
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests

BC Wildfire Service crews welcomed home from California

VICTORIA – BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) crews have returned to B.C. after two weeks supporting the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) with wildfire fighting efforts in Los Angeles.

“In times of need, we will always be there for our friends; that’s who we are as British Columbians and as Canadians,” said Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests. “Firefighters don’t ask questions, they run into fires. I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of the crew members who made the trip south.”

On Jan. 11, 2025, the BCWS deployed a senior management team of 13 technical specialists to support CAL FIRE’s efforts to control the fast-moving Palisades wildfire. Working directly alongside the American incident management team, B.C.’s team supported in planning, logistics, operations, aviation, fire weather and information roles.

“BCWS members integrated into the team, supporting various incident command system positions,” said David Scheurich, staff chief, CAL FIRE. “This collaboration highlighted differences in processes, paving the way for greater future integration between the agencies. As wildfires grow larger and more destructive worldwide, partnerships like these are essential, and we are grateful to our B.C. partners and all the other states and countries that lent their support.”

In addition, 22 front-line personnel and one agency representative from the BCWS arrived on Jan. 16, 2025, to provide a variety of wildland firefighting support roles. This crew participated in fire-readiness activities, rehabilitation work and front-line wildfire suppression on the Eaton and Hughes wildfires.

The top priority for the BCWS in California was to support CAL FIRE with expertise and personnel. They also gained valuable experience managing large fires in the wildland urban interface, which is the area where wilderness meets communities.

Working alongside American firefighters, B.C. crews were able to integrate with their operations and build familiarity with the terrain and processes by conducting response scenarios. This included dispatching, mapping, building a fire line with a variety of hand tools and fire-suppression techniques without the availability of water. By working together and coordinating processes, BCWS crews and their American partners will be better able to fight future wildfires in B.C.

Contact:

Ministry of Forests
Media Relations
250 380-8491

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