



Coastal Fire Centre

hot topics in Wildfire on the Coast

2017 ISSUE 4

Wildfire news

AUGUST 4, 2017

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Ground and flight safety check-ins

The Coastal Fire Centre’s dispatch centre is a year-round operation that provides crucial communications links between firefighting crews and the Regional Wildfire Coordination Centre during the fire season, but it also safety “check-ins” and “check-outs” for forest district staff throughout the year.

The Coastal Fire Centre is one of the three fire centres that provide a year-round safety check-in service for Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development District staff. This service covers BC Timber Sales staff, Compliance and Enforcement Branch personnel, BC Parks staff and wildlife biologists working for the ministry — to name just a few.

These people use the check-in service whenever they go into the field to work (such as wildlife counts, scale checks and compliance and enforcement investigations). Forest district staff, for example, will first submit field itineraries that outline their planned activities for the day, along with a list of who is going into the field, their call signs and their “missed check-in contacts” (whom should be called if staff miss a check-in or have a confirmed emergency).

Standard check-in times have been established (depending on the potential risk associated with the activity) and meet the local district office’s occupational health and safety standards and WorkSafeBC legislation.

If a staff member is working alone, for example, they are generally required to check in every two hours. If they are using resources such as helicopters or boats, they are required to check in every 30 minutes. (Depending on the situation, they can also request shorter check-in intervals.)

The Coastal Fire Centre’s dispatch centre has procedures in place to respond when personnel miss a check-in or if a person or group is 30 minutes overdue. At the 30-minute mark, if no contact has been made, their missed check-in contact (usually a supervisor) is notified.

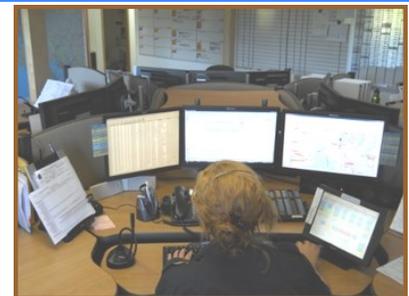
That person then determines what steps are to be taken next (e.g. start a search or allow the person more time to check in). There are separate procedures in place for downed or overdue aircraft, and for medical evacuation scenarios.

The busiest period for the Coastal Fire Centre’s dispatch staff is generally May to September, but March is also busy because numerous wildlife counts (deer, goats and elk, for example) are usually scheduled for that month.

The dispatchers’ efforts to keep people safe when working in the field is in addition to the great work they do support firefighting personnel and keep them safe and connected. It’s a very specialized skill that is much appreciated by staff members.

FLIGHT WATCH

1. Maintain 30 minute check-ins while in aircraft.
2. Ensure that any changes/additions/deletions to aircraft passengers and/or their weights (manifest) are provided to Coastal Dispatch and the air carrier/pilot prior to lift off.
3. Ensure that Coastal Dispatch is advised immediately of any issues/concerns that may affect the flight.
4. Upon conclusion of any aircraft flight, ensure the flight slip is accurate and complete.
5. Assist in the completion of any aircraft incident reports.
6. Coordinate with their local Aviation Liaison representative (if applicable) to ensure timely follow up and investigation of all incidents and/or accidents.



Coastal Fire Centre has 8 frequencies that may be monitored by up to 8 dispatchers at a time. On average 4-6 dispatchers work during a shift to monitor crews and fire activity.

For detailed weather go to page 6

To report a wildfire call: 1 800 663-5555

Ground and flight safety check-ins (cont'd)



FIELD ITINERARY

Today's Date: 2017-05-03

Vehicle #: VE76745 Crew Leader: _____

Accompanying Field Staff: 1) _____ 2) _____
 (Names & Call Signs) 3) _____ 4) _____
 5) _____ 6) _____

Date of Travel: 2017-05-03 LEAVE TIME: 08:15 (i.e. 08:00) RETURN TIME: 16:30 (i.e. 16:00)

GPS Coordinates, if available
 Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Check-in Interval Hours: 2 Minutes: _____

Mode of Transportation (e.g. boat, FS vehicle, snowmobile, ATV)
 C&E Brown Ford F-150 Pickup Truck

Contact names/numbers to be used in Step 1 for missed check-ins:
 Name: _____ Phone number: _____

PROGRAM: _____

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE		
Time (i.e. 08:00)	Location (departure & arrival)	Comments
08:15		
09:15		
09:40		
10:00		
10:20		
11:20		
12:00		
13:00		
13:45		
16:00		

MAP (if required)
File Attachment

Known safety hazards: Unknown Clients at

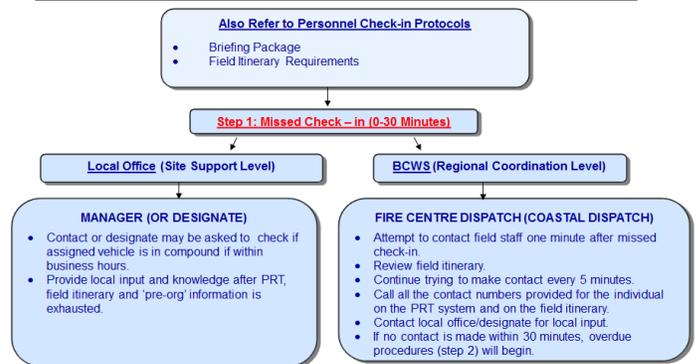
To Aid in emergency response, leave a copy of your planned worksite on the vehicle dash



Flight
over
the
Bella
Coola
fire.

