

British Columbia Wildfires

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR INTERIOR HEALTH EMPLOYEES

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INFORMATION ON WILDFIRES

Q1. Where can I get information on what is happening in my area?

A1. Please visit www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca for the most up to date information on wildfire activity in the province.

Additional information can be found at:

Information for the Public

- [Interiorhealth.ca](http://interiorhealth.ca) > Your Environment > Emergency Information > [Major Events](#)

Information for staff

- [InsideNet](#) > Emergency Response Planning > [Wildfire Response](#)
- [Interiorhealth.ca](http://interiorhealth.ca) > Your Environment > Emergency Information > Major Events > [Wildfire Information for Staff](#)

EVACUATION CENTRES

Q2. Where are the reception/evacuation centres located across the province?

A2. There are a number of evacuation and reception areas located throughout the province. For the latest information on evacuation center locations, please visit www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca.

COMMUNICATION WITH IH

Q3. Who do I contact in IH to let them know where I am if I have been evacuated?

A3. If your contact information has changed due to evacuation from your residence, please contact your regular Staffing office to advise of your new contact information.

Staffing Services can be reached at 1-888-877-7707, Select Option 1 – Staffing Services. You can also email Staffing Services at:

ssc_tcs@interiorhealth.ca (Thompson/Cariboo Shuswap Staffing Service Centre)

ssc_sok@interiorhealth.ca (South Okanagan Staffing Service Centre)

ssc_nok@interiorhealth.ca (North Okanagan Staffing Service Centre)

ssc_ek_kb@interiorhealth.ca (East Kootenay/Kootenay Boundary Staffing Service Centre)

Rural Staffing Offices:

AshcroftScheduling@interiorhealth.ca (Ashcroft/Logan Lake Staffing)

ClearwaterScheduling@interiorhealth.ca (Clearwater/Barriere/Blue River Staffing)

Lillooet/LyttonScheduling@interiorhealth.ca (Lillooet/Lytton Staffing)

MerrittScheduling@interiorhealth.ca (Merritt Staffing)

If at any time, a Staffing office is required to close due to an evacuation, this Q&A will be updated to reflect the most current information.

Q4. I have been evacuated due to the fires and I'm not sure what I am supposed to do now.

A4. The first thing you need to do is follow the evacuation orders by registering at your evacuation centre and with the Red Cross.

Then, if you are able to continue to work, please attend on your regular scheduled shift.

If your work facility has been evacuated, you will be reassigned by Staffing Services. Staffing Services will contact you at the number they have on file for you. If your number has changed due to the evacuation please contact your Staffing office (see above).

If you are unable to work, please contact Employee Absence Reporting Line (EARL) at 1-855-264-9515 and advise of the reason for your leave. You will be paid based on the reason given. If verification is required, it will be requested at a later date.

PAY, COMPENSATION AND SCHEDULING

Q5. Is there someone I can contact in IH if I have a question?

A5. IH has set up a free Employee Information Line – 1-855-802-9944 – to answer questions. Employees can leave a message, and calls will be returned as soon as possible.

Q6. Will I get paid if I am unable to work due to an evacuation order in the area of my residence?

A6. If you are not able to work due to your home being under an evacuation order you may be able to access special leave or another available accrued bank in accordance with your collective agreement, for a period of time. This leave will be determined on a case by case basis by your Manager and HR. Payment or non-payment of these leaves will be determined after the fact, as to allow the employee the time off at the immediate time to deal with the emergent need.

Q7. Will I get paid if I am unable to work due to an evacuation order in my work facility?

A7. All attempts will be made to reassign your schedule to work in facilities that have been closed due to an evacuation order. You will be expected to work in the reassignment.

Q8. I am a casual employee who had pre-booked shifts at a site that is now closed due to evacuation. Will I be paid for those shifts?

A8. All attempts will be made to reassign you to another area for the shift. If we are unable to reassign you to another area, you will be paid for the pre-booked shift.

Q9. I am a part-time employee with pre-booked voluntary shifts over the next month. Will I get paid for these shifts?

A9. All attempts will be made to reassign you to another area for the shift. If we are unable to reassign you to another area, you will be paid for the pre-booked shift.

Q10. Prior to the evacuation, I worked some shifts and also had some on-call shifts that I'm not sure got entered into the system in order to get paid. How do I ensure that I get paid properly for these shifts if they don't show up on the next pay day?

