

# Farm & Ranch *Wildfire Guide*

Whether the fire danger rating is extreme or low, **the stakes are always high if you are not prepared.**

Find the most up-to-date version: <https://firesmartbc.ca/farm-and-ranch-wildfire-preparedness/>

Questions or feedback about the *Guide* or *Plan*? Email [AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca)

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## Disclaimer

The governments of Canada and British Columbia are committed to working with industry partners. The Farm & Ranch *Wildfire Plan* and *Guide* have been prepared to serve as an aid for developing plans to avoid or mitigate adverse consequences that might occur for agriculture producers in the event of a wildfire.

Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information in these publications is correct, the Government of Canada, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food, BC Ministry of Forests, BC Wildfire Service, the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, the BC Agricultural Research & Development Corporation, the Beef Cattle Industry Development Fund, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, and the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative assume no responsibility for the accuracy or reliability of the information or for any decisions arising from the information contained in these documents.

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## HOW TO USE THIS *GUIDE*

This **Guide** takes you step-by-step through the accompanying **Wildfire Plan**. Your completed *Wildfire Plan* becomes your go-to source of information during a wildfire.

*Key information* (indicated with a ★ in your *Wildfire Plan*) can be used to populate a *Wildfire Plan Summary* (provided in Appendix 1 of the *Wildfire Plan*). A *Wildfire Plan Summary* can be used to share information with key agencies (e.g. regional district, fire departments, BC Wildfire Service) in advance of the wildfire season, and during wildfire events.

**The *Wildfire Plan* is a fillable PDF.** When you complete the fillable PDF document, *key information* will auto-populate the *Wildfire Plan Summary*.

**A complete and custom Farm/Ranch *Wildfire Plan* helps farms and ranches to:**

- Make decisions calmly, consider options, and collect information that may be difficult to obtain in a crisis.
- Inform family members, staff, neighbours, and first responders how they can help during a wildfire emergency.
- Reduce harm to their agricultural operation, including assets, crops, and livestock.

### Key Messages

- A completed *Wildfire Plan* is the best way to prepare for a wildfire event.
- Producers are ultimately responsible for protecting their operations through planning and risk-reduction, and as applicable, must consider employees, visitors, and animals/livestock in planning for emergencies.
- The *Wildfire Plan* should be completed and updated outside of fire season to ensure producers are prepared in the event of a wildfire.

# PART A: TAKE ACTION BEFORE A WILDFIRE

## 1 PREPARE YOUR *WILDFIRE PLAN*

- ☐ 1. Add your farm/ranch operation name on your *Wildfire Plan* title page.
- ☐ 2. Add the date the plan was completed or updated on your *Wildfire Plan* title page.
- ☐ 3. Customize your *Wildfire Plan*:
  - **Own multiple properties?** Consider a summary of key information for all properties.
  - **Language barriers?** Consider using more visuals or translate key information to make your *Wildfire Plan* accessible to all personnel.
  - **Diverse farm team?** Consider adapting your *Wildfire Plan* Summary for different end-users such as employees, managers, owner(s), family, or neighbours.
- ☐ 4. Watch a webinar on completing a *Wildfire Plan*:  
<https://www.bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/library/wildfire-preparedness-for-producers-webinars/>

## 2 IDENTIFY LOCAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Understanding the roles of different agencies helps determine who to contact when, and for what information, before, during, and after wildfire.

### Role of Local Authorities:

**Your local authority (First Nation, regional district, or local municipal government) is your main source of information regarding emergency status during a wildfire.** Their focus is public safety.

Your local authority is responsible for the local Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), issuing evacuation alerts or orders, and establishing protocols to enter to evacuation order areas.

**Your local authority should be contacted in advance of the wildfire season** to provide information on local water supply, evacuation routes, and provide maps to assist you in pre-planning. You are encouraged to share relevant information from your completed *Wildfire Plan Summary* (See Appendix 1 of the *Wildfire Plan*) with your local authority prior to wildfire season as it may be used to support emergency operations and response planning during a wildfire event.

**During an evacuation alert**, your local authority may be contacted regarding evacuation concerns and guidance specific to your operation. They may engage agriculture specialists and provide logistical support to producers for livestock relocation. Your local government also provides support in administration of disaster financial support during and after a disaster.

## Role of Provincial Agencies:

- **BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)** – The BC Wildfire Service is part of, and mandated by, the Government of British Columbia to deliver effective wildfire management and emergency response support, protect lives and values at risk, and encourage sustainable, healthy and resilient ecosystems. BCWS provides up-to-date information about wildfires and wildfire-related events and conditions across the province. BCWS makes recommendations to local authorities regarding evacuation alerts or orders and works with the EOC, other agencies, and partners.
- **BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF)** – Agriculture resource specialists assist Provincial Regional EOCs by request. They may inform producers during an emergency and work with private agriculture operation owners and animal owners in protecting and relocating livestock. They may be contacted by producers prior to wildfire season to provide information on government-supported business risk management programs, current policies and procedures around disaster relief, and other relevant industry information to support pre-planning: [AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca)

☐ **Sign up for the AgriServiceBC e-bulletin** to stay up to date on Ministry of Agriculture and Food programs, resources, and funding opportunities: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/agriservicebc>



- **BC Ministry of Forests – Range Program (FOR)** – Range Agrologists assist the EOC by invitation to facilitate livestock relocation. They may work with range tenure holders and BCWS (situational) regarding fire response and suppression planning on Crown land. Producers may contact their local Range Agrologist in advance of fire season to update their range tenure information. During and after wildfire, Range may be contacted for information and support regarding wildfire or suppression activities directly impacting Crown range tenure infrastructure or grazing.
- **Agriculture Associations and Animal Rescue Organizations** – Industry associations and support agencies share information and resources with their members and the public to support individual pre-planning and may provide information and support during wildfire, subject to resources and mandates. They may send representatives/specialists to support EOCs by invitation. Producers may contact their industry associations and other support agencies before, during, and after wildfire for information, support, training, and resources

## *Familiarize yourself with local contacts – complete the actions below to fill out Table 1 (in Section 1.1, Local Information Sources) in your Wildfire Plan:*

- ☐ 1. Record your local authority information into Table 1, including:
  - ☐ **Local Authority:** Record the name of your local authority. Depending on the location of your operation, you may receive information from your First Nation, regional district, or local municipal government.
  - ☐ If you have property in more than one local authority (i.e. two different regional districts), record contact information for each of those regions as processes may differ.
  - ☐ **Ag. Coordinator / Ag. Planner in the EOC:** Check with your local authority to find out if they will have an Agriculture Coordinator or Agricultural Planner in their EOC during an

emergency. Record their contact information on page 4. During an emergency, the Ag. Planner / Ag. Coordinator will be your go-to contact within your local authority's EOC.

☐ **Emergency Alert Website:** Bookmark website and add the website URL to Table 1. This website will list all active and previous evacuation order and alert notices issued by the local authority.

☐ **Emergency Operations Centre** (phone # and email): Record into Table 1. You can find this on your local authority's website. Try to find your local authority's emergency phone number (which is often different than their day-to-day phone number).

☐ **Emergency Alert System:** Register on your local authority's website. This system sends residents emergency alerts and information for critical events such as floods or wildfires.

☐ 2. **BCWS resources:** Familiarize yourself with BCWS resources – find in *Wildfire Plan* Table 1.

☐ Download the BCWS App to view near-real time wildfire information on mobile devices:

■ **App Store:** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/bc-wildfire-service/id1477675008?ls=1>

■ **Google Play:**  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ca.bc.gov.WildfireInformation&hl=en&pli=1>

☐ 3. **Local news:** Record your local radio news channel in Table 1. The RCMP implements evacuation notifications and may use a variety of local resources/media to notify evacuation measures.

☐ 4. Familiarize yourself with additional contacts in *Wildfire Plan* Table 1 – ensure you are up to date with road and highway conditions and provincial evacuation advisories.

☐ 5. Record the information of your **Agriculture Association** in Table 1. Make sure you are signed up for their email list.

☐ 6. Record any additional local contacts that will be important in the event of a wildfire.

### 3 KNOW YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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***Familiarize yourself with emergency contacts – complete the actions below to fill out Table 2 in your Wildfire Plan:***

☐ 1. Record important local emergency contacts (see Table 2 in *Section 2, Emergency Contacts* of the *Wildfire Plan* for prompts).

