



Coastal Fire Centre

hot topics in Wildfire on the Coast

2017 ISSUE 5

Wildfire news

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To Report a
Wildfire Call
1-800-663-5555 or
*5555 on your cell

Island Living



Living on an island comes with a lot of advantages. However, one potential disadvantage is that smaller islands may not have local fire response services. Residents must be conscious of their surroundings and understand that a wildfire could occur in their community.

Island residents are self-sufficient and are often familiar with managing their personal property with an eye to safety. However, there are always those who aren't as aware. Some residents aren't able to do the physical work necessary to maintain a [FireSmart](#) property, which requires clearing their property of unnecessary forest debris or vegetation.

By getting a grant and developing a plan to deal with the risks that come with living in a

forested area, communities can make a difference and work together to handle the most problematic areas. While this holds true for many property owners, island dwellers have a greater need to rely on each other.

If a fire breaks out on an island, the BC Wildfire Service is available to help. Crews can be transported by air, boat or vehicle, or a ferry if available, but remember that the BC Wildfire Service only deals with fires involving vegetation — not structures. We encourage those who live on an island to come up with an emergency plan to deal with all fire types.

The Coastal Fire Centre encourages residents of smaller islands to help us compile a list of key contacts. This list would help ensure that fire information, community and information bulletins, and other information can be delivered to you. If you live on a small island and would like to be added to our contact list, please send us an email at:

FORHPRP.INFOCO@gov.bc.ca

Obligations of Rural Stratas

Strata councils govern all kinds of communal properties. People often think of “stratas” as high-rise buildings or gated communities of some sort, but strata councils can also govern vacation properties or rural residential areas.

These properties share the idea of “common land”. The governance of this common land is outlined in B.C.’s [Strata Property Act](#), which defines how communal land is to be managed and maintained for the benefit of the owners. Rural strata often falls into the category of “bare land” strata.

The *Strata Property Act* specifies the powers, duties and activities of a strata council, including holding meetings, voting and writing bylaws. It is this council structure that makes these properties unique and also aids in wildfire response.

Many strata vacation properties are in remote

areas that can only be reached via natural resource roads. Some strata vacation properties include buildings, which range from simple structures that are only used periodically, to more elaborate homes that are used as primary residences.

Since the *Strata Property Act* requires strata owners to establish a council, elected officials should keep property owners informed of significant developments. The council can be invaluable in ensuring that owners are updated about any nearby wildfires and promote [FireSmart](#) to develop fire-resistant communities.



Vacation Rentals in Remote Locations

With more and more people renting vacation homes rather than checking into a hotel, the problem arises as to how or where visitors get their information about wildfires or open fire prohibitions.

Many rental units are in areas near beaches and tourists may arrive thinking that they can have a beach fire. Foreign visitors, in particular, may not know whether campfires are prohibited while they vacation. As good citizens, it is up to us to provide the information to guests in our communities.

Those who have rental properties can help out by including a link to the BC Wildfire Service in the information package given to visitors, or by having a discussion with them when they arrive. They can also consider providing a CSA/ULC-approved propane fire as an alternative for guests.

Most tourists would welcome this information and it helps property owners build a returning clientele. No one wants to go on holiday and receive a ticket! Under the current open fire prohibition, this could mean a \$1,150 fine per person!



DriveBC

Fire Information Officers often receive calls from the public regarding road closures, which can occasionally slow down other communications about wildfires. While it is important information, it would be helpful if our readers could share a link to the DriveBC website with others.

Sharing this website with others will help get the word out about routes for those undergoing an evacuation. You will help tourists avoid problem or dangerous areas too!

One of the priorities this season for the BC Wildfire Service is to make sure that main highways and other egress routes are kept open, in case an evacuation becomes necessary.

Road closures can occur due to wildfire, danger trees, rolling debris or other hazards.

Maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, DriveBC's website and mobile app has a wealth of information that is kept up to date.

www.drivebc.ca

1-800-550-4997 (toll-free)



Obligations when Camping in B.C.



It has been a busy tourist season in the Coastal Fire Centre. Tourists, who might have normally chosen to go to the Interior are choosing to come to the coast instead. We welcome everyone and would like to remind visitors (and members of the public who have family or friends arriving) of the current open fire prohibitions in place.

If you are a tourist, you should know that you have an obligation to educate yourself while staying in British Columbia:

- ⇒ If you plan to camp, call the campsite or a visitor centre in the community you are planning to visit. Ask for information that you may need regarding campfires and any other cooking or heating devices.
- ⇒ If you are a campground owner, remember to advise your clientele of the current open prohibition in the coast.
- ⇒ If you own a vacation rental, we encourage you to advise

your guests of the current prohibitions.

Many travellers first learn about a seasonal campfire prohibition when they arrive at their destination, perhaps in a conversation at a visitor centre or with staff at a campground. This is one of many reasons why B.C.'s resorts, campgrounds and visitor centres are important partners in proactively sharing fire safety information.

We support the writing of violation tickets by the Conservation Officer Service, the Compliance and Enforcement Branch and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but would rather see tourists come armed with the right knowledge!

