

EMBC INTERIM POLICY and PROCEDURES BULLETIN FIRE SEASON 2017

REIMBURSEMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES DURING WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE FIRES

This policy and procedures bulletin will apply only to structure firefighting response activities due to wildland urban interface fires occurring between April 01, 2017 and December 31, 2017.

Wildland urban interface fires are defined as '*fires occurring in or threatening an area where urban structures and wildland vegetation coincide*'.

Emergency Management BC (EMBC), through the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), will continue to encourage local authorities to develop and use mutual aid agreements as the most effective method of enhancing their structure fire suppression capacity.

Local governments, for the purposes of this bulletin, include local authorities as defined in the *Emergency Program Act* and First Nations band councils.

POLICY

This policy enables local governments to request additional structure firefighting resources and/or seek financial reimbursement for eligible structure firefighting costs from the Province under the following conditions:

- A structure fire, or threat of multiple structure fires, is a direct result of a wildland urban interface fire and is inside a fire protection area;
- The local government has a fire protection service in place that is adequate for its size;
- The local government has made all reasonable attempts to avail itself of mutual aid support;
- The threat to the community is greater than the local government can reasonably be expected to have the capacity to adequately respond with existing fire services, including any established mutual aid support;
- The British Columbia Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Consequence Management Plan, 2008 Edition, has been activated and authorized by an appropriate EMBC employee (Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) Director or Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) Director) in accordance with Section 4 (1) of the *Emergency Program Act*, and,
- An emergency response task number has been obtained from EMBC.

It is important that consideration be given to these conditions early enough to enable resources to be safely and effectively deployed.

PROCEDURE

Resource Provision:

Upon request from a local government Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for provincial support as noted above, EMBC through OFC will coordinate the acquisition and deployment of the provincially provided firefighting resources. These additional firefighting resources will be deployed as follows:

- A resource request and expense approval form (EAF) must be submitted to the PREOC or EMBC duty officer;
- A resource request and EAF must be approved and task number assigned by the EMBC PREOC that has been activated in response to the event. If a PREOC has not been activated, the EMBC Provincial Duty Manager must approve the resource request. Contact 1-800-663-3456;
- Deployed structure firefighting resources will be under the direction of the requesting local government or requesting agency (utilising Unified Command); and,
- EMBC through its OFC representative, who may be on site, will determine the length of deployment and the actual structure firefighting resources that are required.

Financial reimbursement limitations:

- EMBC will not reimburse requesting local governments for regular wages of their structure firefighting staff.
- EMBC **will not reimburse** any local or mutual aid structure firefighting support response costs incurred by the requesting local governments before the EAF has been submitted and approved.

EMBC may reimburse local governments for incremental costs according to the *Emergency Program Act, Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulations* such as:

- Assisting with structure firefighting costs, for the assisting community and not the requesting community, when mutual aid agreements have exceeded normal operational expectations;
- Any and all exceptional costs must be pre-approved by EMBC in writing, or must be outlined in the *Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs, A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations*; and,
- The reimbursement rates for fire apparatus and resources shall not exceed the current "Inter-Agency Working Group Report - Reimbursement Rates"

EMBC will work with local governments to maintain fiscal control of any approved resources or expenditures during responses.

Assistance from EMBC notwithstanding, claimants are responsible for ensuring that all reimbursement requests are complete and supported by verifiable documentation suitable to EMBC. Please see Appendix A for additional details.