



Regional District of Central Kootenay

EMERGENCY PROGRAM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Open Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

1:00 pm

Hybrid Model - In-person and Remote

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT	Director A. Watson	RDCK Board Chair/Electoral Area D
	Director A. McLaren-Caux	RDCK Board Vice-Chair/Nakusp
	Director K. Vandenberghe	Electoral Areas A, B, C, and Creston Representative
	Director S. Hewat	Electoral Areas D, E, F G, Salmo and Kaslo Representative
	Director T. Weatherhead	Electoral Areas H, I, J, K, Nakusp, Silverton, New Denver, Slocan
	S. Horn	Chief Administrative Officer
	D. Seguin	Manager of Community Sustainability
STAFF PRESENT	S. Sudan	General Manager of Community Sustainability and Development Services
	N. Hannon	Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Senior Advisor
	I. Briscoe	Emergency Program Coordinator
	T. Pauls	Emergency Program Coordinator
	M. Barden-Shanks	Meeting Coordinator

1. ZOOM REMOTE MEETING INFO

To promote openness, transparency and provide accessibility to the public we provide the ability to attend all RDCK meetings in-person or remote (hybrid model).

Meeting Time:

1:00 p.m. PST

1:00 p.m. MST

Join by Video:

<https://rdck-bc-ca.zoom.us/j/92020684639?pwd=nNgaBlyPnR9C8N2JbSnO7YASMY4dAO.1&from=addon>

Join by Phone:

855 703 8985 Canada Toll-free

*6 to unmute or mute

*9 to raise or lower your hand

Meeting ID: 920 2068 4639

Meeting Password: 545572

In-Person Location: Board Room, 202 Lakeside Drive, Nelson

2. CALL TO ORDER

Dan Seguin called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS (3 Times)

Director Hewat nominated Director Watson.

No other nomination was put forward.

DECLARATION OF ELECTED OR ACCLAIMED CHAIR

General Manager Sangita Sudan ratifies the appointment Director Watson as Chair of the Emergency Program Executive Committee for 2025.

Director Watson assumed the Chair.

4. TRADITIONAL LANDS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We acknowledge and respect the Indigenous peoples within whose traditional lands we are meeting today.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved and seconded,

And resolved:

The agenda for the May 13th, 2024, Emergency Program Executive Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. RECEIPT OF MINUTES

The November 28th, 2024, Emergency Program Executive Committee minutes, have been received.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Emergency Management Staff Update

The report dated May 13, 2025, from Dan Séguin, Manager of Community Sustainability, re: *Emergency Management Staff Update*, has been received.

The Board will receive the *Emergency Management Staff Update*, see attached.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Third Party Wildfire Resources Policy

The Committee Report dated May 13, 2025, from Dan Séguin, Manager of Community Sustainability, re: *Third Party Wildfire Resources Policy*, has been received. **Note - The Committee Report attachments A, B & C has been received in the addenda.**

Manager Dan Séguin addressed the recent involvement of Wildfire Defense Systems (WDS), contracted by insurance companies to access properties during evacuation orders in the 2024 wildfires. He outlined the associated risks, key considerations, and potential policy responses to guide future practice.

The Board will receive the *Third Party Wildfire Resources Policy report and relevant attachments*, see attached.

Moved and seconded,

And resolved that it be recommended to the Board:

That the Emergency Program Executive Committee recommends the Board direct staff to draft a policy that guides third party resource access to areas under evacuation order within its jurisdiction AND seek legal guidance to inform the policy AND FURTHER bring the policy back to the Board for adoption.

Carried

9. PUBLIC TIME

Chair Watson called for questions from the public and members of the media at 2:13 p.m.

No questions were asked.

10. CLOSED

10.1 Meeting Closed to the Public

The Open meeting will be adjourned after In Camera without reconvening back into the open session unless there is business that needs to be addressed.

Moved and seconded,

And resolved that it be recommended to the Board:

In the opinion of the Board - and in accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter* - the public interest so requires that persons other than DIRECTORS, ALTERNATE DIRECTORS, DELEGATIONS AND STAFF be excluded from the meeting; AND FURTHER, in accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter*, the meeting is to be closed on the bases identified in the following subsections:

- (i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;
- (n) the consideration of whether a council meeting should be closed under a provision of this subsection or subsection (2);

Carried

10.2 Recess of Open Meeting

Moved and seconded,

And resolved:

The Open meeting be recessed at 2:13 p.m. in order to conduct the Closed Board meeting.

Carried

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Emergency Program Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for November 10th, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. PST / 2:00 p.m. MST.

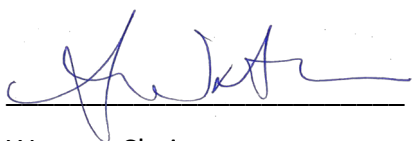
12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved and seconded,

And resolved:

The Emergency Program Executive Committee meeting be adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Carried

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Watson', is written over a horizontal line.

Watson, Chair;



Committee Report

May 13, 2025

Emergency Management Staff Update

Author:	Dan Séguin, Manager of Community Sustainability
File Reference:	--
Electoral Area/Municipality:	All RDCK Electoral Areas, Village of Kaslo, Village of Nakusp, Village of Silverton, Village of New Denver, Village of Salmo, Village of Slocan
Services Impacted	A101 – Emergency Consolidated Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update to the Emergency Program Executive Committee and Board about emergency management activities.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND UPDATE

This report provides an update on key emergency management activities at RDCK and its partner municipalities. The content below highlights strategic priorities and activities through the lens of the four phases of emergency management: preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. This is not an exhaustive list, but a high-level update for Committee awareness.

