



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Wildfires and Evacuations

On average, there are more than 1,600 wildfires in British Columbia each year. Some of these fires can threaten homes, livelihoods, territories, traditional food sources and medicines.



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



BE INFORMED

Before wildfires

- Create an Emergency Plan.
- Choose an Emergency Meeting Place.
- Plan how to communicate, and create a written phone list. This should include someone outside of your area, usually outside of BC. Make sure all household members have the same contact numbers in case of separation.
- Pick a safe meeting place, such as a school or a library.
- Plan to have somebody you trust pick up your children from school or daycare if you can't get to them.

Build a grab-and-go bag

If you're forced to leave your home or workplace, it's important to be able to evacuate in a hurry. To be better prepared for an emergency or evacuation it is advisable to create a grab-and-go bag including items you will need in the immediate period following such an event. Keeping this bag up-to-date and knowing where it is kept can be crucial in saving time and making a stressful experience easier.



Your grab-and-go kit could include:

- Food (non-perishable and ready to eat) and water for 72 hours
- Phone charger and battery bank
- Small battery-powered radio
- Battery-powered flashlight and extra batteries
- Small first-aid kit and personal medications – Devil's Club Rub, Arthritis Salve, Anti-inflammatory Stinging Nettle Tea
- Personal toiletries and items, such as an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses
- Copy of your emergency plan and important documents such as insurance papers and photo I.D.
- Cash in small bills
- Seasonal clothing and an emergency blanket
- Pen and notepad
- Whistle
- Sage and cedar bundle

During an evacuation order

An evacuation alert usually precedes an evacuation order to give you time to prepare to leave in a hurry. An evacuation order means you are at risk and must leave your home immediately. Follow all orders from your Band Office, local government or emergency operations centre and activate your personal emergency plan.

- Do not attempt to cross rivers or flowing waters as you can be swept away
- Do not drive across flooded areas exceeding six inches in depth

There may be an evacuation centre where you may find supports with temporary housing, food and clothing. Those issuing the evacuation order when you are leaving your home will provide this information to you. If you're preparing for an evacuation, or are being evacuated, and you have a Status Card BC Services Card you can pre-register here: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

Who is most at risk?

It is important to monitor yourself, family members, Elders and people in community and to consider developing a check-in system for neighbours and friends who are at higher risk during floods.

- Elders
- people who live alone
- people with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, depression, or anxiety
- people with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or respiratory disease
- people with substance use disorders
- people with disabilities or limited mobility
- people who are marginally housed
- people who are pregnant
- infants and young children

Things to consider

- Include your pet in your emergency plan and have water and food for them in your kit.
- Have a paper and pen available.
- How to turn off utilities like gas and water.
- If you have mobility issues or you know an Elder with mobility challenges add how to manage those issues in a disaster or evacuation.

Additional Resources

Connections to Health:

- [First Nations Health Benefits and Services](#)
- [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)
Phone (toll-free, 7 days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.): 1-855-344-3800

Mental Health Supports

- Tsow-Tun Le Lum cultural support and counselling:
1-888-403-3123
- KUU-US Crisis Line Society
Adults and Elders: 250-723-4050
Children and Youth: 250-723-2040
Toll-free: 1-800-588-8717

FNHA Handouts

- [Recognizing and Addressing Trauma and Anxiety During Disasters](#)
- [Recognizing and Resolving Trauma in Children During Disasters](#)