



Returning Home Information 2024

www.golden.ca/emergencyprogram

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction	1
Returning Home	2
Safety & Hazards	3
Re-Entry Checklist	4
Water Quality & Garbage Disposal	5
Tip Sheet 1: Steps to take when you return home	6
Tip Sheet 2: Cleaning	8
Tip Sheet 3: Food Disposal	10
Tip Sheet 4: Insurance Information	11
Additional Resources & Information	12
Contact Information & Useful Links	13





The re-entry guides includes important and useful information about returning home after the Dogtooth wildfire.

Being prepared and proceeding cautiously will help you stay healthy and avoid injury when you re-enter your home.

The Town of Golden and Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) appreciate your patience during this stressful time. Thank you for respecting all traffic control measures, including emergency and security personnel. We are grateful to residents for following the directions given for the evacuation order and for your patience in returning to your homes.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your home and its surroundings may not look like they did before you left, this may include:

- Blackened and burnt trees, shrubs and landscapes
- Smell of smoke
- Areas covered in ash
- Familiar landmarks missing
- Spoiled food in fridges and freezers

When it is safe to re-enter your home and property, check that you have enough fuel, food and water in case of unforeseen damage or issues. Be prepared with a radio, flashlight and emergency supplies. Be prepared to leave if your area is still under an Evacuation Alert, and stay informed of wildfire information through the Town of Golden website at www.golden.ca, local media, or signing up for Alertable notifications by email, text or landline at www.csr.bc.ca/alertable.

If you have questions regarding evacuations or re-entry details, please contact the Golden Emergency Operation Centre at 250-344-7473



RETURNING HOME

As you arrive, it's important to obey all signage, traffic control measures and fencing.

If you can only enter your home once, remove your valuables and take steps to secure your property.

If you're safely able to return for longer

- Bring supplies like a flashlight, tools, drinking water, gloves, garbage bags and a first aid kit
- Walk around the perimeter of any structure before entering, noting electrical wiring, any gas smell or debris that could fall, and photographing damage
- Enter with caution and check that the main power breaker is off
- Only use generators outdoors; do not connect to a household circuit
- Note sewage and water damage; your septic system or sump pump may not work without power and water may not be potable (that is, may not be safe to consume)
- Do not use your sewage disposal system unless you know it's capable of handling waste
- If using propane, gas or heating oil, contact suppliers for inspection and service

Take pictures, keep track of your expenses and the time you spend cleaning up and make sure you keep your receipts.

IMPORTANT: Please be sure to read this entire package carefully before entry into your home to minimize the risk of danger to you and your family.



BE SAFE

At all times, everywhere in your community

Your safe return to your neighbourhood is our priority. Please make it your priority too. This guide was created to give you the information you need to plan your safe return. Please refer to it often.

You are returning to a community that was affected by a wildfire. Services that you are used to or rely on may be limited for some time.

Anyone with concerns about a medical condition is advised to consult with a physician before returning home. People can call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 if they have questions or need help finding a physician. Online visit www.healthlinkbc.ca.

Returning home after a wildfire evacuation can be a particularly stressful and traumatic experience. The thought of all the work that needs to be completed so that you and your family can return to your normal lives can feel overwhelming. If you need to talk, call the **Mental Health Help Line at 310-6789 (no area code needed)** or **HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1**.

Some areas may be fenced for safety and security purposes. Please respect these restricted areas and any directions given to you by first responders or utilities workers. Doing so will keep you and your family and other members of the community safe.

Post-Wildfire Natural Hazards

Following a wildfire, certain areas with moderate to steep slopes may be at greater risk of exposure to geohazard such as landslides or rock falls. When the fires have subsided, government agencies will be undertaking a program of post-wildfire natural hazard risk analysis in areas deemed to be at risk. Results will be provided to Local Government for dissemination to affected residents.

Learn more:

- climatereadybc.gov.bc.ca
- pwnhr-bcgov03.hub.arcgis.com



RE-ENTRY CHECKLIST



Important: If at any time, you feel your home or surroundings are unsafe, do not proceed.

