

# Returning Home Information



Central Okanagan

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

# Staying Informed

## Where can I find more information?

Central Okanagan Emergency Operation Centre website: [cordemergency.ca](http://cordemergency.ca)

Facebook: [facebook.com/CORDEmergency](https://www.facebook.com/CORDEmergency) and Twitter [@CO\\_Emerg](https://twitter.com/CO_Emerg)

City of West Kelowna website: [westkelownacity.ca/citywildfire](http://westkelownacity.ca/citywildfire)

Facebook: [facebook.com/cityofwestkelowna](https://www.facebook.com/cityofwestkelowna) and Twitter [@cityofwestkelowna](https://twitter.com/cityofwestkelowna)

District of Lake Country website: [lakecountry.bc.ca](http://lakecountry.bc.ca)

Facebook: [facebook.com/lakecountry.gov](https://www.facebook.com/lakecountry.gov)

City of Kelowna website: [kelowna.ca](http://kelowna.ca)

Facebook: [facebook.com/cityofkelowna](https://www.facebook.com/cityofkelowna) Instagram: [@cityofkelowna](https://www.instagram.com/cityofkelowna)

Westbank First Nation website: [wfn.ca](http://wfn.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/westbankfn>

Regional District of Central Okanagan website: [rdco.com](http://rdco.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/regionaldistrict](https://www.facebook.com/regionaldistrict) and YouTube: [youtube.com/regionaldistrict](https://www.youtube.com/regionaldistrict)

BC Wildfire Service website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>

# Key Contacts

- AIM Roads (Ministry of Transportation and Highways contractor) call 1-866-222-4204 for after hours and emergencies
- Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) call 250-809-7152 or visit [alertcanada.org](http://alertcanada.org)
- BC 1 Call (for underground services) website: [bc1c.ca](http://bc1c.ca) or call 1-800-474-6886
- BC Conservation Office call 1-877-952-7277
- BC Crisis Line / Mental Health Support Line is available 24 hours a day at 310-6789 (no area code needed); Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642, or Health Link at 811
  - o More information mental health and wellness supports available can also be found at [heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca).
- BC Hydro call 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or website: [bchydro.com](http://bchydro.com)
- BCSPCA website <https://spca.bc.ca> call 1-855-622-7722
- BC Wildfire website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>
- Canadian Red Cross website: [redcross.ca](http://redcross.ca)
- Drive BC website: [drivebc.ca](http://drivebc.ca)
- Fortis BC website [fortisbc.com](http://fortisbc.com) Natural gas: 1-888-224-2710 Electricity: 1-866-436-7847
- Insurance Bureau of Canada website: [ibc.ca](http://ibc.ca) or email [askIBCwest@ibc.ca](mailto:askIBCwest@ibc.ca) call 1-844-227-5422
- ICBC website [icbc.com](http://icbc.com) call 1-800-950-1498
- Kuu-Uus Indigenous Crisis website: [www.kuu-uscrisisline.com](http://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com) or call 1-800-588-8717
- Ministry of Transportation and Highways call 250-712-3660 (general inquiries)
- Resiliency Centre for the McDougall Creek Wildfire, visit [rdco.com/resiliency](http://rdco.com/resiliency) or call 250-469-6327
- Rogers/Shaw toll-free: call 1-888-472-2222 or website: [rogers.com](http://rogers.com) or [shaw.ca](http://shaw.ca)
- TELUS Mobility: \*611 on TELUS mobile phone or call 1-866-558-2273
- TELUS Internet: Toll-free call 1-888-811-2323 or website: [telus.com](http://telus.com)

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**IMPORTANT: Please be sure to read this entire package carefully before entry into your home to minimize the risk of danger to you and your family.**

## Be safe - at all times and everywhere in your community

Your safe return to your neighbourhood is our priority. Please make it your priority too. This package was created to give you the information you need to plan your safe return. Please refer to it often.

You are returning to a community that was profoundly affected by a wildfire. Services that you are used to or rely on may be limited for some time.


