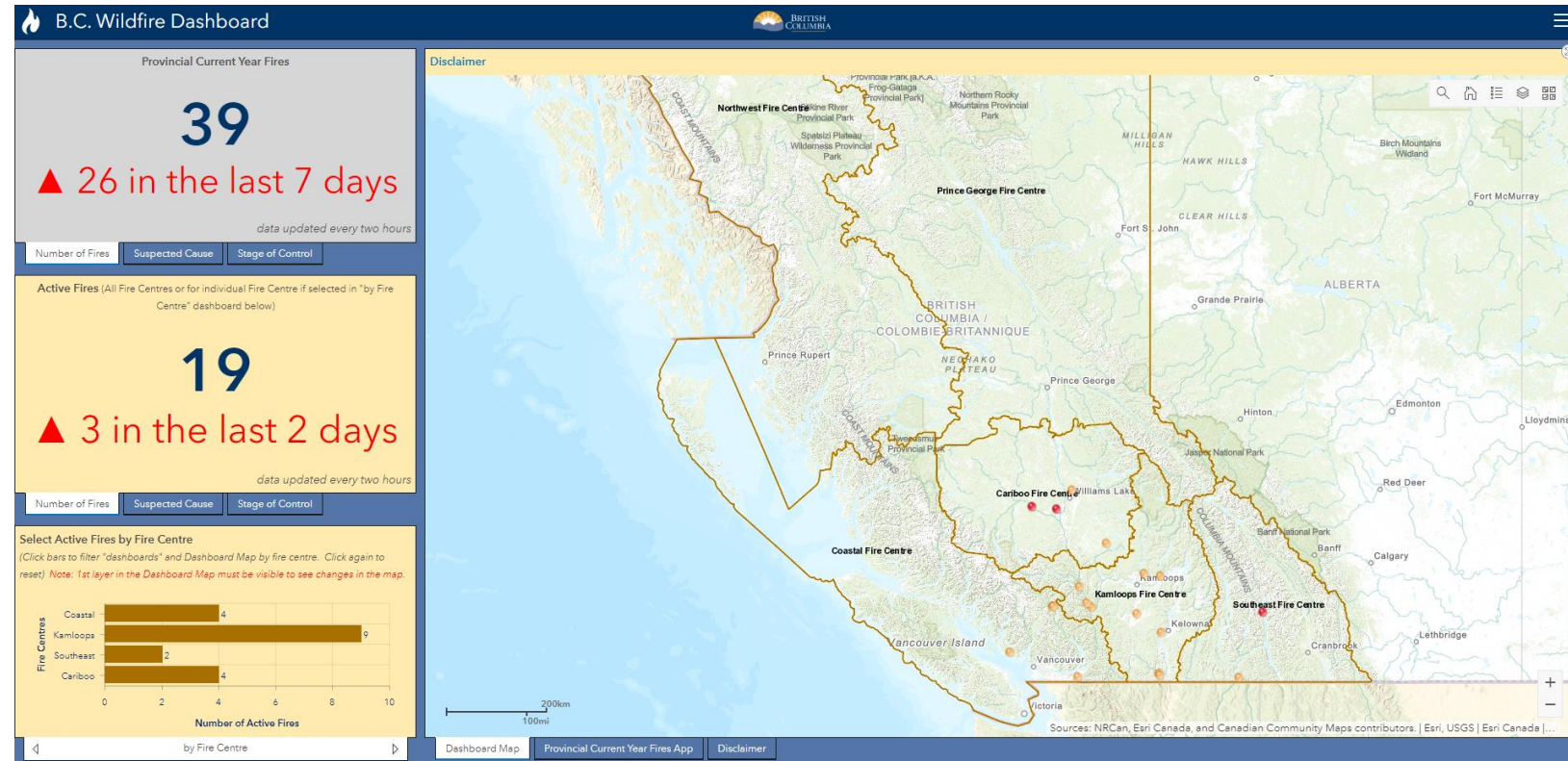
**Fire information line:** 1 888 336-7378

