

# 2024 FIRE SEASON: PREPARE & BE AWARE

## An East Kootenay Emergency Management Program Preparedness Guide

**PLEASE BE SMART, PREPARED AND SAFE THIS SUMMER.**

### PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

There are steps you can take now to help you and your family be ready in the event an emergency happens.

You should have at all times:

- **An emergency plan that every household member knows.**  
The plan should include information on safe meeting places, an out-of-province contact, plans for pets/livestock, and how to shut off electrical power and natural gas sources.
- **An emergency supply kit that contains:** food, water, necessary medications, flashlights with extra batteries, personal toiletries, identification for each family member, some cash, insurance papers and any important family documents, and a change of clothes. Be prepared to be on your own for at least 72 hours, possibly longer.
- **A battery-powered or wind-up radio** that allows you to access weather warnings, updates and instructions from local media.
- **A plan for protecting your home** including the tools/items you may need to do so (sprinklers set up ready to turn on and leave, gas turned off, propane/fuel sources moved away from home, shut windows and doors).

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS



If it is a life safety issue, please call **9-1-1**.

These are the numbers to call to report wide scale events (like forest fires or floods).

These are 24 hour Provincial numbers that alert local emergency officials.

**IF YOU SEE SMOKE OR FIRE,  
PLEASE REPORT IT.**

#### FOREST OR WILDLAND FIRES

**\*5555** (cellphone)

**1-800-663-5555**

**Via the BC Wildfire app**

#### FLOODING

**250-489-9677**

**OTHER** (spills, landslide)

**250-489-9677**

### BE FIRESMART™ & REDUCE YOUR RISK

Taking action to FireSmart your property will dramatically decrease the risk of wildfire damaging your home. And, it's easy to do! The East Kootenay FireSmart Program follows the FireSmart BC and FireSmart Canada principles and is here to help guide you on how reduce your property's wildfire risk.

The Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) is a critical tool in mitigating the risks of wildfires and preventing damage to homes and properties. Assess your home's risk-level by using the Home Ignition Zone Assessment, linked below.

Learn more:

[engage.rdek.bc.ca/firesmart](https://engage.rdek.bc.ca/firesmart)

Home Ignition Zone Self - Assessment:

[firesmartbc.ca/resource/hiz-self-assessment/](https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/hiz-self-assessment/)



# THE STAGES OF EVACUATION

## 1 STAGE 1 – EVACUATION ALERT

Residents are advised of the potential need for evacuation. The alert highlights the nature of the danger and that evacuation may be required at any time. Information will be provided at that time on where to go if the evacuation is ordered. Residents should prepare to evacuate and gather personal supplies necessary for several days.

In the event of imminent danger to property or life, the emergency responders may go straight to an "Evacuation Order" without an alert. This can sometimes be referred to as a "Tactical Evacuation."

If you are evacuated from your property you will not be able to re-enter until the evacuation order is rescinded. Security will be provided to the evacuation area to ensure no one re-enters until the order is rescinded.

## 2 STAGE 2 – EVACUATION ORDER

All persons in the affected area are ordered to leave the area and are provided again with the information required. Once evacuated you are not permitted to return until the order has been rescinded. If an evacuation order is issued, please get out.

## 3 STAGE 3 – EVACUATION RESCIND

All persons in the affected area are advised that the emergency is under control and the area has been declared habitable and the evacuation order has been rescinded.



If you plan on moving RV trailers or boats, the **ALERT STAGE** is the time to do that. Once an **Evacuation Order** has been issued there is **no time** to allow that to happen.

## FIRE BANS AND RESTRICTIONS

All rural properties in the RDEK (outside municipalities) follow the Provincial fire bans and restrictions. Municipal residents should also contact their municipal office to see if there are additional restrictions in place.

Before doing any burning (including lighting a campfire), you should always check to make sure you know what bans or restrictions are in effect. Visit [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca), click on BANS & RESTRICTIONS and Current Restrictions. **We are located in the Southeast Fire Centre.**

Questions about restrictions should go to the Southeast Fire Centre at 250-365-4040.