A Resiliency Centre located on Westbank First Nation lands opened Thursday, August 31, 2023, to support wildfire evacuees and those experiencing loss following the McDougall Creek Wildfire. The Resiliency Centre is a place for people impacted by wildfires in the Central Okanagan to connect with the services they need in a safe and supportive environment.

The centre, located at 403 - 3031 Louie Drive, will serve as a single point of contact to provide supports and information from a variety of government, non-governmental organizations and agencies. Service providers include but not limited to:

- Community case workers
- First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC
- Insurance Bureau of Canada
- Service Canada
- Service BC
- Ministry services
- ICBC
- Red Cross
- Samaritan's Purse

Call the Resiliency Centre at 250-469-6327, or email [resiliency.centre@rdco.com](mailto:resiliency.centre@rdco.com). Centre hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. until further notice.

Anyone with concerns about a medical condition is advised to consult with a physician before returning home. People can call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 if they have questions or need help finding a physician.



Returning home after a wildfire evacuation can be a particularly stressful and traumatic experience. The thought of all the work that needs to be completed so that you and your family can return to your normal lives can feel overwhelming. If you need to talk, call the Mental Health Help Line at 310-6789 (no area code needed) or HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1. Kuu-Uus Indigenous Crisis Line is also available for support and can be reached at 1-800-588-8717.

Some areas will be fenced for safety and security purposes. Please respect these restricted areas and any directions given to you by first responders or utilities workers. Doing so will keep you and your family and other members of the community safe.

### **Post-Wildfire Natural Hazards**

Following a wildfire, certain areas with moderate to steep slopes may be at greater risk of exposure to geohazard. When the fires have subsided, government agencies will be undertaking a program of post-wildfire natural hazard risk analysis in areas deemed to be at risk. Results will be provided to Local Government for dissemination to affected residents. Learn more: [climatereadybc.gov.bc.ca](http://climatereadybc.gov.bc.ca), or <https://pwnhr-bcgov03.hub.arcgis.com>.

# Re-Entry Checklist



**IMPORTANT:** If, at any time, you feel your home or surroundings are unsafe, do not proceed.

- ✓ Visit your local government or Westbank First Nation regularly for Do Not Consume and Water Advisory information and other important local government services updates.
- ✓ Thoroughly check for hazards before entering your house.
- ✓ Exercise safety and caution when returning to a property by wearing items such as long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and rubber boots.
- ✓ Wear an N-95 or equivalent dust mask (disposable facemask to filter dust and other air particulates) to reduce potential smoke exposure.
- ✓ With limited services available in some areas, returning residents should expect some disruptions, service delays, and intermittent road closures.
- ✓ Refer to the **CLEANING** tip sheet in this booklet for detailed information on cleaning and what you may want to include in your cleaning kit.
- ✓ If your home has been impacted by water damage, please refer to the **PREVENTING MOLD** tip sheet in this booklet.
- ✓ All perishables must be disposed of in every home. All appliances must be cleaned and disinfected. For information on spoiled food removal refer to the **DISPOSING FOOD FROM YOUR HOME** tip sheet.
- ✓ Refer to the **STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOU RETURN HOME** tip sheet for additional information on what to do when you arrive home.
- ✓ Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible. Refer to the **INSURANCE INFORMATION** tip sheet for more information.
- ✓ Review the **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS** section for information on additional resources that may be available to you.
- ✓ Refer to the **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** section for some answers to commonly asked questions.

# Water Quality

Due to the wildfires, your water system may have a quality advisories. Visit the Water Advisory Map at <https://drinkingwaterforeveryone.ca/advisorymap> or your local jurisdiction's website for more information on current water quality conditions and updates.

## Do Not Consume Notice

If Do Not Consume Notices are in effect, boiling water will not make it safe. This water should not be used for drinking, making beverages, brushing teeth or food preparation. All water users are advised to use an alternate source of water or bottled water for the above purposes.

It is okay to use the water for household cleaning, bathing and flushing toilets. The water in your hot water tank is also unsafe for consumption. Please consult a qualified plumber before draining your hot water tank.