Current Objectives

The team sets its priorities based on seasonal risk and community context. At present, work is focused on preparedness ahead of hazard season and the rollout of seasonal FireSmart and flood readiness initiatives. Prioritized team objectives are:

1. EOC response readiness
2. Effective and efficient ESS program delivery
3. Community recovery and after-action review
4. Meeting legislative requirements under the EDMA and Indigenous Engagement Requirements (IER)
5. Community readiness and NEPP program development
6. The above, while ensuring the sustainability of staff during prolonged or complex emergency cycles

Opportunities

- Various funding and granting options
- Growing tri-regional collaboration with RDKB and RDEK

Context and Challenges

- Balancing preparedness work with operational response readiness
- Unknown response demands during hazard season
- Staffing capacity constraints, including EPC vacancy and onboarding demands

Highlights

Looking Back

Preparedness – Planning and coordinating systems to support readiness:

- Meeting with BCWS to refine Unified Command, Liaison, and Alert/Order processes
- ESS re-energization: new teams, new tech, and expanded volunteer recruitment
- After-Action Review complete – draft report under internal review
- Recovery: RDCK's direct role is nearing completion; final report expected in the coming months
- Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans (CWRPs): Drafts complete and under review for Areas A, B, C, G; Villages of Salmo, Nakusp, and Area J, K
- Exploration of structural flood mitigation projects are ongoing

Looking Ahead

- Preparedness and Readiness – Preparing the organization, partners, and public for action:
 - Response readiness is the team's top priority for spring/summer
 - Staffing: internal assessment of readiness, compensation, scheduling
 - EOC training for Policy Group, GIS, and field staff
 - Emergency policy updates to EPEC for review
 - Continued ESS team development and resource acquisition
 - Field Operations Resource Workers hired
 - Municipal engagement: Emergency Management 101 presentations; delivery of financial and operational packages. Ongoing work with municipalities to define roles in multi-jurisdictional responses, including cross-jurisdictional emergency notification.
- Grant activities underway:
 - CBT Community Readiness Partnership (\$230K)
 - 2024 CEPF EOC equipment and training applications
 - 2025 CEPF ESS equipment and convening/training
- Ongoing response-related activities:
 - Hamill Creek log jam: monitoring and EMCR-supported mitigation plan in place
 - ESS Level 1 activations for recent structure fires
 - Other smaller EOC activations
- EMDA
 - Regulations are coming: recent provincial presentation on received feedback
 - Indigenous Engagement Requirements are underway. Phase 1 RFP to be posted within the coming weeks
 - Preparing EOI for *Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF)* for a regional Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) with co-benefits of expanding Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP) network and setting the stage for Multijurisdictional Emergency Management Organization (MJEMO)
- Community engagement increasing: Slokan Valley emergency economy coordination, Cooperative Wildfire Response initiatives, NEPP activity in the Lardeau Valley
- Emergency management program review, staffing structure analysis, and hiring plans underway

3.0 NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

Staff will continue advancing the above projects as per the Emergency Management Workplan. Unplanned response efforts will impact staff capacity and may delay some deliverables. Priority will remain on life-safety, legislated obligations, and preparedness activities essential to 2025 hazard season readiness.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Séguin, Manager of Community Sustainability

CONCURRENCE

Chief Administrative Officer – Stuart Horn

General Manager of Development and Community Sustainability Services – Sangita Sudan



Committee Report

May 13, 2025

Third Party Wildfire Resources Policy

Author:	Dan Séguin, Manager of Community Sustainability
File Reference:	--
Electoral Area/Municipality:	All RDCK Electoral Areas, Village of Kaslo, Village of Nakusp, Village of Silverton, Village of New Denver, Village of Salmo, Village of Slocan
Services Impacted	A101 – Emergency Consolidated Services

1.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Emergency Program Executive Committee recommends the Board direct staff to draft a policy that guides third party resource access to areas under evacuation order within its jurisdiction AND seek legal guidance to inform the policy AND FURTHER bring the policy back to the Board for adoption.

2.0 BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Since 2024, approximately eight home insurance companies have engaged Wildfire Defense Systems (WDS) to launch a pilot project providing eligible customers in British Columbia and Alberta with wildfire loss prevention and suppression services for their homes when threatened by active wildfires. During last summer's wildfires, the RDCK was the first Local Authority in BC to have WDS request access to several of its areas under evacuation order.

The RDCK EOC was involved because *the Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) provides authority for municipalities, regional districts and Modern Treaty Nations ("local authorities") to issue evacuation orders. Further, under provincial guidelines, the RDCK is responsible for managing checkpoints and temporary access into evacuated areas (Attachment A – Managing Temporary Access to Areas under Evacuation Order: Guide for Local Authorities). In the absence of a provincial guideline or pre-hazard-season contact by WDS, in July 2024 during EOC activation, the RDCK EOC Director worked with the RDCK Policy Group and Corporate Officer to understand the situation and weigh the risk of allowing WDS into the areas under evacuation. The decision was made to draft an interim policy allowing WDS access (Attachment B – RDCK Temporary Third Party Access Permit).