STAGE 1—Missed Check-In

MISSED CHECK-IN



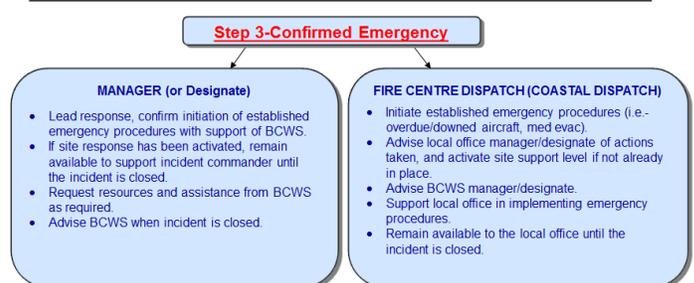
STAGE 2—Overdue Check-In

OVERDUE



STAGE 3—Confirmed Emergency

CONFIRMED EMERGENCY



NOTE: If a site level response is activated, the incident is only to be 'closed' by the Incident Commander and all parties involved are to be notified

Ground and flight safety check-ins (cont'd)

	Field Itineraries	Aircraft Bookings	Ministry Field Staff	Check-ins	Overdue Procedures
April (2016)	463	31	802	1819	3
May (2016)	565	33	1003	2279	7
June (2016)	741	69	1376	2481	6
July (2016)	644	69	1221	2901	11
August (2016)	678	32	1127	2515	5
September (2016)	641	68	1038	2619	3
October (2016)	446	36	771	1763	8
November (2016)	458	39	712	1451	11
December (2016)	208	26	393	777	2
January (2017)	223	19	365	843	3
February (2017)	233	38	401	893	2
March (2017)	375	89	651	1575	0
Total	<u>5675</u>	<u>549</u>	<u>9860</u>	<u>21916</u>	<u>61</u>
Monthly Average	473	46	822	1826	5

Precipice Fire (VA0778)



The Precipice Wildfire is located 52km east of Bella Coola. This lightning caused wildfire was discovered on July 8th.

On August 3rd, winds drove the size of this fire from 2600ha to 3600ha.

An evacuation order has been issued by The Central Coast Regional District for some homesteads in the area. The order can be viewed at the Central Coast Regional District website: www.ccrd-bc.ca.

Firecamps large and small



Large Firecamp-The deployment of a large firecamp from the Provincial Warehouse is a logistical, practical and a financial decision on the part of an Incident Commander (in consultation with the Logistics Chief). If the number of firefighters exceeds local accommodation, if it is more practical for transporting crews or providing meals to a large number of staff, or if it is more economically viable to bring in a camp, then a camp will be recommended.

A large firecamp will include: trailers for office space, a kitchen, tents for eating, bathroom and shower facilities, and a number of large sleeping tents (ranger tents). Staff can also choose to set up their own tent if they wish.

Depending on the size of a fire, a firecamp can be used as a base of operations where crews land for a night before receiving their assignments and being forwarded onto a camp closer to the fire.

Some of the largest firecamps in the Province have been: Ram Fire (Kootenays, 1985), Okanagan Park Fire (2003), Lonesome Lake fire (two firecamps combined, 2004), the Pend D'Oreille River fire (2007), and the Meldrum fire (2009).



Harrison Lake
East Fire



Line Camp (Spike Camp)-Initial Attack crews will carry a modest overnight kit (due to weight restriction and enough food and water for 24 hours). This may consist of one three-person tent, three sleeping bags and some canned goods. There is some variation on what foodstuffs are carried, depending on personal crew preferences so long as weight requirements are met.

Crews may be equipped with overnight gear and rations for upwards of 72 hours. Unit Crew personnel will be able to stay longer on the line as they are deployed with food for 72 hours, but they can be resupplied on the fireline. A Unit Crew is more likely to be living out of tents.

Forward Camp-Crews may be camping near a fire, at different locations, with a firecamp close by.

What can you do to help?

Since the Provincial State of Emergency was declared on July 7, 2017, many British Columbians have asked what they can do to help out. There are any number of ways that you, as a citizen, can help. Many of the suggestions are inexpensive and proactive. Below are some suggestions (both short-term and long-term) for how people can help evacuees, assist firefighters and ultimately help themselves.

Short-term Assistance-There are numerous organizations that are taking donations of clothes, bedding, and toiletries. Make sure you check out the agency collecting these donations carefully.

If you know a person who is away assisting with wildfires, check with the family to see if they need help with things like yard work or offer to babysit for a few hours. Many first responders will be gone for weeks at a time and return home for a few days before they have to go again. Helping them out by doing small chores will give them more time to spend with their family when they are home.

