

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #85 / July 16, 2021

This update and earlier editions are also available on the [First Nations Public Service Secretariat website](#). 

Good Afternoon,

Minister Marc Miller and the Ministers of Public Safety and Transport **released a statement Sunday** committing to on-going engagement with First Nations affected by wildfires in BC and additional resources to advance emergency response measures. Our office shared the statement with you Sunday evening and trust the measures announced brought some comfort in these challenging times.

Notably, Indigenous Services Canada will provide a requested \$1.8 million in additional funding to the First Nations' Emergency Services Society to increase its ability to respond to this 2021 wildfire season.

Additionally, we note Transport Canada issued two Ministerial Orders over the weekend. The **first** halted train service between Kamloops and Boston Bar, BC for 48 hours. This was done in the interest of safe railway operations and to protect residents who temporarily returned to inspect their homes. The **second** requires railways to take precautionary measures to further protect against wildfires in the context of extreme weather conditions – due to climate change.

We note also that the RCMP have posted an update to their investigation **here** and assurance that the Lytton fire remains a priority investigation for all involved.

Our thoughts are with those residents who returned to see the devastation caused by the fire in Lytton First Nation and the neighbouring village. We can't fully imagine the range of emotions many are experiencing. Please continue to remind your members that information about mental health and wellness supports are available through the **First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)**.

You may have heard the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia **will each match every dollar donated to the Canadian Red Cross** for people affected by wildfires in Lytton and other communities. This means that every \$1 donated will become \$3 to support those affected by the wildfires. This will be retroactive to donations received since July 3, 2021, when the Red Cross BC Wildfire Fire Appeal fund began.

We continue to work with our partners such as Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC), the FNHA, and the First Nations Emergency Services Society, to ensure we have a coordinated approach to the evolving situation and can respond as quickly as possible. Additionally, we continue to work with communities directly.

Those wishing to make a financial donation can do so online at [redcross.ca](#), by calling 1-800-418-1111, by texting FIRES to 45678 or by contacting their local Canadian Red Cross office.

We encourage all those who need support at this time to reach out and know that support is always there for you through the Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free) or through the online chat at [hopeforwellness.ca](#), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

EMBC CONTACT INFORMATION

Save EMBC phone numbers to your phone to ensure they are readily available during an emergency. The EMBC 24/7 Emergency Line is 1-800-663-3456. This QR code links to the contact information for all EMBC offices.



More information from EMBC is **available online**.



In BC, through the joint Emergency Management Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, ISC works collaboratively with EMBC to ensure First Nations are fully integrated into the Province of British Columbia's emergency management structure to receive equivalent emergency management services as those provided to other BC residents. After the immediate danger and response is over, we will keep working closely with EMBC to help impacted First Nations **develop and implement recovery plans**.

Also as announced in **Update 84**, we're pleased to share that Allyson Rowe has rejoined ISC BC Region as Regional Director General effective July 12. Please see the last page of this Update for her contact information.

Finally, please continue to follow the advice of public health officials by getting vaccinated, using layers of protection and following the public health orders that remain in place.

Stay safe.

During the hot summer months, please continue to follow public health advice and check on your elderly and vulnerable members to ensure they also remain safe. Resources are available online to provide **tips on beating the heat** and help in **recognizing heat-related illness**.

UPDATES

With the threat of fires facing many areas of the province, we thought we would share again these Frequently Asked Questions:

● **What is ISC's Role?**

ISC works with First Nations, provinces and territories and emergency services partners to ensure that First Nation communities at risk of wildfire have the resources they need and are able to respond in the event of an emergency.

ISC participates on regular provincial coordination calls with key emergency management partners, including First Nations; receives and responds to calls from First Nations directly; communicates issues raised by First Nations to our provincial partners, such as EMBC; and provides up-to-date information to senior officials, including the Minister's office regarding the well-being of BC First Nations.

● **What is Emergency Management BC's role?**

EMBC is the province's lead coordinating agency for all emergency management activities, including response, planning, training, testing and exercising.

Through the joint Emergency Management Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, ISC works collaboratively with EMBC to ensure First Nations are fully integrated into the Province of British Columbia's emergency management structure to receive equivalent emergency management services as those provided to other BC residents.

● How do I get information about the status of fires in my area?

- For current information on fire danger ratings, regional fire prohibitions and wildfire activity call 1-888-336-7378 (3FOREST).
- For emergency response support due to an emergency event, contact EMBC's 24/7 Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456.
- Follow [@EmergencyInfoBC](#) on Twitter or visit [their website](#) for information on evacuation alerts/orders and status updates regarding emergency events.
- Report wildfire sightings or the presence of smoke to BC's Wildfire Management Branch at 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on most cellular phones.
- Keep up-to-date on the provincial wildfire situation by visiting [BC Wildfire's website](#) or viewing the [BC Wildfire Dashboard](#).
- You can find contact information for each of the six EMBC regions on [their website](#).

● What should I do if someone goes missing this Wildfire season?