## BC WILDFIRE SERVICE & WILDFIRE TERMINOLOGY

In the event of a wildfire, the BC Wildfire Service is the lead response agency. For the most current information on the status of wildfires and fire restrictions or bans, visit [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca) or download the BC Wildfire app.

When new fires break out, they are classified as **out of control**. The stage of control describes the level of control that the BC Wildfire Service has of the fire, not the fire's behaviour. Therefore all new fires are **out of control** until they are **being held, under control** or **out**. When new fires are reported they may appear on the interactive fire map; however, if they are quickly extinguished, they may be removed.

### FIRE STAGES OF CONTROL:

OUT OF CONTROL - BEING HELD - UNDER CONTROL - OUT

### FIRE RESPONSE TYPES:

FULL RESPONSE - MODIFIED RESPONSE - MONITORED

*For Stages of Control and Response Type definitions, visit: [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)*

6  
THINGS TO  
REMEMBER



1  
PEOPLE & PETS



2  
MEDS, VITAMINS, GLASSES



3  
CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS, CASH



4  
PHOTOS & MEMORABILIA



5  
COMPUTERS/HARD DRIVES



6  
IMPORTANT PAPERS/PHONE #s

## YOUR PERSONAL EVACUATION PLAN

- Have a designated meeting location outside of the hazard area. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated. If an “Evacuation Order” has been given, the information provided will include the location of the designated ESS reception centre.
- Know several different escape routes from your home and community. The evacuation order as well, will outline the designated travel way for the particular event.
- Plan for your pets. If you have pets or livestock you should also have an evacuation plan for them; methods of transport, location to move them to, etc.
- Create a “Family Communication Plan”. This plan should designate an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. Put their numbers in your wallet and phone.

Learn more:  prepared bc\_ 

## STAY INFORMED

Being aware and informed about what is going on in your area can help you be better prepared and ready to act in an emergency.

**When emergencies happen, it is CRITICALLY important that you trust only verified information sources.**

If you want to share information, please be smart about what you share. Check dates of all social media posts before sharing and share only current information. Share information that is verified from a trusted source. In an emergency, the rumour mill can put lives at risk.

## RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

In an emergency, having good information is key. Here are some great resources:

- **PREPARED BC:** [www.preparedbc.ca](http://www.preparedbc.ca)
- **WILDFIRE INFORMATION:**
  - [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)
  - [www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo/](https://www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo/)
- **ROAD CONDITIONS/CLOSURES:** [www.drivebc.ca](http://www.drivebc.ca)
- **GENERAL INFO:** [www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/)

## 4 WAYS TO GET EMERGENCY INFO

1. **LOCAL MEDIA**
2. **RDEK FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/eastkootenay](http://www.facebook.com/eastkootenay)
3. **RDEK EMAIL GROUP:** [www.rdek.bc.ca/about/email\\_group\\_sign\\_up](http://www.rdek.bc.ca/about/email_group_sign_up)
4. **RDEK WEBSITE:** [www.rdek.bc.ca](http://www.rdek.bc.ca)

## NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Various methods will be used to advise residents in the event of issued evacuation alerts or orders.

- **LOCAL MEDIA** will broadcast or publish alerts or orders.
- **EVACUATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**, see back page of this newsletter to sign up for this important service.
- **DOOR TO DOOR** canvassing will be performed by emergency personnel, such as local firefighters, RCMP, or Search and Rescue.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA** – the RDEK Facebook page will be used to give information to the public. To like our page, visit [www.facebook.com/eastkootenay](http://www.facebook.com/eastkootenay)
- **E-MAIL** – the RDEK provides ongoing emergency information to everyone who has signed up for our e-mail list. To join, visit [www.rdek.bc.ca](http://www.rdek.bc.ca) and follow the “Sign up for community emails” link.

## EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES

Emergency Support Services (ESS) provides basic support to people affected by an emergency or disaster, and is delivered by local Red Cross ESS volunteer teams.

When people are forced from their homes due to an emergency (like wildfire) our Red Cross ESS volunteers step in to provide basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter.

ESS is available for up to 72 hours immediately following the emergency, allowing affected residents the time to make more long-term arrangements and begin the recovery process.

Depending on the situation/emergency, ESS may also be extended.

