



**THIS COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY BOOKLET WAS PUBLISHED
BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF FORT SMITH PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

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Re-Entry Checklist

- Make sure to buy cleaning supplies. There will be smoke and ash in your house, particularly in poorly sealed homes or areas where doors or windows were not properly closed. Perishable food that was left in fridges will be rotten, even if power remained on. Visit www.Fortsmith.ca or town social media for a list of cleaning supplies.
- Make sure to buy groceries before returning to the community. The power has been off for a long time in some areas around the community and the food that was left in your refrigerators and freezers will have spoiled. Try to focus on groceries that do not require refrigeration or freezing as your appliances may need to be replaced.
- Your refrigerators and freezers will have spoiled. Do not open these appliances inside your home. Remove the appliances from your home before opening them if power was off to your house.
 - Please get in touch with your insurance company to ensure that you are able to gather whatever information they may need.
 - The Town will provide a letter for your insurance company with the dates the power was off, and the evacuation order was in place.
 - [repeat of point 2 above]
- FireSmart work has been done to protect homes. Fuel cans and propane tanks will be at the end of your driveway. Put them away in an area at least 10 meters from your home. Other debris removed can be placed at the end of your driveway for pickup. To better prepare our community, take the opportunity to add to the pile with further FireSmart efforts!
- Many of our residents, as well as the Wildfire firefighters will be looking to use our local grocery stores or restaurants. There may be limited supplies for the first few weeks following re-entry.
- The local wildlife is agitated by the fire activity so ensure you are extra vigilant with keeping your home and workplaces bear smart.
- Fuel sources have been compromised between Alberta and Fort Smith. There may be limited or no available gas stations between High Level and Fort Smith. Check the status of fuel stations before leaving High Level and pack extra fuel as a precaution.

Fire Status & Fire Ban

Q: Is the wildfire out?

A: The wildfire is still active, and crews remain on scene. Please be aware that you will continue to see fire activity (smoke, flareups, hotspots) in the coming days. Do not enter these areas. We have protections and containment lines only within Town limits. Stay within Town limits until you are told it is safe to do otherwise. Visit www.fortsmith.ca or Town's social media sites for the evacuation status. When returning from an evacuation order a notice may remain in place.

Q: If the fire is still burning, why are we allowed back home?

A: Fire experts have determined that it is now safe for the public to re-enter the community. But it is important to remember that the conditions can change quickly. We encourage residents to stay tuned to local media for up-to-date information and always be prepared with an emergency kit and essential items. If you notice fire activity, call 911 or 872-2222

Q: Is there still a fire ban in place?

A: Yes. The Town of Fort Smith has a Total Fire Ban in effect. No outdoor burning is allowed. Existing fire permits are cancelled, and no new fire permits will be issued until the Total Fire Ban is lifted. No wood campfires in approved fire pits are allowed. Portable propane fire pits, gas/propane stoves and barbecues, and catalytic or infrared-style heaters are permitted.

RCMP

The RCMP is in the area to serve and protect the community in their regular policing duties.

Air Quality & Sensitivities

Q: I have medical sensitivities. How is the air quality? Is it safe to come home?

A: You can find the current Air Quality Health Index for the Town of Fort Smith online at <https://map.purpleair.com/1/mAQI/a10/p604800/cC0#11/59.9969/-111.8838> or by googling “Purple air Fort Smith”. The area may be experiencing heavy smoke due to the ongoing wildfire. If you have medical concerns, we advise taking necessary precautions prior to re-entry. If you have any concerns about your health due to air quality, seek medical attention or call 811.

Available Services

Q: What services/businesses are open?

A: Prior to re-entry, the Town Local Emergency Management Organization worked with critical essential services so that residents’ immediate needs can be met (food, fuel, medical, and finance). Other services may be limited while businesses work to return to normal operations, so please have patience.

Q: What municipal facilities/buildings are open?

A: Since our municipal staff are primarily working on the emergency and re-entry response, some facilities may be limited.

Tree Safety Following Wildfires

Q: What do I need to know about trees affected by the wildfire?

A: Wildfires can severely damage trees in many ways, making them unstable and posing a significant danger. The environment surrounding the trees (such as scorched earth and water-stressed conditions or tree removal), can also affect them. Please stay away from the trees surrounding the Town as they have been damaged and are coming down regularly.

To prevent injuries, be aware of these potential hazards and take precautions to stay safe. Here are some tips:

- Check the tree's location and whether it's leaning or tilting.
- Look for visible damage to the outside of the tree.
- Examine the canopy or tops of the trees to make sure that there are no overhead hazards.
- Inspect the tree's limbs, stems, and roots for signs of deterioration.

- Even if the tree appears to be in good condition, it may have internal damage that could weaken its structure.

