

Attention Residents: Possibility of Evacuations

Overview

This communication from your Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) is to inform residents of the potential evacuations of peoples in the region this year.

Though disasters can happen year-round, our community is particularly vulnerable to flooding from ice-jams in the spring and forest fires in the summer, both of which have required evacuations of communities within the NWT in the last few years. The island of Fort Simpson was evacuated due to flooding in 2021.

Fort Simpson is also a regional hub, and therefore is called on to assist the smaller communities with hosting and other assistance should they be evacuated. We may have to be a welcoming place for those in need this year as well.

Fires do not have to be directly within the communities to seriously affect them. Lack of road access due to fire or smoke threatens our supply chains. Smoke can stop aircraft operations and cause health problems. Firebrands and sparks can travel long distances on the winds, starting spot fires where they land.

Please consider the following:

Conditions

The March 6 Water Monitoring Bulletin from the GNWT shows the Mackenzie and Liard rivers at record lows, and a “well below average” snow-water equivalent for Fort Simpson. For details on this and other info, visit <https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/newsroom>.

If there is not a large increase in precipitation, we will be starting the warmer months very dry. While this makes it unlikely for the river to flood, it will make us very vulnerable to fires.

Communications

All official communications by the LEMO will first be posted on <https://fortsimpson.com/>, then distributed to other websites, radio, and text alert as required.

In the event of power or communication failure, bulletins will be physically posted at the Rec Center for residents. If required, door-to-door notification of evacuation will be employed.

Preparedness

The LEMO is advising all residents to be prepared for the possibility of evacuation. Packing for yourself and your family in advance is recommended, see attached packing list for suggestions on what to prepare.

Homeowners should be aware of the dangers to their properties and follow attached FireSmart guidelines as much as possible. There is serious risk of fire spread to buildings in a forest fire situation,

and following FireSmart guidelines could be the measure that saves your home. Refer to attached infographic for tips. To this end, the Village will continue to provide free large item pickup for residents, leave large items and branches at the end of your driveway and they will be taken to the dump.

If you require assistance to evacuate, it is important to identify this to friends and family beforehand. Taking care of each other is paramount in times of crisis, and the groups that make up our community will need to come together to keep each other safe.

Evacuation Procedure

Types of Evacuation information posts that may be issued:

Evacuation Warning

- Used when a situation is identified that *may* result in the calling of a general evacuation.
- Used when ample time is estimated for residents to prepare.
- Not necessarily an emergency yet.
- *Ex. High water levels/ A small fire in the region with the potential to threaten the community in the future.*

Evacuation Alert

- Used when a situation is identified that if conditions do not improve, *will likely* result in evacuation.
- Can be issued at any time.
- Potential for serious emergency, those who can leave should consider doing so early.
- Last chance for preparation.
- *Ex. Ice jammed and water levels rising/ a predicted wind change will move a fire towards the community.*

Evacuation Order

- Used when a situation is identified that *will* threaten lives or infrastructure, and a general evacuation is required to protect them.
- Can be issued at any time, with or without previous warnings or alerts.
- Those with the ability to leave the evacuation zone should do so as soon as possible, following all instructions given.
- Citizens with no transportation should proceed to the Rec center.
- Those who refuse to evacuate must be aware that essential services such as water, power, food, and emergency services can become unavailable unexpectedly and at anytime.
- *Ex. Water risen above safe levels/ fire is threatening (or starts in) community.*

Residents are required to register before they evacuate, only one form per household is required. The registration will take place at the Rec center. Pre-filling the attached form can help to increase evacuation efficiency and is recommended by the LEMO.

Evacuating to safety is an important job for the people to accomplish. If we can get our families and friends out of harms way, the emergency response and governmental groups can focus on protecting the things that cannot be moved. By having your household packed and ready to leave, following FireSmart guidelines, and remaining up to date on information, you will have done your part to help our Village be safe.

Your Local Emergency Management Organization is taking the threat of evacuations seriously due to the conditions and the events of last summer, we hope you do the same and take the time now to prepare.

Please continue to check <https://fortsimpson.com> for updates and information as we move forward.

Thank you.

