

Aug. 16, 2017

EOC-17-84

For Immediate Release

Evacuation order downgraded to alert in West Fraser Road area

Williams Lake, B.C. – The Cariboo Regional District announced today that residents are allowed to return to the West Fraser Road area as the evacuation order for the area has been downgraded to an alert. Before deciding to return, residents are encouraged to consider that wildfire activity continues in these areas, air quality remains poor and the areas are still on evacuation alert.

See an attached map of the new alert area: <http://bit.ly/2vJL3Yv>

Wildfires remain active and firefighting activities continue in the area. It is important for residents to stay out of active wildfire areas. Interfering in an active fire area will result in crews ceasing ground and air operations potentially endangering nearby properties.

Since these areas remain on evacuation alert, residents must be prepared in case the area receives a future evacuation order on short notice. Local governments may not have time to go door-to-door should a new evacuation order be issued. Information about what to do when on evacuation alert is listed below.

It is also important to note that air quality remains poor as a result of smoke from nearby fire activity. Those with respiratory issues, small children and the elderly should consider this before they choose to return to the area. Further, services such as health care may be limited for some time.

Residents returning to the area are strongly encouraged to register for the Cariboo Chilcotin Emergency Notification System to receive a text, call or email regarding Evacuation Alerts and Orders:

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612292#/signup>

Re-Entry Information

A re-entry booklet is available with important considerations for returning residents including insurance information, safety, water and sewer, and clean up and food disposal recommendations. Copies are available at the Resiliency Centre in Williams Lake and are available online here: <http://bit.ly/2uGfOjO>

Resiliency Centre Available

A resiliency centre is available in Williams Lake to provide information and programs of support for wildfire evacuees. The resiliency centre is set up at the Boitania Mall (850 Oliver Street) and will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until need subsides. Contact the Resiliency Centre at 250-305-0226.

Both Red Cross and Emergency Support Services have booths at the centre. Red Cross services are available to anyone returning to the area that requires assistance. The Red Cross can be reached at 1-800-863-6582.

Assessing Danger Trees on Affected Properties

For rural properties that have been impacted by wildfire, residents should be aware there may be danger trees in wildfire affected areas. Home owners and private land owners are recommended to work with an insurance agency to have an assessment done by a qualified arborist on their private property.

Remaining On Evacuation Alert

Since the area remains on evacuation alert, residents should remain prepared for an evacuation by:

- Having a plan to transport all family members or co-workers outside the area, should the area be brought back under evacuation order.
- Keeping essential items readily available for a quick departure, including medications, eyeglasses, valuable papers (i.e. insurance), immediate care needs for dependents and, if you choose, keepsakes (photographs, etc).
- Ensuring that any dependents are prepared for departure.
- Ensuring that pets and livestock remain in a safe area.
- Ensuring that you have accommodation options for your family, if possible. A Reception Centre will be made available again if required.
- Monitoring reliable news sources for evacuation order information. Further information will be issued as it becomes available.

For Cariboo Regional District information, please visit cariboord.ca or facebook.com/CRDEmergencyOperations or [@CaribooRD](https://twitter.com/CaribooRD) or call the CRD's public information line at 1-866-759-4977.

-30-

Media Contact:

EOC Communications

Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre

250-302-9003

eoccommunications@cariboord.ca