## Wells and private systems

If you are on a well, cistern or private water system that has been damaged, assume the water is not safe to drink. Contact your private provider, call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 or visit [drinkingwaterforeveryone.ca](https://drinkingwaterforeveryone.ca) for more information.

# Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can help

Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are ready and willing to help the community. The following NGOs will be providing various services in the weeks and months ahead:

- First Nations' Emergency Services Society: [fness.bc.ca](https://fness.bc.ca) or call 1-888-388-4431
- Canadian Red Cross website: [redcross.ca](https://redcross.ca) or call 1-888-350-6070
- Salvation Army website: [salvationarmy.ca](https://salvationarmy.ca)
- Samaritan's Purse website: [samaritanspurse.ca](https://samaritanspurse.ca) or call 1-866-628-6565



# Garbage Disposal



Talk with your insurers about what to do with your home contents including spoiled food, fridges and freezers **before you take any action**. Insurers sometimes require inventory or photos.

**Kelowna: Glenmore Landfill, visit [kelowna.ca](http://kelowna.ca) for updates and hours of operations.**

Glenmore Landfill  
2710 - 2720 John Hindle Dr.  
250-469-8880

**Westside Residential Waste Disposal and Recycling, visit [rdco.com/recycle](http://rdco.com/recycle) for info.**

2640 Asquith Road (off Shannon Lake Road) in West Kelowna for residential use only, no commercial material accepted.

Hours of operation: Open Friday to Monday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (gate closes at 3:50 p.m.)

## **Traders Cove Transfer Station**

Traders Cove has reopened to residents. Visit [rdco.com/recycle](http://rdco.com/recycle) for the latest updates.

**Note:** The Emergency Operations Centre is working on a salvage plan and will have further detailed information available to support resident's disposing of burnt materials. In the short-term, visit the Frequently Asked Questions section on waste disposal (pg. 21) for more information.

## **Fridge and freezer disposal:**

Takes these steps for fridge and freezer curbside pick-up:

- Email: [info@rapidresponseind.com](mailto:info@rapidresponseind.com) to schedule a pick-up.
- Do not open fridge and seal with duct tape prior to moving.
- Move appliances from your home and place on curbside or driveway by 8 a.m. on the scheduled day of pick-up.
- To reduce wildlife conflicts in neighbourhoods, resident should not put fridges or freezers outside until just before scheduled collection time.

Requests submitted before 4 p.m. will be picked up the following day before 4 p.m. Requests after 4 p.m. are subject to 24-hour delay of pick-up. Special requests with extenuating circumstances can contact (956) 302-6611 to facilitate pick-up for residents with mobility challenges.

# Tip Sheet 1: Steps to take when you return home

When returning to a home or business after a wildfire, it is best to take extra precautions. Unseen dangers may linger, ranging from gas leaks and weakened foundations to exposed wires and power lines. Using caution can help reduce potential injuries. Play it safe. When in doubt, ask for help or seek advice from an expert.

Here are tips for safely returning to your home or business after a wildfire:

## **Check the status of your property:**

- Contact your insurance company to discuss claim options and your bank to discuss mortgage or loan payment deferrals.

## **Prior to traveling home, be prepared with the following:**

- food supplies (food left behind maybe unsafe for consumption)
- clean drinking water
- medication (prescription or over-the-counter medication may not be safe to consume)
- boots
- long pants
- a long-sleeved shirt
- N-95 masks (surgical or dust masks not recommended). N-95 masks are available at hardware stores
- gloves
- a camera
- flashlight
- a cleaning kit

You may want to consider arriving with enough of these items to **last for up to 14 days**.

## **Other safety precautions:**

- Check for hazards before entering your house, i.e. damaged trees and other debris.
- Do not allow children or pets to play in areas damaged by fire.
- Do not try to use any electrical appliances or power in your home or garage that may have come into contact with fire, water or fire retardant until they have been cleared for use by a qualified electrician.