The purpose of this report is to determine the RDCK's position and protocols regarding third party wildfire resources working for or contracted by an insurance company.

Interim Standard Operating Guideline for Third Party Wildfire Resources in BC

In mid-August 2024, BCWS provided Local Authorities with an interim Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) for Third Party Wildfire Resources (Attachment C – Interim SOG Third Party Wildfire Resources). The SOG relates generally to the provision of wildfire-related services by entities which are not those of an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), either directly employed or under contract or other form of agreement.

The third-party resources referred to in the SOG may include wildland engines, tenders, hand crews, fire/liaison officers, and personnel working for or contracted by an insurance company with a mission to mitigate wildfire threats to client structures. Third-party resources are expected to work in compliance with the AHJ and instructions of the Incident Commander, BC Wildfire Service, Incident Management Team, and the SOG.

In April 2025, the RDCK Emergency Management (EM) team confirmed with the BCWS Superintendent of Provincial Operations that the interim guideline was still going to be in place for the 2025 wildfire season.

Wildfire Defense Systems Inc.

WDS provides preventative services to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to homes, specifically in areas prone to wildfires. They are not an emergency service and do not extinguish fires, but instead focus on mitigating risks before a fire reaches a property.

At least eight residential insurance companies have contracted WDS to deploy loss prevention and suppression services to customers when their property is threatened by a wildfire within a certain distance. Services may include but are not limited to:

- Removing materials from around the property that may fuel a fire, including firewood, propane tanks, furniture, and grass clipping;
- Covering exterior vents and closing exterior doors, windows, and garage doors to prevent embers from entering the home and igniting the interior;
- Setting up temporary sprinkler systems to increase humidity and lower temperatures.

Once the threat of wildfire is gone, WDS will attempt to return to the property to check that there is no continuing threat, place items back that may have been moved away from structures and remove any temporary sprinkler systems or coverings.

For insurance policyholders of insurers that have contracted WDS, the service is automatically included with eligible home insurance policies at no additional cost for the 2025 wildfire season.

3.0 PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Problem

Entering evacuated areas can be dangerous. The more resources allowed into an area under evacuation order, the more challenging it is to secure the area and homes within it. Third party resources that provide preventative services to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to homes are unknown entities to BCWS and local fire departments – they do not train together, undertake response preparedness and coordination, and may not share common operational procedures. Further, the RDCK cannot confirm if the insurance policyholders identified by WDS have granted permission for third party resources to be on their private property.

Opportunity

To draft a policy that:

- **Clarifies Authority and Process:** A regional policy would provide clear, consistent decision-making criteria for when and how third-party structure protection units (SPUs) may access evacuation order areas. This helps the RDCK assert its role as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and ensures alignment with provincial guidelines while maintaining local control.
- **Mitigates Legal and Operational Risk:** A formal policy, developed with legal input, can help protect the RDCK from liability by establishing transparent, defensible procedures for access authorization, oversight expectations, and safety compliance. It ensures staff, elected officials, and external parties understand their roles and responsibilities.
- **Enhances Public Trust and Responder Coordination:** By proactively addressing this issue, RDCK can reduce confusion during wildfire events, improve communication with property owners, and build stronger integration with insurance-based resources, without compromising public safety or emergency operations.

The starting point is to seek legal guidance that clarifies what legal risks and liabilities are associated with allowing or not allowing third party wildfire resources, including WDS, access to evacuation order areas under the current provincial Interim SOG.

3.1 Alignment to Board Strategic Plan

- **Organizational Excellence:** Continue to update our policies and processes to be responsive and adaptable.
- **Energy Efficiency and Environmental Responsibility:** Proactively prepare for and mitigate the impacts of natural risks, (fire, floods, and slides) including preparedness at the community level.

3.2 Legislative Considerations

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) provides authority for municipalities, regional districts and Modern Treaty Nations (“local authorities”) to issue evacuation orders. Further, under provincial guidelines, the RDCK is responsible for managing checkpoints and temporary access into evacuated areas (Attachment A – Managing Temporary Access to Areas under Evacuation Order: Guide for Local Authorities).

3.3 What Are the Risks

The risks are not yet understood, but of interest are risks related to:

- Allowing access to private property;
- Data sharing between third party resources and insurance companies;
- Public safety;
- Worker safety, and;
- The regional district’s responsibilities as the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

4.0 PROPOSED SOLUTION

To shape a policy that balances community needs, insurance company needs, manages risk for the Regional District.

The starting point is to seek legal guidance that clarifies what legal risks and liabilities are associated with allowing or not allowing third party wildfire resources, including WDS, access to evacuation order areas under the current provincial Interim SOG.

4.1 Financial Considerations of the Proposed Solution

No new funds are requested.

Projected budget: \$2,000-\$5,000

Service: A101

Work Order: OPR501-100

Currently available budget in 54010 Legal: \$5,000

4.2 Risks with the Proposed Solution

The primary risk is delay in policy finalization pending legal review. However, this is outweighed by the benefits of implementing a defensible and clear approach.

4.3 Resource Allocation and Workplan Impact

Who:

- Manager of Community Sustainability (lead)
- Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Senior Advisor (support)

Projected effort: 5 to 20 hours, depending on the complexity of outcomes from the legal opinion

Prioritization: Project is in staff 2025 workplan

4.4 Public Benefit and Stakeholder Engagement of Proposed Solution

Staff have engaged with BCWS, WDS, and Intact Insurance company.

4.5 Leveraging Technology

N/A

4.5 Measuring Success

The RDCK has a robust policy in place that balances community needs, insurance company needs, and manages risk for the Regional District.

If legal opinion recommends that a policy be drafted, the Board will be presented with the policy for adoption.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION(S)

None available at this time.

6.0 OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT PRESENTED

None at this time.

7.0 OPTIONS SUMMARY

Option 1:

Recommendation:

That the Emergency Program Executive Committee recommends the Board direct staff to draft a policy that guides third party resource access to areas under evacuation order within its jurisdiction AND seek legal guidance to inform the policy AND FURTHER bring the policy back to the Board for adoption.

Option 2:

None at this time.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommendation:

That the Emergency Program Executive Committee recommends the Board direct staff to draft a policy that guides third party resource access to areas under evacuation order within its jurisdiction AND seek legal guidance to inform the policy AND FURTHER bring the policy back to the Board for adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Seguin – Manager of Community Sustainability.

CONCURRENCE

Chief Administrative Officer – Stuart Horn

General Manager of Development and Community Sustainability Services – Sangita Sudan

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Managing Temporary Access to Areas under Evacuation Order: Guide for Local Authorities

Attachment B – RDCK Temporary Third Party Access Permit

Attachment C – Interim SOG Third Party Wildfire Resources

Managing Temporary Access to Areas under Evacuation Order

A Guide for Local Authorities



Ministry of
Emergency Management
and Climate Readiness

More information

Online: gov.bc.ca/emergencymanagementact

Email: modernizeEM@gov.bc.ca

For specific inquiries, contact your EMCR Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (Appendix A).

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Amendment Record

Version #	Release Date	Description
1	May 27, 2019	Original document with templates
2	June 3, 2019	Changed recommended minimum age for access to 19
3	September 16, 2024	Updated to align with the <i>Emergency and Disaster Management Act</i>
4	November 27, 2024	Corrected contact information in Appendix A

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Introduction

About this Guide

A component of the [Evacuation Operational Guide](#), this guide provides a recommended process for local authorities to manage **temporary** access into areas under an evacuation order.

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (the Act) provides authority for municipalities, regional districts and Modern Treaty Nations ("local authorities") to issue evacuation orders in certain circumstances. This guide refers to the use of certain powers (such as making an evacuation order) under the Act by a local authority. The Act does not provide these powers to Indigenous governing bodies, other than Modern Treaty Nations. However, Indigenous governing bodies may have similar powers provided by their own law or federal law. The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness recommends that Indigenous governing bodies use a similar approach to managing access to areas under an evacuation order ("evacuated areas") as what is recommended in this document for local authorities.

While this guide is not prescriptive, it provides considerations for local authorities when allowing individuals and agencies into evacuated areas. As each community and emergency event differs, each local authority will need to implement a process that works best for them.

Entering evacuated areas can be dangerous. Local authorities should seek independent legal advice to develop waivers that clarify that any liability for the risks associated with temporary access lies with the individuals or agencies entering the evacuated area. Specific advice on such waivers is not provided in this guide.

Who is this Guide for?

This guide is for any local authority that has issued or is considering issuing an evacuation order for all or part of their jurisdictional area and needs to manage temporary access into that evacuated area. There are a variety of reasons why an individual or agency may request access to an evacuated area. Some examples are provided in the list below:

- Critical infrastructure or utility agencies may require access to service (e.g., refuel, inspect) or make repairs to affected critical equipment and sites.
- Members of the agriculture sector, including small-scale and hobby farmers, may need to provide care for or evacuate their livestock.
- Individuals or agencies may need to travel through the evacuated area to gain access to another area that is not under an evacuation order.

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The above list is not exhaustive. The local authority is responsible for determining the specific purposes for authorizing access and should consider the benefits and risks.

Decision-Making Authority

Managing Access to Evacuated Areas

Local authorities that have declared a state of local emergency can potentially use powers under the Act to authorize:

- entry into any structure or onto any land under an evacuation order to take emergency measures;
- temporary access to evacuated areas for persons or classes of persons for specified purposes;
- a designated person, like the Emergency Operations Centre Director, to manage authorization of temporary access into the area for limited, specified purposes; and
- travel to or from any area, or to otherwise control or prohibit it.

See the [EDMA Response and Recovery Powers guide](#) for information on the exercise of the powers. Municipalities and regional districts are required to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies before taking certain actions or using certain powers. For more details, please refer to the [EDMA Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance](#). Both guides and additional resources can be found on the [Modernized Emergency Management Legislation webpage](#).

If at the time of issuance of the evacuation order a local authority is aware of specific access needs, these can be included in the emergency instrument authorizing the evacuation. The [evacuation order template](#), located on the [Local Emergency Response Operations webpage](#), includes sample authorization provisions. A local authority should obtain independent legal advice on how to include authorization provisions.

The local authority that has issued an evacuation order is responsible for determining who may be permitted temporary access to that area, and how that access is granted.

BC Wildfire Service Access Controls

BC Wildfire Service Staff

An order made by a local authority has no effect to the extent that it prevents or interferes with an exercise of power related to carrying out fire control under the *Wildfire Act*.

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Local authorities do not need to provide authorization for BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) staff, or persons authorized by BCWS, to access evacuated areas.

External Agencies

When BCWS is the lead agency for firefighting efforts, all organizations and people, regardless of affiliation will be coordinated by BCWS. In these circumstances, local authorities should work directly with BCWS to coordinate issuance of passes should they be requested.

Designated Authority

If the local authority wants to designate a person with the authority to grant temporary access, they should be identified by name, title, or position as having that authority in the emergency instrument that authorizes the evacuation, and the specified purposes for which they can grant temporary access (e.g., caring for animals).

To support local authorities with decision-making authority designations related to the exercise of different response powers, a [Local Authority Response Power Designation Matrix](#) is available. For more information on designated authority, please see the Roles and Responsibilities section in the [Evacuation Operational Guide](#).

Recommended Temporary Access Process

Local authorities should determine their temporary access processes in advance of an emergency event. This includes identifying what position should be designated with temporary access decision-making authority in an evacuation order, and how passes are distributed and returned.

The pages that follow provide more information on key aspects of the process. Local authorities should always obtain legal advice before taking any actions.

Recommended Process

The diagram below is a recommended approach to facilitate consistent, timely, safe, and effective access into areas under an evacuation order. This process can be done using paper or electronically (email).

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Requests for Temporary Access

The local authority should designate a staff person in the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), if activated, or the person in charge of emergency management for the community, to manage requests for temporary access. The EOC is often best positioned to make an informed decision to approve or deny the request.

When considering requests, the person responsible should gather and analyze all relevant information regarding identifiable risks including connecting with applicable agencies and subject matter experts. This might include seeking advice from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, to determine if any considerations apply, or consulting the BCWS Incident Commander (IC), or Incident Management Team.

If you require access to hazard specific subject matter experts, please contact your Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) and ask to speak with a Regional Duty Manager. See Appendix A for contact information.

Conditions for Temporary Access

The following conditions are recommended to support the temporary access process.

General Conditions for Temporary Access

- Must be over the age of 19, unless accompanied by their legal guardian or a person over the age of 19.
- No access is granted to re-enter and *remain* in an evacuation order area; access into the restricted area is only temporary and for a specified purpose and period of time.
- All individuals gaining access must be able to produce government-issued photo identification, or attestation by an appropriate representative.
- Access may require an escort, as determined by a hazard-specific subject-matter expert and/or EOC.
- Individuals authorized to enter (e.g., farmers checking on livestock, etc.) must go directly to the identified property, perform the specified purpose or task and return without deviating to another location and by the specified time if applicable. Individuals are authorized to enter for a specific purpose only. If conditions worsen, authorities must be able to locate all authorized individuals.

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Agriculture Conditions

- [Premises ID](#) may be required to validate access to location.

Pass-through Conditions

- Restricted to specific dates and times of travel.
- Restricted to predetermined route and destination.
- Restricted to driver and pre-identified passengers.
- Individuals under the age of 19 may be permitted to pass through an area under an evacuation order when accompanied by their legal guardian or a person over the age of 19.

Waivers

Waivers should be used to clarify that any liability for the risks associated with temporary access lies with the individuals or agencies entering the evacuated area. This will also ensure that the individuals or agencies gaining access understand that they are responsible for their own safety. The person should sign a waiver as a condition of receiving access.

It is recommended that local authorities work with their legal advisors to develop an appropriate waiver for authorizing temporary access into evacuated areas. This will ensure clarity when it comes to liability concerns.

Checkpoints

Where possible, access into evacuated areas should be through strategically placed and pre-identified checkpoints.

Local authorities should confirm the person or entity that will be controlling checkpoints in advance of an event so that they can be identified in the emergency instruments that order the evacuation, and for inclusion in advanced planning and training.

Local authorities should also:

- Establish a single point of contact for both the checkpoint personnel and the EOC for efficient communications.
- Confirm a reporting structure for checkpoint personnel internal to their organization and to the EOC.

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- Provide a Checkpoint One Pager training guide to the entity providing check point services to disseminate to checkpoint personnel. A template for the **Checkpoint One Pager** is located on the [Local Emergency Response Operations webpage](#).

Exiting the Evacuated Area

When individuals exit the checkpoint area, any access passes provided should be returned to checkpoint personnel and the time of departure should be noted on the daily access pass list. The checkpoint personnel should return the daily access pass list and passes to the EOC at the end of the operational period, or at an agreed-upon time.

Should an individual not exit the evacuated area at the time stated on the daily access pass list, and after a previously agreed-upon grace period (e.g., 30 minutes) has elapsed, checkpoint personnel should contact the EOC to report the situation. The EOC will attempt to contact the pass holder before consulting with the hazard-specific subject matter expert to determine any next steps, as required.

Key Considerations

Cross-Jurisdictional Access

There may be times when an individual or agency requires access to an area subject to multiple evacuation orders. For example, an oil and gas pipeline operator may need to perform maintenance checks or repairs on a pipeline that stretches across the province.

To ensure a consistent approach to managing temporary access into evacuated areas, local authorities should coordinate with adjacent local authorities and Indigenous governing bodies when developing emergency management plans, categorical exemptions from evacuation orders for certain agencies or responders (other than BCWS), and temporary access processes. This will assist in facilitating cross-jurisdictional access in a timely and efficient manner during an emergency event.

