

Emergency Social Services – Returning Home After an Evacuation (Re-entry)

- Residents returning home are advised to bring a minimum of 3 days of food, drinking water and essential supplies as their local stores may not yet have adequate stock.
- Consider the unique needs of your family such as medications, pets and items you rely on daily.
- Ensure your vehicle is fully fuelled.

Local Community

- Your community may choose to put resources in place to support your return home. Check their website or community notice board and monitor local media for details.
- Inquire with your local authority if you wish to contribute to the recovery efforts.

I still have a referral form (voucher) for accommodation. What should I do with it?

- A referral form (or voucher) is issued to evacuees who need funding for lodging, food and necessary supplies for the duration of their evacuation.
- As your community is now permitted return home, these forms are no longer needed. Upon departure, it is important to sign out of the facility where you have been staying.
- For more information about the referral forms for evacuees, please call 1-800-585-9559.

The evacuation order has ended and I cannot return home due to health or safety issues. Am I still eligible for Emergency Social Services?

People unable to return home, may still be eligible to receive Emergency Social Services. If you require an extension on services, contact your Reception Centre or local authority.

How long will evacuees be provided aid?

ESS may continue to provide aid based on need until recovery has been established to support those evacuees unable to return home.

Clean up Kits

Household flood clean up kits may be provided to evacuees transitioning to recovery through the local Recovery/Resilience Centre should they be required.

Take Care of Yourself & Your Family

Fear, stress and anxiety are natural reactions to a traumatic event. To help yourself, your loved ones and your community:

- Accept and offer help and comfort; seek support if necessary

- Focus on positive memories and the skills you've used to get through other hard times
- Be aware of children's reactions
- Give yourself, friends and family permission to grieve and time to heal
- Get physical activity, rest as needed, eat well, hydrate and keep a manageable schedule

Re-Entering Your Home

Your home and its surroundings may not look like they did before you left. As you arrive, it's important to obey all signage and understand Damage Assessment Placards. Damage Assessment Placards are notices that the local government places on buildings within the damaged area. They tell you whether a structure is suitable for re-entry, if access is restricted or if it is unsafe to enter. Visit BC Housing for more information on placards. If you can only enter your home once, remove your valuables and take steps to secure your property.

If you're safely able to return for longer:

- Bring supplies like a flashlight, tools, drinking water, gloves, garbage bags and a first aid kit.
- Walk around the perimeter of any structure before entering, noting electrical wiring, any gas smell or debris that could fall, and photographing damage.
- Enter with caution and check that the main power breaker is off.
- Only use generators outdoors; do not connect to a household circuit.
- Note sewage and water damage; your septic system or sump pump may not work without power and water may not be potable (that is, may not be safe to consume).
- Do not use your sewage disposal system unless you know it's capable of handling waste.
- If using propane, gas or heating oil, contact suppliers for inspection and service.

Take pictures, keep track of your expenses and the time you spend cleaning up and make sure you keep your receipts.

Continue to monitor emergency channels and have a plan in place if the local situation changes.