- ☐ Sign up for the Alertable notification system to get important alert notifications for your area.
Download it from Google Play or the App Store or visit csrd.bc.ca/alertable
- ☐ Thoroughly check for hazards before entering your house.
- ☐ Exercise safety and caution when returning to a property by wearing items such as long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and safety boots.
- ☐ Wear an N-95 or equivalent dust mask (disposable facemask to filter dust and other air particulates) to reduce potential smoke exposure.
- ☐ With limited services available in some areas, returning residents should expect some disruptions, service delays, and intermittent road closures.
- ☐ Refer to the **CLEANING** tip sheet in this guide for detailed information on cleaning and what you may want to include in your cleaning kit. Cleaning kits are also available for pick up at the Golden Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).
- ☐ If your home has been impacted by water damage, please refer to the **CLEANING** tip sheet in this booklet for information on preventing mold.
- ☐ All perishables must be disposed of in every home. All appliances must be cleaned and disinfected. For information on spoiled food removal refer to the **DISPOSING FOOD FROM YOUR HOME** tip sheet.
- ☐ Refer to the **STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOU RETURN HOME** tip sheet for additional information on what to do when you arrive home.
- ☐ Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible. Refer to the **INSURANCE INFORMATION** tip sheet for more information.
- ☐ Review the **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS** section for information on additional resources that may be available to you.
- ☐ Refer to the **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** section for some answers to commonly asked questions.



WATER QUALITY

Wells & Private Systems

If you are on a well, cistern or private water system that has been damaged, assume the water is not safe to drink. Contact your private provider, call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 or visit www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/environmental-health-and-hazards/drinkingwater for more information.

GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Talk with your insurers about what to do with your home contents including spoiled food, fridges and freezers before you take any action. Insurers sometimes require inventory or photos.

Based on the information available to the Golden EOC, there were no long-term power outages. However, if you think it's unsafe to open your refrigerator/freezer, or you have been instructed to discard it: Seal the doors shut with duct tape Label the appliance "CONTAMINATED" in large print before bringing it to the landfill.

The Parson Transfer Station is located at 3583 Highway 95. Learn more at www.csr.bc.ca/316/Unscaled-Transfer-Stations

The Golden Landfill is located at 350 Golden-Donald Upper Road and open Mondays to Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn more at www.csr.bc.ca/168/Garbage-Recycling



TIP SHEET 1



STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOU RETURN HOME

When returning to a home or business after a wildfire, it is best to take extra precautions. Unseen dangers may linger, ranging from gas leaks and weakened foundations to exposed wires and power lines. Using caution can help reduce potential injuries. Play it safe. When in doubt, ask for help or seek advice from an expert.

Here are tips for safely returning to your home or business after a wildfire:

Check the status of your property

Contact your insurance company to discuss claim options and your bank to discuss mortgage or loan payment deferrals.

Be prepared with the following before going home:

- food supplies (food left behind maybe unsafe for consumption)
- clean drinking water
- medication (prescription or over-the-counter medication may not be safe to consume)
- safety boots long pants and a long-sleeved shirt
- N-95 masks (surgical or dust masks not recommended). N-95 masks are available at hardware stores.
- gloves
- camera
- flashlight
- a cleaning kit (cleaning kits are available for pick up at the Golden EOC)

You may want to consider arriving with enough of these items to last for up to 14 days

Insurance & Documentation

Documentation will be important to access insurance or other support. Use a journal or electronic document to make detailed and dated notes about your observations of your property including an inventory of items you have lost, people/organizations you speak to, and tasks you need to complete. Create a section for key contacts. Keep all receipts, write a description on the back and store them away from the sun.

Contact your insurance and stay in regular contact about your needs and how they can help. If you do not have insurance, contact Emergency Support Services (ESS) 250-833-3360 and the Canadian Red Cross 1-800-863-6582 or [redcross.ca](https://www.redcross.ca) for possible assistance.

Other safety precautions:

- Check for hazards before entering your house. Walk around the perimeter before entering your home, noting electrical wiring, any gas smell or debris that could fall.
- Do not allow children or pets to play in areas damaged by fire.
- Do not try to use any electrical appliances or power in your home or garage that may have come into contact with fire, water or fire retardant until they have been cleared for use by a qualified electrician.
- Do a thorough visual inspection (including roofs and floors) of your property. The foundation and any brick or cement fireplace chimney may have been damaged by heat caused by fire.
- Check for electrical hazards such as exposed wires. Avoid contact with damaged or fallen power lines and poles. If there are any hazards, contact your provider, BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376)
- Beware of dust, ash, broken glass, and other sharp objects. Seek medical attention if you are injured.
- If you have a propane tank system, contact your service provider to do an inspection.
- Visually check the stability of trees around your property. Look for burn damage on the tree trunk or for visible damage of burnt tree roots. Any trees that have been damaged by fire may soon become a hazard. They may need to be cut down and removed.

