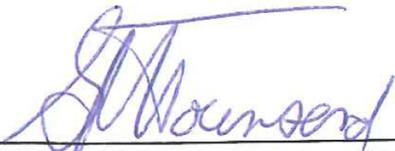




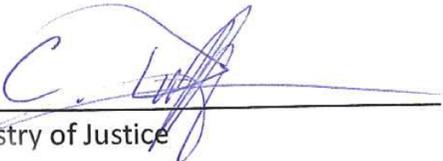
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**British Columbia  
Provincial  
Coordination Plan  
for Wildland Urban  
Interface Fires**

Last Revised: July 25, 2016

  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural  
Resource Operations

July 12, 2013  
Date

  
Ministry of Justice

August 7, 2013  
Date

  
Ministry of Environment

June 28/13  
Date

  
Ministry of Health

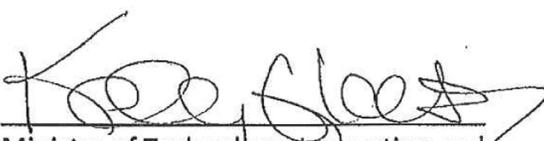
July 10, 2013  
Date

  
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

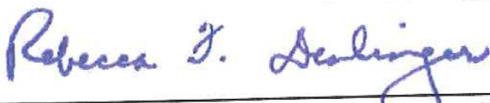
July 15/13  
Date

  
Ministry of Agriculture

August 2013  
Date

  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation and  
Citizens' Services (GCPE)

July 10, 2013  
Date

  
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural  
Development

July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
Date

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## Record of Amendments

Date	Amendment	Page #
February 12, 2014	Modified sentence regarding the OFC to read, "Under normal circumstances, the Incident Commander of the fire will work with the local authority, identifying the need to request tactical evacuations. However, as a last resort the OFC may evacuate the area as a function of Section 25 of the <a href="#">Fire Services Act.</a> "	27
June 6, 2015	Replaced Wildfire Management Branch (WMB) with BC Wildfire Service. (BCWS)	All
June 6, 2015	Replaced Fire and Emergency Management Commissioner with Assistant Deputy Minister of EMBC.	12
June 6, 2015	Added the wildfire management branch to the operations section of the PECC.	13,14
June 6, 2015	Moved the section related to the FireSmart program from EMBC to the BCWS.	22
June 6, 2015	Updated the date and hyperlink for the EMBC Interim Policy and Procedures Bulletin Fire Season 2015.	20, 41
June 6, 2015	Updated the name of the "Provincial Support for Livestock Relocation During an Emergency" policy.	41
June 6, 2015	Replaced @EmergencyPrep with @PreparedBC	24, 31
July 19, 2016	Replaced references of BCERMS with BCEMS.	6, 10, 39
July 19, 2016	Replaced "Attorney General" with "Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure"	9,
July 19, 2016	Replaced "Ministry of Justice" with "Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure"	12, 22, 25
July 19, 2016	Replaced "Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada" with "Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada"	12, 22, 25, 35
July 19, 2016	Updated the date and hyperlink for the EMBC Interim Policy and Procedures Bulletin Fire Season 2016.	21
July 19, 2016	Replaces "First Nations and Inuit Health Branch" with "First Nations Health Authority."	36
July 19, 2016	Replaced "BC Wildfire Management Branch" with "BC Wildfire Service"	11,27,33, 38
July 19, 2016	Added BCWS, FNHA, and INAC to Acronyms list. Removed FNIHB and AANDC.	39
July 19, 2016	Updated hyperlinks to "Provincial Support for Livestock Relocation during an Emergency."	41
July 25, 2016	Updated hyperlink to "FireSmart"	10
July 25, 2016	Changed "Structure Protection Unit" to "Structure Protection"	14, 16

	Program”	
July 25, 2016	Added: “Emergency Firefighters, also known as EFFs.”	18
July 25, 2016	Updated hyperlink: “Wildfire Suppression with Local Governments” standard operating guideline SOG 1.06.01	23
July 25, 2016	Updated wording on BCWS response responsibilities.	24
July 25, 2016	Replaced “Environment Canada Meteorological Service” to “Environment & Climate Change Canada Meteorological Service”	36
July 25, 2016	Added “Only BCWS weather forecasters are to address weather conditions as they relate to fires.”	36

# The British Columbia (BC) Provincial Coordination Plan for Wildland Urban Interface Fires

## Purpose

The BC Provincial Coordination Plan for Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fires describes the provincial response to a major WUI fire event. This plan provides a framework for integrated provincial emergency management to WUI fires and sets out a concept of operations that fosters collaboration among multiple organizations. The plan clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the provincial ministries involved in WUI fire response.

## Scope

The plan focuses on the provincial government's emergency management activities and coordinated response to a major WUI fire. Local government emergency response operations, roles of federal departments, and BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) operations on wildland fires are briefly discussed. Localized wildland fires that do not require multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency response are not discussed. Post wildfire recovery is also not within the scope of this document.

This document is an annex of the provincial Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and aligns with the BC Emergency Management System (BCEMS). Please refer to the [BC All-Hazard Plan](#) (a component of the CEMP) for a detailed outline of the operational structure and responsibilities for a provincial all-hazard response. This document replaces all previous versions including the BC Wildland Urban Interface Fire Consequence Management Plan (2008).

## Background

Typically each year between March and September there are significant risks of major WUI fires throughout the province. BC experiences an average of 2,000 wildfires annually and although only a small percentage of them are interface, there may be significant impacts to affected communities or associated infrastructure. For example, in 2010 there were 1,672 wildfires in BC and approximately 27 of those were significant interface wildfires resulting in 11 evacuation orders and 16 evacuation alerts issued by local authorities and First Nations communities (through Band Council Resolution).

A WUI fire is a fire that is burning in wildland fuels or vegetation and has the potential to interface with urban or developed areas. There are three categories of WUI areas:

- 1) The typical WUI exists where well-defined urban and suburban development presses up against open expanses of wildland areas;
- 2) The mixed WUI is characterized by isolated homes, subdivisions, infrastructures and small communities situated predominantly in wildland settings; and

- 3) The occluded WUI occurs where islands of wildland vegetation exist inside a largely urbanized area.

### **Specific Risks and Considerations Associated with WUI Fires**

The following list is intended to assist with operational planning and is not prioritized nor an exhaustive list of potential risks associated with WUI fires. Some potential risks and considerations when responding to WUI fires may include:

- The holistic integration of different levels of government, industry, NGO's and other stakeholder groups are often required to support emergency planning, response operations and recovery activities;
- WUI fires may put communities, businesses, buildings, structures, utility and communications infrastructure at risk;
- Evacuation of a large number of residents, potentially creating the need for Emergency Social Services (ESS), ESS reception centres, group lodging and family reunification services;
- An intense demand for information from many sources and in many forms including media and the public;
- Communities in BC that do not have established fire services cannot enact fire control measures in response to WUI fire events;
- Smoke and particulates can create health risks;
- WUI fires may cause road closures;
- WUI fires may affect slope stability;
- WUI fires may create a need for livestock relocation;
- WUI fires may affect the local drinking water;
- Large fires can influence localized weather and cause conditions such as wind storms;
- Wildfires can spread across large areas in a limited time due to fire behaviour or wind conditions; and
- Risk of wildfires is heavily dependent on weather and fuel conditions.

Fire insurance is accessible and readily available to individuals and businesses throughout the province. For those located in areas that are outside of a fire protection district, the risk of loss due to a WUI fire is increased, which in turn results in higher insurance premiums. As Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) is not provided to individuals and businesses for losses sustained due to wildland urban interface fire events, individuals and businesses should purchase adequate insurance if they wish to be protected from such losses.

### **Resource Requirements for Consideration**

The following list includes resources that the Province may consider in order to support local authorities in WUI fire response.

- Specialized staff with structure fire and wildfire behaviour expertise;
- Specialized wildfire meteorologists;
- Public information officers to handle extensive media coverage;
- Additional wildfire and structure firefighting personnel and equipment including Structure Protection Units (SPU);
- Telecommunications for emergency operations centres at all levels;
- Air quality monitoring;
- Agency and stakeholder coordination;
- BCWS staging areas for personnel and equipment; and
- Accommodations for provincial responders.