NOTE: Upon request, EMCR can assist with coordinating the process for temporary access requests when multiple local authorities and Indigenous governing bodies are involved (i.e., by organizing coordination calls). However, EMCR cannot approve access into an area that is subject to a local authority or Indigenous governing body's evacuation order.

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Preparing to Rescind an Evacuation Order

To facilitate rapid community recovery, specific individuals and agencies may be given access to the evacuated area to prepare it for full community reentry. This access would be given once a hazard-specific subject matter expert has deemed it safe for people to return to the evacuated area but before the formal rescinding of the evacuation order or expiry of the state of local emergency to ensure critical services, such as hospitals, are functional.

The goal is to facilitate a gradual and coordinated re-entry into the community by making certain that the necessary preparations have been made before the general population returns. For example, the local authority may want a contractor to remove debris or dangerous trees from the area prior to the general population returning.

If individuals or agencies are allowed to enter for this purpose, the local authority should provide a list of the approved persons to checkpoint personnel with instructions that they can remain within the evacuated area to prepare it for returning residents and it has been deemed safe for them to do so.

During this time, it is important to have consistent communications between the local authority EOC who are managing the re-entry and the hazard-specific subject matter expert to maintain awareness of conditions and potential shifts in the hazard situation to ensure safety of personnel during re-entry preparations.

The following individuals/agencies may request access to support re-entry:

- The health authority: to validate that critical public services are available, such as drinking water, proper sewage, air quality, and food safety.
- Hospital maintenance, inspection, and clinical staff: to prepare the emergency department to ensure services are open and available when the evacuation order is lifted.
- Critical infrastructure agencies: to ensure equipment is operating.
- Utility agencies: to reinstate their services.
- School districts will need to determine if they can open schools within a reasonable period, i.e., by assessing damage and establishing a timeline for repairs.
- Personnel under the direction of the local authority to:
 - conduct rapid damage assessments of properties and hazards;
 - assess and clean contaminated sites, if required; and
 - establish a resiliency centre for evacuees to support recovery.

*The information in this document is for your convenience and guidance only.
It is not legal advice or a replacement for the legislation.*

For more information on re-entry considerations, please refer to the **Re-entry Guide and Template section** of the [Disaster Recovery for Communities webpage](#).

Note: There are consultation requirements related to permitting evacuated persons to return to an evacuated area.

- Consultation and cooperation may be required with Indigenous governing bodies. For details, please refer to the [EDMA Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance](#).
- Consultation and coordination with local authorities may be required. For details, please refer to the [Evacuation Operational Guide](#).

Additional Resources

For more information, see the following webpages:

- [Information on the Emergency and Disaster Management Act](#)
- [Local Emergency Response Operations](#)
- [Disaster Recovery for Communities](#)

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Appendix A: EMCR Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre Contact Information

The following contact information for EMCR's Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centres (PREOC) is for use by local authorities and Indigenous governing bodies. Members of the public can contact EMCR's Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) to report an emergency or their [EMCR regional office](#).

For 24/7 support and access to a Regional Duty Manager, contact the Emergency Coordination Centre: 1-800-663-3456		
Vancouver Island Coastal	preoc1.ops1@gov.bc.ca	250-952-5848
Southwest	preoc2.ops1@gov.bc.ca	604-586-4390
Central	preoc3.ops1@gov.bc.ca	250-371-5240
Southeast	preoc4.ops1@gov.bc.ca	250-354-5904
Northeast	preoc5.ops1@gov.bc.ca	250-612-4172
Northwest	preoc6.ops1@gov.bc.ca	250-615-4800



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August 2, 2024

To:

Jake Heckathorn

Fire Officer

Wildfire Defense Systems

RE: Access into the Argenta Fire Complex Evacuation Order Area

As Authority Having Jurisdiction, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) grants *Wildfire Defense Systems (WDS)* permission to enter restricted or evacuated areas within the Argenta Fire Complex fire, if approved by BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) daily, based on issue of safety. Future requests from WDS or other third parties seeking to provide similar functions for this or other incident, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Scope

This policy applies to *Wildfire Defense Systems* to grant them permission to enter restricted or evacuated areas within the Argenta Fire Complex to perform activities list in Annex A at the properties listed in Annex B.

This policy does not apply to:

- a) Any other agencies, organizations, or groups requesting access to evacuated areas;
- b) Any other evacuated area other than the one listed above;
- c) Any other event that the fires identified within this scope.

Duration:

For the duration of the Evacuation Order of the Argenta Fire Complex in 2024.

Roles and Responsibilities

RDCK

- Grants temporary access to WDS to the Argenta Fire Complex areas under Evacuation Order;

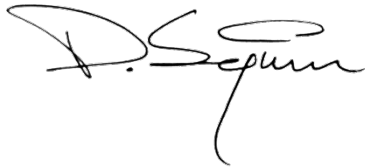
BCWS

- Approve or deny daily access to WDS based on issue of safety;
- Coordinate and communicate with WDS, as needed.

WDS

- Performs activities listed in Annex A, SOLELY, on properties listed in Annex B;
- Provide BCWS with information they require to inform and align with their Incident Action Plan;
- Follow check in and check out procedures as required by BCWS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Séguin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Séguin
RDCK EOC Director

Annex A – Scope of work WDS

WDS resources working within unrestricted, restricted, or evacuated areas may engage in any or all of the following pre-suppression activities:

- Removal of combustibles from structure exteriors.
- Sealing of windows, doors, vents, and chimneys.
- Emergency fuel mitigation.
- Zone sprinkler system setup.
- Fuel break preparation.
- Retardant application.
- Fire blocking gel application.

