



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Health Emergency Management Preparedness and Response Guide



As a partner in health and wellness, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) works with communities and partners to respond to emergencies and events. The information below identifies supports available to BC First Nations Communities in response to local emergencies.

1. Wildfire Events

- **Environmental Public Health Services (EPHS)** – guidance on setting up clean air shelters, avoiding wildfire smoke effects and other air quality concerns and guidance for safely returning to your home after the evacuation order is lifted.
 - [Wildfire Smoke – Clean Air Shelters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - [Returning to Your Home after Wildfires](#) (FNHA guide)
 - Email: environmental.health@fnha.ca or call your FNHA Regional Office
 - Emergencies after hours:
 - Phone 1-844-666-0711 or email ephs.afterhours@fnha.ca
 - Calls/emails received after 10:00 p.m. will be returned the next day at 6:00 a.m.
- **Air purifiers** – units for community members who are more vulnerable to wildfire smoke and unable to travel to a clean air shelter.
 - The FNHA has a limited number of air purifiers for vulnerable community members that meet the criteria in the [Air Purifier Support – 2022 Season](#). Health leadership in your community should contact your Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to request an air purifier
 - Community reimbursement for air purifiers for vulnerable community members may be eligible for reimbursement for those individuals that meet the criteria in the [Air Purifier Support – 2022 Season](#). Email HEM@FNHA.ca with your reimbursement request for review by the regional team
- fnha.ca/wildfire – a central hub for information on emergency management and evacuation supports for communities in BC affected by wildfire and wildfire smoke.

2. Flooding Events

- [Important Flood Safety Information](#)
- [Assessment of Septic Systems after a Flood: A suggested approach with First Nations](#) (FNHA guide)

3. Support for Evacuations

The role of the FNHA during evacuations is to support First Nations Communities and Nations through:

- Ongoing communication and support to Leadership, Health Directors and Community

Engagement Coordinators, relaying information where possible

- Coordination of counselling, traditional supports and culturally safe spaces
- Continued access to FNHA and FNHA-funded health services:
 - [First Nations Health Information for Evacuees](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - **First Nations Health Benefits** – call 1-888-305-1505 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Health Benefits can assist you with:
 - Refilling prescriptions
 - Patient travel services unrelated to evacuation orders (e.g. travel to dialysis and other appointments)
 - Medical supplies and equipment (Including oxygen tanks) and eyewear
 - Dental items (e.g. dentures)
 - Mental health and wellness counselling
 - **Virtual Health Supports**
 - **Mental Health:** available 24-hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of where individuals reside in the province.
 - KUU-US 24-Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717)
 - Indian Residential School Survivors Society 1-800-721-0066
 - Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum 1-888-403-3123
 - **First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day:** Doctors are available seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to provide medical advice, prescriptions and referrals via Zoom video conference or phone. The service is culturally-safe and open to all Indigenous people in BC and their family members. Call 1-855-344-3800 for an appointment.
 - **First Nations Virtual Substance Use & Psychiatry Service:** This service requires a referral from a health and wellness provider, such as a doctor, nurse, mental health counsellor or traditional healer or the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day. Specialists in addictions medicine and psychiatry are available weekdays to support individuals and family members with more complex mental health and addiction needs.

4. Heat Events

In addition to the supports below, please see the BC Centre for Disease Control's [Guidance for Community Cooling Centres During B.C.'s Restart Plan](#) for information on setting up a cooling centre.

- **Environmental Public Health Services (EPHS)** are available by contacting your regional EPHS manager. They can provide support with:
 - Advice on setting up cooling centres, avoiding heat effects, and air quality
 - Email environmental.health@fnha.ca or call your FNHA Regional Office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday
 - Emergencies after hours:
 - Phone: 1-844-666-0711 or email ephs.afterhours@fnha.ca
 - Calls or emails received after 10:00 p.m. will be returned the next day at 6:00 a.m.
- For support in planning and/or responding to heat events (e.g. addressing specific environmental

and health needs, educational materials/opportunities etc.) connect with your regional HEM Manager directly or HEM@fnha.ca for further information.

5. Additional FNHA Resources

- [Mental Health and Wellness Supports](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
- [Recognizing and Addressing Trauma and Anxiety During Disasters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
- [Recognizing and Resolving Trauma in Children During Disasters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)

6. Additional Partner Resources

- **EmergencyInfoBC** provides real-time emergency information online at emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca and on Twitter at @EmergencyInfoBC during partial and full-scale provincial emergencies in BC
- **PreparedBC** is British Columbia's one stop shop for disaster readiness information. They provide information online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc> and provide guides and resources for specific emergencies, including the below but not limited too:
 - [Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide \(PDF, 9.2MB\)](#)
 - [Wildfire Preparedness Guide \(PDF, 4MB\)](#)
 - [Flood Preparedness Guide \(PDF, 4.7MB\)](#)
- **Emergency Support Services (ESS)** are administered by First Nations and should be planned for in the All-Hazard plan, and through mutual support agreements with potential evacuation centre communities. ESS provides short-term basic support, such as temporary lodging and food, to British Columbians impacted by disasters ranging from a single house fire to larger events, such as wildfires. Available at <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>
- **EMBC regional office contacts**
 - South West Region: PREOC2.ops1@gov.bc.ca
 - Central Region: PREOC3.ops1@gov.bc.ca
 - South East Region: PREOC4.ops1@gov.bc.ca
 - North East Region: PREOC5.ops1@gov.bc.ca
 - North West Region: PREOC6.ops1@gov.bc.ca
 - If after regular business hours, call the Emergency Coordination Center at 1-800-663-3456 and ask to speak to the Regional Duty Manager for your area
- **Indigenous Services Canada**
 - <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1309369889599/1535119888656>
- **First Nations Emergency Services Society**
 - <https://www.fness.bc.ca/>