Wildland firefighters are trained and equipped to suppress fires composed of wildland fuels or vegetation and are not trained or equipped to address structure fires, such as residential buildings. Structure firefighters are trained to control and extinguish fires in structures, such as residential buildings. Some structural firefighters have training and/or equipment to suppress wildland fires but not all. Both wildland and structural firefighting expertise are needed for response to WUI fire events. Local authorities are responsible for their structure fire departments which are funded through their local tax base.

Note: The above list does not include the full host of resources available to BCWS nor is it prioritized.

## **Authorities**

Legislation that governs WUI firefighting and response activities may be found in the *Wildfire Act* and the *Emergency Program Act*.

### **Wildfire Act and Regulation**

The *Wildfire Act* provides the provincial government with the authority to carry out wildfire management activities within the Province of BC. It permits the Province's official, in their discretion, to engage in fire use, prevention, control and rehabilitation. Under the *Wildfire Act*, officials engaged in fire control activities may conduct tactical evacuations of all persons within areas specified by the officials.

The *Wildfire Regulation* sets out the intent of the *Wildfire Act* and requirements of industry, railway operators, utility operators for fire prevention activities, hazard assessment and abatement, fire control, open fires, exemptions, cost recovery, administrative penalties and offences.

The *Wildfire Act* and *Regulation* also deal with the roles of industry, private land owners and the general public.

### **Emergency Program Act and Regulations**

The ***Emergency Program Act*** details provincial and local authority emergency management responsibilities. It also enables declarations of local and provincial states of emergency.

Local authorities, as intended in the ***Emergency Program Act***, have a legislated duty to have an emergency plan and program in place to plan and prepare for emergencies and to respond to emergency situations within their jurisdictions.

The ***Emergency Program Management Regulation*** details the responsibilities and authorities of provincial ministers, ministries, government corporations and the Inter-Agency Preparedness Council. The Regulation permits the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to (i) assume the jurisdiction and control of all structure firefighting and fire prevention services in all or any part of British Columbia, and (ii) appoint the Fire Commissioner to exercise authority over those services.

The ***Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation*** details the requirements of local authorities including:

- planning and hazard assessment;
- coordinating the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical services to victims of emergencies and disasters, whether that emergency provision is made from within or outside of the local authority
- establishing the priorities for restoring essential services provided by the local authority that are interrupted during an emergency or disaster, and
- recommending to service providers the priorities for restoring essential services not provided by the local authority that are interrupted during an emergency or disaster.

The ***Emergency Program Act*** and the ***Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation*** may, under certain conditions, provide local authorities with the ability to seek financial assistance with certain response and recovery costs. However, local authorities remain responsible for the direct cost of fire control operations undertaken by the local fire departments within their jurisdictions, or, costs outlined within their local mutual aid agreements (if in place).

### **Local Government Act and the Community Charter**

The ***Local Government Act*** (LGA) and the ***Community Charter*** provide local governments with the legal framework, authority, powers, duties and functions to fulfil their purposes and to respond to different needs and changing circumstances. Parts 25 and 26 of the LGA provide local governments with specific authority to address matters

such as natural hazards, environmental protection, land use planning and development control through Regional Growth Strategies, Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws, Development Permits, etc. Development Permits can identify lands subject to wildfire and can establish requirements for character of development (i.e. landscape, siting, exterior design, form, finishes) and restrictions on type and placement of trees and vegetation. Many local governments try to follow [FireSmart](#) principles.

Note: Other legislation may also pertain to wildfire management activities in BC.

### Provincial Coordination Overview

Provincial WUI fire response activities follow BCEMS as outlined in the BC All-Hazard Plan. The following section outlines provincial emergency operation/coordination centres and their interactions.

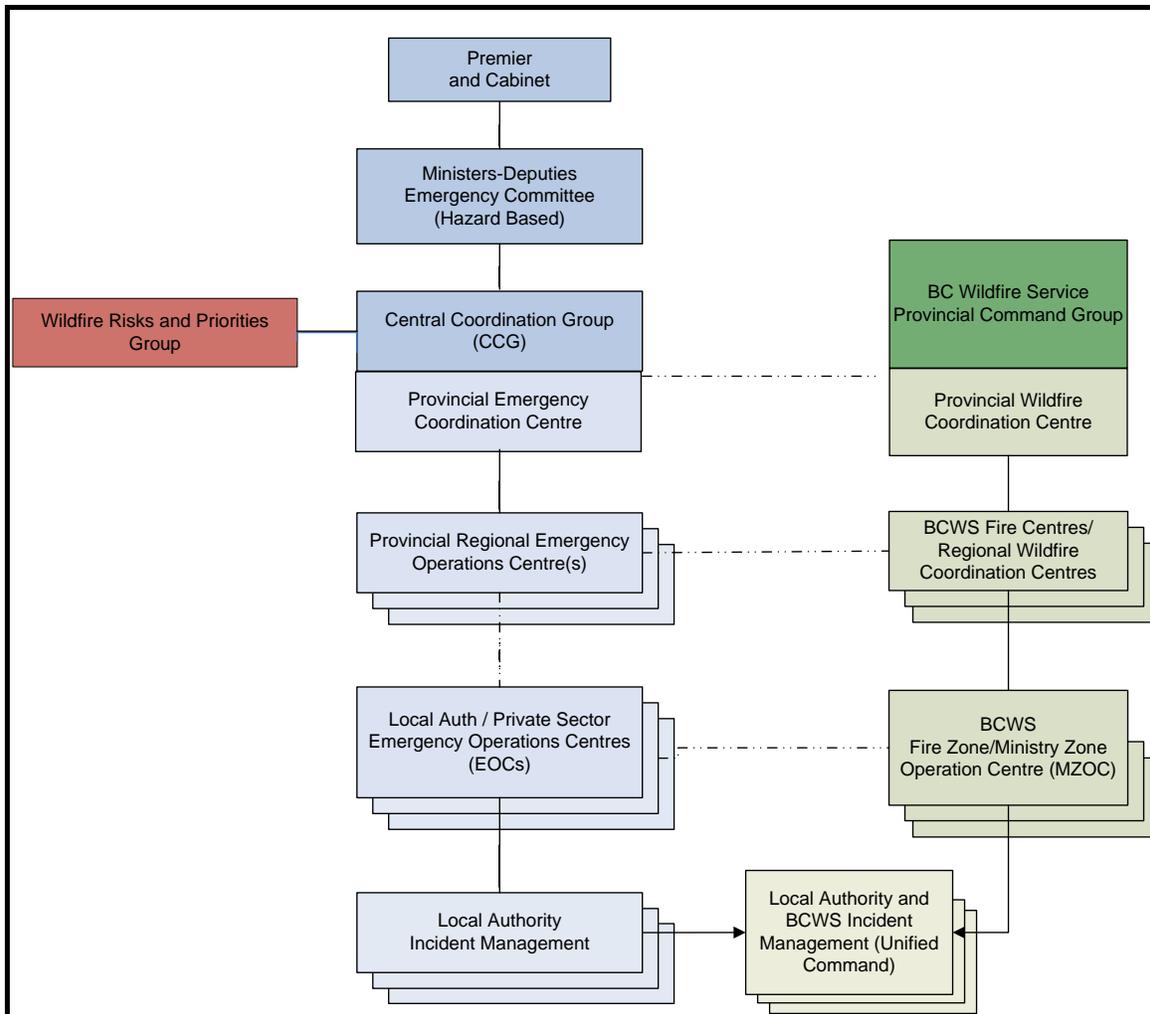


Figure 1: Illustration of the provincial emergency management structure and the relationship with the BCWS during response to WUI fire.

The provincial government response to any major WUI fire event addresses the need for integration and coordination of multiple organizations, including the overall coordination of provincial and federal resources that may be engaged in the response effort.

### **Ministers–Deputies Emergency Committee**

The Ministers-Deputies Emergency Committee (M-DEC) is composed of the key provincial Ministers and Deputy Ministers (or designates) who provide direction, policy and strategic guidance to the Central Coordination Group (CCG) for extraordinary WUI fire events. Often the activation of the M-DEC is recommended by members of the CCG.

### **Central Coordination Group**

In the event of a major WUI fire or severe provincial wildfire situation, the Province may activate the Central Coordination Group (CCG) to ensure cross government and multi-agency coordination of advanced planning and response activities. The CCG provides strategic direction to provincial ministries and agencies involved in the WUI fire response. The CCG provides a venue to discuss significant emergency response challenges that require high-level cross-government coordination. In addition the CCG:

- Evaluates the situation and assesses provincial government involvement;
- Provides strategic direction to the PECC and the PWCC;
- Supports the activation of the M-DEC;
- Oversees the implementation of cross-ministry communications; and
- Briefs senior government officials on the fire threat, fire preparation, emergency response and recovery activities on a regular basis.