☐ 2. Familiarize yourself with the contact information of BC Hydro and FortisBC in the event of downed powerlines or gas leaks (in Table 2, *Section 2, Emergency Contacts* of the *Wildfire Plan*).

☐ 3. Record industry and community support resources.

☐ 4. Record any additional emergency contacts that may be important in the event of a wildfire.

☐ 5. Meet with your neighbours, local community group, farmer institutes, and agriculture associations each year to discuss available resources, equipment, and space (for relocated


livestock). Arrange text messaging, phone tree or other communication system among producers so you can help each other quickly in a wildfire emergency.

☐ 6. Conduct an annual check-in with each person or organization on the Emergency Contacts list to confirm the contact information is current.

☐ 7. Add key contacts to mobile phones.

## 4 PREPARE TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FARM/RANCH

Basic information about your operation helps outside organizations provide assistance during a wildfire. You may later want to share this information via email, fax, or photocopy during a wildfire emergency.

The **B.C. Premises ID (PID) Program** is mandatory (since July 2022) for poultry and livestock owners and commingling site operators. A PID Number links livestock and poultry to geographic locations for rapid notification of livestock/poultry producers during emergencies. 

**Register here:**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/premises-id>



The **Land Classification by BC Assessment Authority** is a source of information to assist with livestock relocation; local authorities may need to confirm “Farm” classification. More info: <https://info.bcasessment.ca/Services-products/property-classes-and-exemptions/understanding-property-classes-and-exemptions>

A **Farmer ID Card and Number** (issued by the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC)) can be used to prove “farm” classification. Proof of a valid agriculture business is often needed to assist with livestock relocation or temporary access permits. More info: <https://www.bcac.bc.ca/about-farmer-id-card>

A **Parcel Identifier** is a nine-digit number that uniquely identifies a parcel in the land title registry of BC. This number can be helpful for responders to locate or reference an agriculture operation and can be found on your tax assessment notice or the BC Assessment’s website: <https://www.bcasessment.ca/>

A **Folio Number** is an important property identifier linking your property information to local government mapping. It can be used to identify your property in relation to a specific wildfire event and inform emergency operations. This is normally printed in the top right corner of an Assessment Notice. More info: <https://info.bcasessment.ca/About-Us/Glossary>

For cattle/ranch operators with a Crown land range tenure, the **Range Agreement Number (RAN)** is a unique identifier for a Range Agreement (e.g., RAN077777). Record the Range Agreement Number (including range use and grazing permits) and location of your tenure in relation to your farm/ranch base. Multiple areas belonging to the same Range Agreement may have the same RAN number with unique block IDs.

### ***Complete the actions below in your Wildfire Plan:***

- ☐ 1. Add basic information about your operation (see notes above about Parcel ID, Folio Number, etc.) to Table 3 in *Section 2.1, Business Information* of your *Wildfire Plan*. Ensure that you include a local manager/contact who can be available (and onsite if necessary) in an emergency.
- ☐ 2. Add range tenure information to Table 4 of your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 3. Make a copy of your Range Use Plan map and attach to your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 4. Add vehicle information to Table 5 of your *Wildfire Plan*. Include the names, contact information, license plates, driver's licence numbers of management and employees. During an evacuation order, this information can help with re-entry permit processes.

## **5 CREATE YOUR FARM / RANCH OPERATIONS MAP**

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Maps are essential for preparing for and responding to wildfire emergencies.

For more information:

1. Find example base maps here: <https://firesmartbc.ca/farm-and-ranch-wildfire-preparedness/>
2. Watch this step-by-step video for creating agricultural operations maps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so6LO7m6vVk&t=4s>

### ***Follow the steps below to create your Farm / Ranch Operations Map:***

- ☐ 1. Obtain or create a base map of the agriculture operation, with at least:
  - Property boundaries.
  - Access roads (include local and unclassified roads) and evacuation routes off the agriculture operation site (ideally multiple routes off and away)
  - Surface water, including ponds and streams.
  - Hydro lines.
  - Underground infrastructure (water lines, pipelines, etc.).

#### ***Options for creating a base map:***

- Sketch a simple map using graph paper or use the grid provided in the *Wildfire Plan* (page 8) to sketch an outline of the property and key elements.
- Obtain a paper map from your local government office, such as the municipal or regional district office.
- Create a map of your operation using regional district web map services. These GIS mapping functions can display a property and save a screen image to provide a base map.
- Visit your local regional district website (or contact your regional district) to see what map services are available.
- A range tenure holder may use their most current Range Use Plan map as a source for range level mapping.

#### ***Helpful resources for creating your operations map:***



- The BC Assessment Authority offers property data, including basic maps. Producers can search for their properties by address, Roll Number, Plan Number, or PID at: <https://www.bcasessment.ca/>
- Readily available resources, like Google Earth (a free, downloadable program), allow producers to zoom in to every section of an agriculture operation, and to tag, label, and draw a boundary around a piece of property. Google Earth here: <https://www.google.com/earth/>

☐ 2. Add important operation and site features (and as applicable, range tenure features) to the map and label each item, such as:

- ☐ Fences.
- ☐ Gates and cattleguards.
- ☐ Structures, including main house, barns, and sheds; produce/inventory storage, sorting, packing, grading, processing buildings; farm market (on-site sales/retail, tasting facilities, restaurant) and other specialty buildings.
- ☐ Public parking and access areas.
- ☐ Pastures, corrals.
- ☐ Wells, tanks and pumps, standpipes, private water reservoirs (water hook-up locations for pump/sprinkler system).
- ☐ In-ground and above-ground irrigation systems (identified as gravity fed or powered).
- ☐ Water lines.
- ☐ Gas lines.
- ☐ Surface water that is suitable for fire suppression.
- ☐ Public reservoirs and other water sources available.
- ☐ Perennial crop production infrastructure (e.g. trellis systems).
- ☐ Access points to adjacent Crown land.
- ☐ Hazardous areas on the property, such as manure holding ponds and pesticide, fuel, and chemical storage locations.
- ☐ Underground infrastructure (water lines, pipelines, etc.) that could be impacted by suppression activities like guard building.

#### TIP

Include features and assets that you want to identify for outside suppression agencies; either for protection from wildfire as well as for protection from the impacts of suppression activities such as machine fire guard construction.

☐ 3. Identify structures to receive priority protection and rank their relative priority using either a colour coding or numbering system, from highest to lowest priority for protection (e.g., red=high, yellow=moderate, and green=low priority or #1 highest to #3 lowest priority). Clearly indicate the ranking in the legend.

☐ 4. Show on the map the equipment and locations that could be useful in a wildfire, including:

- ☐ Fire extinguishers.
  - ☐ First aid kits.
  - ☐ Sprinkler kits and setup locations.
  - ☐ Generators.
  - ☐ Animal loading areas.
  - ☐ Structures that may be used for sheltering livestock.
  - ☐ Tractor and plow implements, front-end loaders, excavators.
  - ☐ Hazard-reduced areas (cleared land), safe places to shelter livestock.
- ☐ 5. If you have livestock on your property, ensure your map includes the following:
- ☐ Fence and gates that can be cut or opened to free livestock in the event of wildfire.
  - ☐ All structures that may provide protection for all animals.
  - ☐ Indicate the locations for loading different types of animals.
- ☐ 6. Include a legend to define any symbols on the map, and any priority ranking system used, as applicable. Add a North arrow and a map scale.
- \*\*\*NOTE:** As you go through the rest of this *Guide*, you will add more features to your map.
- ☐ 7. Make several copies of your maps and attach to your *Wildfire Plan*.

## 5.1 ADDITIONAL MAPS

- **For range tenure holders**, consider creating another smaller scale map to show the layout of your operations and tenure (home ranch and range) that includes roads and access points.
- **For producers with multiple satellite operations / parcels**, another smaller scale map will have value to show the layout of your satellite operations/ parcels (include roads and access points). For example, identify separate parcels under the same company that may be managed or operated by different family members or employees.
- There may be value in creating one small scale map (larger geographic extent) to show the nearby properties, access routes, and all property lines. A second or several large-scale map(s) (smaller geographic extent) may show details that are important to helping others protect your property and operations.

