



## Overview

BC Wildfire Service integrated the Fire Services program in 2017, enabling interoperable wildland urban interface/intermix (WUI) fire operations with local government, First Nations, and other stakeholders. BCWS Fire Services is responsible for training, mobilization, deployment, and demobilization of fire department and contractor resources in response to WUI incidents. To facilitate this, Fire Services is a team of 12 full-time and 44 seasonal Structure Protection Specialists, logistics, and administrative personnel. Fire Services also staffs the provincial Structure Protection Coordination Officer (SPCO) position and provides subject matter expertise to support WUI response across the Province of BC.

Built on the three pillars of structure protection, structure defense, and large water moving systems, BCWS Fire Services program success is based on these core elements ensuring a comprehensive and balanced approach. Structure Protection and Structure Defense deployments are based on various factors, including fire size and incident complexity. When determined that communities, homes, or infrastructure may be impacted or threatened by wildfire, an Incident Commander (IC) will request a Structure Branch Director (STBD), or a Structure Protection Specialist (SPS) be deployed by the SPCO. Once assigned to an incident, they develop Structure Defense Plans to determine the type and number of resources required.

## Structure Protection

Structure protection activities are carried out by Structure Protection Crews (SPC); specially trained five-person crews of firefighters. The SPC's utilize specialized equipment housed in Structure Protection Units (SPUs). BC Wildfire Service owns and operates 10 Type-1 SPUs housed in 53-foot semi-trailers with sufficient equipment to protect up to 100 homes and infrastructure. In addition, BCWS Fire Services has access to more than 40 Type-2 SPUs through contractors and fire departments. A Type-2 SPU is typically a 20-foot enclosed cargo trailer with enough equipment to protect 30-40 homes and infrastructure. Currently, BCWS owns 3 of the Type-2 SPUs and is slated to have a fleet of 16 Type-2 SPUs in place by the 2027 fire season. These resources are strategically prepositioned throughout the province during wildfire season.

## Structure Defense

Structure Defense is the deployment of fire department personnel and resources such as fire engines (structural & wildland) and water tenders to protect homes and infrastructure from wildfires. Successful firefighting operations in the WUI are accomplished by developing sound strategies and tactical actions that keep firefighters safe, protect the public, and minimize property loss or damage. Over 100 fire departments in BC annually pre-register their personnel and equipment for provincial deployments.

## Large Water Moving Systems

BCWS owns and operates 4 Large Water Moving Systems (LWMS) and has Standing Arrangements with 6 contract providers. These innovative water supply systems utilize powerful pumps and manifolds that draw vast amounts of water from lakes and rivers to support response operations. Typically, the LWMS are used to support structure protection systems such as sprinklers, wet lines, and water supply locations for structure defense resources such as fire engines and water tenders.

## Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

Coordination and cooperation in WUI fire management is a collaboration between the BC Wildfire Service and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC (FCABC). This relationship is captured in the guiding document *Memorandum of Agreement for Interagency Operational Procedures and Reimbursement Rates* (the 'IAA'). Through the IAA and the FCABC, BCWS Fire Services is linked to over 300 fire departments, with on average 126 being directly engaged in wildfire deployments. Additionally, 65 fire department personnel from across the province are qualified for deployment as single resources such as Strike Team Leaders, Task Force Leaders, Division Supervisors, and other specialty roles.

## Training Support

Fire Services provides professional development and training courses to Fire Departments, contractors, and First Nations. Completion of required courses qualifies personnel for structure protection and structure defense deployments during the wildfire season and builds local capacity. BCWS Fire Services trains approximately 2,000 structural firefighters annually in a range of curriculum such as;

- Division/Group Supervisor
- Strike Team/Task Force Leader
- Staging Area Manager
- Engine Boss
- Structure Protection Crew Leader
- Structure Protection Program (SPP-115)
- Wildland Fire Fighter Level 1 'Train the Trainer'

In addition, BCWS Fire Services oversees curriculum development and delivery of Day 1 & 2 of the annual 5-day Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit.

## More Information

More information on BCWS Fire Services, training opportunities, provincial deployments, and contact information, can all be found at [BC Wildfire Service - Fire Services - Province of British Columbia](#).