Each ministry that is requested to participate in the CCG will designate a senior representative (Executive Director/Assistant Deputy Minister level) and one alternate to represent it on the CCG. Each representative will report to the CCG on the activities of their respective ministry including readiness activities, major incidents, WUI fire impacts and response capability.

When responding to WUI fire, the CCG is co-chaired by EMBC and BCWS. The recommended composition of the CCG during WUI fire is:

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, EMBC (co-chair)
- Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, BCWS (co-chair)
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services
- Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Depending on response requirements, additional agencies may be required to participate in the CCG including other provincial ministries and federal agencies such as Public Safety Canada (PS), Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Department of National Defence (DND).

### **Wildfire Risks and Priorities Group**

During an extreme wildfire season there may be a requirement to prioritize BCWS wildfire response resources to address expanding threats to communities and provincial assets, or to prepare a provincial response to extreme wildfire impacts. While the BCWS has decision support systems in place to deal with normal and above normal fire seasons, there are situations where engaging additional provincial-level decision making support and expertise from key government ministries and agencies may be required.

As an important sub-component of the CCG, the Wildfire Risks and Priorities Group will assist BCWS:

- In decision support on strategic and operational issues where wildfire situations significantly exceed available wildfire response capacity;
- With decisions regarding wildfire impacts on other provincial assets and priorities;
- In decisions on the management of post wildfire natural hazards as they are identified;
- In developing communications strategies in support of strategic and operational decisions where wildfire situations exceed available wildfire response capacity; and
- In contributing to the development of wildfire management options and provision of a risk management recommendation to BCWS or M-DEC as required.

The Wildfire Risks and Priorities Group is co-chaired by the Executive Director, BCWS and the Assistant Deputy Minister of EMBC, or designates. Other ministries are brought in to provide expertise and specific agency information, to identify priorities and to consult on response options as required.

### **BCWS Provincial Command Group**

The core of this Group consists of the Director of Wildfire Management, the Manager of Wildfire Operations, the Superintendent, Wildfire Preparedness and Operations and the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer. This group provides strategic direction to BCWS to guide fire control activities and oversees fire operations throughout the province.

### **Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre**

The Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre (PWCC), located in Kamloops, monitors potential wildfire conditions and assesses the Province's resource needs. It also

prioritizes and allocates these resources to the Regional Wildfire Coordination Centres (RWCC). The PWCC utilizes wildfire resource sharing mutual aid agreements to access firefighting agencies, provincially, nationally and internationally.

### **Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre**

As per the BC All-Hazard Plan, the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) located in Victoria, will implement CCG priorities and support active PREOCs. The Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) is activated to:

- Implement provincial government's overall priorities and objectives in a significant emergency management event;
- Manage the provincial emergency management structure and provide policy direction for emergency operations;
- Provide coordination and support to activated PREOCs;
- In coordination with the PWCC, provide cross-government support to provincial ministries, local authorities, First Nations and emergency management stakeholders;
- Ensure adequate province-wide mobilization and allocation of critical emergency management assets;
- Coordinate the provincial government's business continuity requirements to support mission critical functions;
- Coordinate provincial communications with the PWCC;
- Provide support to provincial Senior Officials as requested; and
- Facilitate, as required, provincial, territorial, state, and national support.

The PECC manages the acquisition and allocation of non-wildfire provincial and federal response resources requested in support of local government response while the PWCC exclusively manages all provincial wildfire response resources.

The primary communication link between the PWCC and PECC is through the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer and the PECC Director or Deputy Director. In addition, operations, planning and logistics staff communicate directly to meet operational objectives and address specific operational needs. Representatives from BCWS fill the Wildfire Management branch of the Operations section in the PECC. Provincial specialists in the areas of fire behaviour, weather and strategic planning work in collaboration with the PECC.

EMBC will ensure extraordinary requests for SPUs to support BCWS or local government fire services are provincially coordinated and prioritized as warranted by conditions or fire activity throughout the province. During response, the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) will be positioned in the Fire Services Branch of Operations within the PECC. When the PECC is not activated, all structure protection resource requests can be made to the OFC Structure Protection Program Coordinator.

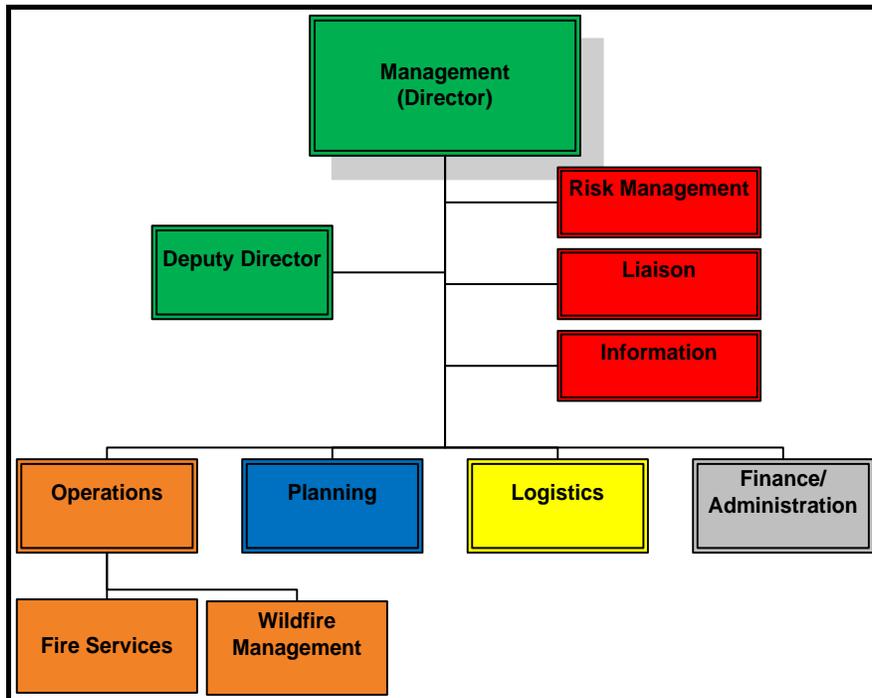


Figure 2: Illustration of the placement of the Fire Services and Wildfire Management branches within the Operations section of the PECC and/or PREOC operational structure(s).

**BCWS Fire Centres/ Regional Wildfire Coordination Centres**

There are six fire centres throughout the province. Each Fire Centre coordinates wildfire management and response services within its geographic boundaries. Each Fire Centre is divided into zones and within each zone there are one or more fire bases. Firefighters are dispatched from fire zones strategically located throughout the province. Fire Centres may activate Type I or II Ministry Zone Operation Centres (MZOC’s) to provide site support and coordinate response and resources for a defined area (e.g. fire zone) experiencing heavy wildfire demands.



Figure 3: BCWS Fire Centre Boundaries

Fire Centres will share information with the PREOC and local governments as required.

### **Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centres (PREOC)**

As per the BC All-Hazard Plan, a PREOC provides support to local government Emergency Operation Centres (EOC) that are activated in response to WUI fires. This includes assisting local governments in managing the consequences to the community due to WUI fires including large evacuations, Emergency Social Service support and public information.

The PREOC interacts with the Fire Centre(s) within its area of jurisdiction as required. The primary communication link between the BCWS Fire Centres and the PREOC is through the Regional Wildfire Coordination Officer and the PREOC Director or Deputy Director. In addition, operations, planning and logistics staff communicate directly to meet operational objectives and address specific operational needs. Agency liaisons from BCWS and provincial specialists in the areas of fire behaviour, weather and strategic planning provide support to the PREOC.

During response, personnel from the OFC with Structure Protection Program expertise may be positioned in the Fire Services Branch of Operations within the PREOC.

### **Local Authority Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) (Site Support Level)**

Local authorities are at all times responsible for the direction and control of the local authority's emergency response. In support of local authority response, Structure Protection Unit Specialists may provide expertise to BCWS or to the EOCs to assist local authorities with technical services including the deployment of SPUs. The deployment of provincial staff for site level support is determined and prioritized by the PREOC/OFC and is dependent on the severity and unique qualities of each WUI fire event.

### **BCWS Incident Command and Incident Management Teams (Site Level)**

BCWS may establish a fire camp and deploy an Incident Management Team (IMT) to provide support for WUI fire response activities at the site. WUI fire response at site level could involve combinations of staff from BCWS, the OFC SPP, and local jurisdiction fire departments coordinated through the Incident Command Post under Unified Command.