**Burn registration line:** 1 888

## Interactive Wildfire Map (B.C. Wildfire Dashboard): Features

- **Current wildfire situation** – active wildfires (discovery date, suspected cause, approximate location, estimated size, stage of control, etc.)
- **Additional layers** (click on layers icon at top right) – fire perimeters, evacuation orders and evacuation alerts, prescribed fires, area restrictions, bans and prohibition areas, recreational sites and trails, protected land access restrictions, fire danger ratings
- **Statistics** – total “current year fires” by stage of control and suspected cause, active fires in each fire centre, new fires in the last seven days

[BCWS Interactive Map Reference Guide](#) – information to help navigate the layers, dashboards and features available on the Interactive Wildfire Map.



### Stages of Control – Definitions

- **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.

Additional terms commonly used to describe wildfire and fuel management can be found here: [Wildfire Glossary](#)

**Fire Danger Rating** (found at top-right of the BC Wildfire Service main page) Click on “View Fire Danger Ratings” button and scroll down to a group of links that will take you to specific weather station readings for specific fire centres.

**Low:** Fires may start easily and spread quickly, but there will be minimal involvement of deeper fuel layers or larger fuels.

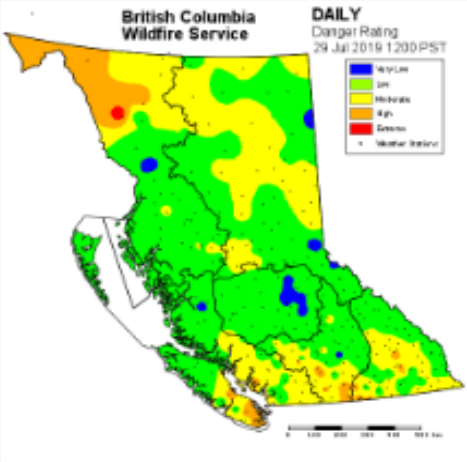
**Moderate:** Forest fuels are drying out and there is an increased risk of surface fires starting. Carry out any forest activities with caution.

**High:** Forest fuels are very dry and the fire risk is serious. New fires may start easily, burn vigorously, and challenge fire suppression efforts. Extreme caution must be used in any forest activities. Open burning and industrial activities may be restricted.

**Extreme:** Forest fuels are extremely dry and the fire risk is very serious. New fires will start easily, spread rapidly, and challenge fire suppression efforts. General forest activities may be restricted, including open burning, industrial activities and campfires.

\* People who are carrying out industrial activities and want to use danger class information provided on this website must confirm that the weather station data they are looking at represents the conditions in the area where they are operating.

### Fire Danger Rating



British Columbia  
Wildfire Service

DAILY  
Danger Rating  
29 Jul 2019 1200 PST

Very Low  
Low  
Moderate  
High  
Extreme

Weather Station

Fire danger ratings indicate how easily fires can start and spread in an area.

[View Fire Danger Ratings](#)

Danger Class	
Kamloops Fire Centre - Tuesday, October 29, 2019	
The danger class values presented on this site are directly applicable only the danger class information from this website must determine that the v	
5 = Extreme Danger 4 = I	
ND	
No Data	
[Dgr Rgn] Station	2019
[3] AFTON	1024
[3] ASHCROFT (EC)	ND
[3] ASHINOLA	ND
[3] ASPEN GROVE	1
[3] AUGUST LAKE	2
[1] BERRY	1
[1] BLUE RIVER 2	1
[3] BRENDA MINES	1
[1] CAHILTY	1
[1] CURWEN CREEK	1
[1] EAST BARRIERE	1
[3] FINTRY	1
[3] FIVE MILE	1
[3] FRENCH BAR	2
[3] GLIMPSE	1
[3] GRIZZLY EXT	1
[3] GWYNETH LAKE	1
[1] HARBOUR LAKE	1
[3] IDABEL LAKE 3	1
[3] INKANEEP EXT	1
[3] KETTLE 2	1
[3] LARCH HILLS WEST	1
[3] LEIGHTON LAKE	2
[3] LILLOOET	2

## FIRE DANGER RATINGS

Weather has a significant impact on wildfires, in terms of how they start, how aggressively they spread, and how long they burn. The fire danger rating is an indication of how dry the conditions are and how rapidly a wildfire will spread (taking into account ignition conditions and fuel sources).