## 6 USE FIRESMART TO PROTECT FARMSTEAD INFRASTRUCTURE

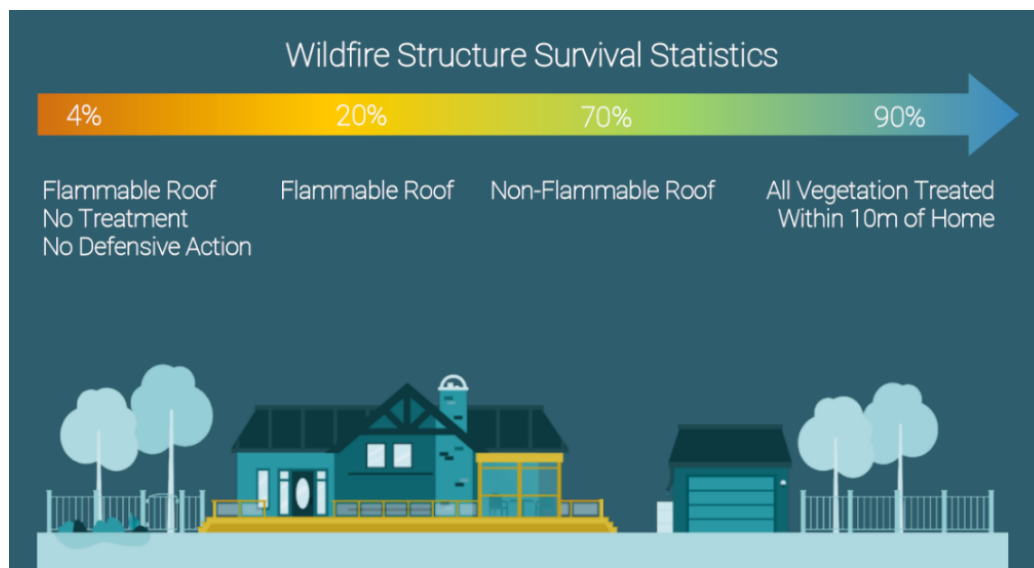
Reduce wildfire impacts on your property by making your infrastructure FireSmart. **Creating defensible space – clear of trees, brush, lawn furniture, toys (anything that can burn) – is the best way to give firefighters a chance to protect your structures and reduce risk of damage.**

Removing combustible vegetation and other materials around agriculture operation structures is one of the most effective ways of protecting the operation. Removing combustible materials

around animal barns is especially important if the structure may be used to shelter livestock during a wildfire.

## WHAT IS FIRESMART?

FireSmartBC™ is a program that helps reduce the damage caused by wildfires. It provides useful tips for people, neighborhoods, and communities to protect their homes and properties. Based on scientific research, the program shows that simple actions can make homes more resistant to wildfires.



To handle the growing threat of wildfire it's essential to take proactive steps, like using FireSmart practices, to protect properties. Studies show these actions are effective in defending against wildfires. Preventing wildfire loss is a shared responsibility – when we all work together, we can greatly reduce the risk to our communities.

Learn more about fire-resistant materials in the *FireSmart Begins at Home Manual* here:

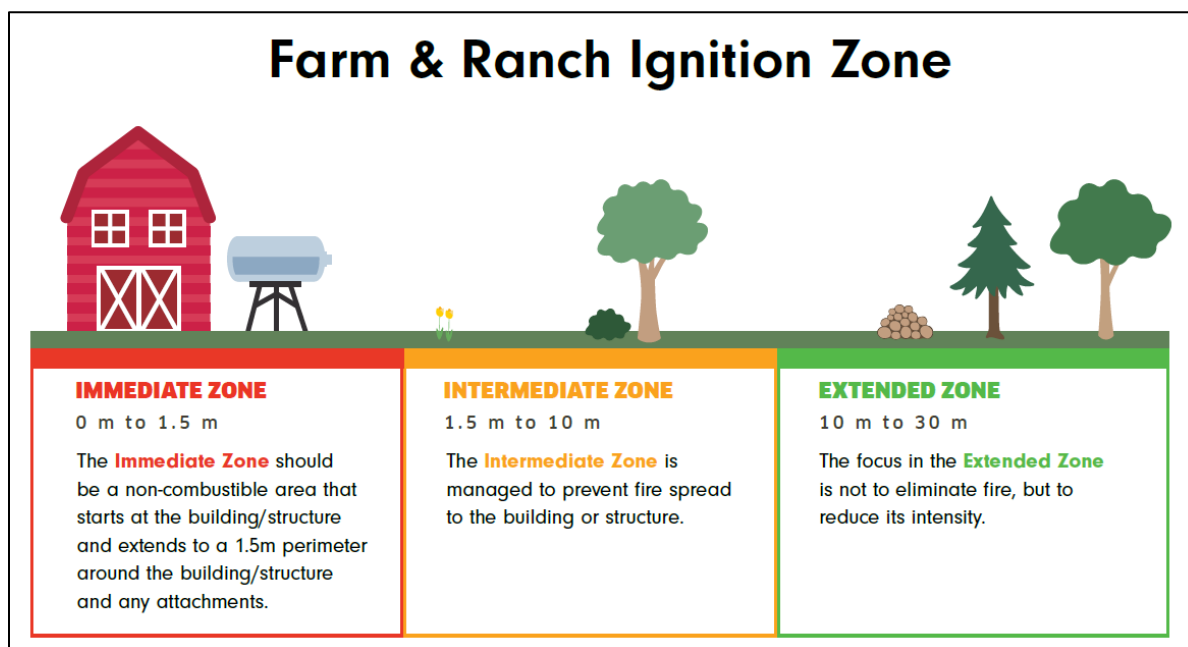
[https://firesmartbc.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/FireSmart\\_Begins\\_At\\_Home\\_Manual\\_2upv2.pdf](https://firesmartbc.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/FireSmart_Begins_At_Home_Manual_2upv2.pdf)

### Get a FireSmart Home Assessment now!



- **Do it yourself** with the Home Ignition Zone self assessment:  
<https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/hiz-self-assessment/>
- or
- **Contact your FireSmart Coordinator** for a free home assessment:  
<https://firesmartbc.ca/firesmart-coordinators/>
  - **No FireSmart Coordinator in your community?** Contact your Local FireSmart Representative: <https://firesmartbc.ca/local-firesmart-representatives/>

Learn about FireSmart Assessments here: <https://firesmartbc.ca/farm-and-ranch-wildfire-preparedness/>



***Complete the actions below to increase the ignition resistance of your structure:***

- ☐ 1. Replace un-rated or old roofing materials with fire-rated (USC/ASTM - Class A, Class B, or Class C) roofing materials. Pay attention to barns and other structures that will be used for livestock shelter during a wildfire.
  - **AVOID:** Wood roofing materials.
  - **USE:** Asphalt shingles, clay tile, or metal roofing materials.
- ☐ 2. Regularly clean your roof and gutters of combustible materials. Every inside-corner of a roof is a place where debris and embers can collect.
- ☐ 3. Ensure buildings have non-flammable siding (e.g., metal or concrete).
  - **AVOID:** Untreated wood and vinyl siding materials.
  - **USE:** Stucco, metal, brick, concrete, and fiber cement siding materials. Logs and heavy timbers are also reasonably effective.
- ☐ 4. Ensure your siding is free of gaps, holes, or other areas where embers could accumulate, lodge, or penetrate. Prioritize repairing any vulnerabilities identified on the exterior walls of your critical structures.
- ☐ 5. Create a minimum of 15-cm vertical non-combustible material clearance between the ground and combustible siding material.
- ☐ 6. Close or screen eaves and vents with 3-mm mesh, excluding dryer vents. Consider having heavy high duty poly on-hand to cover openings (e.g. buildings or shops with no doors) in the event of a fire.
- ☐ 7. If a wood fence is installed, ensure there is at least a 1.5-metre non-combustible break between the wood portion of the fence and any structures it attaches to. Install a metal gate, for

example, to break up the combustible fence and protect the structure. Combustible wood fences create a direct line for fire to spread to a home or barn.

☐ 8. Review *Section 4, Last Minute FireSmart Actions* in your *Wildfire Plan* to get familiar with last-minute tasks you can take in the event of a wildfire to increase chances of structures surviving a wildfire.