## **WUI Fire Emergency Management Overview**

There are multiple layers of authority and responsibility involved in coordinating a response to WUI fire. In broad terms, there is a basic division of responsibility between the Province (represented by BCWS and EMBC) and local governments.

FLNRO's role within the provincial mandate is to effectively monitor and manage risks to the environment and public health and safety, such as interface wildfire. Thus, BCWS is tasked with managing wildfires on both Crown and private lands in regional districts or

outside of fire protection areas within local government boundaries. The BCWS [mandate](#) is to deliver effective wildfire management and emergency response support on behalf of the government of British Columbia to protect life and values at risk and to encourage sustainable, healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Managing a WUI fire requires an integrated provincial response. BCWS is responsible for the management of wildland fire on all Crown land outside of local government fire protection areas, however, in emergency situations, where wildfire threatens forest or other wildland values, BCWS may respond, regardless of ownership or land status. BCWS will support local government fire control activities within local government boundaries when requested as per the BCWS/EMBC 2010 Letter of Understanding.

EMBC's role is to coordinate provincial government response to a significant event and support local authorities in their response activities. The OFC within EMBC manages the SPU program which augments local firefighting resources during WUI fires.

### **BCWS Provincial Preparedness Conditions**

BCWS Provincial Preparedness Conditions are in place to define the overall status of wildfire operations within the province. These conditions are used to guide BCWS resource management decisions and to succinctly communicate the operational needs of provincial wildfire control activities. The following sections define the five levels.

#### ***Provincial Preparedness Condition 1: Exporting***

- Normal fire activities, no additional resource support anticipated.
- Fire centres have adequate resources to deal with anticipated fire demands.
- Normal activities are based on resources required in an 'average fire season'.
- Monitor and anticipate possible support for non-wildfire provincial emergencies (e.g. flooding).
- When the province is in a Prep Con 1 it will normally have adequate resources available for the PWCC to pursue deployment opportunities out of province for cost recovery.

#### ***Provincial Preparedness Condition 2: Exporting/Holding***

- There is an increase in fire activity however fire centre resources are adequate to meet their fire demands.
- The PWCC can continue to pursue out of province deployment opportunities involving a limited number of resources but need to balance this against anticipated in-province fire demands within each fire centre and to support non wildfire emergencies.

***Provincial Preparedness Condition 3: Holding***

- There is an increase in fire activity and some fire centres can no longer meet local resource demands.
- Provincial Resource and Strategic Wildfire Allocation Protocol (RSWAP) is implemented.
- The PWCC needs to consider BCWS's resource needs with respect to requesting out of province resources from other fire fighting agencies.
- Long-term Operational Planning becomes critical in determining what resources are needed and where.

***Provincial Preparedness Condition 4: Holding/Importing***

- The province is experiencing a high level of fire activity and multiple fire starts.
- Resources at specific fire centres will need to be supplemented from other fire centres.
- Out of province resource requests for specific or critical resources may be required if provincial resource capacity is not able to handle fire demands.
- Critical resource shortages are closely monitored to ensure continuous capacity in those areas.
- RSWAP is fully established and implemented.

***Provincial Preparedness Condition 5: Importing***

- The province is experiencing very significant fire activity, and/or extreme fire behaviour; heavy demands on provincial resources are occurring and anticipated to continue.
- Resource capacity is supplemented with Wildfire TEAMS staff, other Ministry staff, forest sector, Fire Departments and Type 3 resources (Emergency Firefighters, also known as EFFs)).
- The PWCC is actively monitoring the amount and type of resources required to support the province.
- Resources from outside the province will be required as provincial shortfalls are identified to ensure a continuous capacity in those critical areas.
- RSWAP is fully established and implemented.

In addition to the Provincial Preparedness Conditions, there are Regional Preparedness Conditions that are used to communicate the status of each Fire Centre. Thus, Fire Centres may be at varying Regional Preparedness Condition Levels (1-5) which are then analyzed to determine the Provincial Preparedness Condition. If wildfires are not in the interface, it is possible for the Provincial Preparedness Condition to be elevated without engagement of other ministries.

## **BCWS Priorities**

When wildfire response is placing high demands on BCWS resources and firefighting resources are limited, the BCWS has established criteria for assessing and prioritizing wildfire response resource priorities throughout the province. In times of limited resources, these priorities provide decision makers with guidance that can be used in conjunction with consequence management plans, local fire management plans and other relevant information.

These guidelines apply when it is necessary to set priorities for:

- a) multiple fire initial attack;
- b) containment objectives and allocation of resources to fires beyond initial attack; and,
- c) strategic positioning of resources in anticipation of new fires occurring.

When setting priorities and allocating resources, decision makers will normally assess and consider a variety of factors, including:

- Human life and safety, including fire responders, emergency personnel and the public;
- Present and forecast weather and fire behavior;
- Availability of suitable fire attack resources;
- Guidance or information in fire response plans;
- Values at risk in the immediate vicinity and surrounding area;
- Potential smoke and public health impacts;
- Information available from local sources; and
- The probability of success.

It is recognized that the degree of risk to defined values (e.g., high, medium or low), and timing of that risk (e.g., imminent, within 72 hours, or longer term) is determined by many variables, and can change in a very short time. There may be competing values at risk requiring a discretionary decision. However, when setting objectives and allocating resources, weight will be apportioned to protecting values on the basis of the following ranking, in descending order:

### **1. Human Life and Safety**

- a. Evacuation
- b. Emergency protection of occupied interface areas, evacuation travel corridors, and other occupied sites

### **2. Property**

- a. Infrastructure or assets important to public health and safety, (e.g., public buildings, drinking water sanitation systems, major communication, transmission and transportation facilities, etc.)
- b. Concentrated areas of residences and infrastructure facing imminent threat
- c. Dispersed residences and associated infrastructure facing imminent threat
- d. Communities or rural residences where threat is greater than 3 days away
- e. Other public infrastructure, including park facilities
- f. Infrastructure, installations or assets covered by client agreements, (e.g., communications and transmission infrastructure, resource extraction equipment or assets etc.)
- g. Other private and commercial property.

### **3. High Environmental Values or Cultural Values**

- a. Community watersheds / drinking water catchment areas
- b. Critical habitat of known and identified species at risk

### **4. Resource Values**

- a. Active resource extraction sites or timber harvesting and silviculture investment areas
- b. Timber covered by a client protection agreement
- c. Other commercially valuable timber
- d. Areas identified as a priority in BC Parks Fire Response Plans
- e. Other forest resource values
- f. Agricultural

#### **Wildfires Occurring Within a Local Fire Protection Jurisdiction**

Where a local fire protection jurisdiction exists through municipalities, regional districts or improvement districts (i.e. a fire department), the fire department is responsible for fire control action on all fires within its legislated fire protection jurisdiction.

Upon a request from a local government, and if resources are available, BCWS may support local government resources under unified command if required. This support may be limited to wildfire control and may work in cooperation with a Structure Protection Specialist provided by EMBC. Suppression efforts undertaken by the BCWS and costs associated with those efforts will be the responsibility of the BCWS, on behalf of the Province. Fire departments will be responsible for their own costs which they incur in suppressing fires within their fire response area and including any costs as outlined in their local mutual aid agreements (if in place). Fires on Crown lands within a fire department's boundaries are administered through the ["Wildfire Suppression with Local Governments" standard operating guideline SOG 1.06.01.](#)

The [EMBC Interim Policy and Procedures Bulletin Fire Season 2016: Reimbursement for Local Government Fire Services during Wildland Urban Interface Fires](#) 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;
- This plan 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.

#### **Wildfires Occurring Outside of a Local Fire Protection Jurisdiction**

BCWS may request the assistance of a local government fire department on a fire outside the local government fire protection district. In those cases, BCWS pre-approves the deployment and will reimburse any fire department that has undertaken suppression activities on behalf of BCWS, and according to a local suppression agreement as per the [standard operating guideline 1.06.01 “Wildfire Suppression with Local Governments”](#). If a fire department is called by BCWS to respond to a wildfire outside the fire protection district, contact should be made between the local Fire Centre and the assisting fire department confirming the resources that are being deployed and the protocol and resources for response to wildfires outside the protection area should also be confirmed at the same time. When EMBC PECC and PREOCs are activated, the BCWS will inform EMBC when utilizing fire departments outside their fire protection area.

