
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2017FLNR0171-001319
July 17, 2017

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource
Operations
BC Wildfire Service

Australia to aid British Columbia's wildfire response efforts

KAMLOOPS – With British Columbia continuing to battle wildfires during an exceptionally severe wildfire season, a contingent of specialized wildfire personnel from Australia will be coming to B.C. to assist with wildfire response.

About 50 wildfire personnel, including a combination of officers and technical specialists, are scheduled to arrive in Vancouver on Wednesday, July 19. These personnel will be deployed throughout the province, based on current and anticipated wildfire activity. They could remain in B.C. for up to 38 days.

The Australians' expertise will help maintain the BC Wildfire Service's high success rate for containing new fires. They also will augment the response to existing fires by allowing B.C. personnel to take mandatory days off so they can begin another cycle of fire suppression operations.

British Columbia has fostered a mutually beneficial wildfire management relationship with Australia for over 10 years and has a resource-sharing agreement in place with the State of Victoria. This agreement allows for the exchange of personnel, knowledge, skills, equipment, technology and mutual support in the event of an emergency. The cost of bringing in the Australians will be covered by the Province of B.C.

Wildland fire personnel from B.C. were deployed to Australia in 2007 and 2009 to help respond to busy fire seasons there, since the height of the Australian fire season typically occurs during B.C.'s winter and spring months. Personnel from Australia also were deployed to B.C. to assist with firefighting efforts in 2009, 2014 and 2015.

These personnel will join more than 1,600 provincial staff, 940 B.C. contractors and over 450 out-of-province personnel already actively engaged in fire suppression in British Columbia.

Hot and dry weather conditions have once again elevated the fire danger rating throughout the province. Most of B.C. is currently experiencing a "high" to "extreme" fire danger rating, which means that forest fuels are easily ignited. Firefighting crews are on standby in all six of B.C.'s fire centres in preparation for an anticipated increase in fire starts over the next few days.

The BC Wildfire Service has responded to 657 wildfires so far this season. About half of these fires were caused by lightning and serve as a reminder that as lightning activity increases, extra caution is needed to prevent person-caused wildfires. Each person-caused fire diverts critical resources away from lightning-caused fires.

Report a wildfire or unattended campfire by calling 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or *5555 on a

cellphone.

For the latest information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions, road closures and air quality advisories, go to: <http://www.bcwildfire.ca>

Quick Facts:

- Fire danger ratings are based on readings from over 200 weather stations throughout the province.
- An “extreme” fire danger rating indicates that forest fuels are extremely dry and the fire risk is very serious. New fires will start easily, spread rapidly and make fire-suppression efforts challenging.

Learn More:

You can follow the latest B.C. wildfire news:

- On Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo>
- On Facebook: <http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo>

Contacts:

Fire Information	Joint Information Centre
BC Wildfire Service	Media Line
Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre	778 698-7452
250 312-3051	

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect