

August 11, 2025, 10:30 a.m.

Resiliency Centre

Q: Where can I find resources for returning home?

A: Returning home after a wildfire can be overwhelming. The area may look different and wildfire operations are still taking place. A Resilience Centre at the Lighthouse Community Centre, 240 Lions Way, Qualicum Beach, will be open between 2 and 8 p.m. from Tuesday, August 12 to Friday, August 15 (with a possibility of extension if needed), to support residents and evacuees affected by the Wesley Ridge Wildfire. Resources available will include clean up, health/mental health navigation support and FireSmart education. Additional community supports will be brought in as available.

Emergency Support Services

Q: I am currently receiving Emergency Support Services (ESS) for the Wesley Ridge wildfire. How long will I receive supports?

A: Emergency Support Services have been extended for everyone under evacuation order until Friday, August 15, 2025 and will be reviewed again depending on the situation.

To extend your ESS supports, call the provincial ESS call center at 1-800-387-4258, go online via self-serve at <https://ess.gov.bc.ca> or visit the reception centre at 747 Jones Street (open 10:30 am – 8 pm Monday August 11) or at the same location as the Resilience Centre at Lighthouse Community Centre, 240 Lion's Way, Qualicum Beach (open 2-8 pm Tuesday August 12-15).

If you have insurance, please work with your insurance provider before seeking ESS.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious or distressed, support is available from the BC Mental Health Support Line at 310-6789.

For other information, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/current-alerts or call the Emergency Operation Centre Call Centre at 250-390-6538.

Recreational use

Q: The weather is expected to warm up this weekend, can we use the lakes?

A: For your safety, and the safety of Wesley Ridge wildfire response crews, Horne and Spider Lake users are asked to stay close to the shore when on or in the lake as they are being used as a water source for ongoing air support of the Wesley Ridge Wildfire. Boaters and other lake users should be aware that aircrafts are active in the area. Horne Lake boat launch is closed. There continues to be no access to Cameron Lake. Thank you for your cooperation as crews work hard on the Wesley Ridge wildfire.

Q: Is Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park still closed?

A: Yes

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Re-Entry

Q: I've been told I can return home, what do I need to know?

A: First, make sure that you may, in fact, return to your residence after being ordered to evacuate. Up-to-date information can be found on the RDN website at: rdn.bc.ca/current-alerts

Use caution and exercise good judgment when re-entering an area that was affected by the wildfire. Hazards may still exist, including hot spots that can flare up without warning.

Emergency operations may still be underway. First responders as well as firefighting machinery may still be present in the area.

In addition:

- **Little Qualicum River Village is on a Boil Water Notice.**
Returning evacuees are asked to limit water use to essential needs only (drinking, cooking, short showers, etc.) until advised otherwise. For detailed water use, information and direction, residents should contact the Strata Press Portal to reach council.
- Inspect your home carefully before entering. Watch for unstable structures, ash pits and fallen trees.
- Mark ash pits for safety. Ash pits are holes full of hot ashes, created by burned trees and stumps. You can be seriously burned by falling into ash pits or landing in them with your hands or feet. Warn your family and neighbours to keep clear of the pits.
- Be mindful of danger trees and consider having an assessment done by a professional.
- If food has expired, discard as normal.
- Curbside service is temporarily paused in your area to keep roadways clear for wildfire services. Tipping fees for organics and waste will be waived at the Church Road Transfer Station.

For more information on re-entering your home, visit: rdn.bc.ca/wesleyridgewildfire

(Updated August 2, 2025)

Staying Informed During a Wildfire

Q: How will I receive up-to-date information?

A: You can stay informed through:

1. BC Wildfire Service website - bit.ly/wesleyridgewildfire
2. RDN website – rdn.bc.ca/current-alerts
3. Voyent Alert – sign up to receive updates via text, email or phone call - rdn.bc.ca/emergency-program

Q: How do I sign up for Voyent Alert?

A: Visit rdn.bc.ca/rdn-alerts or search “Voyent Alert” on the RDN website. You can also call the Emergency Operations Call Centre at 250-390-6538 to be manually subscribed. RDN’s notification service helps residents, businesses and visitors stay informed about critical events such receiving important information about the current wildfire evacuation. By signing up, you can receive alerts via app, text message, voice call, or email—ensuring you're aware and prepared during emergencies.