If an interface situation exists in an unprotected area (e.g. no fire department), BCWS may request structure fire protection for the at-risk values through EMBC. This determination is made based on a series of operational factors which include:

- the availability of resources;
- the values at risk;

- the accessibility of the structures;
- the proximity of reliable water sources; and
- the nature, speed and extent of the wildfire.

### **WUI Fires Occurring on First Nations Treaty Lands**

Wildfire Suppression Agreements have been entered into with Treaty First Nations (TFN) at the time the Treaty is signed and implemented. BCWS will provide fire control services to TFNs based on the Wildfire Suppression Agreement parameters contained within the Wildfire Suppression Agreement with that TFN.

### **WUI Fires Occurring on First Nations Non-treaty Lands (e.g. Federal Indian Reserves)**

BCWS will provide fire control services to these areas as per the Wildfire Response Agreement with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

### **Provincial Fire Department**

If the situation is significant enough to warrant a declaration of a Provincial State of Emergency, the Lieutenant Governor in Council or Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure may establish a Provincial Fire Department to facilitate the coordination of structure firefighting resources throughout the province. In addition, the Lieutenant Governor in Council or Minister can appoint the Fire and Emergency Management Commissioner to exercise authority over those services.

If a provincial declaration has been made and a provincial fire department created, BCWS will request the assistance of structure firefighting resources through the PECC. The fire service resources dispatched or approved by EMBC are tracked and demobilized by EMBC.

## **Provincial Agency Roles and Responsibilities**

This section highlights the roles of the primary ministries involved in the integrated provincial response to WUI fire and assistance to local authorities. All provincial ministries must coordinate and collaborate with emergency management stakeholders to effectively manage the consequences of WUI fire events. Due to the unpredictable nature of interface wildfires, enhanced readiness and response activities often require significant cross-government collaboration. A coordinated and integrated response from the provincial, federal and local governments ensures that response objectives and strategies are identified; communication links are established; and response tasks and functions are assigned appropriately to protect life and property during a WUI fire event.

### **Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, BC Wildfire Services**

### ***Mitigation***

Prevention programs designed to prevent or mitigate the effects of wildland urban interface fires include measures such as fire management planning, fuel management, public education, legislation and policy. Open fire prohibitions and forest use restrictions may be imposed if conditions meet specific thresholds.

Fuel management is defined as the process of reducing vegetation (live and dead) fuel load in the forest (thinning, spacing, pruning and removal of debris from the forest floor) to diminish aggressive fire behaviour and the potential for devastating wildfires. The Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative is a suite of funding programs managed through the Provincial Fuel Management Working Group including the First Nation's Emergency Services Society, Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations and the Union of BC Municipalities. Grant administration is provided by Union of BC Municipalities to local governments. The initiative supports communities to mitigate risk from wildfire in the wildland urban interface areas.

Strategic long-term planning at local, provincial and national levels is also being conducted. With wildfires having such a wide-reaching impact, partners are engaged at varying degrees and include all provinces and territories, the federal government, Union of BC Municipalities, First Nations, and industry.

The FireSmart program outlines proactive prevention measures that can be taken by homeowners and communities to reduce their risk and exposure to wildfires. The FireSmart program encourages community-based initiatives to reduce the risk of fire losses and enhance safety in the wildland urban interface, such as incorporating municipal bylaws and architectural standards that discourage the use of flammable building materials.

### ***Preparedness and Planning***

As the scope and scale of a fire season cannot be accurately predetermined, BCWS utilizes a well defined preparedness process to support readiness activities based on current and predicted wildfire risk and threat including predicted fire starts, fire growth potential and analysis of response requirements.

As part of the assessment process Fire Danger Ratings are identified by the collection of data from various weather stations throughout the province. To inform the public of fire danger, BCWS maintains an extensive [website](#) of current [Fire Danger Ratings](#) and other wildfire information. Fire Centres will also liaise with local governments prior to the fire season to establish reporting protocols and criteria for requesting assistance. The [standard operating guideline 1.06.01, "Wildfire Suppression with Local Governments,"](#) should be referred to at that time.

BCWS staffs and trains positions in the PWCC, RWCC, MZOC and at the incident site level including Incident Management Teams and Wildfire TEAMS personnel.

**Response**

BCWS has the primary responsibility for Provincial response to WUI fires. During WUI fire response, BCWS is authorized to:

Provincial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate all Provincial and out of Province resources required to manage fire control activities;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to local authorities’ WUI fire control activities as required and in accordance with the 2010 Letter of Agreement;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders through the CCG to provide situational awareness, technical advice on fire behaviour and weather forecasts;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and disseminate accurate and timely public safety and fire prevention messaging to the public, media, and community stakeholders. This will include regular media briefings and the use of social media feeds (Facebook: BC Wildfire Service and Twitter: @BCGovFireInfo);</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage resource needs for BCWS communications provincially through the Chief Fire Information Officer;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather, confirm and synthesize fire information from across the province into a daily and weekly situation report, which is distributed to government stakeholders, other agencies and ministry staff as needed; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-chair the Wildfire CCG and the Wildfire Risks and Priorities Group</li> </ul>
Regional / Fire Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to fires which includes coordinating and deploying fire control resources required to manage activities within the fire centre boundaries;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to local authorities’ WUI fire control activities as required and in accordance with the 2010 Letter of Understanding;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders through the fire centre to provide situational awareness, technical advice on fire behaviour and weather forecasts;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect, confirm and deliver public safety and prevention messaging and timely regional fire information to the public, media, community stakeholders and the PWCC;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the public communications for major fires are supported by the deployment of Fire Information Officers;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with impacted local governments to coordinate public communications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders through the PREOC to provide situational awareness, technical advice on fire behaviour and weather forecasts;</li> </ul>

GeoBC provides direct support to EMBC and when there is a provincial emergency (e.g. interface fire, flood, etc.) and coordinates the provision of GIS resources when support

is requested. BCWS Geospatial Services is responsible for coordinating Wildfire Incident Mapping support.

### **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Emergency Management British Columbia**

#### ***Mitigation***

EMBC maintains a series of public education materials related to personal preparedness and emergencies.

An education-based twitter feed (@PreparedBC) is maintained to engage with members of the public on personal emergency preparedness activities. The feed provides preparedness tips and recovery information. This feed is coordinated with the BCWS social media to ensure consistent messaging.

#### ***Preparedness***

EMBC works in partnership with BCWS to develop and revise the cross-government BC Provincial Coordination Plan for Wildland Urban Interface Fires. In addition, EMBC maintains an internal staff training program that includes components regarding WUI fire response.

#### ***Readiness***

While emergency management planning is ongoing, readiness activities are increased prior to fire season and when a significant fire risk is identified. In conjunction with other ministries, EMBC holds annual seasonal readiness workshops for local authorities, First Nations and regional response agencies to provide education respecting the provincial framework for integrated emergency management with knowledge or assistance from BCWS on the wildland fire risk.

EMBC emergency management performs a number of readiness activities including:

- Coordinate cross-ministry advanced planning as required;
- Facilitate annual seasonal readiness workshops in conjunction with other ministries for local authorities, First Nations community representatives and other regional emergency management stakeholders;
- Liaise with INAC to engage First Nations communities in readiness activities;
- Plan staffing and training for PECC and PREOC staff and EMBC Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (TEAMS); and
- Develop and/or review public information material for distribution.

EMBC interacts with subject matter experts including representatives from all levels of government, industry and volunteer groups undertaking provincial readiness activities including: federal, health, transportation, government, communications, critical infrastructure, utilities, oil and gas sectors.

Prior to the start of fire season the OFC within EMBC ensures that the following is completed:

- Renew contracts for SPU Program components; and
- Develop/update policy for fire service reimbursements.

Each fire season, the OFC makes training available to local fire departments, and SPU contract crews covering safety, strategy and tactics. The OFC also supports local fire services to improve local planning and response effectiveness. The S-115 (Structure and site preparation training) was developed to enable local fire services to train their own personnel to a Provincial standard when using SPU trailer resources.

**Response**

During a significant wildland urban interface fire event, EMBC’s role is to ensure that local government response to WUI fires is supported and provincial response is integrated. In order to assist local governments in consequence management, EMBC will activate the PREOCs to support local government EOCs, and in turn the PECC will activate to support active PREOCs.