- Do a thorough visual inspection (including roofs and floors) of your property. The foundation and any brick or cement fireplace chimney may have been damaged by heat caused by fire.
- Check for electrical hazards such as exposed wires. Avoid contact with damaged or fallen power lines and poles. If there are any hazards, contact your provider:
  - BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376)
  - FortisBC at 1-866-436-7847
- Beware of dust, ash, broken glass, and other sharp objects. Seek medical attention if you are injured.
- If you have a propane tank system, contact your service provider to do an inspection.
- **Visually check the stability of trees around your property.** Look for burn damage on the tree trunk or for visible damage of burnt tree roots. Any trees that have been damaged by fire may soon become a hazard. They may need to be cut down and removed (refer to Tip Sheet 7 on page 17).

**Be cautious when going inside your home or business:**

 ***Do not start cleaning or throwing anything away until you contact your insurance company.***

- Bring flashlights as there may not be power in your home.
- If applicable, ask your insurance provider what you should do about covering broken windows, doors and other exposed areas, pumping out water and any other activities you may need to do to secure and weatherproof your home.
- Take pictures and/or video and make a list of damaged belongings.
- Residents should expect power to have been restored upon re-entry. If the power is off in your home, please check your breaker panel. If it is still off, please call your provider, either BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or FortisBC at 1-866-436-7847.
- Wear boots, long sleeves, long pants, and rubber gloves when working in an area that has been affected by fire. If you or any of your family members have breathing difficulties or asthma, take all appropriate precautions to protect yourself.
- Wear an N-95 mask while sifting through debris to avoid inhaling smoke and ash.
- It is important to wash your hands if they come into contact with ash or burned items.
- Until the water is safe to use, please follow the Do Not Consume Notice or Water Advisory for your water system (check with your local government or Westbank First Nation).
- If you are not on a municipal water system, check your private water, sewer and septic systems. Call the company or contractor that usually provides these services to ask for an assessment.
- Be aware that animals may have taken shelter in your home, garage or outbuildings. Leaving a door open will allow animals to return to their natural surroundings on their own.
- Be cautious when disposing of garbage as it can attract bears and other wildlife leading to human-wildlife conflicts.

If you encounter an animal that appears injured or unwilling to leave, call the B.C. Conservation Office at 1-877-952-7277.

# Tip Sheet 2: Cleaning

This tip sheet provides general information for when you begin the clean-up process. If you are unable to do so on your own, volunteers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) listed may be able to assist.

- Wash all interior walls and hard surfaces with a steam cleaner or white vinegar. **NEVER** use bleach to clean areas where fire retardants have been used. If you notice fire retardant residue on your property (red stains) use water or biodegradable household cleaners. Also clean inside cabinets, drawers and closets. Steam or wipe undersides of furniture, tables and chairs. To clean windows and glass, use clean water and a razor blade tool to help to remove any sticky residue.
- Use black garbage bags for disposal: Dispose of food and other landfill-appropriate items with your regular household garbage.
- Launder or dry clean: All clothing, linens and bedding should be laundered or dry cleaned.
- Wash all movable items: All movable items should be washed with a steam cleaner or microfibre cloth. This includes picture frames and knick-knacks.
- Wash all children's toys: Wash down children's outside toys, play structures and recreational equipment to remove any residual fire contaminants. Wash down sandboxes with clean water; if the sandbox drains directly into the soil, repeat this step several times. If the sandbox is a plastic container, remove the sand and replace it with clean sand.
- Disinfect and deodorize: Upholstery, fabric window treatments, etc., can be spray-treated with deodorizing products available at most supermarkets. Avoid room sprays since they just cover up the problem and don't fix it. Steam items including carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture and mattresses. Steam melts the tar and neutralizes the odour and carbon film left by wildfires.
- Clean ductwork: Have heating, ventilating and air conditioning units and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash and smoke residue. Change filters when you first return to the premise and then continue to replace them at least once a month for the next year.
- Clean exterior surfaces: Pressure wash or scrub all exterior surfaces including walls, walks, drives, decks, windows and screens.
- Vinyl siding that has been stained by the use of fire retardant may qualify for replacement in most insurance policies. Contact your insurance company for coverage included in your policy.
- Consult a professional: If required, consult or hire professional cleaners.
- **Keep all receipts:** Remember to keep all receipts for cleaning and other expenses to provide to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

### **Build a Clean-up Kit:**

Consider the following to build a clean-up kit before you return home. Materials can be purchased at most hardware stores or wherever you normally buy household goods.

