

Wildfire Preparedness Planning for Resorts or Campgrounds

Many campgrounds and resorts have professional emergency plans in place but we would like to propose to those of you, who may be in the process of creating a plan, a series of questions you may want to address.

	Question:
Planning:	Do I have a list of emergency numbers prepared? This should include the local government fire response number or the Wildfire Reporting Line 1-800-663-5555. Or call 911.
	Do I have the numbers to those neighbours or businesses immediately adjacent to the property so you can call them to warn them as well?
	Is there a fire suppression plan in place? What water sources are available or fire extinguishers, if the situation is small and/or manageable? Take action only if you are in a position to and you are suitably equipped.
	Evaluate the potential effects of fire on roads, trails, structures, campsites, propane, property/vehicles. For example: is there one road in, one road out of the property or are there alternate routes that may be used?
	Do you have a map of the campground/resort easily available to hand over to emergency personnel? Do you have some type of package of information you can pass on including water sources, sprinkler systems, propane storage or any other details that may be pertinent?
Equipment:	Do you have handheld radios on site? Do you have fresh batteries and do you know their range?
	What is the cell phone coverage in the area? Should you consider a landline in a central location on the property? Or a satellite phone?
Staff Training:	Is staff able and prepared to deal with emergencies? Or do you need to create a plan and teach your staff how to respond in case of an incident?
	Do you know if any of your staff has first aid training?
	Is there one staff person per shift who is designated to be the primary contact for all staff?
	Does your staff know what fire equipment looks like and how it works? Do all staff know where fire equipment is located and know how to use it?
	Do you have a marshalling point on-site? Do all staff know where it is?
	In case it becomes necessary do you have an evacuation plan in place?
Evacuation:	Do you have a plan that addresses at least two levels of evacuation – First Alert or Immediate ? A First Alert Evacuation is a planned, orderly evacuation where there is ample time to gather belongings and leave versus an Immediate Evacuation where there is immediate danger and may occur with no notice.
	Documentation – do you have a list of all campsites where you can check off those who were residing on the site as they leave; do you have a portable log book or flash drive to take your guests contact information with you?
	If you must ask guests to leave do you have a standardized route so vacating the premises is timely and orderly?
	If you have to have an immediate evacuation have you prepared your staff to the possibility of limited road access, traffic congestion, people or groups without vehicles, people who may be hysterical or upset?
	If you require an immediate evacuation do you have a marshalling point away from the area and do you have maps or instructions prepared for your guests.
	If people must leave the area without their vehicles do you have a meeting point and plan to take them to the marshalling point outside the affected area so that no one is left behind.
	Do you have a method for contacting and marking each site you have informed of an evacuation?

Pre-Fire Planning – Even if you don't have a formalized plan you should document some basic facts about your operation. An example of some of the detail that would be helpful to Fire Departments, Wildfire Management and other responders would include:

Description of the Campground or Resort:	Give a brief description of the facility including whether it is largely urban or wilderness.
Access:	Describe the number and location of all access points on the property. This should include walking trails and roadways.
Location:	Give a street address if possible, or driving directions to the property but most helpful would be lats and longs to the property.
Area:	What size is the property? Or approximately what size is the fire?
Map:	A map showing campsite locations, water sources, location of hazardous materials including propane, gas storage, or any other volatiles? This can be a hand drawn map in the absence of a scale drawing. An idea of the lay out of the premises gives responders something to start from.
Staff:	How many staff do you generally have onsite? Are any of your staff trained to handle emergency situations?
Equipment:	Is there any firefighting equipment onsite? If so, what?
Communications:	Phones? Radios? How do you communicate onsite and do you have strong cell service in the area?
Emergency Contacts:	Do you have contact information including the owner of the property?
Special Considerations:	This could be anything from are there any permanent residents on site to noting nearby ecological concerns. Whatever you think responders should know if a fire should occur. Is there a good water source nearby? Or are you close to fire hydrants?
Emergency Plan:	Do you have a more formal emergency plan developed and if so, is it readily available? Does it have an evacuation plan if it is required?

Do you have children's programming at your Campground or Resort?

Why not teach Campfire Safety?

There are some wonderful resources out there. Here are a few:

You still can't go wrong with Smokey but it's suprising how many kids have never heard of the big old bear
Smokeybear.com

How about a Disney *Planes: Fire & Rescue Night*. Show the movie and then for a printable activity book go to:
<http://www.nvfc.org/files/documents/Planes-Fire-and-Rescue-Educational-Activity-Book.pdf>

Books!! – There are some wonderful books out there that teach campfire safety or the principles of firefighting. We would like to suggest '*Contain the Flame*' by Jill Urban Donahue and Jill Kalz for the pre-school crowd or for the grade 5-7 kids interested in science there is the *Charcoal Forest* by Beth A. Peluso or *Fire! The Renewal of a Forest* by Celia Godkin.

If you know of any others please let us know we would love to be able to recommend some solid Canadian content in this area.