During WUI fire response that requires activation of the PECC or PREOC, EMBC will:

Provincial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and disseminate situation reports for stakeholders and provincial elected officials;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate a provincial call centre for residents and travellers if a significant number of individuals are evacuated and information management is beyond the capacity of the local government;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local authorities that are providing Emergency Social Services by deploying provincial Mobile Support Teams when requested;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strategic information to senior officials;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate the EMBC TEAMS roster based on operational needs;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with emergency management stakeholders;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Structure Protection Program through the OFC;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide public information support to BCWS through the EMBC social media team;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the provincial DFAA claim as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the provincial fire department if required; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-chair the CCG.</li> </ul>
Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and disseminate regional situation reports;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate coordination and information sharing between local authorities, First</li> </ul>

Nations, BCWS and key stakeholders;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support affected local authorities by sharing information, filling requests for resources, and advising on policy questions and decisions;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploy and coordinate provincial, federal, and international resources required for managing the WUI fire impacts to local authorities within its region (but not including those resources managed by BCWS);</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the PECC to identify additional requirements and critical resource availability; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Fire Centre(s) within its area of jurisdiction as required.</li> </ul>

In addition, an alert-based twitter feed (@EmergencyInfoBC) is available to amplify BC Wildfire Service and local government communications when public safety is at risk.

**Structure Protection Program**

OFC representatives manage the Structure Protection Program. SPU’s are designed to minimize structure damage from WUI fire by dampening roofs and areas around structures to prevent sparks and embers from igniting structure fires. A single Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) owned SPU contains about 350 sprinklers and can protect between 30 and 50 homes. Numerous communities have created their own SPUs and trained their fire departments in the deployment of the units for the purpose of protecting structures in interface areas within their own fire protection districts. When not in use, locally owned SPUs may be made available to the OFC for deployment to other communities on a cost recovery basis.

A local government may make a request to EMBC for additional structure protection or other firefighting assets when facing a WUI fire event that exceeds the normal capabilities of its local resources and its local mutual aid agreements (if in place). Local governments should follow this process to receive provincial assistance:

- Initiate Emergency Plan;
- Set up and operate an EOC;
- Exercise mutual aid agreements with neighbouring communities.

A local government’s request for additional structure protection or other firefighting assets should be directed from the relevant EOC to either the PREOC or, if not activated, the EMBC Duty Manager. EMBC will review the request in consultation with the local government and (where relevant) BCWS. Resources available include:

- Structure Protection Units;
- Structure Protection Specialists;
- Other equipment, apparatus and personnel as may be necessary and are available; and
- Traditional structure fire suppression apparatus and crews.

EMBC also provides structure protection resources to BCWS Incident Commanders (in areas with no fire protection services). EMBC provides structure protection services to

BCWS using the SPU program. The structure fire service resources, dispatched or approved should be tracked and demobilized by the requesting local government and/or BCWS.

Under normal circumstances, the Incident Commander of the fire will work with the local authority, identifying the need to request tactical evacuations. However, as a last resort the OFC may evacuate the area as a function of Section 25 of the [Fire Services Act](#).

In response to a major emergency or disaster, a provincial declaration of a state of emergency may be issued (under the Emergency Program Act). The authority for a provincial declaration rests with the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or the Minister. Although used only in extreme situations in B.C., a provincially declared state of emergency can be invoked if extraordinary powers are required to respond effectively to an emergency or disaster. Large scale evacuations of people, access to private property where public safety is an issue, or the movement of equipment and other resources throughout the province are the most frequently cited reasons. If the situation is significant enough to warrant a declaration of a provincial state of emergency, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or the Minister may establish a Provincial Fire Department according to the Emergency Program Management Regulation (Section 10) to facilitate the coordination of structure fire fighting resources throughout the province.

**Ministry of Environment**

During the provincial response to a WUI fire event the main role of the Ministry of Environment (MoE) is to monitor and report air quality. The MoE will also provide technical advice and specialist expertise regarding hazmat, pollution spills and other threats to the environment. BC Parks Branch liaises with BCWS and the PREOC when wildfires impact parks and evacuations are necessary. The MoE will participate as a member of the CCG as required.

Provincial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical advice and specialist expertise, support services and staff as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide representatives to the PECC as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a senior representative to the CCG;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical services regarding environmental risks;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and report air quality.</li> </ul>
Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide representatives to the PECC, PREOC and site as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expertise on hazardous material, waste management and disaster debris issues resulting from WUI fires;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical assessment and direction regarding environmental risks;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate evacuation of provincial parks if required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce fire bans in provincial parks;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and report air quality; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine any imminent risk of pollution and require the associated actions to be undertaken if appropriate.</li> </ul>

**Ministry of Health**

During the provincial response to a WUI fire event the main role of the Ministry of Health (MoH) is to support health authorities, monitor health risks due to diminished water or air quality, support vulnerable populations within the medical system and assist as required with evacuations of health facilities due to fire or smoke exposure or road closures. MoH supports regional health authorities to ensure the continuity of health services including the monitoring and management of public health impacts. If the situation becomes severe, the ministry may activate its Health Emergency Coordination Centre (HECC) in Victoria, in support and coordination of the health sector response.

<b>Provincial</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a senior representative to the CCG;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a representative to the operations section of the PECC;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate the Health Emergency Management Structure as needed;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership and direction on public health issues related to smoke and air quality; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Provincial Health Services Authority provide and coordinate Provincial Disaster Psychosocial support as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional – Health Authorities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide awareness and information on health risks associated with air and water quality, food safety during power outages, and advice to help evacuees manage stress;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through health authorities and other health agencies, provide a representative to the PREOC(s) or local government EOC(s);</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate Local and Regional Health Emergency Management Structures as needed;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership and direction on public health issues related to WUI fires;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide drinking water quality expertise; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and coordinate the evacuation of health care facilities as required.</li> </ul>

**Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure**

During the provincial response to a WUI fire event the main role of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) is to monitor provincially owned highways for safety. As required or as requested by BCWS, MoTI will close provincial transportation

routes including highways and inland ferries due to poor visibility caused by smoke or risk due to wildland fires. MoTI may also close highways at the request of a local government when regular traffic may interfere with evacuations or livestock relocation. BCWS has an agreement with MoTI to provide traffic control services during fire operations, through highways maintenance contractors. (Note: RCMP may also close the highways if they feel public safety is endangered.) MoTI also provides updated information to the public through the [DriveBC](#) website.

During WUI fire response MoTI responds to fires impacting provincial highway infrastructure as well as supports the response activities of the province. Associated activities include:

<b>Provincial</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical advice and specialist expertise, support services and staff as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide representatives to the PECC as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a senior representative to the CCG; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close highways as required.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in regional planning as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide representatives to the PREOC as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When requested by a PREOC, supply heavy equipment, construction materials and/or contract equipment and operators; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete emergency highway and bridge infrastructure work.</li> </ul>
<b>Districts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate maintenance contractor site response on provincial highways;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report response activities and changes in status to Regional Operation Centres;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install road closure signs and update Drive BC notifications as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete emergency highway and bridge infrastructure work;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set priorities for sites along provincial roadways or related to provincially owned infrastructure;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the road system is reliable and safe for re-opening; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish alternate routes as required and if available.</li> </ul>

**Ministry of Agriculture**

During provincial response to wildfires the role of the Ministry of Agriculture is to facilitate the relocation of livestock, provide advice regarding assets protection, re-entry permitting and provide support to the agricultural industry. If the situation becomes severe, the ministry may activate its Ministry Emergency Operation Centre (MEOC) in Abbotsford. The Ministry of Agriculture will provide advice on the protection of livestock and the coordination for disposal of livestock carcasses.

Ministry Regional Coordinators are on call and are responsible for the pre-planning and coordination of AGRI Emergency Responder support to an EOC or PREOC. Ministry responders will be activated when a Ministry Regional Coordinator receives a direct request for assistance from the EMBC Regional Manager, PREOC or the local EOC. There are three AGRI Regional Coordinators: one in the North West/North East EMBC Region, one in the Central/ South East region, and one in the South West/ Vancouver Island region.

Where multi-jurisdictional or complex action is required, AGRI activities may include advanced planning, coordination of information, resources, and decision-making on a regional or provincial basis. This would include the activation of a MEOC in Abbotsford, or elsewhere as appropriate, which would be supported by the PECC and provide coordination on agriculture issues for agriculture industries and local governments. AGRI staff will also maintain operational linkages with the required PREOC(s).