Mental Health

Being evacuated from your home is stressful and can be overwhelming. It's important to take care of your mental health. There are many resources available:

- If you need to talk, call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-800-661-0844
- Crisis Text Line - Text CONNECT to 686868
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- Addiction Helpline – 1-800-661-0844
- Family Violence – Find Supports – 1-800-661-0844

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services also has great information and resources for people affected by wildfires. This can be found at:

<https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/wildfire-health-services-updates>

Property Damage & Insurance

Q: What if I notice my property has been damaged?

A: Document the damage (photos can also be helpful). List all damages/destroyed items. Call your insurance representative and/or company before doing any repair work/fixes. If possible, try to assemble proof of purchase, photos, receipts, and warranties. Keep all receipts related to cleanup and repairs, or replacements.

Q: Will insurance providers be coming to the community to do assessments?

A: Please speak to your insurance company directly as they will be able to give you the best information on their plans to assist.

Utilities

Check your utilities upon re-entry. If your utilities are not working, do not attempt to repair them yourself. Call your utility company immediately.

Gas

If you smell heating oil or propane after entering your home, leave immediately and call the Town of Fort Smith for further instructions or to connect you with a professional.

Water

The Town water is safe to drink.

Power

If you see a downed powerline or exposed wire do not touch or approach the power line. Call NTPC at: 1-800-661-0855

Internet

If your internet is down contact your internet service provider about connectivity

Garbage, Waste Disposal & Recycling

Q: When will garbage be picked up?

A: Curbside garbage pickup will resume on the regular schedule – Tuesdays and Fridays.

NOTE: To help with garbage pickup do not overfill garbage bags. Separate items into manageable amounts to help with the physical demands on our public works staff.

Q: Where do I put garbage?

A: You may use your curbside pickup option. Alternatively, you may dispose of waste at the Fort Smith Landfill, free of charge for the first week following re-entry. The Town will also place extra bins at the Community and Recreation Center parking lot.

Q: Are there any landfills open?

A: Residents may use the Fort Smith Landfill.

Q: Can I burn garbage?

A: No. There is still a Fire Ban in place and burning garbage is never permitted.

Fraud & Scams

It is important to be careful of frauds and scams during this time. Fraudsters may prey on your emotional state or your desire to fix/repair your property. Here are some scams to be aware of:

- Fraudulent insurance claims
- Identity theft
- Price gouging
- Fake solicitations for donations/charities
- Contractor fraud
- Impersonating Law enforcement/emergency responder
- Impersonating a Volunteer
- Impersonating a government official/department

How to protect yourself from scams/frauds:

- Don't be intimidated by high-pressure sales tactics; say no.
- Protect your personal information (name, address, birthdate, Social Insurance Number, date of birth, credit card information, and emails/passwords).
- Watch for offers/pleas that play on emotions.
- If receiving a call, ask for the info in writing.
- Ask for ID from anyone claiming to be from an organization/business and verify the person's identity by calling the organization directly.
- For businesses, ask for proof of a legitimate business license.
- Be wary of offers for discounted services.
- Make sure contractors get proper permits to do any work on your property.
- Verify charities with the Canada Revenue Agency to determine if they are legitimate.

If you suspect someone is committing fraud/scams, or you are a victim of a scam you can report it to the RCMP. You can also report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre by phone or online:

<https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm>

Schools/Childcare

Q: Are schools open/operating?

A: Please check directly with South Slave Divisional Education Council at <https://www.ssdec.net/>

Q: Are there any childcare options open?

A: Please reach out directly to childcare operators to find out if they are open/operating.

Other FAQs

Q: I heard a rumour about _____? I saw _____ on social media?

A: Please watch official Town of Fort Smith accounts for legitimate, verified information. Sharing misinformation/unverified information can be harmful during an emergency and recovery process.

Q: I’ve lost my job/income because of the fires. What do I do?

A: Please visit the Government of Canada’s website regarding Employment Insurance:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

Or the GNWT income assistance page at <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/income-security-programs/income-assistance-program>

Resources for Businesses

Q: I am a business in Fort Smith. What do I need to consider for re-entry?

A: Each business’s needs depend on the type of services they offer, but some common considerations

businesses will need to think about are:

- Is your property damaged in any way? If so, contact your insurance company immediately. Document any damage and take pictures as well.
- If you are a food-based business, is there any food spoilage that needs to be addressed?
- Do any safety/health inspections need to be completed before you can reopen?
- Have your employees been contacted and are they able to return to work?
- Do you need to restock supplies?
- Is there any clean-up or sanitation that needs to be done?
- Have you communicated when you will reopen, or if your services will be limited?

Q: Is the municipality going to use local vendors/businesses for the recovery efforts?

A: The municipality is working with as many local vendors as possible.

Contact Information

ECC

Wildfire - 1-877-698-3478

Wildlife - 1-867-872-6400

Town of Fort Smith

Rec Center – 867-872-4732

Town Hall – 867-872-8400

Fort Smith Health Center

867-872-6200

Fort Smith Emergency Services

Fire – 867-872-2222

EMS – 867-872-3111

Police – 867-872-1111