Emergency Contacts

RCMP* (867) 695-1111

Health Center* (867) 695-3232

Fire Department (867) 695-2222

Rec Center* (867) 695-3300

Wildfire 1-877-698-3473

Village Office (867) 695-2253

*worked without internet access, must not use 867

Info Websites

<https://fortsimpson.com/>

<https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/en/BeReadyNWT>

<https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/FireSmart>

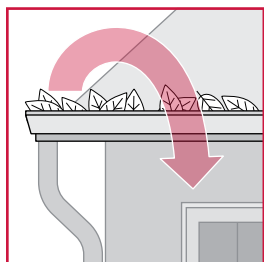
<https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/public-safety>

<https://nrc.canada.ca/en/certifications-evaluations-standards/codes-canada/construction-innovation/new-national-guide-wildland-urban-interface-fires>

THREE STEPS TO A COST-EFFECTIVE FIRESMART™ HOME

Step 1: Maintain what you've got at least twice per year

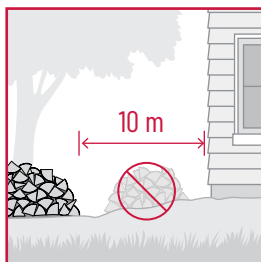
Do-it-yourself, \$0 - \$300



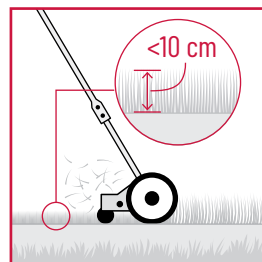
- 1 Remove needles, leaves and other debris from gutters, roof surfaces, decks and balconies. Regularly clean vents.



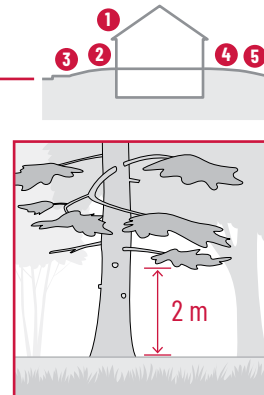
- 2 Remove all combustible ground cover (mulch and plants) within 1.5 m of the house perimeter.



- 3 Remove combustible materials (firewood and lumber) stored within 10 m of house perimeter and under decks.



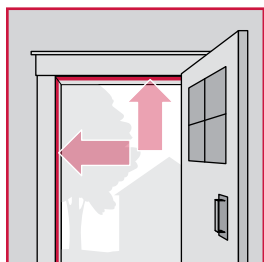
- 4 Mow the lawn to <10 cm and plant low-growing, well-spaced shrubs and other fire-resistant plants.



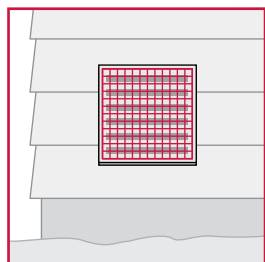
- 5 Prune trees to create a 2 m clearance from the ground to the lowest tree branches.

Step 2: Complete simple upgrades

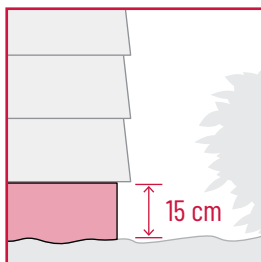
\$300 - \$3,000



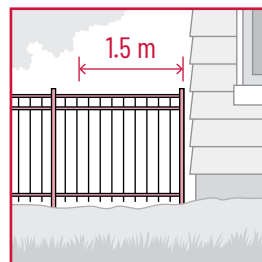
- 1 Replace worn or missing weather stripping on all doors including garage doors.



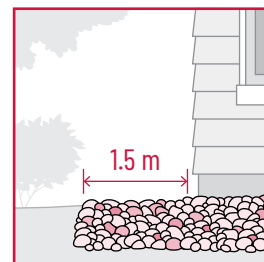
- 2 Add a non-combustible 3 mm screen to all external vents, except dryer vents.



- 3 Create a 15 cm ground-to-siding non-combustible clearance (e.g., install cement board or metal skirting).



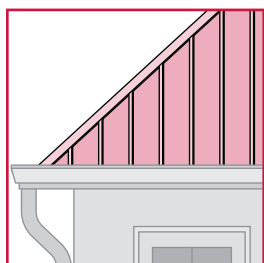
- 4 Install non-combustible fencing within 1.5 m of the house (cement fiber, metal, chain link or stone).



