



# Customer support and assistance during wildfire season

At BC Hydro, our top priority is the safety of the public and our employees. We prepare for wildfire season year-round and take precautionary measures, including inspecting equipment regularly, applying fire retardant to wooden power poles and managing vegetation that could be hazardous.

Our crews work closely with local and provincial emergency authorities in the event of wildfire. For updates on the status of wildfires, fire danger ratings and fire bans, visit the **BC Wildfire Service website**. In the event of wildfire, stay away from and do not touch BC Hydro infrastructure (lines, poles, towers, hydro boxes, etc.). Always assume that any fallen or damaged infrastructure is live and dangerous.

Getting prepared with an emergency kit and an evacuation plan is the best way to keep you and your family safe.

## Planning ahead for evacuations

As we are in the midst of an active wildfire season, we're encouraging customers to be prepared by planning ahead and knowing what to do to keep you and your family safe if you are evacuated.

- **Develop an emergency evacuation plan:** PreparedBC has a **downloadable plan template**. Your plan should include what you'll do in the event of an extended power outage. Make note of where your main electrical power switch is, label it and know how to shut it off safely should you have to leave your house during an emergency. Also, make a list of local emergency contact numbers (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- **Prepare an emergency kit:** This should include enough supplies for you and your family for at least 72 hours and store it in an easy-to-find location. Your kit should also have a copy of emergency contact numbers and important family documents (copies of birth and marriage certificates, medical care card, wills, insurance and policy providers, etc.).
- **Know what to do during an evacuation:** If you're under an evacuation order, turn off all unnecessary appliances, such as air conditioners and hot tubs; unplug sensitive electrical equipment and appliances, such as televisions and computers; remove food from your refrigerator; leave the door open before evacuating, but only if there's enough time to do so; and, turn off all lights except for one exterior light, which will indicate to BC Hydro crews that power is on at the residence.

## Power outages and disconnections during evacuations

We aim to keep power on for as long as possible in communities affected by evacuation orders and alerts. Power will only be disconnected when there's an immediate threat to our infrastructure or concern for the safety of the public or emergency responders. Please note that our crews are restricted from entering evacuated areas to restore power during an outage.

## Returning home after an evacuation

If you experience problems with your power when you return home after the evacuation order has been lifted, call **1 800 BC HYDRO (1 800 224 9376)**. Depending on the extent of damage, power could be out for several days. We'll coordinate with agencies and local authorities to restore services.

It should be noted that not all areas under an evacuation order experience power outages. Before you return home, you can check to see if your power is on two ways:

- Using your mobile device, visit our **outages page**, scroll to the bottom and select the address tile. Enter your home address in the search bar to see if there's currently an outage for your property.
- Call **1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376)** and follow the prompts to identify your property and be provided with any outage information or speak directly with an agent.

If you've returned home and the digital clocks aren't blinking, then you likely didn't have a power outage.

## Help for evacuees

We know that the last thing you're thinking about if have to evacuate your home or business is turning off lights, appliances and electronics. That's why we proactively monitor evacuation orders in the province and offer bill credits and payment plans for customers who are evacuated due to a natural disaster, like a wildfire, flood or landslide.

Residential and commercial customers who are affected by an evacuation order are eligible to receive a credit for the electricity consumed for the duration of the time they're out of their home, if the order is for five days or longer. You don't need to call to tell us about your evacuation. The credit will be automatically applied to your next bill. We also offer flexible bill payment plans for when you're able to return home.

For residential customers whose property was unfortunately destroyed as a result of the natural disaster, we'll automatically waive all electricity charges since the previous billing period, including for electricity used prior to the evacuation order. Waiving these charges means you won't receive a final bill for the account. We proactively monitor evacuation areas where properties were lost so there's no need to call us to report. We'll also waive the electricity service connection charge for any residential customer that rebuilds their home if it's not paid for by insurance.

## Contact information for other agencies

There are a number of other agencies that offer important information and support during wildfires:

Agency	Contact information
Report a wildfire	1 800 663 5555 or *5555 on a cell
Fire information	1 888 336 7378
Burn registration	1 888 797 1717
Highway conditions and road closures	DriveBC.ca
Emergency Support Services	For up-to-date list of evacuation orders 1 800 585 9559
Canadian Red Cross Family Reunification	For those who have been separated from family in evacuation or emergency 1 800 863 6582
Property damage	Contact your insurance provider or the Insurance Bureau of Canada's Consumer Information Centre at 1 844 227 5422
Inspecting damaged electrical equipment	technicalsafetybc.ca or 1 866 566 7233

In some instances, Disaster Financial Assistance is available through the Government of B.C. Please refer to **Financial assistance in a disaster – Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)** to determine if you may be eligible.