



MIND your business



Institute for Catastrophic
Loss Reduction

Building resilient communities

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Business wildfire evacuations



Do you know what to do if a wildfire is approaching your business? When wildfire may threaten and time allows, follow these last-minute steps to help protect employees and customers and increase your building's chance of survival.



Stay informed and activate a plan

■ Stay vigilant and monitor for wildfires

- Most Canadian provinces and Territories have webpages that provide real-time wildfire information, including maps. Some have smartphone apps.
- Watch for community alerts in your area. Stay aware of the latest emergency evacuation updates including recommended routes.
- Follow evacuation instructions by local authorities via official websites, social media accounts and local news outlets.

Note: Defending a business against wildfire can be extremely dangerous and your safety should be a top priority.

■ Activate your wildfire preparedness plan. Keep employees informed of:

- Wildfire conditions.
- Your company's response.
- What actions employees should take, or be prepared to take, and when they should act.

Outside your building

■ Fence/gated properties, garages and parking structures

- Open all gates so occupants can leave when needed.

■ Double check your 5-foot non-combustible buffer

- Bring in combustible items and inventory or storage – like door mats, pallets, outdoor seating furniture, outdoor equipment, signage and planters.
- Remove fallen tree debris from your patios or ramps attached to your building and within 5 feet of your structure.
- Remove any trash, cardboard boxes or other combustible items that may have been stored in this zone.
- Secure fence gate(s) in an open position if you have a combustible fence that attaches to your building.

■ Remove debris from your roof and gutters

- Clean debris from your roof, gutters, and downspouts.

■ Cover and clean vents

- If you have metal wire mesh vent covers, remove any debris buildup.
- Ensure vents are clear of debris and protected with 1/8-inch (3 mm) metal mesh or ember-resistant vent covers. Do not seal vents with tape or other temporary materials.

■ Shut off gas supply

- It is standard practice by emergency response to shut off the gas supply to your property to prevent feeding a fire. Doing so yourself further reduces risks to your building.
- Turn the handwheel clockwise to close valves.
- Move propane cylinders away from your building(s).
- If you have a large stationary propane tank, turn it off and remove weeds and other combustible debris from at least 10 feet around it.

■ Consider the water supply

- Do not leave landscape sprinklers on. It can negatively affect water pressure needed by firefighters. Instead, leave buckets of water around your building.





Inside your building

■ Move interior combustibles

- Move combustible items like curtains, window coverings, inventory, boxes, and furniture away from windows, doors, and vents. If time allows, unplug appliances and equipment to reduce electrical hazards.

■ Ensure your property is easily seen

- Leave exterior lights and business signage on to help firefighters see your building in smoky conditions if power has not been turned off in your area.

■ Close doors and windows

- Close all interior and exterior doors and windows. Exterior doors and windows can become a pathway for fire to enter the building. Closing interior doors can help stop the spread of fire.
- Close commercial sectional (garage), overhead, and roller doors.

■ Evacuate and stay safe

- Follow instructions and evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so.
- Evacuate your staff if you feel it is unsafe to stay. DO NOT wait to receive an emergency notification if you feel threatened by a fire.
- Leave your property.



This publication is adapted from the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety's (IBHS) How to Prepare a Business Before a Wildfire Emergency or Evacuation and Prepare a Business for a Wildfire Emergency or Evacuation guidance, used with appreciation. The IBHS mission is to conduct objective, scientific research to identify and promote effective actions that strengthen homes, businesses, and communities against natural hazards and other causes of loss. Learn more about IBHS at [IBHS.org](https://www.ibhs.org). Some content has been modified to reflect Canadian conditions and practices.

Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction

Mission

To reduce the loss of life and property caused by severe weather and earthquakes through the identification and support of sustained actions that improve society's capacity to adapt to, anticipate, mitigate, withstand and recover from natural disasters.

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