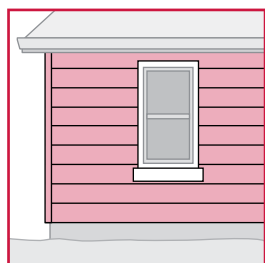
- 5 Install non-combustible ground surfaces within 1.5 m of the house (mineral soil, rock, concrete or stone).

Step 3: Complete more complex upgrades

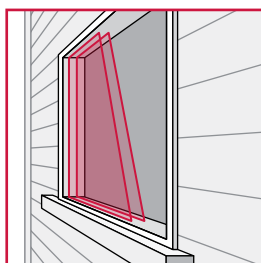
Work with a contractor, \$3,000 - \$30,000



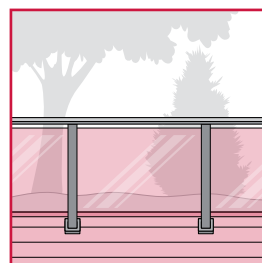
- 1 Install Class A fire-resistant roof covering (e.g., cement fibre, metal or asphalt shingles).



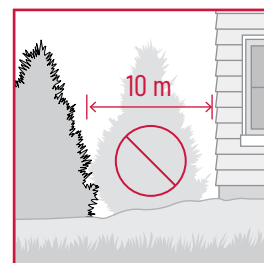
- 2 Install non-combustible siding (stucco, metal, stone, cement fibre board).



- 3 Install multi-pane or tempered glass windows and exterior fire rated doors.



- 4 Retrofit all deck components to be fire-rated, with a continuous surface.



- 5 Remove conifer trees that are within 10 m of the house.

Note: not all actions will be applicable to each home. Completing these steps does not eliminate the risk of home or structure ignition.



EVACUEE (PRE)REGISTRATION FORM

- This form is for use by Local EMOs in the event of a community evacuation.
- Only one form per address/household is required.
- This form must be completed in full.

DD/MM/YYYY

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full name

Physical address

Phone

Alternate phone

Primary language spoken

Household member list:

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

Full name

Age

EVACUEE (PRE)REGISTRATION FORM

ASSISTANCE

Mobility/Medical/Social considerations

Do any of your family members require special considerations (mobility issues, medical/social needs, etc.)?

If any household members request special assistance regarding above, please list additional information for:

- Home health/hospice care
- Live-in caregiver

Full name

Relationship

Phone

Full name

Relationship

Phone

Full name

Relationship

Phone

Be Ready
for Emergencies

EVACUEE (PRE)REGISTRATION FORM

Transportation

Do you require evacuation assistance?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If YES: Please specify what assistance is needed:

If NO: Please specify how you will travel out of the community:

Do you have a designated person you will be contacting once you reach your destination?

☐ YES

☐ NO

SERVICE ANIMAL INFORMATION

Note: With the exception of service animals, pets are not permitted at shelters

Do you have a service animal?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If YES: Please specify animal type (dog/other):

Be Ready
for Emergencies

EVACUEE (PRE)REGISTRATION FORM

Lodging

Where are you staying for the duration of the evacuation? (eg: with family/friends/requesting lodging at evacuation centre)

- Evacuees requiring a place to stay will be provided information on the location of the nearest evacuation centre.
- Evacuation centres will consist of a group lodging format which is usually located in an arena- or school gymnasium- type facility, and typically includes cots, blankets, and other basic necessities. Commercial lodging only considered when absolutely necessary based on advice from the healthcare system.
- Residents who chose not to stay at the reception centre, must bear any costs of making alternate accommodations if applicable and will not qualify for reimbursement by the GNWT.



Wildfire Evacuation Checklist

Review this information now to prepare yourself for a quick and safe evacuation.



GO BAG ESSENTIALS:

- ☐ ATM, credit and debit cards and cash in small bills
- ☐ Medications, Health Care Cards, Coverage Cards and vaccination records for humans and pets
- ☐ Non-perishable food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Water for 72 hours
- ☐ Driver's license, passport
- ☐ Important documents (bank, investment, insurance policy, birth certificates, medical records)
- ☐ Computer backup files & passwords
- ☐ Inventory of home contents (consider making a video inventory now, prior to an emergency)
- ☐ Photographs of the exterior of the house and landscape
- ☐ Address book including medical and veterinarian contact information
- ☐ Wind-up or battery-powered flashlight (and extra batteries)
- ☐ Cell phone charger, car charger and battery packs
- ☐ Personal toiletries
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Enough clothing for 3-5 days
- ☐ Family heirlooms, photo albums and videos
- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Tune in to a local radio station and listen for instructions (CFLK-FM90.7)

