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### CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 20

Hectares burned: 48

Human-caused: 20

Lightning-caused: 0

### BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

**Campfire:** No Prohibition

**Category 2:** No Prohibition

**Category 3:** No Prohibition

**Forest Use Restrictions:** No Prohibition

[Prohibitions section of bcwildfire.ca for full details.](#)

## Fire Centre Update

### Fire activity remains below average

The Northwest Fire Centre, like the rest of the province, continues to see far lower fire activity than normal. Crews have responded to just 19 fires to date in 2020, far lower than the 10-year average of 35. And only 47 hectares have burned so far this year, compared to a 10-year average of more than 3,000.

Across most of the Northwest Fire Centre, forest fuels are unseasonably wet and less likely to burn if an ignition source—through human activity or lightning—is applied. Lightning that has occurred in the Northwest Fire Centre this year has been accompanied by widespread rains, which have kept forest fuels wet and prevented starts. There have been no known lightning-caused fires in the Northwest to date; all fires so far have been caused by human activity.

As we move into what may be hotter, drier summer months, when forest fuels typically dry and become more prone to ignition, it is important to remain vigilant in order to limit the risk of human-caused wildfires. While there are presently no prohibitions on campfires, Category 2 or Category 3 open fires, individuals are responsible for ensuring they use fires safely and in accordance with all regulations.

For more information visit the B.C. Wildfire Service [Fire Bans and Restrictions](#) webpage, which includes [campfire regulations](#) as well as updated pamphlets on [Category 2 Open Fire](#) and [Category 3 Open Fire](#).

We thank the public for their ongoing cooperation in preventing wildfires.

## How Initial Attack Crews Respond to Fires

In British Columbia the challenging landscape combined with the harsh wildland fire environment requires knowledgeable, prepared personnel. The BC Wildfire Service has 1,100 Type 1 firefighters who annually respond to nearly 2,000 fires on behalf of the province of B.C. The type or types of crew deployed to fight a wildfire depends on a variety of factors including location, terrain, size and fire behaviour.

Initial Attack (IA) firefighters operate as three-person crews. These well-trained, physically fit and highly mobile crews may be moved rapidly throughout the province to new fires. Initial attack crews are usually the first on the scene of a new wildfire, and can be dispatched by helicopter or vehicle, depending on access to the fire. IA crews must be able to be deployed by helicopter if needed, and as this is a requirement of the job, they are required to be under 200 pounds in weight.

Once at the fire, the crew assesses the scene and decides what fire fighting tactic to use depending on the values at risk and what rank the fire is burning at. If applicable, the crew will contact the operations staff in the office, who will refer to the Fire Management Plan. This document contains the essential elements of actions necessary to save human life and property and minimize fire danger.



If the fire is deemed beneficial to land management objectives in the area, it is suitable for the crew to modify the goal of immediately extinguishing the fire. This fire would then be referred to as 'modified response', and the fire would be monitored to ensure it continues to benefit the land base and does not threaten life or property, rather than being immediately extinguished.

If the fire is a threat and needs to be immediately extinguished, the crew will begin fighting the fire. Following the initial assessment, crews set up water pumps, remove fuel from the fire's path using chainsaws, pulaskis or shovels, and dig fire guards to contain or extinguish the blaze.

## Basic Training: S-100

Before anyone can work in a wildfire environment, they must have a basic understanding of wildfire behaviour, suppression, terminology and, most importantly, safety. This includes not only firefighters, but also support staff, such as medics and pilots. Completion of the S-100 course is also mandated by WorkSafeBC for workers involved in forestry operations.

The S-100 course is the minimum level of training required to fight wildfire in the province. A two-day, 16-hour program provides a day of classroom learning followed by a hands-on day in the field, learning the basics of wildland firefighting. The S-100A is a four-hour refresher and is all that is required if you have taken either course within the past five years. Both courses are valid for one year from date of delivery. The BCWS [Wildfire Training](#) page on [bcwildfire.ca](http://bcwildfire.ca) has information on these and other courses.

When a wildfire starts, industry and the public can help by prompt and accurate reporting to our fire reporting line (1-800-663-5555 or \*5555). The dispatch will guide you through initial fire assessment with questions about the location, size and smoke characteristics of a fire, along with wind, fuel, terrain and values at risk. Crews will reassess these same elements when they arrive on scene.

Fireline workers must understand the basics of fire and all the factors that influence its behaviour. The Fire Triangle lays out the three necessities for a fire to burn: oxygen, heat and fuel. All suppression tactics aim to break the triangle by removing one or more of these factors. For example, dousing a fire with water removes heat; building a control line removes fuel; smothering a fire with soil or foam removes oxygen. Firefighters must be familiar with suppression principles, fire attack methods, and the many techniques and equipment used to break the Fire Triangle.