A10. If there was a missed shift, on-call, call-back, etc., that may not have been entered and paid; we will reconcile this for you at a later date. Please keep records of any time that may not have been paid to you and discuss with your manager when we begin to return to normal business operations.

Q11. What if I am not able to return to work once the facility re-opens?

A11. Depending on your situation, you will likely have to apply for a leave of absence.

Q12. What if I am required or requested to work overtime?

A12. If you are covered by a collective agreement will be compensated in accordance with your collective agreement for hours over your regularly scheduled hours or work on a scheduled day of rest.

Q13. I was pre-scheduled for overtime and this shift was cancelled. Will I get compensated for overtime?

A13. You will not be paid for a cancelled overtime shift if it was cancelled due to an evacuation or emergent situation.

Q14. Can my manager mandate me to report to work on days off during this emergency?

A14. Yes, you may be required to work overtime or involuntary additional hours in order to respond to this emergency. This is a very unique situation that requires extraordinary efforts to ensure our patients and clients receive proper care.

Q15. I had to go home mid shift due to evacuation. How will my time be coded?

A15. You may be eligible for Special Leave or another type of leave dependent on your situation or collective agreement. This will be determined by your Manager and HR at a later time.

Q16. What if I am unable to report for redeployment and/or overtime work as requested or required?

A16. If you are unable to respond to a request to work as a result of an evacuation, road closure or other personal circumstances, please explain the reasons for your inability to respond to your Manager or staffing person calling you.

Q17. Can my manager make me stay after my shift?

A17. You may be required to work overtime in order to respond to this emergency.

Q18. Can I bank my overtime?

A18. If you are a unionized employee, you may bank your overtime in accordance with your collective agreement.

Q19. I had to be evacuated from an affected area due to the fires and have lots of additional expenses I have to pay for and wasn't expecting. Can I get paid out for some of my banked time such as vacation and overtime?

A19. We are not able to pay out your accrued vacation; however you are able to access your banked overtime. Please request the payout process via the normal process.

Q20. I had vacation time booked in the next couple of weeks and I have been evacuated from my home. Will I be required to still take this vacation time or can I reschedule it?

A20. Prescheduled vacations will not be cancelled, unless in an emergent situation your attendance is required at the worksite. These situations will be assessed on a case by case basis. Managers will be provided with additional information from Human Resources on how to assess these situations.

REDEPLOYMENT * Redeployment may be to another IH facility or to another Employer site (e.g., Northern Health)

Q21. I am able and willing to work elsewhere while I'm evacuated. Who should I contact and how will this impact my pay?

A21. If you are able and willing to be redeployed right now, please call Staffing Services ([see Q3](#)) with your name; current position and department; skills and training; home work site; distance you're willing to be deployed; contact information; and dates of availability.

Any hours you work for IH will be considered in relation to what you were scheduled for. For instance, if

you are full-time and you are able and willing to work 2 shifts in another facility, you will still be paid for your full-time hours. If you are working in excess of your regularly scheduled hours of work, any overtime provisions in the collective agreements will apply.

Q22. How will redeployment decisions be made and how will I be contacted?

A22. You will be contacted by Staffing Services, if you are able to be redeployed from your regular schedule or deployed on your days off. There may be also be occasions where you are contacted by your Manager, but every effort is being made to filter all scheduling through regular Staffing departments.

Q23. If I am redeployed to help during the disaster response, how will my pay be handled?

A23. You will be paid for any shifts that you work in accordance with collective agreements as applicable.

Q24. If I am reassigned to another site, how will I be compensated for travel and accommodation expenses?

A24. You will be reimbursed for applicable accommodation, mileage, parking expenses and travel time pursuant to your applicable collective agreement. Travel between sites during the work day shall be considered work time and you will be paid for all time and mileage for such travel. Travel Education Expense Reimbursement (TEER) forms will be used for reimbursements.

If you are required to report for work at a different site for your first report of the day, you may be eligible for travel time or mileage pursuant to your applicable collective agreement, depending on the distance between your usual home site and the site to which you are redeployed.

If you are called back to duty pursuant to your applicable collective agreement, you may be eligible for travel expenses for your usual commute.

Please save your receipts and submit via the expense claim process. Expense claims can be found on Insite.