Where hazard forecasts do permit an orderly relocation, the Ministry of Agriculture and EMBC have developed an agri-business livestock evacuation protocol during evacuation alert and/or evacuation order stages set by the local authority (“Provincial Support for Agricultural Businesses” Bulletin). This procedure will only be considered when the listed conditions are met and a request is made by the local authority for support:

- An EMBC task number has been issued for the emergency.
- The agricultural business operator has requested assistance through his or her local authority EOC.
- An evaluation of risk and capacity is completed by AGRI with applicable stakeholders (EMBC, local authority, FLNRO) and using the threat assessment form.

For further information regarding the bulletin, local authorities should contact their EMBC regional office.

During provincial response to WUI Fires the Ministry of Agriculture will:

<b>Provincial</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a senior representative to the CCG;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate a MEOC as required and to support livestock relocation activities;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide coordination of the evacuation of livestock and their care, including emergency feeding;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice on the protection and health of livestock; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice regarding the coordination for disposal of livestock carcasses.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a representative to the appropriate PREOC as required;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide agriculture related information to local government EOCs as required;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the coordination of livestock relocation and their care, including emergency feeding and coordinating with FLNRO range staff;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice on the protection of livestock, agriculture assets and re-entry permitting;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice regarding the disposal of livestock carcasses;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate to farmers through agriculture industry associations, community open houses or update sessions; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the regional planning as required.</li> </ul>

**Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens’ Services, Government Communications and Public Engagement (GCPE)**

During the provincial response to a wildland urban interface fire event the main role of the GCPE is to support EMBC and BCWS efforts for public messaging, awareness and education. This includes maintaining the Emergency Info BC blog and maintaining and monitoring the two twitter feeds (@EmergencyInfoBC for emergency alerts and notices and @PreparedBC for emergency preparedness).

Government Communications and Public Engagement (GCPE) has the primary responsibility to implement the provincial communications strategy once the provincial emergency management structure is activated. GCPE provides information officers to the PREOCs and the PECC as needed to provide expertise in media relations and public information activities. GCPE may also provide expertise and support local EOCs when requested and able. GCPE will participate as a member of the CCG. Associated activities include:

Provincial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During readiness, prepare to implement the Province’s Crisis Communications Strategy for Major Provincial Emergencies and ensure the readiness of TEAMS information officers;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief senior government officials on communications issues;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a senior representative to the core CCG;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign TEAMS Information Officers to the PECC and each regional PREOC, as requested by the PECC, and where necessary, to local authorities EOCs;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCPE-FLNRO supports Fire Information Officers within the BC Wildfire Service. BCWS is the provincial media lead and provides information to the public regarding wildfire safety, behaviour and status;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfill the Information Officer role in the PECC and PREOC;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate cross-agency media briefings; and</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the BC Crisis Communications Strategy for Major Provincial Emergencies and the CEMP Public Information Annex.</li> </ul>

### **Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development**

The Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development (CSCD) provides programs and services related to local governments, including the legislative, policy, governance and planning framework for local governments. The Ministry provides funding, advice, and other guidance to foster effective local government services, infrastructure, and governance structures. The Ministry undertakes research and policy development on matters related to local government and climate change adaptation. For example, The Ministry supported the development of the *Local Climate Change Visioning and Landscape Visualization: Guidance Manual* by the Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning at University of British Columbia which was piloted with the City of Kimberley on a climate adaptation and wildfire events project.

During the provincial response to wildfires the CSCD will:

Provincial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In support of local government recovery, provide guidance and assistance to local governments regarding infrastructure; and</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After situation assessment, may approve special operating authority/funds for local governments (in an emergency event). Specifically, the Minister may “ratify” a borrowing by-law under the <i>Emergency Program Act (13(6))</i>.</li></ul>

### **Response Roles of Key External Agency**

#### **Local Government**

Local authorities are at all times responsible for the direction and control of the local authority’s emergency response within their jurisdiction. All local authorities are required under the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* to prepare and maintain emergency plans that detail how the community will respond to known hazards including how to engage mutual aid and contingencies for external support. Every emergency responder should be familiar with basic ICS and BCEMS concepts, particularly as they define how provincial agencies interact during emergencies. Local authorities should have developed evacuation plans and established internal and external emergency communication plans.

Local authorities will establish Emergency Operations Centres to:

- Implement local government policy, priorities and emergency response plans
- Support site operations including local fire departments
- Coordinate multi-agency and volunteer activities
- Coordinate external resource requirements and mutual aid
- Coordinate evacuations including access restrictions and declarations of state of local emergency

- Provide Emergency Social Services for impacted residents
- Manage local communications and public information (such as public/media messaging and emergency radio communications)
- Initiate and coordinate community recovery efforts
- Assess infrastructure at risk and liaise with CI asset owners and responders to protect the infrastructure or mitigate the consequences of its loss
- Manage the deployment of local government owned structure protection units
- Liaise with the appropriate PREOC

In some circumstances, neighbouring local authorities may choose to coordinate the emergency response through a joint emergency operation centre.

Local fire departments are responsible to extinguish all unwanted fires within their established protection areas. If wildfires occur within a local fire protection district, the local authority is responsible for fire control and must assume a lead role in control operations. As noted previously, EMBC and BCWS will support the local government's emergency response structure as required. Upon a request from a local authority, and if resources are available, the BCWS may support local authority efforts. However, the BCWS support will be limited to wildfire control and support to the OFC structure specialist for structural or values protection, not structural firefighting. On larger fires, Fire Departments are encouraged to work with BCWS to ensure a coordinated action plan. In addition, EMBC PREOCs provide support to activated EOCs as needed and to manage the impacts and consequences of WUI fire events.

It is recognized that not all jurisdictions have fire departments. Local authorities determine the types of services that will be provided. For those that choose not to have local Fire Departments, local structural fire protection is not available. For more information see the section named Wildfires Occurring Outside of a Local Fire Protection Jurisdiction on page 20.

### **Federal Government**

When an emergency requires an integrated Government of Canada response, Public Safety Canada (PS) coordinates the response on behalf of federal government institutions and ensures adequate response to a provincial request for federal assistance in BC. Known as the "single window" concept, it is intended to facilitate interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination, without unduly restricting operations. This concept does not exclude or discourage interactions between supporting federal departments or agencies and supported provincial ministries. That said, in a situation to save life, some federal departments/agencies have legislative authority to commit resources without requiring a request for assistance to be coordinated through the PECC.

### ***Public Safety Canada***

During an emergency PS is the primary point of contact for EMBC and is responsible for the coordination of provincial requests for federal assistance. PS links into the provincial emergency management structure through the PECC and CCG to facilitate situational awareness, conduct advanced planning and coordinate requests for assistance and liaison. During WUI Fire events, PS may deploy a representative(s) to the PECC.

### ***Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada***

INAC holds legislated responsibility for emergency management on federally designated First Nations reserves. Through a letter of understanding with INAC, EMBC has agreed to support the provision of emergency response and recovery services to First Nations communities when requested by either INAC or the local Band Council. INAC BC Region Emergency Management Unit works closely with EMBC in preparing for WUI Fire Season and during a wildland urban interface fire emergency, including facilitating evacuations. INAC's Emergency Management Unit links to the provincial emergency management structure through EMBC's PECC, PREOCs and regional offices to support the coordination of response activities for First Nations on-reserve. INAC BC Region and the provincial Wildfire Management Branch (BCWS) have an agreement in place for the provision of forest protection and wildfire control services.

### ***Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada***

Under the Agri-Food Emergency Support Function of the Federal Emergency Response Plan, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) will assist BC in securing safe food and water, spare parts and fuel for producers and key ingredients for processors. AAFC will work in coordination with PS to seek alternate means of transport if the Province requests assistance for the emergency movement of livestock out of areas threatened by wildfire.

### ***Canadian Food Inspection Agency***

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) enforces the Health of Animals Regulations, which governs the humane transportation of all animals in Canada. CFIA staff engagement during livestock relocations can reduce concerns around humane livestock transport. CFIA authorizes the movement of Specified Risk Materials (SRM) under a transport permit to a permitted livestock carcass disposal site.

### ***Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada***

The Department of Fisheries Oceans Canada (DFO), through coordination with PS, can assist the Province by providing marine transportation, aerial reconnaissance with photo and video capability, law enforcement support to the RCMP and boats to secure areas in support of firefighting operations.

