
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Emergency Management BC

Provincial state of emergency declared

VICTORIA – The B.C. government has declared a provincial state of emergency to support the provincewide response to the ongoing wildfire situation.

Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, made the declaration based on the recommendation from B.C.'s wildfire and emergency management officials.

The state of emergency is initially in effect for 14 days once issued and may be extended or rescinded as necessary. The state of emergency applies to the whole province and ensures federal, provincial and local resources can be delivered in a co-ordinated response to protect the public, which remains the provincial government's top priority.

"Public safety is always our first priority, and as wildfire activity is expected to increase, this is a progressive step in our wildfire response to make sure British Columbia has access to any and all resources necessary," said Farnworth. "Taking this step will further ensure we can protect the public, property and infrastructure, and assist with firefighting efforts."

As of Aug. 14, there were 566 wildfires burning in B.C., with 29 evacuation orders affecting approximately 3,050 people (1,521 properties), in addition to 48 evacuation alerts impacting approximately 18,720 people (9,359 properties). The extended weather forecast calls for continued hot and dry conditions, with risk of thunderstorms in some parts of the province.

Currently, more than 3,372 firefighters and contractors are actively engaged in fighting fires in all fire regions of the province. This includes 1,427 B.C. contract personnel, as well as 436 out-of-province personnel from Alberta, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Parks Canada, Australia, Mexico and New Zealand.

The federal government has responded to and accepted British Columbia's request for assistance. In the coming days, federal personnel and resources will be arriving in B.C. to assist with wildfire efforts.

"Given the unpredictable behaviour of wildfires and the number of significant wildfires in all areas of the province, we're bringing in the additional resources we need to keep people and communities as safe as possible," said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "We're asking British Columbians to do their part and follow burning bans and restrictions to prevent human-caused fires."

The state of emergency gives agencies, such as the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Emergency Management BC, the fire commissioner and the RCMP, the authority to take every action necessary to fight the wildfires and protect people and communities.

Quick Facts:

- Declarations of provincial states of emergency may be issued by the minister responsible under the Emergency Program Act.
- The provincial government can extend the period of a declaration made by the minister responsible for further periods of time.
- During the 2017 wildfire season, the Province was in a provincial state of emergency for 10 weeks from July 7 to Sept. 15.
- The last provincial declaration of state of emergency before the 2017 wildfire season was issued in August 2003, to also deal with wildfires.

Learn More:

For information on evacuation orders and alerts, visit Emergency Info BC:

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

Keep up to date on the provincial wildfire situation: www.bcwildfire.ca

Contact:

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