

Welcome Back

Evacuated Residents of the Upper Park Rill Creek Wildfire (K52813)

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 healthy and avoid injury when you re-enter your home.

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
- Pets and Animal Assistance
- Food Safety
- Solid Waste Curbside Collection
- Roads and Storm Drainage
- Handouts and links for more information

The RDOS thanks you for following the direction given for the evacuation order and your patience getting back to your homes.

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

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Chair, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

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Date Signed

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 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 natural gas as you enter your home, leave immediately and contact Fortis BC Gas Emergency line at [1-800-663-9911](tel:1-800-663-9911) (24 hours).
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Remember to bring food and supplies for your pets and animals.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Check fences for damage prior to allowing pets or livestock into secured areas.
- ✓ Do not access any burnt areas on Crown Lands for your safety.



Drinking Water Safety and Water Use



Water supply for the properties involved in the wildfire event have private groundwater wells, surface water intakes or are connected into a community water system. Water quality may be impacted from the activities of the firefighting efforts. *Information sheet included in this package.*

Community water and sewer systems have been maintained through the wildfire event.

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 from firefighting sprinklers 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.

Water restrictions for community water systems in place prior to the wildfire event, will remain in effect to ensure adequate water supplies for everyone.

Check your hoses and irrigation system for signs of damage from fire or extreme heat prior to use. Household irrigation systems should be run on their regular schedules. Additional hand watering is permitted for the next few days.

Pools & Hot tubs

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

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

Specific Information for:

Willowbrook Water System Residents:

The Willowbrook water system has been operating normally to assist with firefighting efforts in the area.

Watch for important information or updates on the water system from the RDOS after re-entry occurs.

For more information regarding the Willowbrook Water System please contact the RDOS Water Utility Administration at [250-490-4135](tel:250-490-4135).



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

All perishable foods should be disposed of immediately upon your return. Take photos of all food to be thrown out for a possible insurance claim.



Dispose of:

- **Refrigerated food**
 - If the temperature inside the fridge has increased above the normal temperatures.
 - Any food that shows signs of spoilage or odours.
 - If your refrigerator has foul odours after cleaning, it may need to be replaced.
- **Frozen food:**
 - Frozen food is probably safe, unless the freezer was exposed to heat from a fire, to floodwaters or has been without power for an extended period.
 - If the electricity is off, keep the freezer closed. It has enough insulation to keep food frozen for up to three days without power.
 - Discard anything that has completely thawed 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 flood waters or smoke.
 - Food stored in glass jars that have been exposed to heat should be thrown out as seals may have been broken.
- **Open food:**
 - Food left unrefrigerated and in bowls or on counters as they may have ash or smoke exposure.



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. They should be composted or placed in the yard and garden waste for pickup.
- Fridge or Freezer Disposal: If you have refrigerator or freezer units that require disposal due to a prolonged power outage, please contact the RDOS Solid Waste Management Coordinator for further instructions – they 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 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.
www.sos.cmha.bc.ca
- **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>
- **Questions and assistance for pets and animals evacuated.** Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) **250-809-7152**, <http://alertcanada.org/>
- **Farm / Ranch Wildfire Plan Workbook Preparing for and Responding to Wildfire.** BC Ministry of Agriculture <https://bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/Resources/BC-Farm-Ranch-Wildfire-Plan-2019-workbook.pdf>
- **Last–Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire.** FireSmart. www.firesmart.rdos.bc.ca
- **Landslide and Flooding Risks Due to Wildfires.** Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- **Do you have a 72- Hour Emergency Kit?.** RDOS Emergency Operations Centre
<https://emergency.rdos.bc.ca/>
- **Province of BC’s Disaster Financial Assistance Program – Key Information.** 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