PREPARE FAMILY MEMBERS:

- ☐ If possible, evacuate all family members not essential to preparing the house for wildfire
- ☐ Plan several evacuation routes from your home
- ☐ Designate a safe meeting place and contact person
- ☐ Relay your plans to a contact person
- ☐ Register for a local emergency notification system
<https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/form/evac>
 - » Ask your community emergency management for details
 - » Update personal information and cell phone numbers in databases

WHAT TO WEAR:

- ☐ Wear only cotton or wool clothes, including long pants, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, a hat, and boots
- ☐ Carry gloves, water to drink, and goggles
- ☐ Keep your cell phone, a flashlight, and portable radio with you at all times
- ☐ N95 or P100 mask

PREPARE VEHICLE:

- ☐ Keep your vehicle's gas tank full
- ☐ Extra jerry cans of fuel (if needed)
- ☐ Sand, salt or cat litter (non clumping)
- ☐ Antifreeze/windshield washer fluid
- ☐ Tow rope
- ☐ Jumper cables
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ Warning light or road flares
- ☐ If you can lift your garage door manually, place vehicle in the garage pointing out with the keys in the ignition and disconnect the electric garage door opener. If not, park in your driveway facing out
- ☐ Roll up the car windows
- ☐ Place essential items in the car
- ☐ If you do not drive, make other arrangements for transportation in advance
- ☐ Close garage door when you leave

INSIDE THE HOME:

- ☐ Close all interior doors
- ☐ Leave a light on in each room
- ☐ Remove lightweight, non-fire-resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around windows
- ☐ Close fire-resistant drapes, shutters, and blinds
- ☐ Turn off all pilot lights
- ☐ Move overstuffed furniture, such as couches and easy chairs, to the center of the room
- ☐ Close fireplace damper
- ☐ Close or block off any doggie-doors
- ☐ Lock-up firearms or valuables

OUTSIDE THE HOME:

- ☐ Place combustible patio furniture and barbecues in the house, garage or away from the home
- ☐ Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the meter, and clear the area of combustible material
- ☐ Close all exterior vents, doors, and windows
- ☐ Leave gates unlocked
- ☐ Turn on outside lights
- ☐ If available and if there's time, cover windows, attic openings, and vents with plywood that is at least one-half inch thick
- ☐ Ensure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and turned off
- ☐ Don't leave sprinklers on, or water running; they can affect critical water pressure
- ☐ Ensure that house numbers and street signs are visible and reflective if possible
- ☐ Have identification on your animal

PREPARE PETS:

- ☐ Have identification on your animal
- ☐ Many animal species can be microchipped (Microchipping is a permanent form of identification for your pet)
- ☐ Have veterinary records and medications in one easy-to-find place
- ☐ Pro Tip: A gallon ziplock bag can keep them dry and catch any pills that may fall out of a container that isn't securely shut
- ☐ Transport food, water and bowls in easy-to-carry, sealed containers
- ☐ Have a buddy system, Can your neighbors help if you are not home during an evacuation?
- ☐ Do you have a family member or friend that can help house your animals should you need to be evacuated for an extended time?
- ☐ Dogs and small pets should be securely crated with only one animal per carrier
- ☐ Normally well-behaved pets can panic and run away during a stressful event; a carrier can keep them safe
- ☐ Remove any non-essential items from carriers or cages, as unsecured items can injure a pet during transport
- ☐ IF YOU MUST LEAVE ANIMALS BEHIND, NOTIFY YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL SERVICE AGENCY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Consider these additional emergency kit:

- ☐ Candles and matches or lighter (place in sturdy containers and do not burn unattended)
- ☐ Change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- ☐ two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- ☐ Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each household member
- ☐ Toiletries and personal hygiene items
- ☐ Hand sanitizer, toilet paper and garbage bags
- ☐ Prepaid phone card, mobile phone charger
- ☐ Infant formula, baby food and supplies
- ☐ Activities for children like books, puzzles or toys
- ☐ Utensils, plates and cups
- ☐ Household chlorine bleach or water purifying tablets
- ☐ Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves, pocket knife)
- ☐ Small fuel-operated stove and fuel
- ☐ Whistle (to attract attention)
- ☐ Duct tape