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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2024FOR0049-001687  
Dec. 29, 2024

Ministry of Forests  
Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate  
Readiness

### **B.C. reflects on another year fighting wildfires, building climate resiliency**

VICTORIA – In 2024, the BC Wildfire Service worked with people and communities to fight wildfires and build climate resiliency throughout B.C.

Since April 1, 2024, a total of 1,688 wildfires resulted in approximately 1.08 million hectares burned. More than 70% of wildfires this season were caused by lightning, while slightly fewer than 30% were attributed to human activity. A small percentage remains undetermined.

“I want to thank the hardworking members of the BC Wildfire Service who put their lives on the line every day to protect British Columbians and their communities from the devastating impact of wildfires,” said Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests. “Their dedication and bravery are nothing short of extraordinary, especially as wildfire seasons grow longer and more intense, putting greater pressure on people, ecosystems and communities.”

The growing impact of climate change is creating more demand for advanced wildfire strategies in rural and remote communities. Building on the recommendations of the Premier’s Expert Task Force on Emergencies, the BC Wildfire Service is working in partnership with trained local community members who are interested in supporting response efforts around their communities.

In 2024, there were 51 evacuation orders, which affected more than 4,100 properties, and 112 evacuation alerts, which affected more than 11,600 properties.

“People’s lives are increasingly being impacted by the effects of climate change and we must be proactive in how we prepare for climate-driven emergencies,” said Kelly Greene, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. “We have applied lessons learned from 2023 wildfires by introducing flexible supports for evacuees, making it easier for people to receive those supports and improving preparedness tools. Our first priority is to ensure that people and communities have the tools and resources they need to stay safe during emergencies.”

The Province is expanding the number of firefighting tools available to crews to provide broader response capabilities. Throughout 2024, upgrades were made to firefighting equipment and fire-camp infrastructure, which are critical to the safety and well-being of wildland firefighters. Additionally, the BC Wildfire Service purchased and used more on-the-ground firefighting equipment, such as pumps, fire-camp equipment and safety gear, as well as medical and hygiene equipment.

This year, a wildfire training and education centre was announced. A first-of-its-kind in North America, the centre is a partnership with Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops. The

program will offer comprehensive wildfire training and education, progressing from basic field skills to academic diploma and degree programs in wildfire and emergency management disciplines. The dedicated wildfire program will offer career development pathways in wildfire management for B.C.'s future wildland firefighters.

Other 2024 milestones include:

- using predictive software that harnesses real-time information from the field to better predict how wildfires behave;
- implementing night-vision imaging systems on active wildfires; and
- new and improved preparedness tools ahead of the wildfire season to help people plan and stay informed, such as redevelopment of the BC Wildfire mobile and web application.

**Learn More:**

For a review about preparedness, prevention, response and recovery efforts throughout the 2024 wildfire season, visit the BC Wildfire Service's season summary webpage:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/about-bcws/wildfire-history/wildfire-season-summary>

To learn more about the Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/emergency-management/emergency-activation/em-taskforce>

The Emergency Ready Planner is available online:

<https://blog.gov.bc.ca/emergencymanagement/emergencyready/>

Visit the updated and redesigned the EmergencyInfoBC:

<https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Preparedness tools developed for 2024 wildfire season**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, the BC Wildfire Service highlighted new and improved preparedness tools ahead of the 2024 wildfire season to help people plan and stay informed.

This included redevelopment of the BC Wildfire mobile and web application, which provides users with timely and accurate information about wildfires throughout the province. The Province also created the Emergency Ready Planner, an online, interactive tool to help people create a personalized emergency and evacuation plan. The Emergency Ready Planner is available online.

To better support people who cannot meet their own needs during evacuations from wildfires and other climate emergencies, in 2024, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness introduced several improved measures stemming from the recommendations of the Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies, such as:

- an accommodation allowance of \$200 per night, which is available through Interac e-Transfer. This provides people with greater flexibility choosing where they stay during an evacuation, such as whether to stay with family or friends, find a hotel on their own or stay at a campground. Alternatively, people can still receive a direct referral to a hotel or other accommodation from their local government or First Nation.
- a new Interac e-Transfer direct deposit option for people to get quicker access to emergency support for accommodation, food or clothing during large-scale evacuations.
- the new BC Evacuee Helpline launched by the Province to help cut down on lineups at evacuation reception centres and allow more flexibility in registering for Emergency Support Services. People also have the option of visiting a reception centre to receive support in person.
- an updated and redesigned EmergencyInfoBC website to improve user experience, especially on mobile devices. This includes an easy-to-use share feature, inviting people to share accurate emergency information with their social network.

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