#### *Disaster Management Clean-up Kits include:*

- One 5-gallon bucket with a reusable lid
- One 20-ounce cotton wet mop head
- One 14" palmyra push broom head
- One 14" floor squeegee head
- Two 54" four-section metal handles
- One 9" palmyra capped sweep head
- One 7" scrub brush
- Two cellulose sponges
- One pair leather palm work gloves
- Two pairs household rubber gloves
- One N95 mask
- Ten heavy duty garbage bags
- One litre bleach-based all-purpose cleaner

#### *After Fire Clean-up Kits include:*

- One full release smoke odour fogger
- One Tap-A-Drop 0.5 ounce concentrated liquid deodorizer for washing machine
- Two pairs leather-palm work gloves
- Ten garbage bags
- Flashlight with 3-AAA batteries included
- One 4-pack AAA batteries
- Surface antibacterial wipes
- One empty 32-ounce plastic spray bottle with trigger spray
- One 32-ounce bottle all-purpose cleaner/disinfectant
- One roll toilet paper
- Two pairs nitrile gloves
- Two pairs safety glasses – clear lens
- Drawstring backpack

# Tip Sheet 3: Preventing mold



If your home was damaged by the wildfires, you will need to remove of excess water to prevent mold growth. **Check with your insurance adjuster before completing any work on your damaged home.**

- Call your insurance company: Let your insurance company and restoration contractor know as soon as possible if you find any visible mold growth or smell mold inside your home.
- When you are trying to decide what to keep or to throw away, be safe and always remember: “When in doubt, throw it out.”
- Dry all wet items as soon as possible. Wet or waterlogged carpeting should be dried as quickly as possible, and any underlay should be removed. Steam cleaning carpets with a disinfectant will be adequate.
- Remember to contact your insurance provider if you have any questions about whether to simply clean your refrigerator/freezer or to dispose of it.
- Clean and disinfect: To help prevent mold growth, any water damaged or stained surfaces and appliances should be checked for damage, cleaned and disinfected with a 1:10 parts household bleach to water solution (2 tsp. bleach in 750 ml water or 1 capful bleach in 1 gallon water). **ONLY USE BLEACH IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO – NEVER USE BLEACH IN THE PRESENCE OF FIRE RETARDANTS.**
- Get air moving inside your house: Open windows and use a fan to circulate the inside air.
- Dehumidifiers reduce moisture: You may need to use a dehumidifier to help remove excess moisture from the air inside your home.
- You may wish to remove stained rugs, curtains and soft furniture from your home to clean them.

# Tip Sheet 4: Food disposal

When you are trying to decide what food to keep or throw away, be safe and always remember: “When in doubt, throw it out.”

**IF POWER IS OUT IN YOUR HOME, ALL PERISHABLE ITEMS MUST BE DISPOSED OF IMMEDIATELY UPON YOUR RETURN, INCLUDING ITEMS IN YOUR FREEZER.**

If you are unsure of how long power was out in your home, contact your utility provider and/or insurer for direction.

Food in your home may be unsafe for consumption, consider the disposal of:

- All dry goods that are not in sealed packages/cans.
- Any unrefrigerated raw vegetables or fruits, or any foods that were stored in porous containers (e.g., cardboard, foam containers, etc.).
- Food that was in bowls on counters/tables.
- Food that shows signs of damage from heat or fire, including ash or smoke.
- Any canned food where the can looks like it is bulging or rusted. Canned foods that look like they may be okay need to be cleaned and disinfected with soap and water before being opened to make sure the contents aren't contaminated.
- Any food that has come in contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals or water.
- Any food displaying an off odour or signs of spoilage.