Monetary Donations- Any of the links below will take a financial donation or let you know where to go to donate:

- [CanadaHelps](#)
- [Food Banks BC](#)
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [United Way](#)
- [BC Liquor Stores](#)
- [Red Cross](#)

These are agencies that have a long history of aid during crises and are considered reputable.

Support-While offering money is a great short-term option, there are a variety of opportunities to provide sustainable assistance. **VOLUNTEER!** We can not stress how important it is to support your local volunteer fire department, Emergency Operations Centre or other agencies that support first responders. You can help with administration, help raise money, or any other tasks required.

One of the shortages identified by a Emergency Social Services Reception Centre was volunteers with good administration skills. When paperwork needs to be done, it is always beneficial to have volunteers with typing skills and experience filling in forms. Sometimes it is the tasks you don't expect that are most needed. Whatever skill you can share is valuable during a crisis.

We would like to remind everyone that the BC Wildfire Service only fights fires that involve vegetation. The hard work you see saving structures is done by local fire departments or members of Structural Protection Unit crews (who are managed by the Office of the Fire Commissioner but are staffed by contractors or fire departments big and small). The BC Wildfire Service relies on its partnerships with fire departments and would like to acknowledge all local fire departments who work so tirelessly for their communities.

Long-term Gains-FireSmart! We are constantly reminding everybody about the importance of FireSmart principles but they really work. A plan for an area's forest health and safety is a "prescription" for the land base and surrounding communities. So think of FireSmart as a prescription for your home. Read through the website at: <https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/> and pay particular attention to the checklists. What can you do to make your property more FireSmart?

The next thing you can do is talk to your neighbours about FireSmart and fire prevention. Whether it's a casual conversation, or a more formal meeting, it is important to share the information with your community. If possible, come up with a plan, work together and work towards a safer community.

There is funding available to communities under the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative, which is managed by the Union of BC Municipalities. For more information go to: <http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/strategic-wildfire-prevention/2016-swpi-program.html>. Get involved and support your community's application of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This is the prescription you need for your whole community.

One last thought-While we never like to think about something going awry, in our business it can. It happens quickly and without warning. We would also like to ask that if you can, you consider supporting:

Honour House-This charity supports all first responders who have been injured. This organization depends on donations to operate: <https://honourhouse.ca/>

Canadian Fallen Firefighters-This organization honours those first responders who have lost their lives while serving: <http://www.cfff.ca/EN/index.html>.

To Date
in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person
Caused **65**

Lighting
Caused **4**

Total
Number
of Fires **69**

Fire Danger Rating today



Current Prohibitions
(within BCWS
jurisdictional area)

All Open Fire Prohibited
except the Fog Zone and
Haida Gwaii

At Coastal

The Coastal Fire Centre is supporting some of the hardest hit areas of the Province with crews and resources. So far this summer, fire activity has been relatively quiet with only 4 lightning caused wildfires this season. The average for this time of year is 56 lightning caused wildfires.

The number of human caused wildfires is also down with 65 to date from an average of 93. Unfortunately, we do still receive reports of illegal campfires and improperly discarded cigarette butts.

With the long weekend upon us, members of the public are reminded to think about wildfire prevention. Checking your trailer before you leave to make sure there is

nothing dragging that could cause a spark and turning off your propane tanks can help reduce the risk of starting a fire. If you ride a motorcycle or ATV, make sure you avoid grass or combustible materials. Other parts of the Province were required to put restrictions on these types of vehicles. We will be watching fires causes closely, and will consider issuing restrictions if conditions warrant them.

With the campfire ban in effect, if you plan on using a CSA or ULC rated stove or portable campfire, please make sure that you take appropriate precautions.

Please report any open burning violation, columns of smoke or a wildfire by calling 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on cellphone.

Weather

SYNOPSIS:

Hot, dry & smoky conditions continue in most areas again today while the large-scale pattern remains largely unchanged: A massive ridge of high pressure remains in control aloft with weak outflow conditions continuing at the surface. Improved visibility should be seen in the Tweedsmuir Park area this afternoon while gusty easterly or northeasterly winds likely shift to northerly or northwesterly through mid-late afternoon. Elsewhere, where smoke remains a significant factor through the day, winds should remain generally light (direction: Outflow or variable). Weak outflow conditions support variable recoveries again tonight while the next wave of smoke pushes slowly westward – likely leading to more extensive/thicker smoke in many areas on Saturday. A very weak inflow pattern develops in many areas on Saturday, most noticeable throughout western sections of each zone where improved visibility and a slight uptick in winds should be seen (more so for western

Vancouver Island and western Mid Coast while areas south of Knight Inlet potentially see no significant change from today). Fairly stagnant or else weak outflow winds are expected Saturday night.

OUTLOOK:

The huge upper ridge remains in place over the region Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to maintain hot and dry conditions. Temperatures throughout inland valleys of each zone should warm to the 32° to 36° range with minimum afternoon humidities from 15% to 25%. With winds expected to be either calm or weak outflow each night, smoke should continue to be an issue in most areas despite weak inflow winds developing each afternoon. Bands of disorganized Pacific moisture could drift through the dominant upper ridge Monday or Tuesday bringing a slight chance of an isolated thunderstorm (20% chance Monday, 30% chance Tuesday).