

## Welcome Back residents impacted by Crater Creek wildfire

This re-entry kit contains important and useful information about returning home after the threat of a wildfire. Being well prepared and proceeding cautiously will help you stay safe and avoid injury when you re-enter your home and property.

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) appreciates your patience during this stressful time. Thank you for respecting all traffic control measures, including emergency and security personnel.

This re-entry kit includes some basic information on:

- Re-entry checklist for your home and property
- Fortis contact information – electricity and gas service
- Drinking water safety and water use
- Food safety
- Solid waste curbside collection
- Roads and storm drainage
- Handouts and links for more information

Thank you for following the direction given for the Evacuation Order and for your patience while returning to your home.

If you have questions regarding the Evacuation Order or re-entry details, please contact the RDOS Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at [250-490-4225](tel:250-490-4225).

*Mark Pendergraft*

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Mark Pendergraft  
Chair, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

## Anticipate what the area will be like.

It helps to think ahead about what the environment will look, feel, and smell like when you return. There may be delays in returning home if the area is unsafe.

The community may have dramatically changed, including:

- Blackened and burnt trees, shrubs and landscapes
- Smell of smoke
- Areas covered in ash
- Familiar landmarks missing
- Spoiled food in fridges and freezers

When it is safe to re-enter your home and property, check that you have enough fuel, food and water in case of unforeseen damage or issues. Be prepared with a radio, flashlight and emergency supplies.

## Re-entry checklist for your home and property:

- ✓ Walk carefully around the outside of the house. Carefully check for signs of damage or danger. Charred trees are unstable and may be a hazard.
- ✓ Look for loose or fallen power lines. Stay away from fallen or damaged electrical wires. If you have questions, no service or are experiencing fluctuations in electrical service quality, contact Fortis BC Electricity at [1-866-436-7847](tel:1-866-436-7847) (24 hours).
- ✓ If you smell an odour like rotten eggs or sulphur as you enter your home, it could be a gas leak. Go outside and call the FortisBC Emergency Line at [1-800-663-9911](tel:1-800-663-9911) (24 hours) or [911](tel:911).
- ✓ Clean any ash off your belongings and furniture. Your regular cleaning regime should be adequate to bring your home back to normal.
- ✓ All perishables and spoiled food in your home should be disposed of. Thoroughly clean your refrigerator and freezer.
- ✓ Take pictures of any damage for insurance claims. Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible to discuss claim options if you have any damage.
- ✓ Wash your hands if they come into contact with ash.



# Properties connected to Community Water or Sewer Systems

## Please Reduce Water Usage

**Watch for any information or updates on the community water and sewer system as re-entry occurs.**

The water system may have been running at full capacity to assist with firefighting. Residents returning to their homes should conserve water and follow the water restrictions set by the water purveyor.



# Drinking water safety and water use for Rural Properties



If you do not have community water and sewer services, check your water and septic system prior to use for any signs of damage.

**If you are on a well or cistern and it has been flooded or damaged by fire, assume that the water in your home is not safe to drink.** You will probably need to disinfect the well or cistern, or have it repaired. Contact Interior Health Authority to receive information on how to test and clean your well or cistern.



Before using your water for consumption, flush the system to remove all stagnant water from your household water lines by running all cold and hot water taps for several minutes before using them.

## Pools & Hot Tubs

Homeowners will be requested not to drain any pools into the sanitary sewer system or overload any area storm drainage. Drain any pools slowly. Note that water containing any type of disinfection – salt water or chlorine – cannot be drained into a creek.

Homeowners on community water systems need to contact their purveyor prior to refilling pools as it will require scheduling to ensure the water system is able to handle the increased use.

## **Pet and Animals**

The Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) is dedicated to animal welfare through the preparation for and the actual rescue and shelter of domestic animals and livestock in a disaster.

If you had pets or animals evacuated, contact ALERT to arrange for pick up: [250-809-7152](tel:250-809-7152)

For ranchers and farmers who had assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture on moving livestock, please contact the RDOS EOC at [250-490-4225](tel:250-490-4225) with any questions and to arrange details for re-entry.

## **Checklist for Damage Assessment for Agricultural Operations**

Once the evacuation order has been lifted and if damage is observed on the agriculture operation, consider these steps to limit further damage.