Stay informed:

⇒ BC Wildfire Service, Fire Bans and Restrictions:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions>

⇒ B.C. Visitor Centres:

<https://www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/about-bc/visitor-centres.aspx>

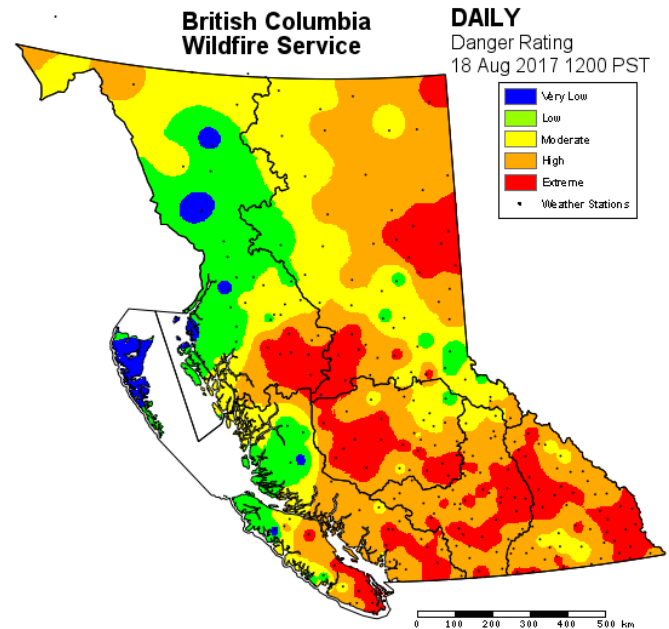
Evacuations

The BC Wildfire Service may recommend that an evacuation alert or order be put in place. However, the BC Wildfire Service generally does not implement, manage or rescind these orders. An evacuation must be authorized by the local government, except when it comes to a “tactical” evacuation.

In extreme circumstances, the BC Wildfire Service can implement a tactical evacuation when there is an imminent risk and no time to obtain a formal evacuation order. BC Wildfire Service personnel have the authority under the *Wildfire Act* to order people to quickly leave an area in response to wildfire threats or, if necessary, due to operational requirements. This ability is especially valuable when time does not permit a local evacuation order or alert to be declared if a wildfire is burning on provincial or federal land.

Pieces of provincial legislation that govern evacuations include: [Emergency Program Act](#), [Wildfire Act](#), [Fire Services Act](#), [Health Act](#), [Mines Act](#), [Waste Management Act](#), [Workers Compensation Act](#), and [Petroleum and Natural Gas Act](#).

Fire Danger Rating



Fire Danger Rating: the current fire danger rating can be found at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/>

Kaikash Creek Fire (V91631)

Reported: August 8, 2017

Size: 85 hectares (mapped)

Status: Out of Control

Cause: still under investigation

The Kaikash Creek fire is located approximately 30 kilometres southeast of Port McNeill. A successful burn-off operation effectively helped the crews burn fuels up to the edge of the cut block, allowing them to work along the fire's perimeter. This fire includes an area of steep terrain, which is inaccessible and unsafe for the crew to access. Periodic puffs of smoke are expected in the area, as warm and dry conditions return to Vancouver Island.



Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized on-site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

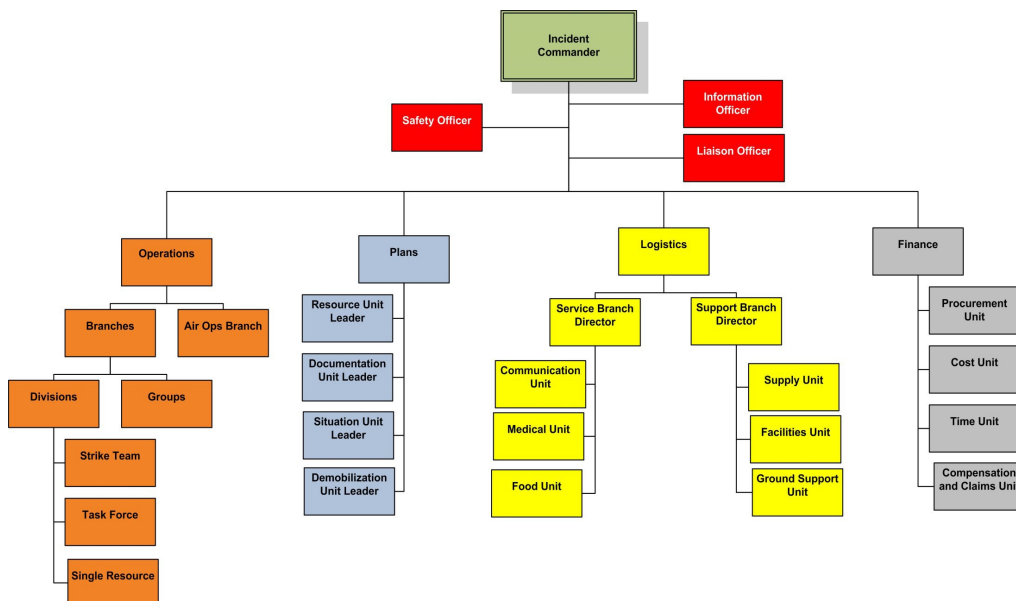
ICS is used for the safety of responders “to maximize the use of resources including personnel and to achieve response objectives quickly to attain the desired outcome.” It was developed in the 1970s following a series of fires in California that caused many deaths and left millions of dollars of property damage in its wake. The merits of the system became apparent and was adopted in the 1990s by the B.C. government, followed soon after by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. It is now the standard across Canada as well as internationally in countries that commonly respond to wildfires. This system allows incoming assistance to integrate into an existing structure quickly and efficiently. All of the wildfire command resources that B.C. has brought in this season use ICS, including people from other provinces in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Mexico.