Be cautious when going inside your home or business:

- Do not start cleaning or throwing anything away until you contact your insurance company.
- If applicable, ask your insurance provider what you should do about covering broken windows, doors and other exposed areas, pumping out water and any other activities you may need to do to secure and weatherproof your home.
- Take pictures and/or video, and make a list of damaged belongings.
- Understand what your situation is before you return. If power has been restored but the power is off in your home, please check your breaker panel. If it is still off, please call BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376).
- If you or any of your family members have breathing difficulties or asthma, take all appropriate precautions to protect yourself.
- Wear an N-95 mask while sifting through debris to avoid inhaling smoke and ash.
- It is important to wash your hands if they come into contact with ash or burned items. •
- Check your private water, sewer and septic systems. Call the company or contractor that usually provides these services to ask for an assessment.
- Be aware that animals may have taken shelter in your home, garage or outbuildings. Leaving a door open will allow animals to return to their natural surroundings on their own.
- Be cautious when disposing of garbage as it can attract bears and other wildlife leading to human-wildlife conflicts.
- If you encounter an animal that appears injured or unwilling to leave, call the B.C. Conservation Office at 1-877-952-7277.

TIP SHEET 2



CLEANING

This tip sheet provides general information for when you begin the clean-up process. **Free cleaning kits are available for pickup at the Golden EOC, contact 250-344-7473 to arrange pick-up.**

- Wash all interior walls and hard surfaces with a steam cleaner or white vinegar. **NEVER use bleach to clean areas where fire retardants have been used.** If you notice fire retardant residue on your property (red stains) use water or biodegradable household cleaners. Also clean inside cabinets, drawers and closets. Steam or wipe undersides of furniture, tables and chairs. To clean windows and glass, use clean water and a razor blade tool to help to remove any sticky residue.
- Use black garbage bags for disposal: Dispose of food and other landfill-appropriate items with your regular household garbage.
- All clothing, linens and bedding should be laundered or dry cleaned.
- Wash all movable items: All movable items should be washed with a steam cleaner or microfibre cloth. This includes picture frames and knick-knacks.
- Wash all children's toys: Wash down children's outside toys, play structures and recreational equipment to remove any residual fire contaminants.
- Disinfect and deodorize: Upholstery, fabric window treatments, etc., can be spray-treated with deodorizing products available at most supermarkets. Avoid room sprays since they just cover up the problem and don't fix it. Steam items including carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture and mattresses. Steam melts the tar and neutralizes the odour and carbon film left by wildfires.
- Clean ductwork: Have heating, ventilating and air conditioning units and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash and smoke residue. Change filters when you first return to the premise and then continue to replace them at least once a month for the next year.
- Clean exterior surfaces: Pressure wash or scrub all exterior surfaces including walls, walks, drives, decks, windows and screens.
- Vinyl siding that has been stained by the use of fire retardant may qualify for replacement in most insurance policies. Contact your insurance company for coverage included in your policy.
- Consult a professional: If required, consult or hire professional cleaners.
- **Keep all receipts:** Remember to keep all receipts for cleaning and other expenses to provide to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

BUILD A CLEAN-UP KIT

Consider the following to build a clean-up kit before you return home. Materials can be purchased at most hardware stores or wherever you normally buy household goods. **Free cleaning kits are available for pickup at the Golden EOC, contact 250-344-7473 to arrange pick-up.**

Disaster Management Clean-up Kits include:

- ☐ One 5-gallon bucket with a reusable lid
- ☐ Multiple cotton wet mop heads
- ☐ One 14" stiff push broom head
- ☐ One 14" floor squeegee head
- ☐ Two 54" four-section metal handles
- ☐ One 9" stiff capped sweep head
- ☐ One 7" scrub brush
- ☐ Multiple sponges
- ☐ One pair leather work gloves
- ☐ Two pairs household rubber gloves
- ☐ One N95 mask
- ☐ Ten heavy duty garbage bags
- ☐ One litre bleach-based all-purpose cleaner

After Fire Clean-up Kits include:

- ☐ One full release smoke odour fogger
- ☐ One concentrated liquid deodorizer for washing machine
- ☐ Two pairs leather work gloves
- ☐ Ten garbage bags
- ☐ Flashlight with 3-AAA batteries included
- ☐ One 4-pack AAA batteries
- ☐ Surface antibacterial wipes
- ☐ One empty 32-ounce plastic spray bottle with trigger spray
- ☐ One 32oz bottle all-purpose cleaner/disinfectant
- ☐ One roll toilet paper
- ☐ Two pairs nitrile gloves
- ☐ Two pairs safety glasses – clear lens
- ☐ Drawstring backpack

PREVENTING MOLD

If your home was damaged by wildfires, you will need to remove excess water to prevent mold growth.

Check with your insurance adjuster before completing any work on your damaged home.