For large scale responses, in addition to providing basic needs, ESS may also assist with family reunification, emotional support, and transportation. The goal of ESS is to help people re-establish themselves as quickly as possible following a disaster. ESS volunteers provide a critical service during emergencies and we are so grateful to all those volunteers on our Red Cross ESS teams around the East Kootenay.

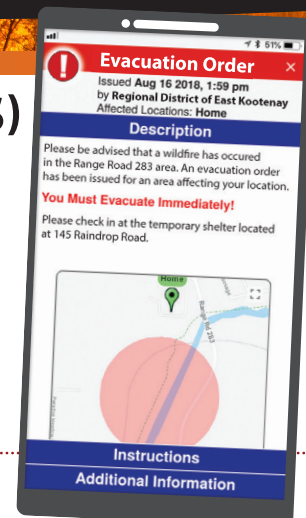
**JOIN US!** If you care about people, have a desire to help others, and are a team player, please consider joining our ESS team. Training is provided and being an ESS volunteer gives you a chance to give back to your community when they need it most. To learn more, contact Simran Sandhu at 250-489-6908.

# REGIONAL EVACUATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ENS)

The Regional Evacuation Notification System (ENS) is powered by Voyent Alert! and notifies you if your property/properties are affected by an evacuation alert or order.

**The service is free and it is for EVERYONE in the East Kootenay - including ALL municipalities, rural areas and First Nations.** Property owners, renters, and even visitors can sign up to be alerted.

**To date, over 20,000 people have registered.** If you have not yet signed up, please do so today. This is one of the most effective tools in our toolbox to notify people when every second counts.



## *some important tips:*

### **THIS IS NOT THE PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL ALERT READY SYSTEM**

Many people think they are part of the Regional ENS when they receive a notification like an Amber Alert or test alert on their cellphones via the Provincial/National Alert Ready system. These are two totally separate systems. Each has an important role and unique advantages, but we can't stress enough the importance of people registering for the Regional ENS.

### **IS YOUR PIN IN THE CORRECT LOCATION?**

We urge anyone who has signed up previously for the service to login to the system and ensure they have properly pinned their property address or addresses. We have come across many residents who have signed up, only to discover later that they have not placed their pins in the right spot. Those who would like to ensure that they have correctly located their property can do so through the website, app, or by calling the RDEK for help. For tips on how to check, visit [www.rdek.bc.ca](http://www.rdek.bc.ca)

### **DO YOU WANT TO HEAR THE NOTIFICATION EVEN IF YOUR CELL PHONE IS ON DND OR SILENT MODE?**

If you are using the Voyent Alert app, it will make a loud sound when an alert is delivered.

For those getting cell phone calls or text messages, if your phone is on silent mode or Do Not Disturb, the alert will come through like any other text or phone call (either with no notification or a vibration depending how you have your device set up). However, you can set up your device to ensure you hear the alert even if you are on silent mode/DND.

#### **For text messages / SMS notifications - they will come from the number 25378.**

1. Create 25378 as a contact in your phone called Voyent Alert (or a name of your choosing).
2. For iPhone users, go into that contact, and choose EMERGENCY BYPASS under your ringtone settings. For Android users, you should be able to add the contact to your "Allowed during Do Not Disturb" section. For other devices, research the steps to allow for notification during silent mode.

#### **For phone call notifications - they will come from the number 250-426-2188 which is the Regional Emergency Information Line.**

1. Create 250-426-2188 as a contact in your phone called Emergency Info (or a name of your choosing).
2. For iPhone users, go into that contact, and choose EMERGENCY BYPASS under your ringtone settings. For Android users, you should be able to add the contact to your "Allowed during Do Not Disturb" section. For other devices, research the steps to allow for notification during silent mode.

## *how to register:*

*Remember to add at least one location when you register*

### **SMS/TEXT OR VOICE DIAL USERS**

- Register online at: <https://ca.voyent-alert.com/vras/register.html>
- Choose "My Locations" to pin your locations to receive voice or text based alerts.

### **MOBILE APP USERS**

- Download and install the Voyent Alert! app from the Apple App or Google Play stores.

### **NEED HELP SIGNING UP?**

- Call the RDEK Cranbrook office at (250) 489-2791 or 1-888-478-7335.