VOLUNTEERING AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE DURING THE RELIEF EFFORTS

Q25. I do not reside in an affected area and have not been impacted by the fires and evacuation. I would like to volunteer to assist. Who should I contact if I want to help?

A25. Thank you for your kind offer of assistance. If you are able and willing to be redeployed right now, please contact Staffing Services ([see Q3](#)).

Q26. Is there going to be a way for IH employees to provide assistance and support to other IH staff who are impacted by the wildfires?

A26. We appreciate your willingness to help the IH employees that were impacted by the wildfires. Our main priority right now is working to get the appropriate level of health care to our patients/clients/residents, including mental health supports, home care supports, emergency management services and pharmacy services. General support and assistance can be provided by contacting the Canadian Red Cross and other relief organizations that are seeking donations, supplies and accommodations.

Q27. I am a reservist with the military and have been called upon to assist with the firefighting efforts in affected communities. Who should I ask about approval to take a leave from my position and how will I be compensated?

A27. We understand that this is a critical time for British Columbia and your reservist duties are very important in the firefighting and evacuation efforts. Please contact your manager to request a leave from your position as you normally would and provide as much information as possible related to the commencement and duration of the leave and any other important details. We encourage managers to

support the leave recognizing this is a crucial time for British Columbians. This will be coded as a leave without pay from IH during the time you are away.

Q28. I'm an employee of IH and also volunteer with an external organization. I have been called upon to assist with the firefighting efforts in affected communities. Who should I ask about approval to take a leave from my position and how will I be compensated?

A28. We understand that this is a critical time for British Columbia and your volunteer duties are very important in the firefighting and evacuation efforts. Please contact your manager to request a leave from your position as you normally would and provide as much information as possible related to the commencement and duration of the leave and any other important details in order to consider your request. We encourage managers to support the leave recognizing this is a crucial time for British Columbians subject to operational requirements.

Q29. I do not reside in an affected area but I have friends and family that do and they had to be evacuated and going through a lot right now. I need to take time off to support them as they need my help and I am very worried about them. Can I request time off to be with them?

A29. The situation regarding the wildfires and evacuation continues to evolve and our ongoing priority is to ensure our patients, clients, and staff is safe. We understand your need to be with your family and friends and assist them in their time of need. Please contact your manager to request time off as you would normally. We have recommended that managers give as much consideration as they can to approve these requests subject to operational requirements. Employees can request time off using vacation time, special/personal leave, overtime banks, etc., as may be appropriate and available.

COSTS, EXPENSES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

Q30. I evacuated from an affected area and have chosen to stay at a hotel. Will I be reimbursed for my expenses?

A30. IH will not be reimbursing costs associated with temporary lodging during the evacuation. Employees are encouraged to contact their personal insurance companies or any Government Emergency Funding sources to inquire about eligibility for expense reimbursement.

The Canadian Red Cross is supporting the B.C. government in providing relief for those affected by the wildfires. If you have been evacuated, please call the contact center at 1-800-863-6582 to have a Red Cross agent help you register, or fill out the [online registration form](#).

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

Q31. What resources are available to me and my family during the wildfires?

A31. Below are some supports that are available to you and your families at this difficult time:

- Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Crisis Support Line – **1-844-751-2133**
 - Call the EFAP crisis support line, available 24/7, and you will receive crisis counselling support and/or referral to community resources
- Interior Health Mental Health – **1-250-377-6500**
 - Call the MHSU Central Intake in Kamloops and ask for Intake to be connected with an Interior Health counsellor.
- BC Crisis Line – **250-310-6789**

Other Support Resources:

- [IH's Guide to Employee Health & Wellness Services](#) contains all the contact information for health and wellness services available to employees.
- [Forest Fires page](#) on the IH public website provides information about what you can do during and after a fire, including: [dealing with stress](#) and [helping kids cope](#) during a fire threat.
- [Here to Help](#) is a mental health support agency provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority.
- [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#) is a provincial resource centre that provides mental health information, resources, and peer support to children, youth, and their families.

Refer to the [Employee Wellness web page](#) on Inside Net for more information.

- Canadian Red Cross.
All affected evacuees are requested to register with the Red Cross.
www.redcross.ca
[1-800-863-6582](tel:1-800-863-6582)