***Complete the actions below to manage vegetation near buildings and critical structures:***

☐ 1. Remove all combustible materials within the Immediate Zone (0-1.5m from structures) including:

- Coniferous trees and shrubs.
- Packaging and pallets.
- Pesticides or other hazardous material subject to volatilization and explosion.
- Hay bales.
- Woodpiles and deadfall.
- Propane and other fuel tanks.
- Vehicles, boats, and untreated outbuildings.
- Other combustibles.

☐ 2. In the Extended Zone (between 10m and 30m around each structure), reduce the amount of flammable materials, such as:

- Coniferous trees, to create more space between them (aiming for 2 to 6 meters between tree crowns where ecologically appropriate).
- Low branches that could allow ground fire to spread to the canopy (limb branches to 2 metres off the ground).
- Deadfall and dense surface vegetation.
- Vegetation around critical fence lines (clear vegetation within 1.5m of critical fences).

☐ 3. Consider risk to wood power poles and gas and power lines which are often surrounded by grass fuels. Preventative measures include:

- Using underground/buried propane lines.
- Adding aluminum flashing around the base of wooden poles and regular clearing of grass fuels to 1.5m around wood poles.

☐ 4. If you have fuel tanks (propane, gas, etc.) located on your property:

- ☐ Any tanks larger than 10 lbs (i.e. standard BBQ tank and larger) should be at least 10m from critical structures and professionally installed on a non-combustible surface (concrete pad).
- ☐ Remove weeds and other debris under and 1.5m around large stationary tanks so there is no combustible material near tank.
- ☐ Ensure any vegetation surrounding the propane tank is properly managed (remove anything flammable, such as dead grass and weeds, within 10m).

☐ 5. If you have hayfields and pastureland:

- ☐ Reduce the amount of dry grass and stubble on your property to help prevent a fire escaping, or to help stop a wildfire spreading to your yard. This can be done through mowing, grazing, or using handheld equipment (such as a Weed Eater) and treating areas using chemical control products (such as herbicide). Livestock can also do a good job of cleaning up these areas if you are unable to mow the grass.
  - ☐ Turn over grain fields near buildings before the ground freezes. Making one or two passes around the yard before putting your tillage equipment away for the winter will go a long way toward making your yard FireSmart.
  - ☐ Cut hayfields next to your yard as late in the season as possible to minimize regrowth or mow a strip around each building to create a fire guard.
  - ☐ Till around the outside perimeter of pastureland. This will create a fire break that could save a field from burning or help prevent a fire spreading to other fields.
- ☐ 6. If you have feed storage on your property:
- ☐ Make sure that hay is cured to the proper moisture content level before baling it. If the hay is not cured correctly, it can begin to decompose and release heat and moisture, leading to spontaneous combustion.
  - ☐ If possible, store straw and hay bales away from any structures to reduce the risk of a fire spreading from the bales to your house or outbuildings.
  - ☐ Maintain vegetation and keep grass mown between your bales and any buildings.
  - ☐ Store your winter supply of bales in a couple of different locations to minimize the loss of feed in the event of a fire.
  - ☐ Clean up loose hay or straw (from broken bales or bale bottoms freezing down over the winter) that may accumulate in storage areas.

## 7 CONSIDER CREATING A FIRE BREAK

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*Consider the following actions to prepare to create a fire break in the event of a fire:*

- ☐ 1. What are your priority structures/areas to protect with a plowed or wetted fire break? Note them in *Section 5, Checklist to Create a Fire Break* of your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 2. Prepare a rough sketch of the areas to be plowed to provide fire breaks – attach to your *Wildfire Plan*.

## 8 SPRINKLER PROTECTION AND DEPLOYMENT

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**Sprinklers are not a replacement for FireSmart actions.** Garden sprinklers and roof-watering systems should not be considered an alternative to the application of FireSmart principles and guidelines. Rather, it's suggested that their use be a supplement to already proven FireSmart strategies.

Keep in mind that exterior sprinkler systems may become unreliable or unserviceable during a wildfire for several reasons:

- Sprinklers may require a significant water supply and are subject to mechanical failure.
- The soaking effect of sprinklers may be lost in high fire danger weather conditions.
- Improper or prolonged use of exterior sprinklers may result in water damage to the structure.
- If electrical supply is damaged or intentionally shut down during a wildfire, exterior sprinklers may not function due to loss of power and/or water supply.
- Unnecessary use of water may reduce the firefighting water supply where it is needed most.

**Sprinkler systems can be particularly important where animals will be sheltered.** You can put sprinkler equipment in place at the beginning of each fire season, or leave the system permanently installed.

***Consider the following actions to set up sprinkler systems for protection of your agriculture operation:***

☐ 1. Determine if the primary water supply is reliable (check with your local water purveyor/supplier if applicable) and have back-up water supply or storage (e.g., cisterns) in place for the sprinkler system. The volume of water required will depend on the size and number of buildings, surface area, and duration of sprinkling.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Farms and ranches with complex sprinkler system needs should consult the B.C. Structure Protection Coordination Office: [spco@gov.bc.ca](mailto:spco@gov.bc.ca) when seeking advice on system design and quantity of water. More information on water sources can be found in *Section 13, Water Sources* of this *Guide*.

☐ 2. Identify priority structures for sprinkler protection. It is rarely feasible to protect all structures due to water supply or equipment constraints. It is better to protect fewer structures properly, than more structures poorly.

☐ 3. Gather equipment and set the sprinkler system in place to test the coverage and identify problems. Mount sprinklers in appropriate locations and connect to a water source. If the roof is made of combustible material, such as wood, direct the sprinkler spray onto the roof. If the roof is metal, mount the sprinklers on a high point (such as the ridge) to create a high humidity zone around the building. When sprinklers remain on the ground, position them so their reach just wets the sides of the structure.

☐ 4. Determine if existing sprinkler equipment is sufficient to create a 'humidity bubble' around the structures. Consult the B.C. Structure Protection Coordination Office: [spco@gov.bc.ca](mailto:spco@gov.bc.ca) for advice on configuration and deployment of exterior sprinklers. Contact [LivingWaterWise@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LivingWaterWise@gov.bc.ca) for advice on potential impacts sprinkler use may have on the local water supply.

☐ 5. When you are satisfied with your sprinkler system equipment and plan, record the information in *Section 6, Checklist to Create a Fire Break* in your *Wildfire Plan*.

☐ 6. Indicate on your map how to lay out your sprinkler equipment and water delivery system.

☐ 7. The best instructions are ones that have been tested. Take the time to set out the selected sprinkler systems and record the steps as if instructing someone who has offered to help. Add the instructions to *Section 6, Checklist for Sprinkler Deployment* in your *Wildfire Plan*.

For more information:

- Visit the FireSmart BC website for an Exterior Home Sprinklers factsheet here: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/factsheet-exterior-home-sprinklers-and-structure-protection-units/>
- For more information on setting up structural sprinklers, contact your local fire department.

## 9 PROTECT RANGE ASSETS

*[If you do not have livestock on range, skip to Section 10].*

Take steps to protect your range assets from wildfire damage. Focus on fuel reduction through careful consideration of fuel types, distribution, and treatment options.

### Range assets may include:

- Fencing.
- Corrals.
- Water developments (troughs).
- Evacuation routes.
- Safe spaces.
- Loading areas.

### Fuels may include:

- Native flammable materials such as grass, brush, shrubs, trees, and other vegetation.
- Introduced flammable materials such as lumber, plastics, diesel/gasoline, and others.

### Risk reduction actions may include:

- Clearing of fuels around Range Assets where feasible.
- Widening of rights of ways.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Dispose of flammable materials (like cut vegetation) safely, in compliance with local burning bylaws and approved disposal methods.

### Fuel management on crown land:

Range tenure holders (or an applicant) may be granted rights to cut and or remove trees on crown land in the vicinity of range infrastructure (for fuel management purposes) under different Acts and Regulations such as the Forest and Range Practices Act, the Forest Act, and the Range Planning and Practices Regulation. All fuel management on crown land requires an authorization issued by the Ministry of Forests. Types of authorizations will vary depending on what type of activity is being proposed and the amount and quality of timber or other vegetation being cut or removed.