**Fire Weather** (found at top-right of the BC Wildfire Service Fire Danger Rating page)



Here you will find a section titled **Weather Maps**. This link will bring you to a page with a series of maps, as shown below.



On the Weather Maps page, you will find additional links to the right that include: **Lightning Danger** (Map), **Smoke Forecast** and the **Venting Index** (also known as the ventilation index).

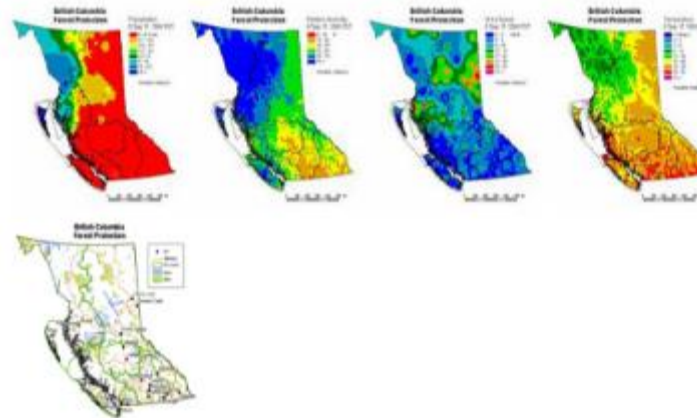
## Fire Weather



Check [weather conditions in B.C.](#)

## Weather Maps

Click to [view maps](#) showing the precipitation levels, wind speed, relative humidity and temperature across B.C.



## Related Links

- [Lightning Danger \(map\)](#)
- [Smoke Forecast](#)
- [Venting Index](#)

# FIRE WEATHER

Collectively, “fire weather” considers all parameters that influence fire starts and subsequent fire behaviour, including temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, direction, precipitation and atmospheric stability.

## Fire Bans and Restrictions

You can access information about open burning prohibitions and restrictions through a link on the main page of the BC Wildfire Service website. Information about fire-related fines and penalties can also be found on this Fire Bans and Restrictions page.

[Home](#) > [Public Safety & Emergency Services](#) >

### Wildfire Service

#### Employment Opportunities

The BC Wildfire Service employs approximately 1,600 seasonal personnel each year, including firefighters, dispatchers, and other seasonal positions.

[Learn more](#)

Search Wildfire Service

Enter a keyword or phrase to search



#### Popular Resources

##### Wildfires of Note

Find the latest information on wildfires that are particularly visible or pose a threat to public safety.



##### Interactive Wildfire Map

View the location and details of all active wildfires in B.C., as well as Fire Centre boundaries.



##### Emergency Info BC

B.C.'s hub for disaster information, from evacuation alerts and orders to response and recovery resources.



##### Current Wildfire Activity

Get information on current wildfire activity in B.C., including details about specific wildfires, fire response efforts, and Fire Danger Ratings across the province.

[Explore Within](#)

##### Fire Bans and Restrictions

Find out what fire bans and restrictions are in effect in your area. You can face serious fines and penalties if you fail to adhere to these bans and restrictions.

[Explore Within](#)

## Fire Bans and Restrictions

Find out what fire bans and restrictions are in effect in your area. You can face serious fines and penalties if you fail to adhere to these bans and restrictions.

[View current bans and restrictions](#)

[Subscribe to the fire ban RSS feed](#)

[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)

[Campfires](#)



[Open Burning](#)



[UAVs and Drones](#)



[Frequently Asked Questions](#)



British Columbia covers a vast amount of land, and conditions can vary significantly from one area of the province to another. For that reason, the BC Wildfire Service implements open fire prohibitions on a regional basis, rather than implementing a single ban that applies to the entire province.

Multiple factors are taken into consideration when assessing wildfire hazards and deciding whether to implement an open fire prohibition, including current and forecasted weather conditions, the availability of firefighting resources and the “Buildup Index.”