WDS resources working within unrestricted, restricted, or evacuated areas may engage in any or all of the following post-suppression activities:

- Removal of sealing and covering materials from structures.
- Wildland engine operations focused on mop-up and extinguishment of residual fires.
- Breakdown of sprinkler systems.

Interim Standard Operating Guideline

For

Third Party Wildfire Resources in the Province of British Columbia, Canada

The following Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) relates generally to the provision of wildfire-related services by entities which are not those of an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) either directly employed or under contract or other form of agreement. This SOG provides the AHJ defined as being Local Government, First Nations and/or Crown land with objective guidelines to manage third-party private fire prevention resources (hereinafter referenced as 'third-party resources') access to and operational movement on wildfire incidents. Terms used in this protocol but not otherwise defined have the meaning ascribed to such terms by the Incident Command System Canada (ICS).

- Failure to comply with any part of the SOG is grounds for the removal from evacuation order/ restricted zones.
- The AHJ holds the right to request more information and/or documentation than is listed in this SOG.
- The Third-party resource agrees to a non-disclosure of scene details until permission received from AHJ.

I. Scope of Resources

- a. The third-party resources referred to in this SOG may include wildland engines, tenders, hand crews, fire/liaison officers, and personnel working for or contracted by an insurance company or other entity as noted above, with a mission to mitigate wildfire threats to client structures. Third-party resources work in compliance with the AHJ and instructions of the Incident Commander, BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), and Incident Management Team, and this SOG. All qualifications, standards, and specifications for personnel and equipment are to be consistent with BC Wildfire Service, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) and where applicable the U.S. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). In particular, the standards for personnel and equipment are outlined in the [Memorandum of Agreement for Inter-Agency Operational Guidelines and Reimbursement Rates](#) between the Fire Chiefs Association of BC and BC Wildfire Service. (the IAA).

- b. The third-party resources mission is limited to providing loss intervention services to client properties. With AHJ authorization, these activities may occur on the specified properties within geographic areas under an Evacuation Order.
- c. Pre-wildfire structure loss intervention services may include property inspection and observation, emergency fuel mitigation, structure ignition zone sprinkler system setup, fuel break construction, fire blocking gel or fire-retardant application, flammable/combustible hazards removal, secure/protect openings in structures, and other similar activities.
- d. Post-wildfire structure loss intervention services may include property inspection and observation, return of the property to pre-wildfire loss intervention condition including removal of tape, return of relocated combustibles, removal of sprinkler equipment, securing property from residual wildfire threats, mop-up, and washing away of fire blocking gels and fire retardants.
- e. Third-party resources must have been given permission by property owners/insurance provider to access their property. No actions will be taken on property without these permissions in place. Any real or potential hazards on property adjacent to the defined client property must be incorporated into the third-party resource site safety plan.

II. Operating Guidelines

1. Access

- a. The AHJ may grant access to any community or properties within evacuated or restricted zones unless any of the following apply:
 - i. The AHJ or their authorized designee determines third-party resources do not meet the standards set forth for personnel and equipment, for this SOG, or any Agreement with the Provincial authority,
 - ii. The AHJ has determined after receiving a recommendation for the approval or denial of the request based on the perspective of safety from a subject matter expert (SME) and/or BC Wildfire Service on the specific hazard event that it is not safe for third-party resources to operate within a designated evacuation order area/restricted zone.
 - iii. The AHJ has determined at their discretion that entry of third-party resources within a designated evacuation order/restricted area does not assist in reducing the consequential impact of the emergency event for the community.

- iv. The Third-party resources has failed to provide adequate documentation as laid out in this SOG.
- b. The AHJ may utilize the guidelines provided by Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) [Managing Access to Areas Under Evacuation Order for Local Authorities and First Nations](#) for additional information and access templates.
- c. As a condition of access, the third-party resources shall comply with all orders from AHJ and/or BC Wildfire Service representatives including orders to vacate an area due to unsafe fire activity and/or any safety risk as per 1(a) ii.
- d. When compliant with 1(b) above, third-party resources may be granted timely access to client properties by the AHJ to provide loss intervention services within designated evacuation order area/restricted zones.

2. Incident Oversight of Private Fire Prevention Resources (Third-Party Resources)

- a. The AHJ, or their authorized designee, retains oversight of third-party resources in the same manner as other individuals or entities granted access to a designated evacuation order area/restricted zone . As such third-party resources will follow direction to evacuate from any areas that are deemed unsafe as per 1(a)ii.
- b. Third-party resources recognize and accept that the AHJ and/or law enforcement are endowed with the statutory authority for command and control of an emergency incident and shall comply with all lawful orders.
- c. Third-party resources have no claim or stake in unified command and will not perform in an ICS role, except as set forth in this SOG.
- d. Third-party resources will adhere to and comply with parameters laid out within any structure defense/structure protection planning laid out by the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service and/or their designee.
- e. Third-party resources shall utilize identified water sources as approved by the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service or their authorized designee and shall follow AHJ safe water handling protocols.

3. Self-sufficient Operations

- a. Third-party resources shall remain self-sufficient with the ability to operate without relying on the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service or their authorized designee for assistance or resources. This includes the capability to produce and

procure the necessary area authorizations and operational resources at the point of use.