### ***Department of National Defence***

The Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), represented in BC by Joint Task Force Pacific (JTFP), will coordinate with PS and EMBC in preparing for a potential response to support the Province and local authorities during WUI fires. When requested and depending on the availability of military resources at the time, the Canadian Armed Forces may support civilian functions including operational planning, communications, area surveillance, evacuation support and workforce reinforcement. Liaisons may also be deployed to the PECC or PREOC if appropriate. As the Canadian Armed Forces is responsible for Air Search and Rescue, this function may also be enhanced depending on the situation.

### ***Environment & Climate Change Canada Meteorological Service***

The Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) provides vital weather and environmental information and warnings 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During WUI events the Warning Preparedness Meteorologist liaises with municipal emergency programs (coordinated through the PREOC/PECC), as BCWS is generally the fire weather forecasting agency provincially. MSC Warning Preparedness Meteorologist ensure that important weather information regarding the safety and security of people, property and critical infrastructure is received and understood by key decision-makers in a timely and efficient manner. Messaging around weather questions from the media received by MSC is coordinated with BCWS and GCPE. Only BCWS weather forecasters are to address weather conditions as they relate to fires.

### ***Health Portfolio (Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada)***

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)'s regional Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit maintains a close working relationship with the BC MoH's Emergency Management Unit, as well as PS's regional office. PHAC plays a coordination role for Health Canada's emergency management activities, and as such, serves as a single window into the federal health community in BC for external stakeholders. Health Canada's First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) works directly with First Nations communities on reserve in BC. FNHA staff actively engage in wildfire response, maintain lists of high risk individuals in First Nations communities (e.g. elders, chronically ill, etc.), identify health conditions impacted by wildfires, conduct environmental health assessments, and issue response recommendations based on health risks caused by various agents such as poor air quality, contaminated water or communicable disease. FNHA staff also have direct relationships with EMBC and link into PREOCs on a regular basis.

### ***Industry Canada***

Industry Canada's (IC) works during non-emergency times to assess risk, to raise awareness and to fund, coordinate or legislate preventative measures. During emergency events, IC's role includes, but is not limited to, situational awareness and

federal representation of the telecommunication stakeholders' interests in efforts such as fuel prioritization, credentialing, public communications, international assistance, and the movement of resources. IC emergency management role is that of coordinator of "telecommunications stakeholders" whose infrastructure may be impacted during WUI fire emergency events. IC does not own the infrastructure, and therefore, cannot carry out the physical repair of a telecommunications network.

During emergency response, IC manages the information flow to and from telecommunication stakeholders and other government departments, particularly PS. IC may become more deeply involved as situations deteriorate and requests for assistance are made from the telecommunication community, such as for additional frequencies and the acquisition and movement of goods or people (including cross-border). IC "leads" a federal response effort when telecommunications is the sole or most greatly impacted critical infrastructure during an emergency event.

### ***Parks Canada Agency***

With the role of managing Canada's National Parks, Parks Canada Agency (PCA) controls wildfires for the protection of people, infrastructure, cultural and ecological components. PCA maintains Incident Management Teams IMT for command and coordination as well wildland fire control/fire use teams. PCA has established partnerships, memorandums of understandings and cooperation agreements with Provinces and Territories for the management of wildland fires, which includes the Province of British Columbia. PCA is also a member agency of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) which coordinates resource sharing for operational wildland fire-control. As required by BCWS/EMBC, depending on availability, PCA could deploy resources through these agreements for WUI fire events.

### ***Royal Canadian Mounted Police***

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) conduct policing duties associated with regular general duty policing (e.g., controlled movement of people from an area including traffic control, evacuation, temporary re-entry and orderly return coordination, scene containment and area security) as well as operational support requirements, including coordination of response and communications interoperability on a federal, provincial and local level.

### **Oil and Gas Commission**

The Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) acts as a liaison between the industry operators and the provincial emergency management structure to provide information related to threatened oil and gas assets. If required the Oil and Gas Commission may designate a representative to attend the PREOC or may establish a government EOC at the OGC office.

### **Private Sector/Crown Corporations**

Wildfires and WUI Fires may threaten private sector assets or cause utility outages. In such cases, the provincial emergency management structure liaises directly with private sector and the crown corporations to share information, to perform advanced planning and to mitigate and manage the consequences of the fires such as power or telephone outages and other threats to critical infrastructure. In addition:

- Utilities may provide agency representatives to the PREOC or PECC to share information relating to threatened or disrupted power, telephone or gas services as well as facilitate the coordination of critical service restoration by priority.
- Rail Companies may provide agency representation to the PREOC or PECC to act as liaison and share information related to rail operations threatened or impacted by wildland fires.

### **Authoritative Sources of Information**

The following sources of information are valid for use in the development of situation reports and for gaining situational awareness.

- [Drive BC](#)
- [BC Wildfire Service](#)
- [Emergency Info BC: http://emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/](http://emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/)
- [BC Air Quality – Smoke Forecasts](#)
- Water quality advisories are posted on Health Authority websites. For advisory definitions and current advisories visit <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/protect/dwadvisories.html>

### **References**

- *Wildfire Act*
- *Wildfire Regulation, B.C. Regulation*
- *Emergency Program Act*
- *Emergency Program Management Regulation*
- *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation*
- *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation*
- *BC All-Hazard Plan*
- *Fire Smart Brochure*
- *Preparedness Information*

## Appendix A: Acronyms

AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
AGRI	Ministry of Agriculture
BCEMS	British Columbia Emergency Management System
BCWS	British Columbia Wildfire Service
CCG	Central Coordination Group
CEMP	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
CFIA	Canadian Food and Inspection Agency
CIFCC	Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre
CJOC	Canadian Joint Operation Centre
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
DND	Department of National Defence
ECC	Emergency Coordination Centre
EMBC	Emergency Management BC
EOC	Emergency Operation Centre
EPA	Emergency Program Act
ESS	Emergency Social Services
FLNRO	Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
FNHA	First Nations Health Authority
FSR	Forest Service Roads
GCPE	Government Communications and Public Engagement
HECC	Health Emergency Coordination Centre
IEPC	Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness Committee
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
IC	Industry Canada
JTFP	Joint Task Force Pacific
LGA	Local Government Act
M-DEC	Ministers-Deputies Emergency Committee
MOC	Ministry Operation Centre
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Meteorological Service of Canada
MZOC	Ministry Zone Operation Centre
OGC	Oil and Gas Commission
OFC	Office of the Fire Commissioner
PCA	Parks Canada Agency
PECC	Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre
PHAC	Public Health Agency Canada
PREOC	Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre

PS	Public Safety Canada
PWCC	Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RSWAP	Provincial Resource and Strategic Wildfire Allocation Protocol
SPU	Structure Protection Unit
TFN	Treaty First Nations
U/C	Unified Command
TEAMS	Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (EMBC or BCWS)
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

## **Appendix B: Agreements and Policies**

There are numerous agreements and policies between BCWS and other governments and stakeholders that affect how wildfires are managed such as mutual aid agreements (provincial and international), Letters of Understanding with fire departments, client services agreements, post wildfire natural hazards Memoranda of Understanding, Standard Operating Procedures and Policies, Ministry of FLNRO Policy 9.1 on Wildfire Costs and Responsibilities. The following list outlines key policies that influence response when wildfires impact communities:

### [EMBC Interim Policy and Procedures Bulletin Fire Season 2016: Reimbursement for Local Government Fire Services during Wildland Urban Interface Fires](#)

This procedure enables local governments to request additional structure firefighting resources and/or seek financial reimbursement for eligible structure firefighting costs from the Province under specific conditions as detailed in the document.

### BCWS/EMBC Letter of Understanding

In 2010 a Letter of Understanding was signed by BCWS and EMBC outlining key responsibilities and commitments of each organization in WUI response.

### SPU Protection Units

UBCM owns three Community SPU trailers that are available to communities throughout BC. These units are jointly managed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BCWS and OFC.

### [Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre \(CIFFC\)](#)

Through mutual aid resource sharing agreements, BCWS can obtain assistance nationally and internationally and can assist other fire agencies throughout Canada and the world, as needed.

### [Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement and Northwest Border Arrangement](#)

BC is a co-signatory of the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement (known as the NW Compact) and the Northwest Border Arrangement. Both of these documents work to facilitate assistance in wildland fire pre-suppression and suppression between the US states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana as well as the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

### [Provincial Support for Livestock Relocation during an Emergency](#)

Because of the size and scale of agricultural businesses and time needed to evacuate, this procedure allows for evacuation of agricultural businesses during an evacuation 'alert' stage. Agricultural business operations are defined by the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act.