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Q: Why is the RDN not responding to comments on social media?

A: Due to high inquiry volumes, the RDN is prioritizing safe and efficient evacuations. Responses are provided when possible. For updates, please visit the BC Wildfire and RDN websites or subscribe to Voyent Alert.

Q: Where can I get information about the Wesley Ridge wildfire?

A: Please go to the BC Wildfire Services website at wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/map.

Q: How can I contact the Emergency Operations Call Centre?

A: You can reach out via phone at 250-390-6538 between 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Evacuation Procedures & Support

Q: We are being ordered to evacuate. What do we do once we have left the property safely?

A: Register:

- Online at ess.gov.bc.ca or
- Call 1-800-387-4258 or
- At the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre reception centre at 747 Jones Street
 - This is where evacuees can receive and access information, resources and eligible support.
 - Hours of operation 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Evacuees are asked to contact their insurance providers. Most home and tenant's insurance providers cover living expenses during evacuations.

Q: What if I need help evacuating?

A: Please call the Emergency Operations Call Centre at 250-390-6538. We will coordinate support to ensure everyone can evacuate safely.

Q: We are being ordered to evacuate. Where do we go?

A: You can go to family or friends outside of the evacuation order area or you can go to the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre at 747 Jones Street which is set up as an Emergency Support Services reception centre. You will be asked to register upon arrival at the Civic Centre.

We have a mobile pet support unit at the reception centre. See our 'Evacuating with Pets' section below for more information.

Q. I have been evacuated, where can I go to shower?

A. The shower facilities at Ravensong Aquatic Centre will be available free of charge for Wesley Ridge ESS evacuees. Please note that the family changing rooms will not be available at this time.

The Facility is available as follows:

- Monday - Friday: 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Saturday: 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Sunday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Q: We are in an alert zone or near it. What should we do and where should we go?

A: If you're not under an evacuation order, do not go to the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre. If you choose to leave voluntarily pack essential items like medications, medical devices and important documents—you may not be able to return quickly.

Q: I need transportation assistance. Can the RDN help?

A: Yes. Call 250-390-6538 for transportation support.

Q: I am not in the evacuation order zone, but I have a medical condition worsened by smoke. How can I get support?

A: Call the Emergency Operations Call Centre at 250-390-6538 for assistance.

Q: How long will we be out of our house?

A: That information is not available at this time. Please subscribe to Voyent Alert for updates.

Q: Which areas are currently affected?

A: The Wesley Ridge Wildfire is currently affecting areas near Cameron Lake. Evacuation orders and alerts are in place for various areas. Visit rdn.bc.ca/current-alerts for current evacuation orders and alerts.

Aircraft are drawing water from Cameron Lake, Spider Lake and Horne Lake to support firefighting efforts. Please avoid using these lakes.

Evacuee Support - Emergency Support Services (ESS)

Q: What evacuee supports are available?

ESS provides basic support to evacuees such as **accommodation, food, clothing, incidentals and transportation** who do not have insurance or are unable to meet their own needs during or immediately after an emergency.

Q: How long is support provided?

Support is provided to evacuees while they are under an evacuation order. Support is initially provided for a 72-hour period. Emergency Support Services have been extended for everyone under evacuation order until Friday, August 15, 2025 and will be reviewed again depending on the situation.

During this time, evacuees are encouraged to:

- Connect with your insurance providers
- Connect with family and friends
- Access other community services as needed

Further support is available as the Wesley Ridge Wildfire Evacuation Order is still in effect. Evacuees can receive additional assistance and should contact the provincial ESS support team at [1-800-387-4258](tel:1-800-387-4258) to request access to additional food, incidentals, transportation or accommodation supports (if required) for the extended period. Phone lines are open Monday to Sunday: 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. (including statutory holidays).

Q: Who qualifies for ESS support?

A: Only residents whose primary residence is within an **Evacuation Order** area are eligible. Vacation rentals and secondary homes do not qualify.