☐ 1. Before engaging in fuel management on Crown land, consult with your local Ministry of Forests District Office for more information on types of licences and permits required for fuel reduction for protection of range assets. Find your local District Office here:



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/ministry-of-forests-lands-and-natural-resource-operations-region-district-contacts>

### ***Consider the following actions for fuel management on private land:***

Prior to any large-scale vegetation efforts on private land, check-in with local contacts to ensure the work is done safely and correctly:

- ☐ 1. Confirm you own the rights to the timber; if you're not sure, check your property title or contact your local authority.
- ☐ 2. If you plan to remove timber from your property after cutting for fuel management purposes, you need to obtain a Private Timber Mark. You can do this by contacting your local Ministry of Forests District office (link to contact information provided in the section above).
- ☐ 3. Confirm with local authorities that industrial activities are permitted (municipality, regional district, First Nations, or provincial government can have industrial activity shutdowns due to fire risk).
- ☐ 4. Complete *Section 7, Protect Range Assets* in your *Wildfire Plan*.

For more information:

- **Forest Agreements – Licence to Cut:**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/forest-tenures/timber-harvesting-rights/licence-to-cut>
- **Forest & Range Practices Act (FRPA):**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/legislation-regulation/forest-range-practices-act>
- **Range Planning and Practices Regulations:**  
[https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19\\_2004](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19_2004)
- The ***Cariboo-Chilcotin Agriculture/Wildfire Preparedness Project – Opportunities and Barriers to Wildfire Risk Mitigation*** report may also be consulted for further information on proactive intervention to reduce wildfire risk on range lands:  
<https://www.bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/app/uploads/CB01-Wildfire-Preparedness-and-Mitigation-OpportunitiesBarriers2016.pdf>

## **OPEN BURNING – DON'T START A WILDFIRE!**

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- Information regarding agricultural burning can be found on the Province of British Columbia's Farming, Natural Resources and Industry website at:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/air-management/agricultural-burning>
- Further resources regarding agricultural burning are also available on the FireSmart BC website at: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/open-burning-practices-for-farmers-and-ranchers/>

# PART B: DURING A WILDFIRE

## 10 PREPARE FOR EVACUATION

Know your evacuation terms:

- **Evacuation Alert:** Get prepared to leave on short notice.
- **Evacuation Order:** Leave the area immediately – you are at risk.
- **Evacuation Rescind:** Return home when the area is safe.

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Ensure that you have an evacuation plan in place **BEFORE** the alert phase. Prepare your transportation and work with your buddy farm well in advance of an evacuation alert. The following sections should be completed before an evacuation alert to ensure that you are prepared to evacuate.

### 10.1 EVACUATION AREA ACCESS PERMITS

When the local authority issues an Evacuation Order, all persons must leave the defined area. Road access to the evacuated area will be secured by the RCMP and you will not be allowed to return without a permit. The local authority that is responsible for the area where the Evacuation Order is in place is responsible for deciding whether to allow or deny requests for temporary access into the evacuated zone. Evacuation Order area access permits are often called 'Temporary Access Permits' or 'Temporary Entry Permits'.

**Complete the action below to seek a Temporary Access Permit:**

- ☐ 1. Contact your local authority ahead of wildfire season to ask if there is a Temporary Access Permit process in place. Ask what documents you will need to provide to be eligible. Document this information in your *Wildfire Plan* on page 29.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Issuing of access permits depends on the specific fire situation and are not guaranteed in the event of an evacuation.

### 10.2 PREPARE FOR PERSONAL EVACUATION

**Complete the following actions to prepare for personal evacuation:**

- ☐ 1. Review and complete proactive actions in *Section 8.2, Personal Evacuation* in your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 2. Write your planned routes and exits on your evacuation map, and make sure any special steps needed for a safe exit are noted.

Find more information on building emergency kits at PreparedBC:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/build-an-emergency-kit-and-grab-and-go-bag>

## 10.3 PREPARE FOR FARM & PROPERTY EVACUATION

***Complete the following actions in Section 8.2, Personal Evacuation of your Wildfire Plan:***

☐ 1. Record in Table 6: Determine key roles and responsibilities of personnel within your farm operation and ensure that your workers are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Key roles and responsibilities include:

- The primary and backup decision-makers/coordinators.
- Roles for other participants appropriate to your operation.

The decision maker/coordinator responsibilities will generally include the following:

- Review and update the Evacuation Checklist annually outside of fire season.
- Ensure all emergency evacuation roles are assigned and participants are informed/aware of their responsibilities.
- Decide if/when you will limit visitor access.
- Initiate and coordinate evacuation.

☐ 2. In Table 7 in your *Wildfire Plan*, list the people who will keep staff and visitors updated during a wildfire emergency. Identify who should be contacted to share information and what specific details need to be communicated. It's important to check accurate and trustworthy sources for updates (See *Section 1, Receive and Share Information* and *Section 2, Emergency Contacts* of this *Guide*).

The Tourism Industry Association of BC and Destination BC may have resources, updates, and links to share with visitors and to inform yourself; see here: <https://tiabc.ca/emergency-preparedness/>

☐ 3. Designate an out-of-region individual for contact during an emergency.

☐ 4. For agritourism operations and operations with visitors and/or employees at risk during wildfire season, ensure that you have created a separate evacuation plan map for use by you and your employees and post at your site as necessary.

☐ 5. Confirm emergency shut-off procedures for utilities, equipment, and processes as applicable. Know where your electrical panel, gas, and water shut-off valves are located and how to turn them off if necessary.

☐ 6. Record priority items that could present a significant risk to first responders, such as compressed gases, pesticides, fertilizers, petroleum fuel, and to a lesser extent lubricants, paints, thinners, and solvents.

☐ 7. Ensure that your pesticides are kept in a locked, vented, and signed storage facility.

☐ 8. Ensure that your pesticides are properly labelled with pesticide storage signs. Signage is available here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/pesticides-and-pest-management/pesticide-use/forms/warningsigncolour.pdf>

☐ 9. Keep an up-to-date inventory of all stored pesticides and attach the list to your *Wildfire Plan*. The inventory should include trade names, active ingredients, and quantity of the pesticide in storage. Ensure that your list is updated and reflects inventory counts at the time of the fire.

A comprehensive pesticide inventory will help in recovery after a fire. Knowing what pesticides were on-site and being used prior to a fire is crucial for efficient clean-up, soil testing, and re-planting agricultural crops.

☐ 10. CleanFarms offers a free annual collection site for unwanted, obsolete, and banned pesticides. Learn where and when the program is being offered here:  
<https://cleanfarms.ca/materials/unwanted-pesticides-animal-meds/#toggle-id-1-closedE>

☐ 11. Record in Table 8: Identify routes and exits from your operation, considering all buildings and business sites where visitors and employees may be located at any given time:

- Identify buildings or locations for visitors, such as wine cellar, tasting room, restaurant, picnic area, parking lot, in-field tour, in-field picking, etc.
- Identify any exit constraints (single exit or egress road) and special procedures required to limit congestion and ensure safe exit (e.g., a pilot car and tag car process).
- Identify any challenging aspects such as locating and evacuating visitors and employees that are spread over a large site such as U-pick operations and orchards or vineyards.
- Make note of all roads, trails and gate locations, record in Table 9 (page 33).
- Consider designating a gathering point before evacuating the property.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Contact your local authority if you need assistance in planning your evacuation route; particularly if access options are limited and you are in an area at risk of entrapment.

☐ 12. Ensure that all personnel are aware of the evacuation procedures and routes, and that these can be effectively communicated to visitors during an evacuation It is recommended that a practice evacuation be conducted annually or periodically outside of fire season.

- Wildfire evacuation training and hazard awareness for employees can be part of your regular worksite safety program (employee orientations, safety meetings, and training).
- Simplified, user-friendly versions of the evacuation plan may be given to employees at the time of orientation.

☐ 13. Identify and record a place to meet after the evacuation, (i.e., emergency centre or designated safe zone such as a school ground or open public space safe from fire).

☐ 14. Keep an up-to-date list of all workers and have it easily available in the event of an evacuation. Attach the list to your Plan. If you use cloud storage, upload your documents to the cloud if you cannot access a hard copy.

☐ 15. Ensure you always know the location of your workers, including those travelling to and from your operation.

☐ 16. Ensure your workers know what vehicles are used in an evacuation and what the driving arrangements are. Make sure everyone has a seat in the vehicle. Use Table 10 to record this information.

☐ 17. Develop a system for accounting for personnel and visitors which includes making an individual or individuals responsible (i.e. visitor and employee contact lists, as applicable).

