



BC Forest Safety

Wildfire Risk and Readiness in BC Forestry Operations: Protecting Workers, Operations and Communities

Wildfire activity is not simply a disruption to forestry work in British Columbia--it has the potential to be a significant occupational hazard. Wildfire smoke and ash can cause respiratory problems, trees impacted by fire can fall unexpectedly and crews could become entrapped by fast moving flame fronts. In recent years, BC has experienced some of the most severe wildfire seasons in Canada. One season alone saw approximately 2.8 million hectares burned, which was more than double previous records and caused widespread evacuations, area closures, and heavy smoke. BC's forestry sector was significantly impacted, particularly in remote locations that were dangerously exposed to rapidly changing fire conditions.



Wildfires can escalate quickly into uncontrollable situations, putting workers at risk, halting operations, damaging equipment and threatening nearby communities. **Wildfire preparedness is essential and it is a shared responsibility.** Forestry operators, workers and industry partners all play a role in reducing risk and responding effectively.

Forestry operations need to adapt their emergency response planning to address not only the risks from active wildfires but also the risk of causing one. Forestry work often involves ignition sources such as machinery, hot work or pile burning and companies need to understand their responsibilities in preventing human-caused fires and have clear plans in place to respond quickly if a fire breaks out on a worksite.

Preparing Crews Through Training and Planning

Effective wildfire readiness starts well before the fire season begins. Employers should ensure that:

- Their responsibilities under the [Wildfire Act and Regulation](#) are reviewed
- Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) are current, site-specific and well understood
- Workers are trained on emergency procedures and practise them through regular drills
- Fire suppression equipment and communication devices are functional and inspected
- Workers who may be involved in fire response receive S-100 Wildfire Suppression Training, including annual refreshers where required

To support employers and forestry workers, BCFSC offers the following resources and training opportunities:

Resources:

- [Dangerous Tree Resources](#)

Free Training:

- [Introduction to Dangerous Trees](#)
- [Forest Supervisor Training](#)
- [Serious Incident and Fatality Investigation](#)

Webinar Recordings:

- [Mitigation Strategies for Wildfire Smoke and Other Respiratory Hazards in Wildland Firefighting](#)
- [Tips to Successfully Transition into Supervision](#)

Crew Talks:

- [Wildfire Safety While at Work](#)
- [Emergency Response in the Workplace](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation Grab & Go Bags](#)

Monitoring Conditions and Staying Informed

Staying informed allows for faster response and safer decision-making. During wildfire season, monitoring the [Fire Danger Rating](#) in your work area helps prepare for high-risk activities. Confirming local weather conditions and paying attention to sudden shifts are good daily practices to help adjust plans as needed. Use the BC Wildfire Service mobile app and online dashboards to track wildfire activity, fire bans and evacuation alerts in real time.

Wildfires will continue to challenge BC's forestry sector. By learning from past wildfire seasons, staying informed and working together, the industry can better protect workers, operations and the communities that depend on them.

If you do spot a wildfire, report it immediately by calling **1-800-663-5555** or ***5555** from a mobile phone, or by using the BC Wildfire smartphone app.