The Buildup Index rating is an estimate of the total amount of fuel available for combustion on the landscape. Using the Buildup Index allows the province’s six fire centres to follow a consistent and scientific process for evaluating the need to implement open fire prohibitions.

Where local, municipal or regional by laws are in place governing the use of open fire or smoke management, please contact those authorities before igniting a fire.





COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## Concern raised by a member of the public: *Why is there no campfire ban in place?*

The decision on when or where to implement open fire prohibitions (including campfire bans) is made by regional fire centres, depending on local fire hazards or dangers, forecasted weather conditions, and the type and level of wildfire activity being experienced in that region. Below are some examples of regional considerations:

- Current forest fuel conditions (danger class)
- Availability of firefighting resources
- Level of wildfire activity
- Impacts on recreational activities
- Weather forecast

Any local government (including municipalities, regional districts and First Nations communities) can pass an open burning bylaw and administer it independently of any provincial prohibitions. The BC Wildfire Service supports local governments enacting local burn bylaws, which will supersede any provincial prohibitions.

According to the *Wildfire Act*, the use of open fire is prohibited “if an official considers it necessary or desirable to limit the risk of a fire or to address a public safety concern.” For more information, see the [Wildfire Act](#) and [Wildfire Regulation](#).

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Concern raised by a member of the public: *Fire use when an open fire prohibition is in place*

*“On Saturday, over 100 people were crowded into a local 20-person campground, burning campfires MUCH larger than allowed, and there were gallons of alcohol consumed right around the corner from me.”*

**If you witness or are aware of a natural resource violation, please do one of the following:**

- fill out a Report of [Natural Resource Violation](#)
- call the Natural Resource Violation reporting line at 1 877 952-7277
- contact your local police detachment

Anyone found in contravention of an open burning prohibition may be issued a ticket for \$1,150, required to pay an administrative penalty of up to \$10,000 or, if convicted in court, fined up to \$100,000 and/or sentenced to one year in jail. If the contravention causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.



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Concern raised by a member of the public: *Where is that smoke coming from? Is there a wildfire nearby?*

If you have spotted smoke and you think there is a wildfire in the area, report it to the BC Wildfire Service by calling 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or \*5555 on your cellphone.

If you want to know where smoke is coming from, the first course of action for these types of concerns is to check the [Interactive Wildfire map \(B.C. Wildfire Dashboard\)](#).

If you find out that the smoke is not coming from a local wildfire, you can check [www.firesmoke.ca](http://www.firesmoke.ca) to trace the source of smoke from fires that are not in your area.

Remember that smoke may be coming from a structure fire, not a wildfire.

If there is smoke in the area and you are concerned about how the smoke may affect your health, please check the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's [Air Quality Health Index](#) or HealthlinkBC for information about [Wildfires and Your Health](#).

## Concern raised by a member of the public: *high-risk activities*

*“It’s very dry and my neighbour is using an excavator.  
Isn’t that dangerous? Can’t something be done about it?”*

The Wildfire Regulation defines high-risk activities and sets out requirements and restrictions related to those activities. If industry personnel or members of the public are planning to do any land-clearing within one kilometre of grasslands or a forest, they must take measures to prevent a wildfire starting or spreading. This requirement also applies to the use of spark-producing machinery such as welders, mowers, chainsaws, grinders, power tools or any other equipment that could strike a rock and create a spark.

Information about [high-risk activities](#) can be found in the “Wildfire Prevention” section on the BC Wildfire Service’s main page (“Fire Prevention for Industry & Operators > High Risk Activities”).

If after reviewing this information you are concerned that someone is in violation, please refer to the directions as outlined on [slide 11](#).

### [Wildfire Prevention](#)

We’re in this together. Wildfire prevention can happen at home, in the backcountry, and through larger-scale fire and fuel management planning. Learn what you can do to help.

[Explore Within](#) ▾



### [Fire Prevention for Industry & Operators](#)

Are you involved with industry or a commercial operator in BC? You have legal obligations and responsibilities with respect to fire use, prevention, control, and rehabilitation.