**\*\*\*NOTE:** In some operations it may be difficult to control and track people coming and going. As a precautionary measure, consider limiting entry to parts of the property during the alert stage (recognize that alerts may be in place for weeks).

- ☐ 18. Develop a system for assisting visitors and personnel with disabilities and mobility issues.
- ☐ 19. Identify barriers to effective communication and develop appropriate methods of communication. Record the methods for communication, such as:
  - In the event of limited mobile phone reception, consider handheld satellite communications devices with 2-way text communication capability such as inReach.
  - In the event of language barriers (e.g., owner/operators, employees, and visitors with no English or English as a second language) create a user-friendly copy of the evacuation plan including:
    - Evacuation maps and other visuals
    - Clear instructions on evacuation procedures
    - Translation of essential information as required. (Translation services may be available from the local Immigrant Services Society).

## **DO YOU HAVE TOURISTS ON YOUR FARM / RANCH IN THE SUMMER?**

Visitor evacuation will primarily be a concern for agritourism operations or other agricultural operations that receive a significant number of visitors at any time during wildfire season.

Contact your local authority if you need assistance in planning your evacuation route; particularly if access options are limited and you are in an area at risk of entrapment.

The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) has resources to assist producers in messaging to visitors and emergency planning here: <https://tiabc.ca/emergency-preparedness/>

## **DO YOU EMPLOY OUT-OF-PROVINCE PERSONNEL?**

- ☐ 1. Complete the actions in the '*Do you employ out-of-province personnel*' on page 20 of your *Wildfire Plan*.

## **DO YOU EMPLOY TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS?**

If yes:

Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) require special considerations during an evacuation. Ensure you know and understand your role as an employer when evacuating TFWs. Also ensure that the TFWs you employ are aware of their rights and responsibilities during an evacuation.

### ***Complete the following action to evacuate TFWs:***

- ☐ 1. Download, print, and review the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's *Information for Temporary Foreign Workers* document. Attach a copy of this to your *Wildfire Plan* to ensure it is easily accessible in the event of an evacuation. Ensure that TFWs have the contact information for their respective

consulates and/or local settlement services agency. The *Information for TFWs* document is available here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/emergency-management/emergency-preparedness-for-producers>.

## 11 AFTER PERSONNEL EVACUATION

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***Consider the following action after an evacuation:***

☐ 1. Ensure that you and personnel are registered with Emergency Support Services (ESS). You can register in-person at a designated evacuee Reception Centre. This information should be included in Evacuation Alert/Order documents from your local authority. Find more information about ESS online here: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

## 12 PROTECT LIVESTOCK

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*[Section 12 is primarily intended for use by commercial livestock producers. If you have pets or non-farm business livestock that need to be considered in wildfire planning, they may be listed in this section].*

An up-to-date livestock inventory will help manage decisions during response, such as whether to shelter-in-place or to relocate livestock and can be used to inform others who offer help. Also, loss compensation through commercial insurance or other program requires documentation of the animals prior to impact.

***Complete the following actions in your Wildfire Plan to prepare your livestock inventory:***

- ☐ 1. If you already have prepared a livestock inventory, attach it to your *Wildfire Plan*. If you do not have an existing livestock inventory, complete Tables 11 & 12 in *Section 10.1, Livestock Inventory* in your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 2. Prepare photo documentation of your livestock for insurance purposes and save appropriately either electronically or in a fire-resistant filing cabinet.

### 12.1 DECISION GUIDE FOR LIVESTOCK PROTECTION ON PRIVATE AND CROWN LAND

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Ahead of wildfire season, explore options for protecting livestock from a wildfire. Consider these four options in selecting the best way to protect your animals. *There are risks with all the options, but you should select the approach with the greatest chance of success, all things considered.*

Options include:

1. Shelter livestock in barn.
2. Relocate livestock to a safe outdoor location. \*
3. Relocate livestock to a 'buddy farm' \*
4. Freeing animals **<last resort and not recommended>**

\* Relocation assistance for relocating livestock may be available through the Emergency Operations Centre. Contact your local authority for more information.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Producers may wish to adopt a different option for each type of animal. For example, cows may be sheltered in a barn, while horses are relocated.

***Complete the following actions in your Wildfire Plan to prepare your Decision Guide for Livestock Protection:***

- ☐ 1. Read through the information in *Section 10.2, Decision Guide for Livestock Protection* of your *Wildfire Plan* to understand the options that are available for livestock protection during a wildfire emergency. Complete the sections with the required information.
- ☐ 2. Add all locations that may provide protection for outdoor animals to your Agriculture Operation Map.
- ☐ 3. If applicable, ensure that you have indicated on the Agriculture Operation Map the locations for loading the different types of animals.
- ☐ 4. If applicable, add your buddy farm contact information to Table 2 in *Section 2, Emergency Contacts* in your *Wildfire Plan*.
  - When identifying a buddy farm, **it is important they be located in a different area not likely to be impacted by the same wildfire.**
  - Consider having more than one option in different regions of the province.
  - Consider finding a "reciprocal buddy farm" where you and another producer agree to house each other's livestock in the event of an evacuation. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, arrangements may be agreed to and documented in a mutual aid agreement or memorandum of understanding.
- ☐ 5. Financial supports *may be* available for relocating and housing animals at buddy farm locations; contact your local authority before fire season to check your eligibility for these financial supports.

**FREEING LIVESTOCK IS THE LAST RESORT AND IS NOT RECOMMENDED. YOU MUST INFORM YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY AND BCWS IF ANY ANIMALS ARE FREED.**

### **Livestock Relocation Contacts & Resources**

- **Livestock Relocation** – This Ministry of Agriculture and Food website provides an overview of provincial supports for livestock relocation (including relevant policy, procedures and application for relocation assistance) as well as resources for non-farm business livestock owners at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/emergency-management/livestock-relocation>
- **BC Horse Council** – A membership-driven not-for-profit association representing the interests of the equine industry in all sectors throughout BC.  
Contact: Gord Mackenzie. BC Horse Council Aldergrove: 1-800-856-4302
- **Interior Horse Rescue Society** – This Kelowna-based non-profit society provides horse rescue and adoptions. [https://www.equinenow.com/farm/bc\\_interior\\_horse\\_rescue.htm](https://www.equinenow.com/farm/bc_interior_horse_rescue.htm); 250-575-253

## 13 WATER SOURCES

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It is important to understand the types of water sources that may be available for irrigation and/or sprinkler protection. These sources can be used to safeguard the operation and for activities that are essential to livestock and crop management. Water supply can be restricted and prioritized for use by response agencies during a wildfire event.

Water systems differ throughout B.C. Ensure you understand your region's water system. Ensure you fully consider water supply and potential limitations (e.g. power outages and internet disruptions) and contact your water purveyor (water supplier) (if applicable).

### **Examples of water sources include:**

- Surface water (ponds, streams).
- Private reservoirs (manual or powered gates).
- Groundwater (wells).
- Water tanks.
- Standpipes.
- Cisterns.

Prepare water storage as required. Cisterns may be filled with rainwater and should be kept filled during wildfire season.

### ***Account for water available for fire response by following these steps:***

- ☐ 1. Use Table 17 in *Section 11, Water Sources* in your *Wildfire Plan* to include a list of water sources that are readily available on the property or nearby as a back-up, including both privately held and public resources that may be potentially accessed.
- ☐ 2. Discuss this list with neighbours and local water authorities/purveyors to confirm the availability of water sources before and during wildfire.
- ☐ 3. If water is purveyed to your property (e.g., you do not hold a water licence directly with the province) record the business name of the water purveyor/water authority (e.g., Irrigation District name or local government system) and an emergency contact.

For more information about water diversion and use for fire suppression and prevention, contact: [LivingWaterSmart@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LivingWaterSmart@gov.bc.ca) or consult *Interim Guidance for Water Authorizations: Water Use for Fire Prevention and Suppression*: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/laws-rules/interim\\_guidance\\_fire\\_prevention-water\\_use.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/laws-rules/interim_guidance_fire_prevention-water_use.pdf)

## 14 BACKUP POWER

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Agricultural operations rely on electrical equipment prone to power interruptions. Wildfires can cause extended outages locally or regionally. Producers should prepare for these outages beforehand to safeguard critical systems.



### Essential agriculture operation systems requiring electrical power may include:

- Irrigation.
- Refrigeration equipment.
- Processing systems.
- Dairy milking systems.
- Feeding systems.
- Water pump.
- Sewer system.
- Freezers.