The command structure in ICS simply states that every incident requires a number of core functions, and those functions must communicate clearly and effectively. A number of positions are identified as essential regardless of the size of the fire. The most basic command structure used in the ICS system includes the Incident Commander with four subordinate functions: Operations, Logistics, Plans and Finance. If there are only three people available, however, the functions will be assigned or the Incident Commander will take on multiple responsibilities. On small fires, the Incident Commander could be responsible for all of these positions and assign work to staff.

When multiple agencies use the same standardized system, it makes integration and/or interagency co-operation more efficient and more effective. As more agencies get involved, they step into predetermined positions and are responsible for the tasks involved with each of these positions. With everyone speaking the same language and having a clear understanding of their roles, wildfire operations become more fluid and attain better results.

How do transitions work?

The Incident Command System is designed to expand and contract. As every position has duties and responsibilities attached to it, people who occupy these positions do the work assigned to them. Small incidents will have most of the “boxes” filled by one individual and that individual is responsible for the outputs for each position. Large, complex incidents will fill positions with more people. Often, during a transition from one team to another, some former team members assume roles within the new organization to help bring local knowledge and the history of the fire into the team. For larger and complex incidents, the incident management team could be 30-40 people (or more) which doesn’t include the crews fighting the fire on the ground.



To Date
in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person
Caused **73**

Lighting
Caused **5**

Total
Number
of Fires **78**

Fire Danger Rating today



Current Prohibitions
(within BCWS
jurisdictional area)

All Open Fire
Prohibited except the
Fog Zone and
Haida Gwaii

To Report a
Wildfire Call
1-800-663-5555 or
*5555 on your cell

At Coastal

Harrison Lake East (V10484) - Under Control

Location: approximately 30 kilometres north of Harrison Hot Springs, near the mouth of Big Silver Creek
Size: 202 hectares (estimated)

Containment: 60%

Reported: Afternoon of July 1, 2017

Cause: This is a human-caused fire and is under investigation.

Resources and Status: Smoke may be visible when pockets of fuel within the perimeter of the fire flare up. When conditions allow, crews will continue to work on this fire as conditions allow.

More Information:

Due to reduced fire activity and progress made by firefighting crews, the BC Wildfire Service rescinded the Area Restriction Order and forest service road closure for the area around the Harrison Lake East wildfire on July 28, 2017. Although the status of the Harrison Lake East fire is now classified as "under control" and no further spread of the fire is expected, we are reminding people that this fire remains active and is considered hazardous; please stay away from this

area. The Harrison Lake East FSR will be periodically busy with fire crews accessing the area. Expect increased road traffic, park well off the road and drive with caution.



Image provided by a remote camera that was strategically installed to offer visual updates (in addition to fire monitoring on the ground.)

Weather

SYNOPSIS:

A cold front passing over the region supports strengthening winds in most areas today. Otherwise, a cooler, cloudier, and somewhat unstable air mass associated with the upper trough that follows brings slightly lower temperatures and slightly higher humidity than were seen on Thursday with scattered showers continuing throughout upslope sections of the north; isolated showers or rain-free elsewhere (isolated showers potentially lingering across the far south tonight). Light but potentially gusty winds continue in some areas this evening. Limited moisture entrained in the prevailing WNW flow aloft, as well as patchy cloud at lower elevations should result in a mix of sun and cloud across the southern half of the region on Saturday, generally cloudier to the north with slightly lower winds and similar temperatures and humidity to today. Fairly calm or else light inflow winds and a more

stable atmosphere should support full recoveries in all areas & elevations Saturday night.

OUTLOOK:

A flat upper ridge rebuilds to the west by Sunday, strengthening as it drifts eastward over the region Monday and Tuesday. Bands of Pacific moisture passing through the ridge should delay the more noticeable warming and drying until Monday or Tuesday, especially for the northern half of the region. Showers or occasional rain continues in Haida Gwaii each day and remains a possibility on the outer coast of the North Island and Mid Coast until Monday. Temperatures likely reach the upper twenties throughout the drier inland valleys by Tuesday afternoon while a generally light but fairly continuous inflow pattern prevents humidity from dropping much below 22% in those drier areas (lower temperatures and higher humidity elsewhere).