# Tip Sheet 5: Pets

Pets are an important part of our families. Below is a list of questions that we anticipate you may have.

## **My pet was cared for by ALERT but I haven't been able to pick my pet up yet. What do I do now?**

To find out more details about your pet's care or to retrieve your animal, call the agency that assisted when you were evacuated.

- Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) call 250-809-7152

## **My pet has passed away in my home. What do I do?**

We are sorry for your loss and understand this will be upsetting for you and your family. It is your choice how to dispose of your pet. Your veterinarian may offer cremation options, you may choose to bury your pet on your property or small animals can be disposed of with your waste.



# Tip Sheet 6: Insurance information

## **If you are insured:**

1. If your home has a mortgage, call the bank or company that holds this mortgage to let them know about the wildfires as soon as possible.
2. Contact your insurance company/broker as soon as possible. Most have a 24-hour claims service. The sooner the insurance company is notified, the quicker your insurance claim can be processed.
3. Try to create an inventory of household items, both inside and outside of the buildings, which have been damaged by fire. Photograph or videotape the damage as much as possible.
4. Work with your insurance company to find out what is covered, what is not covered and what may be subject to further discussion.
5. Work with your insurance company and their accredited fire restoration companies to try to restore or rebuild your home.
6. In the event that any of these suggestions conflict with information provided by your insurer, please follow the instructions provided by your insurer.

## **If you are NOT insured:**

For information on available assistance, check with:

- Emergency Support Services (ESS) call 1-800-585-9559
- Canadian Red Cross: call 1-800-863-6582 or website: [redcross.ca](http://redcross.ca)
- Other non-government organizations

## **Restoration Contractors:**

- As much as possible, work with and through your insurance company. They can recommend reputable restoration contractors who can help and who know the proper standards to follow.
- If you decide to choose your own restoration contractor, check their references.
- If anyone in your family is sensitive to chemicals or mold, you need to let the restoration contractor know so that they can take all necessary precautions.

If you have questions about a certain contractor, or issues arise, visit:

- Consumer Protection BC office at website: [consumerprotectionbc.ca](http://consumerprotectionbc.ca) or call 1-888-564-9963
- Better Business Bureau at website: [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) or call 604-682-2711

They can help provide you with more information about various consumer issues.

# Tip Sheet 7: Danger trees

The heat and wind from the nearby interface wildfire may have compromised trees with no visible damage. It is advised homeowners hire a qualified arborist to assess the health and safety of trees on private property.

## **Fire Impact trees:**

Trees with visible damage from wildfire should be inspected by a qualified arborist or danger tree assessor familiar with fire effects to assess the health and safety of trees on **private property** as soon as possible. Consult with your insurance company.

## **Marked trees:**

You may return to find trees on property that have been inspected and marked with spray paint or tape. This was done by emergency responders for their safety to work in the area, or work in the area if needed, for fire suppression and other emergency activities. Any marked trees that were deemed to be hazardous over the short term (for people to return) were removed. Burned trees can deteriorate over the mid to long term or become unstable in burned ground where their roots have been impacted and sustained winds have been realized post inspection. For the long-term safety of your property, we suggest these be inspected by a qualified arborist to assess the health and safety of trees on private property as soon as possible. **Consult with your insurance company.**

## **Felled trees:**

You may return to find trees on property that have been felled and may be cut into logs. This was done by emergency responders for their safety to work in the area for fire suppression and other emergency activities. It is strongly recommended wood on the ground be removed as soon as possible as it contributes to ground fuel and fire risk. Consult with your insurance company.

## **Natural conditions areas and parks with fire impacts:**

Danger trees are present after a wildfire. Exercise caution around trees in natural area and parks. Observe parks closures.

## **Insurance and trees:**

Check with your insurance company about coverage for damaged trees. Note that WorksafeBC requires danger trees and hazards be addressed before workers can safely work in in an area. Hazard trees will need to be assessed if work needs to be conducted, such as repair or reconstruction of any structures.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Health

### **I have a medical condition. Should I return home?**

Anyone with concerns about a medical condition is advised to consult with a physician before returning home. People can call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 if they have questions or need help finding a physician.