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Protect yourself and the community around you by ensuring that any generator backup systems are properly installed to ensure no back-feed into the power grid. Electrical systems must be wired to exclude regular electric power.

### *Complete the following actions to set up the backup power systems for agriculture operation equipment:*

- ☐ 1. In your *Wildfire Plan*, use *Section 12, Backup Power*, to identify the priorities for agriculture equipment that should be supported by backup power systems.
- ☐ 2. Gather the power equipment needed to provide backup power, including electrical cords, fuel, lubrication, and filters for generators.
- ☐ 3. Set the backup generators in place and connect to the critical equipment that requires power. Confirm that the generator is disconnected from the power grid, to avoid back-feed.
- ☐ 4. Start the generator(s) to test the system for at least 1 hour, if possible. Confirm that the power loads are sufficient to operate the priority equipment. Note the fuel use rate and estimate how long system can provide power without service or refueling.
- ☐ 5. In your *Wildfire Plan (Section 13, Backup Power)*, complete the *Checklist for Operating Backup Power*.
- ☐ 6. Test the instructions and ensure all the equipment can be easily located.

## 15 RESPONSE EQUIPMENT / RESOURCES

A complete inventory of equipment is important for insurance purposes. Your *Wildfire Plan* includes space to record vehicles and equipment on the property and with nearby neighbours. **This list may also help producers share equipment among their neighbours during a wildfire and can support wildfire response efforts.**

### *Complete the following actions to prepare your response equipment and resources:*

- ☐ 1. Use Table 18 in *Section 13, Response Equipment/Resources* of the *Wildfire Plan* to include a list of:

- Personnel (including relevant certifications and training).
- Livestock trailers.
- Heavy equipment.
- Capacity and use of the vehicles and equipment.
- Number of vehicles and equipment on the property and their locations.
- Other equipment available from neighbours.

☐ 2. Discuss this list with neighbours to confirm the equipment and resources they may be able to share before and during wildfire.

☐ 3. If desired, contact the local BCWS Fire Centre to register for “as and when required” heavy equipment contract opportunities:

- Most equipment is hired prior to and early in the fire season (March-May) by the local Fire Centre.
- Equipment rates can be found online at:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/about-bcws/employment-and-contracts/contract-opportunities/equipment>

## 16 INSURANCE INFORMATION

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Producers in B.C. have access to several approaches to insurance and managing financial losses due to the consequences of wildfire, as noted below. It is important to recognize how the different stages of production are covered under insurance, from crops in the ground, to harvested, stored, processed, and transported product. Crop insurance is available commercially and through the government-funded BC Production Insurance (see federal/provincial programs below). For some producers, business interruption or loss of profit insurance may be beneficial.

If your operation is located within a specified distance of an active wildfire, your ability to purchase additional coverage, obtain a new insurance policy, or to renew your policy may be limited. **It is advised that you renew your private insurance outside of fire season** (during the fall and winter) to ensure that you are not in an active fire situation at the time of renewal. If you are renewing crop coverage through the Production Insurance Program, be aware of the renewal dates. Production Insurance policies and the AgriStability program have very specific renewal period requirements.

Do not underestimate replacement costs relative to the cost of insurance. Communicate property improvements to your insurance broker as they occur to ensure they are covered. **Talk with your insurance broker or agent at least annually** to ensure you have adequate insurance specific to your operation and location.

### 16.1 PRIVATE INSURANCE

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Insurance plays an important role in protecting the agriculture producer from wildfires. Different types of private insurance are available to cover losses to infrastructure (i.e., structures, fences, and equipment), crops, and livestock as well business/income interruption losses due to wildfire.

Depending on the specific policy, farm insurance coverage likely includes the cost of relocating livestock in an emergency, both during transportation and at relocation sites. Insurers will likely reimburse producers for transportation and other costs for protecting their animals.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Some insurers cover fences. In some cases, special additional coverage is required for livestock and fencing. Check with your agent or broker for details of specific infrastructure that is covered.

As an important step in managing risk, producers in B.C. should understand what is covered under their insurance policies and what may be excluded. For example:

- Are your losses covered if livestock are harmed indirectly in a wildfire?
- Are both completed stock (harvested crop) and crops in progress (generally crops in the ground) insured?
- Does completed stock such as hay and feed need to be stored inside a structure to be covered by insurance?

***Ensure you have appropriate and adequate insurance and business risk private insurance:***

- ☐ 1. Ensure that annually, outside of fire season, you prepare comprehensive and consistent photo documentation of assets. This documentation can be done annually at insurance renewal, or when you prepare and update your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 2. Ensure that photo documentation of your assets reflects their current state and condition, from the same location/position, before and after an event. This information will help support your claim and make the process faster.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada can help producers find available coverage for business losses through private insurance programs. Its member companies represent approximately 90% of the property and casualty insurance market in Canada. Their website is <http://www.ibc.ca/bc/>

## **16.2 FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

The federal and provincial governments provide a suite of cost-shared risk management programs for the agricultural sector that provide protection against different types of income and production losses applicable to crop and livestock producers.

- Production Insurance helps producers manage their risk of crop losses caused by the weather, such as spring frost, freeze, extreme heat, flooding, drought, hail, excessive moisture, wind and fire.
- The Agriculture Wildlife program provides compensation for crop loss due to wildlife damage.
- AgriStability helps to stabilize farm income by managing the risk of large income declines.
- AgriInvest helps manage small income declines and provides support for investments to reduce risks or improve market income.

More information on these risk management programs can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs#Insurance>

- **Production Insurance Information:**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/agriculture-insurance-and-income-protection-programs/redirect-production-insuranceInformation>
- **AgriStability Information:** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/agriculture-insurance-and-income-protection-programs/agristability-2024>

## 16.3 INSURANCE CHECKLIST

***Consider the following actions to ensure you have appropriate and adequate insurance and business risk management in place:***

- ☐ 1. Review all commercial insurance and government supported insurance or risk management programs relevant to your operations in the context of the following:
  - Local wildfire threat.
  - Potential direct and indirect impacts of wildfire to your assets.
  - Anticipated realistic replacement costs and deductible limits.
- ☐ 2. Meet with your insurance agent or broker or program representative at least annually to review your coverage, including the following points:
  - Is the potential loss of livestock covered if animals are moved from the farm to a safe location due to the threat of a wildfire?
  - Are the costs of transportation, feed, water, and veterinary care for animals relocated during a wildfire emergency covered under the policy?
  - Does coverage include the costs of returning animals to the farm after the wildfire emergency has ended?
  - Does coverage include the costs of repairing fences and gates after damage due to wildfire?
  - Does the coverage include direct and indirect losses to crops, including yield, quality, and loss of stock?
  - Does coverage include loss of harvested, stored, processed, or transported crop products as well as crops in the ground?
  - Does coverage include losses due to prolonged power outage due to a primary emergency, such as a wildfire?
  - What infrastructure relevant to my operations is covered?
  - What steps should be taken when damage occurs? Record the answers in the space provided for “Key Coverages and Exclusions” in *Section 14* of the *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 3. Ensure you understand your policy and are aware of what is included and what is excluded.
- ☐ 4. Take photographs and video of important assets to document their existence and condition, noting the time and date the images were collected. For insurance purposes, it is important to photo-document annually from the same location/position. Consider making multiple copies of photographs and videos of important assets.
- ☐ 5. Use your *Wildfire Plan (Section 16, Insurance Information)* to complete the checklist to ensure that you understand your coverage and are up to date on your coverage.

- ☐ 6. In your *Wildfire Plan*, use *Section 10.1, Livestock Inventory* to ensure that all animals are properly photo documented for insurance purposes prior to threat of wildfire.
- ☐ 7. Store essential operation records and images in a fire-resistant filing cabinet or at an off-site location. Consider backing up electronic files using cloud storage services in Canada. Record the location of your essential records and images in *Section 16, Insurance Information* of your *Wildfire Plan*.
- ☐ 8. Use Table 19 (in *Section 14, Insurance Information* of your *Wildfire Plan* to record the essential information about your commercial farm insurance. Include anything not covered by your plan.
- ☐ 9. Record essential information on additional insurance, including anything not included in your coverage in Table 20 in *Section 14, Insurance Information* in your *Wildfire Plan*.

