



Anywhere. Anytime. | Red Cross

You are Red Cross

And you make a World of Difference

Helping victims of B.C. forest fires

The Need:

Major forest fires in British Columbia's interior and northern regions have resulted in the evacuation of as many as 8,500 residents and the declaration of a state of emergency.



High temperatures, low humidity and electrical storms created infernos that over 1,000 firefighters continue to struggle to contain. Massive fires covering tens of thousands of hectares are located in the areas of McLure (40 km north of Kamloops), Strawberry Hill (Rayleigh suburb of Kamloops), Cedar Hills (northeast of Vernon) and Alexis Creek (110 km west of Williams Lake).

While many evacuees have now returned to their communities, they are discovering that the suffering caused by disaster can continue long after news of it disappears from front pages of national newspapers. At a minimum, residents face smoke damage to their homes and diminished access to basic daily supplies and services. For others, it will be far worse.

At least 65 evacuated families have returned to find their homes completely destroyed. It is estimated that half of those families do not have insurance to cover losses or provide for their basic needs in the weeks ahead. Some evacuees have already been unable to work for two weeks. Devastatingly, the mill that employed many people in several communities has burned to the ground. As in all disasters, the total impact of the B.C. forest fires will not be known for several months.

For many of those affected by these fires, the road to recovery will be long and hard.

Red Cross Response:

Recovery Assistance

Canadian Red Cross is on public appeal for \$1 million to provide for those basic recovery needs of B.C. forest fire victims that will not be met through insurance companies or other agencies. Red Cross help will address needs related to accommodations (including rent and utility assistance), food, clean-up, clothing, household furnishings, school supplies and home repair.

Relief Assistance

Red Cross is supporting provincial relief operations by:

- working in concert with other response agencies to ensure the basic needs of those affected are being met;
- registering evacuees to give responders an accurate picture of how many people are displaced and what support is required;
- operating a service that reconnects evacuees with concerned family members; and
- managing the bureau that coordinates staffing of disaster workers and volunteers (excluding firefighters).



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How you can help:

Make a donation:

Public donations can make a world of difference in the lives of those families affected by forest fires in B.C. Donate today by calling 1-800-418-1111, online at www.redcross.ca, or by visiting any Red Cross office. (Financial donations only, please; donations of goods are not accepted.)

Hosting a fundraising event is a powerful way of turning the care and concern of your company or social group into meaningful help. For guidance in operating such fundraisers or in making a corporate donation, call your local Red Cross office.

In the unlikely event that donations exceed needs for this disaster, remaining funds would be directed to the Red Cross Canadian Disaster Relief Fund to help those affected by future disasters.

Volunteer:

Become a trained Red Cross disaster services volunteer and help families affected by disasters. For more information, contact your local Red Cross office.

Be Prepared:

If you live in an area currently threatened by forest fires, find out how to safely and effectively prepare for evacuation by visiting the Canadian Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.ca (see 'How we Help>Disaster Services>Disaster Preparedness').



Red Cross volunteers register B.C. forest fire evacuees. Registration helps response agencies to know the whereabouts of evacuees and identify services they might require. The service can also link evacuees with concerned family members and friends outside of the disaster area.

If you would like to help make a **World of Difference**, contact your local Red Cross office today.