### **Where can I get mental health support?**

Experiencing a disaster such as a wildfire can be particularly stressful and overwhelming. If you need to talk, call the BC Crisis Line / Mental Health Support call 310-6789 (no area code needed) or HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.

The BC Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association also has excellent resources for dealing with natural disaster stress at website [cmhakeLOWNA.com](http://cmhakeLOWNA.com)

## Working

### **My workplace was destroyed in the fire and I'm now unemployed. What do I do now?**

Affected workers are encouraged to apply for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits as soon as possible, even without a Record of Employment.

If you were receiving EI benefits before the evacuation, you should also contact EI as it could affect how you're reporting activity.

- Apply by phone: 1-800-206-7218, choose option 6
- Apply online at <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/ei/apply.page>

### **Are you concerned about whether or not it's safe to return to work?**

Safety of workers is paramount. Workers are protected by BC's Occupational Health and Safety laws.

If you have questions or concerns about working conditions, talk to your employer. If you still have concerns after speaking with your employer, visit [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com)

## Road safety and maintenance

### Who maintains the neighbourhood roads?

In Electoral Areas, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for roads including safety and maintenance. Highway 97 is maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Please call the Province's contractor AIM Roads at 1-866-222-4204 for maintenance or safety concerns.

District of Lake Country visit: [mylakecountry.ca](http://mylakecountry.ca) to report a problem. For Road Emergencies call 250-317-9870

City of West Kelowna Roads Department: Email [roads@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:roads@westkelownacity.ca) or complete a service request at <https://forms.westkelownacity.ca/Service-Request>. After Hours Roads phone 1-866-353-3136

### Where do I get information about road closures or delays?

For provincial highways such as Highway 97, Westside Road and Highway 33, visit [drivebc.ca](http://drivebc.ca) for info about traffic, road and weather conditions. Check out the local municipality or Westbank First Nation websites for up-to-date local road report information.

### Is the community accessible for persons with disabilities?

There may be unique circumstances that have yet to be identified. If you require assistance or would like to report an issue, please call the Resiliency Centre line at 250-469-6237.

## Community services

### Are schools open?

Check with your local school.

- School District #23 (Central Okanagan) call 250-860-8888
- School District #22 (Vernon) call 250-542-3331
- OKIB Cultural Immersion School call 250-542-1893

## Waste disposal

### Will the Glenmore Landfill, Westside Residential and Recycling Centre, or Traders Cove Transfer Station be open?

The Glenmore Landfill has limited disposal options due to the fire. Please visit [kelowna.ca/landfill](http://kelowna.ca/landfill) for updates. For information on what items you should throw out after a wildfire, visit [interiorhealth.ca](http://interiorhealth.ca) for wildfire resources on return home.

Check with your local municipality's website to find the most up to date information on household waste information and where you can dispose of garbage during this time.

### **What do I do with burnt logs, stumps and trees?**

Currently the EOC is working on a salvage plan to manage these wastes. More information will be available as these details are developed.

### **Will the landfill take regular burnt landscaping such as cedar hedges?**

Yes, the landfill will accept burnt landscaping materials. Depending on the amount of charring and what the wastes are co-mingled with, these may be managed as green waste or garbage and would be charged the appropriate rate depending on material characteristics. The landfill encourages residents to separate green wastes that may be composted from the charred material that may have to be disposed.

### **How do I dispose of non-structural debris such as yard furniture, decking materials, etc.?**

Non-structural debris may be brought to the landfill or transfer stations and managed as demolition debris. Recoverable items and mandatory recyclables such as scrap metal, concrete and asphalt must still be separated.

Hazardous materials and demolition waste such as wood from damaged structures or burnt vehicles cannot be accepted at this time. For other disposal options or if you have questions about waste, visit [rdco.com/recycle](http://rdco.com/recycle) or call 250-469-6250.