In B.C., firefighters adhere to what is known as the “10 a.m. concept,” whereby crews aim to control any new fire by 10 a.m. the morning following discovery. After 10 a.m., rising temperatures and dropping humidity increase a fire’s potential to spread. Crews meet this suppression goal more than 90 per cent of the time.

The BCWS follows the national system of rating fire danger, the [Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System](#) (CFFDRS). The CFFDRS considers a wide array of factors: moisture levels, available fuels, weather conditions and topography to name a few. Using a series of detailed indices, this system helps firefighters predict how easily a fire will start and how it will behave if it does. The science behind fire ignition and behaviour is fascinating and complex.



## Basic Training: S-100 Cont.

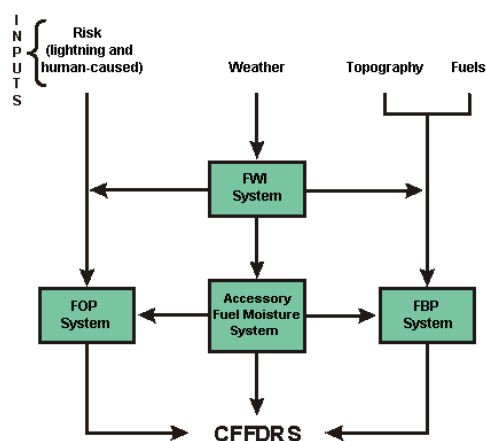
The BCWS website contains more detailed information on [wildfire behaviour](#) and the [wildfire ranking scale](#). Understanding the factors that affect fire is essential to worker safety on the fire line.

The first responsibility of all firefighters is to prevent injury to themselves and others. The S-100 course emphasizes safety in all aspects of wildfire fighting. The many hazards touched on, in addition to fire behaviour, include helicopters, heavy equipment, the physical environment, pumps, chainsaws and other tools. Throughout the course, communication is highlighted as a main strategy to avoid hazardous situations. When on a fire, the BCWS organizes according to the Incident Command System (ICS) which provides common terminology and a clear chain of command. Morning briefings clearly outline the goals for the day as well as channels for communication and potential dangers. Safety zones and escape routes are emphasized. Fighting wildfires is a dangerous activity, but education and communication go a long way towards mitigating the many hazards. The S-100 course provides the basics, but it is only the first of many BC Wildfire Service courses that promote wildfire knowledge, effective suppression and safety.

For more information on employment opportunities and wildfire training, visit the [BCWS Employment & Contract Opportunities](#) page.

### RESOURCES

- [BCWS Wildfire Training](#)
- [Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System](#)
- [Wildfire Behaviour](#)
- [Wildfire Ranking Scale](#)
- [Employment & Contract Opportunities](#)



# Fuel management underway in Houston

## Project will reduce risk and potential impact of wildfire

While wildfire activity is low, firefighters are keeping busy with a variety of tasks, including conducting fuel management treatments.

Crews are currently working in Houston to reduce the risk and potential impact of wildfire to residences, properties and other values. The site near the Lund Road subdivision was chosen for wildfire risk reduction due to a large volume of dead and blown down immature spruce and pine trees. Crews are burning woody debris that was previously cleared and piled. The burns are conducted carefully and only when good venting allows for the quick dissipation of smoke. Once these piles are burned, crews will continue with other fuel management activities in the area.

When conducting fuel management activities, crews often prune and thin trees to reduce the risk of a fire spreading. They may also remove dead standing trees that could fuel a wildfire and pose safety risks to firefighters and the public. Fuel management always strives to retain trees and materials that promote biodiversity, such as mature trees, wildlife habitat trees and logs and other coarse debris on the forest floor that are home to wildlife.

This work will be ongoing until the site meets specific targets that, in the event of a wildfire, will lessen fire intensity and allow fire crews a better chance of safe and successful suppression.

For more information on fuel management, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/vegetation-and-fuel-management>

## Virtual circle held on First Nations funding opportunities

BC Wildfire Service recently organized a virtual circle for the First Nations Administrators Group, through the First Nations Public Service, to explore funds available for wildfire prevention, emergency response, and other areas. Fifty-six Nations attended the virtual circle, alongside representatives from Indigenous Services Canada, Emergency Management BC, First Nations Emergency Service Society (FNESS), First Nations Health Authority and BCWS.

To watch a recording of the discussion, click [here](#).

## Contact Information

**Report a Wildfire: \*5555 on a cell or 1-800-663-5555**

**Wildfire Information Line: 1-888-3FOREST**

**Northwest Fire Centre Reception: 250-847-6600**

**NWFC Information Officer:**

**Phone: 250-847-6639**

**Email: [BCWS.NWFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCWS.NWFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca)**