- Check livestock that sheltered-in-place at the earliest possible opportunity, and provide for their needs with water, feed, and safety.
- Inspect the agriculture operation for hazards and damage. Take care to avoid hazards, such as smoldering tree roots underground.
- Ensure to inspect fences for damage to prevent wandering of livestock into other areas.
- Contact insurance agent or broker.
- Document any loss of livestock, buildings, fences, or equipment in writing, using the inventory to verify losses. Document salvaged items.
- Take samples as required for laboratory assessment of damage (e.g., smoke taint of grapes).
- Secure the site.

For more detailed information and for planning for any future events:

<https://bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/Resources/BC-Farm-Ranch-Wildfire-Plan-2019-workbook.pdf>

# Food Safety



- **Refrigerated food:**

- Refrigerators keep food at 4 degrees C (40 degrees F).
- If the temperature inside the fridge has gone above that level, discard all the food.
- If you are unsure about the temperature, throw the food out.
- If your fridge was exposed to floodwater, throw out the entire contents, including all meats, fresh fruit, and vegetables. Thoroughly clean your refrigerator and freezer.

- **Frozen food:**

- Frozen food is likely safe unless the freezer was exposed to heat from a fire, floodwater or has been without power for an extended period.
- If you are unsure about the exposure, throw the food out.
- If the electricity is off, keep the freezer closed. It has enough insulation to keep food frozen for up to three days without power.
- It's considered safe to refreeze food that has partially thawed if it still contains visible ice crystals. However, partial thawing and refreezing will reduce the quality of the food.
- Discard any food that has completely thawed, has reached a temperature above 4 degrees C (40 degrees F), or has questionable colour or odour.

- **Canned food:**

- Tinned goods should be good for consumption unless the can has bulged, is badly dented or has rusted. Throw these ones out.
- All undamaged canned goods should be washed and disinfected if they have been exposed to floodwater or smoke.
- Food stored in glass jars that have been exposed to heat should be thrown out as seals may have been broken.



**When in doubt, throw it out.**

## Solid Waste Collection

- Curbside Collection: The RDOS waste collection curbside service will remove garbage bag limits for your first normal pickup day after re-entry and for the following-week. Please remember, garbage bags need to weigh less than 25kg (50 pounds) to be lifted.
- Food affected by fire retardant: Interior Health highly discourages consuming home-grown fruits and vegetables that have been affected by fire retardants. These items should be composted or placed in the yard and garden waste for pickup. *Information sheet included in this package.*
- Fridge or freezer disposal: If you have refrigerator or freezer units that require disposal, please contact the RDOS Solid Waste Management Coordinator for further instruction. These items cannot go directly into the landfill.
- Burnt material disposal: Any “burnt materials” need to be placed aside for 2 weeks prior to being placed in any collection. Please follow the procedure for disposal and complete the required forms – please contact the RDOS Solid Waste Management Coordinator for additional support.



Questions regarding curbside pickup or other waste disposal can be directed to the **RDOS Solid Waste Management Coordinator** at [250-490-4203](tel:250-490-4203).

## Roads and storm drainage

- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) and the roads contractor Acciona Infrastructure Maintenance (AIM) has been active throughout the wildfire event.
- Both agencies will be coordinating any cleanup and maintenance of the roads, ditches and culverts.

**AIM contact: [1-866-222-4204](tel:1-866-222-4204)**

Please refer to the included handouts and websites for more information:

- **Coping through a natural disaster.** Canadian Mental Health Association.  
<https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/coping-with-natural-disaster-stress/>
- **Water and Food Quality: Information for Evacuees Returning after a Fire and Recommended Precautions for Water and Food Affected by Fire Retardants.** Interior Health Authority. <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/natural-disasters-and-emergencies/wildfires>
- **Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality and Health Effects of Wildfire Smoke.** BC Centre for Disease Control.  
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/wildfire-smoke>
- **Last–Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire.** FireSmart. [www.firesmart.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.firesmart.rdos.bc.ca)
- **Landslide and Flooding Risks Due to Wildfires** (*included brochure*)  
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- **Do you have a 72- Hour Emergency Kit?** RDOS Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)  
<https://emergency.rdos.bc.ca/>
- **Province of B.C. Disaster Financial Assistance Program**  
Emergency Management BC. <http://www.gov.bc.ca/disasterfinancialassistance>
- **Fire Recovery Guide.** Canadian Red Cross  
[https://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/Fire-Recovery-Guide\\_2017\\_v3\\_1.pdf](https://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/Fire-Recovery-Guide_2017_v3_1.pdf)