### **What about buildings and other burnt structures?**

All buildings and structures, burnt or not, are required by WorksafeBC to have a Hazardous Material Assessment performed prior to renovation or demolition. The Glenmore Landfill may request to see copies of these reports for worker safety, and recommends that the haulers are provided a copy of the assessment and associated abatement reports when they pick up the bins. Please see the City of Kelowna [Demo Permit package](#) as a reference.

Although not an exhaustive list, a contact list for local Haz Mat Assessments and Abatement companies can be found at the [rdos.bc.ca](http://rdos.bc.ca) [contract list](#)

## **Pets**

### **I have questions about my pet, who do I contact?**

Please refer to the **PETS** tip sheet in this booklet for further information.

## **Home and property**

### **Do I need to get my home inspected?**

Insurance policies vary. Please talk to your insurance provider. Refer to the **INSURANCE INFORMATION** tip sheet in this package.

### **Do I need permits to begin rebuilding and repairing my house?**

Depending on the extent of damage, permits may be required by your municipality. For properties within a local municipality, please contact their office directly for information on their bylaws and processes.

Building permits are required for the construction, addition, alteration or demolition of any building or structure. Accessory buildings less than 10 square meters are exempt.

- City of Kelowna call 250-469-8960 or email [developmentsservicesinfo@kelowna.ca](mailto:developmentsservicesinfo@kelowna.ca)
- City of West Kelowna call 778-797-8820
- District of Lake Country call 250-766-6675 or email [building@lakecountry.bc.ca](mailto:building@lakecountry.bc.ca)

The Regional District of Central Okanagan administers licenses and permits for the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area.

- For planning and land use questions, call RDCO Planning Services at 250-469-6227 or email [planning@rdco.com](mailto:planning@rdco.com)
- For building permit or inspection questions, call 250-469-6211 or email [inspections@rdco.com](mailto:inspections@rdco.com)

### **How do I know if my house was without power?**

A simple way of knowing is if your digital clocks are blinking. However, this will not indicate how long the power was off. If you need specific information call BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or FortisBC 1-866-436-7847.

## **Community support**

### **Where can I donate equipment to help with the clean up?**

Coordinating donations is underway and can be found online at [rdco.com/resiliency](http://rdco.com/resiliency) in the future.

### **How can I register my home so that people can stay with me?**

If you would like to offer accommodation, this can be done privately. Popular options for sharing this kind of information include:

- Reaching out to your personal networks.
- Contact local property management companies to discuss listing options.
- Using online and traditional classified services I.e., Kijiji, Facebook Marketplace and local media outlets.

### **Where can I donate money, food, and clothing?**

Monetary donations to the charity of your choice are encouraged and appreciated, such as the Central Okanagan Food Bank, SPCA and Central Okanagan United Way. Visit [cordemergency.ca](http://cordemergency.ca) for contact information.

## **Utilities**

**Once you are home you may need to re-establish your utilities or check your billing. Contact your provider directly. Included below are some of the common ones in our area.**

- BC Hydro call 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or FortisBC at 1-866-436-7847

- BC 1 Call (for any underground service inquiries before you dig) website: bc1c.ca or call 1-800-474-6886
- City of West Kelowna: Utility Billing call 778-797-8850
- District of Lake Country call 250-766-6680 or email Utilitybillings@lakecountry.bc.ca
- Fortis BC website <https://fortisbc.com> Natural gas: 1-888-224-2710 Electricity: 1-866-436-7847
- RDCO Utility water systems: website rdco.com/water or call 250-469-6241 (M-F from 8 am to 4 pm) and 250-868-5299 (after hours / emergencies only)
- Rogers/Shaw Toll-free: call 1-888-472-2222 or websites: shaw.ca rogers.com
- TELUS Mobility: \*611 on your TELUS mobile phone or call 1-866-558-2273
- TELUS Internet: Toll-free call 1-888-811-2323 or website: telus.com

Note: For private water systems contact your provider or the contractor who regularly services your system.