How do I go about getting my department involved in structure protection deployments?
The OFC sends out information packages to all fire departments and regional Districts in British Columbia asking for expressions of interest in participating in the structure protection program. Interested departments are required to submit their expression of interest by the date indicated. Also, to be included, each department must submit their available apparatus and personnel which meet the minimum requirements as determined by the Office of the Fire Commissioner, BC Wildfire Service and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC.

Our department has an apparatus which is in excellent condition but is older than 20 years. Will this apparatus be acceptable for use?
Yes. Older apparatus may be used if it successfully passes annual pump and mechanical certification. Maintenance and testing should only be completed by a qualified Mechanic certified to perform maintenance and servicing of the apparatus. Documentation of current certification must be presented to the OFC Staging Manager/Representative at the Staging Area prior to assignment.

We didn’t register our department but now want to help. Can we self-deploy resources if we see a need?
No. To respond to an incident, departments must be requested by either BCWS or the OFC by way of a draw down contract. Departments arriving at the staging area must provide the Staging Manager with a copy of their draw down contract. Failure to produce the contract will result in the department being sent home at their own expense.

What is the process once we are requested to deploy?
Resources are sent to either stand-by areas, apparatus staging areas or BCWS fire camps prior to being given assignments. A Staging Manager will sign in all responding resources. All resources will be vetted for appropriate apparatus, equipment, crew and personnel equipment. Once vetted and signed in, crews will be given assignments as required (assigned to Strike Teams or Task Force Teams)Departments sending crews and/or apparatus not meeting the minimum requirements will be returned home at their own expense.

What are the required forms and paperwork that need to be completed?
Responding Fire Departments must produce their “draw down” contract upon arrival to the staging area. Once signed in, briefed and given assignments, the Officer of the crew must complete a Daily Time Record for every day of the assignment (including travel days). This time record must be filled completely and signed by the designated OFC or Provincial Representative each day. The officer should also complete a daily log outlining activities for each day. Copies of the DTR and daily log must be included with the submitted invoice for payment.
Q. What is the reimbursement rate for apparatus damaged during deployment?
A. Apparatus 20 years or newer damaged during deployment are reimbursed at 100%. Apparatus 21 year+ are reimbursed at 75%.

During deployment, some of our equipment went missing or was damaged/ Our Apparatus was damaged. Are we reimbursed for this?
Yes. As stated in the Inter-Agency Agreement, equipment damaged or lost, and damage to apparatus as a result of a provincial deployment will be reimbursed. However, damage to equipment or apparatus and/or missing equipment must be reported to the OFC Representative prior to departure (demobilization). Failure to do so will invalidate any future claims.

My department’s policy is to send a command vehicle (including an officer) whenever our apparatus responds out of district. Will we be compensated for that extra command vehicle and officer?
No. Extra personnel over and above the minimum requirements as set by the Inter-Agency Agreement will not be covered. This includes all costs associated with the extra vehicle and personnel (accommodation, food, travel, wages, fuel etc.). Do not send extra personnel and apparatus unless specifically requested. Extra personnel will be sent home at your own expense.

Can we send an Engine with 3 crew members and/or a Tender with only one crew member?
No. Apparatus arriving at the staging area without the required crew numbers (4 for an engine, 2 for a Tender) will not be accepted and will be returned or, retained in the staging area until the arrival of the required crew member, at your own expense.

What crew personal equipment is required?
Crews are required to have all the personal protective equipment as identified in the Inter-Agency Procedures and also included in this information package (see Structural Firefighter Crew – Protection Equipment Checklist). Also, each crew member should be prepared to be self-sufficient for 48 hours. Crews are to provide their own tents, sleeping bags, pillows and other personal items.

A wildfire has moved into my jurisdiction. Will BCWS or OFC compensate my department for our time in dealing with this emergency?
Fires within a fire department’s local jurisdiction are the responsibility of that department and are not normally compensated by the Province. However, extraordinary circumstances will be considered for compensation on a case by case basis.

What is the OFC policy on consumption of alcohol and drugs during deployment?
The OFC has zero tolerance for consuming alcohol or drugs during deployment which is consistent with BCWS policy. This includes, but not limited to, travel days to and from the incident and off duty hours. Departments are reminded of the Code of Conduct in the appendices of the Inter-Agency Operational Procedures.

Why does it take so long after we have submitted our deployment invoice to be compensated by the Province?
The Province, whether it is BCWS or EMBC, processes invoices as quickly as possible. However, there are several things your department, Regional District or city can do to expedite the process:
1) Provide the person submitting the invoice, usually from your Finance department, a copy of the Inter-Agency Agreement and this information package so that they have an understanding of what is eligible for compensation;

2) Submit all required supporting documentation with the detailed invoice (this includes all Daily Time Records, Daily Logs, hotel receipts, travel receipts and a copy of the draw down contract).

3) Submit the invoice to the correct address as indicated on your draw down contract. And provide a contact from your department and finance section.