### [High Risk Activities](#)

A person who carries out a high risk activity on or within 300m of forest land or grass land on or after March 1 and before November 1, unless the area is snow covered, must determine the Fire Danger Class for the location of the activity. There are three steps to determine your obligations around high risk activities.

[Learn More](#)

## Concern raised by a member of the public: *evacuation alerts and evacuation orders*

*“I have been put on an evacuation alert. What does that mean?  
What do I do next? Who can help me?”*

The BC Wildfire Service does not implement or administer evacuation alerts or orders. Evacuation alerts and evacuation orders are administered by local governments, including First Nations. (The exception is a tactical evacuation, when BC Wildfire Service personnel come to your door during an emergency situation and tell you to leave immediately.)

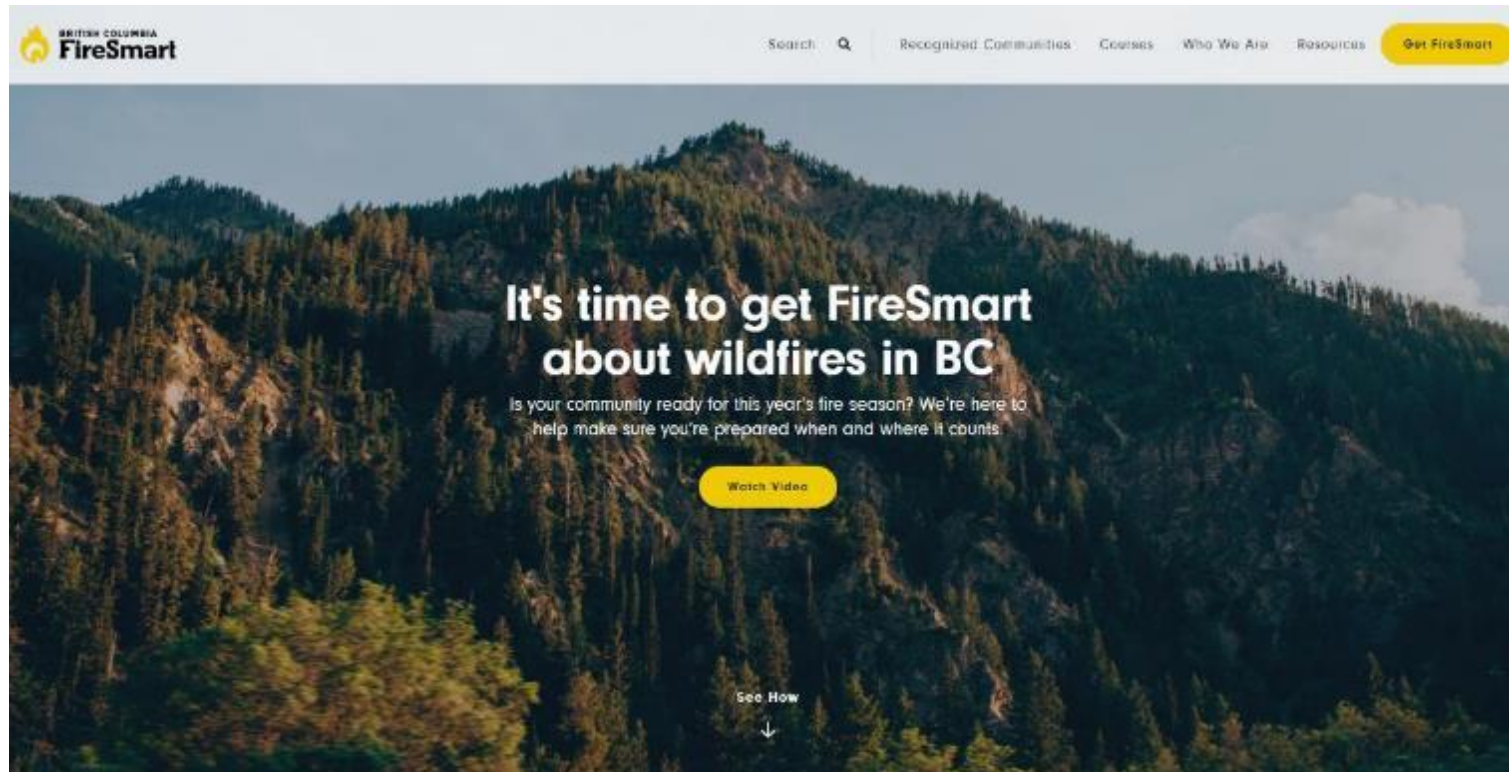
Please contact your local government for information about a particular evacuation alert or evacuation order.