BC RCMP answers: The sudden and urgent evacuation of people from the Village of Lytton and neighbouring Indigenous communities on June 30th, created numerous situations where families and friends were unexpectedly separated from one another. The emotional stress and worry of not knowing where your loved ones are is understandably difficult. BC RCMP has been working with various programs and services to help find and re-unite loved ones in the aftermath of Lytton tragedy.

“Generally speaking, when persons are reported missing to the police we are able to locate them in a relatively short period of time,” says Cpl. Jennifer Sparkes the Southeast District Missing Persons Coordinator. “In mass evacuation - situations, we are able to coordinate efforts amongst police and provincial agencies to ensure there are no delays in searching for persons who cannot be accounted for, however, we are unable to do that if an initial report is not made.”

While the RCMP is aware of the possibility that there could be someone still left unaccounted for, the events of the Lytton Creek fire have provided us with some important examples of what everyone can do in these circumstances.

Here is what you need to do should you be unable to locate a loved one:

- Determine if your loved one has gone to the planned location or emergency meet-up place discussed in your [Preparedness Plan](#).
- If you are unable to find your loved one, call or attend your local or nearest RCMP detachment to report the individual as missing.
- Be prepared to provide police with as much detail as possible about your loved one, particularly the circumstances at the time of last contact with them. This is critical to determining whether they have evacuated and are sheltering elsewhere, or may be trapped within the evacuation zone.

If you have livestock, leaving animals unsheltered is preferable, or if time and personal safety permits, evacuation away from the danger zone should be considered.

FIRESMART BC TOOLKIT

The [FireSmart toolkit](#), a one-stop shop for resources, key links and assets to create FireSmart BC communications online.

With the unpredictable and challenging BC Wildfire season still underway, the BC RCMP is hoping that everyone remains safe. Please contact us if you need help finding a missing person.

We're happy to report that as of this week everyone is accounted for after the Lytton fire.

To find a BC RCMP Detachment visit bc.rcmp.ca/detachments.

● What should I do if I need my status card reissued?

BC Region has mobile status card issuance teams that can travel to evacuation areas upon request. Please contact our Emergency Management program's Duty Officer at 604-209-9709 or bcaandc.do@canada.ca to make arrangements. Individuals can also write to aadnc.infopubs.aandc@canada.ca to request a Temporary Confirmation of Registration Document (TCRD) by mail – use "BC Wildfire TCRD" in the subject. A team is in Kamloops this week and future outreach is planned.

SHARE WITH YOUR ADMINISTRATORS – ICSF REPORTING

The Annual Activities and Expenditures Report (DCI# 4548549) for the Indigenous Community Support Fund due date is July 31.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Health and safety around wildfire smoke

The Province of British Columbia has [released tips](#) for protecting yourself from the effects of wildfire smoke advising that it is to reduce your exposure by sheltering in place.

Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy:

- Reduce the amount of time spent outdoors, stay hydrated and avoid rigorous outdoor activities.
- For those who require rescue medications, especially for respiratory conditions like asthma, ensure you have sufficient supplies on hand for when conditions are smoky.
- If you cannot access cleaner air, some [face masks](#) can provide protection from wildfire smoke.
- Check the [Air Quality Health Index](#) in your area.

Culturally Sensitive Mental Health and Wellness Supports

The FNHA has provided following mental health and wellness supports for individuals who may be impacted by wildfires and other emergencies:

1. The FNHA web page on [culturally-safe mental health and wellness supports](#), as well as counselling services covered by FNHA Health Benefits.
2. A printable [PDF on mental health and wellness supports](#) for communities in the Interior, developed in coordination with our FNHA Interior Region.
3. A printable [PDF on health and wellness support for wildfire evacuees](#), including First Nations Health Benefits, for all regions of BC.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We would also like to take this opportunity to share the contact information for our Executive Leadership Team should you or your team need to reach out regarding specific programs or services within their respective areas:

- **Regional Director General**
Allyson Rowe / 604-355-3018
- **Associate Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Residential Schools Information and Inquiries**
David Russell / 604-817-2644 /
Twitter: @davidsrussell
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Acting Director, Lands and Economic Development**
Angela McCarthy / 604-209-1251
- **Director, Funding Services**
Jody Kaden / 236-334-4742
- **Director, Child and Family Services**
Chiara Taylor / 778-668-9067
- **Director, Community Development**
James Moxon / 604-367-8241
- **Director, Corporate Services**
Harold Powell / 604-219-1737

Should you have any COVID-19 health-related questions, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- For general inquiries: covid19needs@fnha.ca
- For FNHA and community health care providers (CHNs, HD, etc.) or CDE planning questions: CDMgmt@fnha.ca
- For individual health care and COVID-19 questions: 811 or primary care provider or contact the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day 1-855-344-3800 or email virtualdoctor@rccbc.ca.

Should you have any questions regarding the Emergency Management Assistance Program, please contact our Duty Officer at 604-209-9709 or bcaandc.do@canada.ca.