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Note: Evacuee supports may be available for vulnerable populations in **Evacuation Alert** areas where it is determined that due to their vulnerability, they should evacuate. Vulnerable populations may include at-risk populations, those experiencing medical, communication or independence challenges, and/or those requiring supervision and special transportation needs. For more information call the Emergency Operations Call Centre at 250-390-6538 or visit your designated reception centre.

Q: How do I register for ESS assistance?

A: You can register online at <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>, or in person at the reception centre listed in your Evacuation Order. If you reregistering online and you need help with your Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) profile or Service BC authentication, please contact the ESS toll-free support line directly at **1-800-387-4258**. The ESS Call Centre is available Monday to Sunday including stat holidays.

Q: Can insurance provide more support than ESS?

A: In many cases, home or tenant insurance offers more comprehensive support. Contact your provider or the Insurance Bureau of Canada at 1-844-227-5422.

Q: What is the ESS reception centre, who can access it and when?

A: The Emergency Support Services reception centre is where evacuees can receive and access information and resources such as temporary accommodation supports and food.

Effective August 7, 2025, the reception centre is accessible for evacuees to register from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Q: What is group lodging and when it is available?

A: Group lodging facilities are spaces where evacuees can access temporary accommodations provided on a large scale. Group lodging facilities also provide access to showers and meals. Our group lodging facility is located at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre and are open and accessible for existing registered evacuees only.

Q. Are there other accommodation options than group lodging?

A: The accommodation allowance is financial support to help you find your own place to stay. This could mean staying with family/friends, booking a hotel/motel, or even a campsite. The allowance is paid directly to you, to help support your housing needs during your evacuation. If eligible, you can receive the allowance by Interac e-Transfer. To get supports, go to the reception centre, call the Call Centre at 1-800-387-4258 or apply online with your BC Services Card account at ess.gov.bc.ca

What to Bring When You Evacuate

Q: What should I take with me when evacuating?

A: Bring:

- Government-issued ID
- Insurance and financial documents
- Medications and medical supplies
- Pet supplies (food, water, leashes, carriers, medications)
- Irreplaceable personal items (e.g., family photos)
- Emergency supplies (flashlights, batteries, non-perishable food, water)

Preparing Your Home Before Evacuating

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Q: How can I protect my home before leaving?

A: If time allows:

- Close all windows and doors
- Cover vents
- Remove flammable materials from around your property
- Turn off utilities if instructed
- Leave a light on inside to help fire crews locate your home

Evacuating with Pets, Animals, Livestock

Q: What about my pets?

A: We have a mobile pet support unit at the reception centre for evacuees. Remember to prepare a pet evacuation kit with:

- Food and water
- Medications
- Leashes, carriers and comfort items

B: SPCA has a dedicated phone line for pet support for evacuees. Foster families may be available in nearby communities. Evacuees should call 250-586-1581 for information.

Q: What do I do with livestock?

A: For livestock or large animals, visit the Ministry of Agriculture website ([Livestock relocation - Province of British Columbia](#)) or call the Emergency Operations Call Centre at 250-390-6538 for help or relocation information. Hobby farmers are responsible for evacuating their own animals and are advised to prepare for evacuation during Evacuation Alerts and find supports with friends, family or other connections.

Safety While Traveling or Encountering Fire

Q: Is Highway 4 closed? Can I drive to/from Tofino?

A: Check DriveBC at [drivebc.ca](#) for current road conditions. If you travel, bring safety supplies, food and water. Do not stop to take photos, as this can obstruct emergency responders.

Q: What should I do if I encounter wildfire while driving?

A: Do not drive through a wildfire. Pull over safely, stay in your vehicle and wait for instructions from emergency personnel.

Q: What should I do if I see a wildfire?

A: Report it immediately by calling:

- 911, or
- BC Wildfire Service: 1-800-663-5555 or **5555 from a cell phone

Community Support & Volunteering

Q: How can I help?

A: The RDN is receiving many offers of help and land use. Your information will be recorded, and you may be contacted if assistance is needed.

Additional Resources

- For information on the status of highways: drivebc.ca/
- For information on the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI):
<https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/aqhi-table.html>
- For updates on fire weather and smoke across Canada: firesmoke.ca/