**Emergency Management BC (EMBC)** coordinates communications across all agencies and stakeholders to support communities in an emergency. For more information, go to [EmergencyInfoBC](#) where you will find all current provincial advisories as well as a link to EMBC's [EmergencyMap](#).



Concern raised by a member of the public: *mitigating wildfire risks to private property*



The BC Wildfire Service supports the BC FireSmart Committee.

Go to [www.FireSmartBC.ca](http://www.FireSmartBC.ca) to learn how you can help mitigate wildfire threats around your home and in your community.

Take the [FireSmart 101 Online Course](#) to learn about the Wildland Urban Interface, why FireSmart is needed more than ever, the seven fire smart principles and much more.



Order resources through [FireSmartbc.ca/resources/](http://FireSmartbc.ca/resources/) or download the *FireSmart Begins At Home* manual [here](#).

## Roles and responsibilities

BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)	Emergency Management BC (EMBC)	Local municipalities and regional districts	First Nations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCWS's jurisdiction covers all BC Parks, Crown land and private lands, but does not within the boundaries of a local government that has forest fire prevention bylaws and is serviced by a fire department.</li> <li>BCWS speaks directly about wildfires (fire status, operations, etc.)</li> <li>BCWS is responsible for disseminating wildfire updates to local governments, stakeholders, First Nations, the media and the public.</li> <li>BCWS does <u>not</u> announce strategic evacuation orders or evacuation alerts.</li> <li>BCWS <u>does</u> announce tactical evacuations.</li> <li>In the event of an imminent threat to public safety, BCWS can authorize an immediate tactical evacuation of the affected area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In an emergency, EMBC coordinates communications across all agencies and stakeholders to support communities.</li> <li>EMBC provides advice to evacuees and support to communities regarding Emergency Operations Centres and Emergency Support Services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local municipalities and regional districts speak directly about strategic evacuation orders and evacuation alerts in their respective jurisdictions.</li> <li>If a wildfire <u>starts</u> within the boundaries of a local jurisdiction, then the local fire department will be the lead agency on the incident.</li> <li>BCWS will often assist the local fire department with suppression efforts. If the fire spreads onto Crown land and becomes a wildfire, BCWS will often assume control of firefighting activities.</li> <li>If BCWS assumes control, the local municipality or regional district will <u>not</u> speak about the status of the wildfire, since it is no longer the lead agency on the incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Indian Reserve (IR) lands, evacuation orders and evacuation alerts are implemented by a Band Council Resolution or other means.</li> <li>A designated person(s) from the affected First Nation community will speak to evacuation orders and evacuation alerts on IR lands.</li> </ul>

## CONTACT INFORMATION – COASTAL FIRE CENTRE

Contact		Phone	Email
Donna MacPherson	Coastal Fire Centre Communications Specialist	Phone (250) 947-2615 Cell (250) 927-1446	Donna.MacPherson@gov.bc.ca
Coastal Fire Centre Information Officers		Phone (250) 951-4209	BCWS.COFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca
Provincial Coordination Centre Information Officers		Phone (250) 312-2051	FIREINFO@gov.bc.ca

### Report a Wildfire:

Immediately call **1 800 663-5555** toll-free or **\*5555** on a cellphone to report wildfires, smoke columns or violations of wildfire regulations in British Columbia.

### Wildfire Information:

Call **1 888 336-7378** (3FOREST) for up-to-date information on: fire danger ratings, regional fire prohibitions and wildfire activity.



[www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)



[BC Forest Fire Info](#)



[@BCGovFireInfo](#)



[www.firesmartBC.ca](http://www.firesmartBC.ca)



THANK YOU.

BC Wildfire Service, Coastal Fire Centre

