

WILDFIRE Seasonal Outlook



OUTLOOK THIS MONTH

There were 303 new wildfire starts during the month of August in British Columbia. Of those 303 new wildfires, 192 were confirmed to be started by lightning. The majority of wildfire ignitions continue to be in the southern half of the province due to a combination of a dry July and August with significant lightning events. As of September 3, 2020, there are 32 active wildfires – 15 of which are classified as Under Control, nine are Being Held, and eight are Out of Control. To learn more about current wildfires burning in the province, visit the [B.C. Wildfire Dashboard](#) online or download the official BC Wildfire App.

Weather conditions are showing a warmer and drier pattern for part of September. This will allow indices to continue to grow, although shorter days and overnight recoveries moving into the fall will assist in reducing the length of burning periods and aggressive wildfire behaviour. Fire behaviour conditions will continue to remain below normal for this time in the wildfire season, with the exception being the Southeast which will continue to have control difficulties on steep slopes and windy areas. Care should be taken in dry areas.

As of September 3, 2020, there have been 588 wildfires across the province since April 1, 2020. This number is significantly lower than the 893 wildfires recorded at this time in 2019. Historically, September has fewer wildfires than August as there are fewer lightning events and days are shorter. Historically, human caused fires are more common than lightning caused fires in September.



PREDICTED FIRE CONDITIONS



Normal



Above normal

STATISTICS TO DATE

2020 WILDFIRE SEASON (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021)	588 WILDFIRES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WILDFIRES				
		5-YEAR AVG.	10-YEAR AVG.	15-YEAR AVG.	20-YEAR AVG.	25-YEAR AVG.
		1,369	1,324	1,495	1,559	1,513
11,961 HECTARES BURNED	AVERAGE NUMBER OF HECTARES BURNED					
	5-YEAR AVG.	10-YEAR AVG.	15-YEAR AVG.	20-YEAR AVG.	25-YEAR AVG.	
	565,912	356,756	265,722	223,146	184,338	

For more information on how to establish wildfire resiliency in our forests and communities, visit:



bcwildfire.ca



firesmartbc.ca



[BC Wildfire Service](#)



[BCGovFireInfo](#)

WHY IS SMOKE STILL VISIBLE ON A WILDFIRE THAT IS CLASSIFIED AS UNDER CONTROL?

The priority when suppressing a wildfire is to stop the spread and perimeter growth. This is achieved through various suppression tactics to completely secure and extinguish the perimeter.

Once the perimeter has been extinguished, fire suppression staff will do a second pass extinguishing all signs of fire within 50-100 metres of the perimeter. The goal is to improve the strength of the perimeter and ensure that no fire can spot or jump across the extinguished perimeter. On small fires, this second pass will often result in the fire being completely extinguished with no visible smoke.

Smoke visibility on fires classified as Under Control is an issue on larger fires that cannot be 100% extinguished on a second pass. Unburnt fuel inside the fire's perimeter burns during daytime heating creating what is called a hotspot. On larger fires, hotspots often remain after the second pass producing visible smoke within the interior of the fire. Once their location is visible and identified BC Wildfire Service ground crews and helicopters with water buckets work together to extinguish the remaining hotspots.

Due to the steep and rocky terrain across B.C., some wildfires may be unsafe to suppress and are left burning. This is called a Modified Response. Smoke in the interior of the fire may be visible for a few weeks, or even months when there is little precipitation in the weather forecast.



Figure 1: Image of interior smoke burning on Christie Mountain (K51287) wildfire. Smoke is 500m away from the fire perimeter burning in a stump. This smoke has no chance of escaping and is a low priority for crews to action at time of photo.



Figure 2: Single smoke burning at the top of a tree. Not expected to escape and unsafe for crews to action.



Figure 3: Interior smoke on a wildfire classified as Under Control. No chance of spread.



Figure 4: Fire burning in moss on a steep unsafe rock face. Crews set up sprinklers below the burning moss to prevent burning embers from rolling down the hill and starting new fires.

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