## PART C: AFTER A WILDFIRE

### 17 CHECKLIST FOR DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Once the danger has passed in an emergency, the local authority will rescind or downgrade an Evacuation Order to an Evacuation Alert and allow residents to return to their homes and agriculture operations.

*Consider the following action to prepare for damage assessment:*

- ☐ 1. Consider the checklist in your *Wildfire Plan* (Section 15, *Checklist for Damage Assessment*) and make any revisions that would better suit your operation. The steps will help clarify the actions to take in assessing damage after a wildfire event.

### 18 CHECKLIST FOR INITIATING INSURANCE/OTHER LOSS COVERAGE

Major wildfire emergencies may have catastrophic consequences for an individual agriculture operation. Some damage may be unavoidable, regardless of the level of preparedness.

Risk reduction efforts, combined with a *Wildfire Plan* and insurance, provide the breadth of protection needed by producers and livestock owners.

#### Initiating Insurance or Other Loss Coverage

Some disaster relief programs are time limited and the funds available may be limited. **Ensure that you initiate a claim for assistance as soon as possible and within the program-specific application time limits following declared completion of the wildfire event.**

Insurance, provincial risk management programs, and disaster financial assistance represent the last lines of disaster defense. **Insurers and governments at all levels expect producers to take reasonable steps to protect their operations and livestock, and to not rely only on disaster recovery programs.**

Producers in B.C. have access to several approaches to managing these financial losses, as noted below.

*Use the following steps to initiate insurance and other loss coverage:*

- ☐ 1. Ensure that you have taken photographs and video of important assets to document their existence and condition ***before the wildfire***, noting the time and date the images were collected. For insurance purposes, it is important to photo-document annually from the same location/position.
- ☐ 2. Contact your insurance agent (or government program agent if you have paid premiums or are enrolled in a business risk management program) to report the damage (refer to the *Guide Section 16, Insurance Information*).

□ 3. Ensure you understand the distinction between an insurance **broker** and an insurance **adjuster**. Understanding this distinction is important in helping you to direct your questions to the right individual.

- **Insurance broker:** advises you and explains insurance.
- **Insurance adjuster:** works for the insurance company and is there to determine if and to what degree you are covered for damages they can verify.

□ 4. Using your *Wildfire Plan (Section 15, Checklist for Damage Assessment)*, complete a thorough damage assessment. Ensure that you keep accurate records (notes, receipts, photographs) and document the value of lost assets.

□ 5. Using your *Wildfire Plan (Section 16, Checklist for Initiating Insurance or Other Loss Coverage)* complete the checklist to initiate insurance or other loss coverage

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Do not rush to settle an insurance claim; be aware that the real damage may not be apparent right away.

## 18.1 FINANCIAL LOSSES RESOURCES

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### COMMERCIAL INSURANCE:

See *Section 16, Insurance Information* in this *Guide*.

### FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Federal and Provincial Government risk management programs include insurance and income protection programs as noted in *Section 16* of this *Guide*. Currently, the AgriRecovery program provides a coordinated government framework for disaster relief on a case-by-case basis. Funding may be available for losses incurred during a declared disaster and not covered by other programs and may be cost-shared between the provincial and federal governments.

More information on this risk management program is available here:

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/programs/agrirecovery>

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Government programs are subject to review and change; check with your local Ministry of Agriculture and Food contact for the current program.

### PROVINCIAL DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

After a disaster, the province may declare an event eligible for Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). Once declared, the program may provide applicants with assistance to restore uninsurable losses that are essential. DFA is meant to compensate for sudden, unexpected, and uninsurable losses. This may include building repairs, replacement of essential personal effects, eligible equipment and inventory, clean up and debris removal. For details, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/evacuation-recovery/disaster-financial-assistance>

Please note that items compensated under one program are not eligible for compensation under another program.

## **BC WILDFIRE SERVICE FIRE SUPPRESSION DISTURBANCE REHABILITATION:**

Sites impacted by fire suppression activities are required to be rehabilitated to ensure that the natural drainage patterns are maintained, and fuel hazards are minimized. This rehabilitation includes mitigation of impacts to land features (i.e., watering holes, pastures) on private land.

Private landowners may be eligible to receive compensation for damage to private property caused by the government in carrying out fire control. For example, fencing or irrigation damage caused by a fire break may be eligible for compensation.

Contact the BC Wildfire Service claims team for more information: [BCWSClaims@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCWSClaims@gov.bc.ca)

## **19 CHECKLIST FOR RECOVERY**

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Recovering from a disaster, such as a wildfire, may take months or even years. Much depends on the extent of damage and the degree of collaboration that draws the community together.

Disaster Recovery Planning support is available through the BC Agri-Business Planning Program here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management#business>

Following a significant disaster, your local authority will continue to share information and coordinate resources within the region.

***Follow these steps to consider the disaster recovery phase of a wildfire event, and the potential actions for the operation:***

- ☐ 1. Review the listed actions in your *Wildfire Plan (Section 17, Checklist for Recovery)* and make any amendments and additions that suit your operation.
- ☐ 2. Speak with members of the farmer institutes and agriculture associations that support your agriculture commodity group within the region and enquire about their ability to assist in disaster recovery.
- ☐ 3. If your operation is damaged, consider reconstruction in ways that protects livestock and operations from future threats, such as using combustion resistant building materials for structures and fences. Refer to *Section 6, Use FireSmart to Protect Farmstead Infrastructure* in this *Guide* for suggested actions.

More information on reducing combustible materials is available in the FireSmart Begins at Home Manual here:

[https://firesmartbc.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/FireSmart\\_Begins\\_At\\_Home\\_Manual\\_2upv2.pdf](https://firesmartbc.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/FireSmart_Begins_At_Home_Manual_2upv2.pdf)



## PART D: FINALIZE, STORE, AND SHARE YOUR PLAN

*After completing your Wildfire Plan, make sure it's available to be used as designed:*

- ☐ 1. Make sure all the critical elements of agriculture operation information (including maps and response plans) are included in the *Wildfire Plan*, both in the electronic file (if applicable) and paper copy.
- ☐ 2. Ensure that you have multiple copies of the *Wildfire Plan*. Store copies in different locations around operation buildings, with one copy in a personal vehicle. Also, add a copy to an off-site location, such as a family member or in Canadian cloud storage.
- ☐ 3. Ensure that all family members and personnel understand the contents of the *Wildfire Plan* and know where to find it. Talk it over with them so everyone understands the steps needed to protect the operation from a major wildfire emergency.
- ☐ 4. Make several copies of the Emergency Contacts and keep them in different locations including a personal vehicle.
- ☐ 5. Complete the separate *Wildfire Plan Summary* (Appendix 1 of the *Wildfire Plan*): The *Wildfire Plan Summary* may be used to create discussion with key agencies (e.g. regional district, fire departments, BC Wildfire Service) in advance of the wildfire season and may assist to support identification and protection of your operation.
- ☐ 6. Add the local contacts you will share your *Wildfire Plan Appendix* with to Table 21 in Section 18, *Finalizing, Storing, and Sharing Your Wildfire Plan*.

**\*\*\*NOTE** Because agriculture operations and contacts are likely to change over time, it is important to review and update the *Wildfire Plan* at least once each year, outside of fire season. Revisit each section of this *Guide* to confirm essential information and your choices.

## PART E: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **BC Climate Change Adaptation Program (CCAP)** – CCAP supports farms in adopting a proactive approach to climate change issues: <https://bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/>
- **Emergency Management Guidebooks for Producers** – The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has prepared three emergency management Guides for specific commodity groups and one for small mixed farms.
  - Beef - [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/beef\\_emergency\\_management\\_Guide.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/beef_emergency_management_Guide.pdf)
  - Dairy - [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/dairy\\_emergency\\_management\\_Guide.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/dairy_emergency_management_Guide.pdf)
  - Pork - [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/bc\\_pork\\_emergency\\_management\\_Guide\\_march2015.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/bc_pork_emergency_management_Guide_march2015.pdf)
  - Small Mixed Farms - [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/900600-4\\_em\\_small\\_mixed\\_farm\\_Guide.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/900600-4_em_small_mixed_farm_Guide.pdf)
- **Wildfire Collaborative Partnership Guide** – The BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) works with various partners at all stages of wildfire management. Our Guide aims to strengthen our collective effectiveness by understanding our complementary roles and responsibilities: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/partners>