- b. Third-party resources shall not utilize any Province supplied camp or facility or taxpayer based public support resources and shall operate self-sufficiently, as above.
- c. The grant of access within designated evacuation order area/restricted zones by the AHJ to third-party resources does not imply or create any obligation or responsibility for the operational management or situational awareness of third-party resources.

4. **BC Wildfire Service - Training and Equipment Standards Compliance**

- a. Third-party resources requesting access must be currently trained and equipped to meet the apparatus and personnel standards as set out within the IAA or equivalent for resources and personnel.
- b. The AHJ may recognize the following WUI Position/NWCG equivalencies:

BCWS WUI Position	NWCG Classification
Apparatus Member	Firefighter II, Firefighter I
Structure Protection Crew Member	Firefighter II, Firefighter I
Crew Leader	Engine Boss
Strike Team Leader or Task Force Leader	Task Force Leader
Structure Protection Specialist	Resource Liaison

- c. The AHJ may accept third-party resources personnel incident qualification and certification systems as proof of proper classification for determination of BCWS IAA equivalency.

5. **Third-Party Resources - Resource Identification**

- a. All third-party resources should be identified in a manner such that they do not appear to be a public fire first responder resource and shall not have or use emergency lights or sirens.
- b. The AHJ shall provide some means of credential to facilitate and streamline incident access at checkpoints or law enforcement or military roadblocks. The AHJ shall notify all personnel fulfilling roadblock responsibilities of the presence of third-party resources.

6. **Pre- Incident Communications Protocol**

- a. Prior to or at the time of mobilization of third-party resources towards an

incident, the third-party resources will email both the BC Wildfire Service Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer (PWCO) and the BCWS Structure Protection Coordination Officer (SPCO) to notify their intention to deploy and destination.

- b. These email notifications will be sent to:
 - i. BC Wildfire Service Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer – bcws.pwco@gov.bc.ca , and;
 - ii. BC Wildfire Service Structure Protection Coordination Officer (Logistics) – bcws.spplogistics@gov.bc.ca .
 - iii. AHJ, if possible

BC Wildfire Service or the IC will inform the AHJ of Third-Party resources intention to work within evacuated or restricted zones.

The BC Wildfire Service and the AHJ will work together to determine access with the AHJ having ultimate authority for the decision to allow or deny access.

- c. The email notification sent by the third-party resource must include an Incident Submittal Package which shall include:
 - i. Client Invitation Letter, including list of properties.
 - ii. Geographic location of deployment and AHJ wildfire incident number, if known.
 - iii. Responding personnel.
Description (type and number) of resources being deployed, including equipment manifests with engine designations.
 - iv. Dates/time of deployment
 - v. Intended Port of Entry if third-party resources originate outside of Canada.
 - vi. ETA to the Port of Entry
 - vii. ETA to the wildfire incident.
 - viii. Contact information for the WDS third-party resources representative who will be onsite with resources.
- d. Third-party resources shall, in a reasonable amount of time, communicate any changes in the documentation and information provided.
 - i. Third-party resources shall acknowledge any site-specific information provided by the PWCO and/or SPCO.
 - ii. The PWCO and/or SPCO shall confirm receipt of the information.

7. Incident Arrival Protocol

- a. Third-party resources are required to check in with the AHJ and obtain access authorization and credentials before entering any designated evacuation order area/restricted zones .
- b. Third-party resources must provide the AHJ with a list of their responding resources including equipment identification numbers.
- c. Third-party resources must then check in with the Incident Commander or designate at the ICP with proof of approval/permit from the AHJ to access order area/restricted zones and a list of their responding resources including equipment identification numbers.
- d. Third-party resources must receive a safety briefing from the Operations Section Chief, Structure Branch Director or Division Supervisor before proceeding.
- e. Third-party resources shall be considered a cooperating agency by the AHJ and report to the operations section and if established the Structure Branch.
- f. Third-party resources shall be included in the Incident Action Plan (IAP) to indicate that access to the incident has been granted.
- g. Third-party resources will be expected to inform the planning section or Structure Branch Director of their planned activities for the next operational period by filling out ICS 204.

8. IMT Briefing Guideline

- a. Third-party resources shall follow the standard check-in and check-out Guidelines required of all resources on the incident.
- b. A message shall be included in the IAP and announced during operational briefings that third-party resources are authorized to operate within the incident and shall be communicating with BCWS Operations Section and/or Structure Branch throughout the course of their operations.

9. Agency Liaison

- a. Third-party resources shall provide an agency liaison available to incident command, reporting to the IC, Operations Section Chief, Structure Branch Director, Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or designate. The liaison must be able to contact third-party resources at any time. If requested by the IMT, this liaison shall attend any planning and operational briefings as required. This liaison may be reached by radio or cellular communication.

10. Communications

- a. The third-party resource Commander, or their authorized designee, is responsible for communicating third-party resources location and movements.
- b. Third-party resources shall monitor incident command radio frequencies assigned to a particular incident, where radio network authorizations have

- been provided. Third-party resources shall not communicate on incident command radio frequencies without approval from Incident Command.
- c. Third-party resources shall have available their own radio frequency for their internal communications.
 - d. The Third-party resources shall observe and follow the incident communications plan.
 - e. Third-party resource must abide by all relevant CRTC radio communication rules, policies, and standards.