- Call your insurance company: Let your insurance company and restoration contractor know as soon as possible if you find any visible mold growth or smell mold inside your home.
- When you are trying to decide what to keep or to throw away, be safe and always remember: “When in doubt, throw it out.”
- Dry all wet items as soon as possible. Wet or waterlogged carpeting should be dried as quickly as possible, and any underlay should be removed. Steam cleaning carpets with a disinfectant will be adequate.
- Remember to contact your insurance provider if you have any questions about whether to simply clean your refrigerator/freezer or to dispose of it.
- Clean and disinfect: To help prevent mold growth, any water damaged or stained surfaces and appliances should be checked for damage, cleaned and disinfected with a 1:10 parts household bleach to water solution (2 tsp. bleach in 750 ml water or 1 capful bleach in 1 gallon water). **ONLY USE BLEACH IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO – NEVER USE BLEACH IN THE PRESENCE OF FIRE RETARDANTS.**
- Get air moving inside your house: Open windows and use a fan to circulate the inside air.
- Dehumidifiers reduce moisture: You may need to use a dehumidifier to help remove excess moisture from the air inside your home.
- You may wish to remove stained rugs, curtains and soft furniture from your home to clean them.

TIP SHEET 3



FOOD DISPOSAL

When in doubt, throw it out!

Based on the information available to the Golden EOC, there were no long-term power outages. However, if you are unsure of how long power was out in your home, contact your utility provider and/or insurer for direction.

Food in your home may be unsafe for consumption, consider the disposal of:

- All dry goods that are not in sealed packages/cans.
- Any unrefrigerated raw vegetables or fruits, or any foods that were stored in porous containers (e.g., cardboard, foam containers, etc.).
- Food that was in bowls on counters/tables.
- Food that shows signs of damage from heat or fire, including ash or smoke.
- Any canned food where the can looks like it is bulging or rusted. Canned foods that look like they may be okay need to be cleaned and disinfected with soap and water before being opened to make sure the contents aren't contaminated.
- Any food that has come in contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals or water.
- Any food displaying an off odour or signs of spoilage.

IMPORTANT: If power is out in your home, or was out for an extended period of time, all perishable items must be disposed of immediately upon your return, including items in your freezer.



INSURANCE INFORMATION

If you are insured:

1. If your home has a mortgage, call the bank or company that holds this mortgage to let them know about the wildfires as soon as possible.
2. Contact your insurance company/broker as soon as possible. Most have a 24-hour claims service. The sooner the insurance company is notified, the quicker your insurance claim can be processed.
3. Try to create an inventory of household items, both inside and outside of the buildings, which have been damaged by fire. Photograph or videotape the damage as much as possible.
4. Work with your insurance company to find out what is covered, what is not covered and what may be subject to further discussion.
5. Work with your insurance company and their accredited fire restoration companies to try to restore or rebuild your home.
6. In the event that any of these suggestions conflict with information provided by your insurer,

If you are not insured:

For information on available assistance, check with:

- Emergency Support Services (ESS) call 250-344 –272-0291
- Canadian Red Cross: call 1-800-863-6582 or redcross.ca
- Other non-government organizations

Restoration contractors:

- As much as possible, work with and through your insurance company. They can recommend reputable restoration contractors who can help and who know the proper standards to follow.
- If you decide to choose your own restoration contractor, check their references.
- If anyone in your family is sensitive to chemicals or mold, you need to let the restoration contractor know so that they can take all necessary precautions.

If you have questions about a certain contractor, or issues arise, visit:

- Consumer Protection BC office at: www.consumerprotectionbc.ca or call 1-888-564-9963
- Better Business Bureau at: www.bbb.org or call 604-682-2711

They can help provide you with more information about various consumer issues.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Health & Mental Health

If you have a medical condition and are uncertain about returning home, consult with a physician before returning home. People can call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 if they have questions or need help finding a physician.

Experiencing a disaster such as a wildfire can be particularly stressful and overwhelming. If you need to talk, call the BC Crisis Line / Mental Health Support call 310-6789 (no area code needed) or HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 or visit healthlinkbc.ca.

The BC Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association also has excellent resources for dealing with natural disaster stress at cmha.bc.ca.

The Golden Family Center also offers free drop in counselling every Wednesday. Sessions are booked on a first come first serve basis. Please call 250-344-2000 to schedule an appointment.

Utilities

BC Hydro

Based on the information available, there were no long-term power outages. If you are not sure if your house was without power a simple way of knowing is if your digital clocks are blinking, however, this will not indicate how long the power was off. If you need specific information, or if your property is still without power, contact BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376).

Telus

- TELUS Mobility: *611 on your TELUS mobile phone or call 1-866-558-2273
- TELUS Internet: Toll-free call 1-888-811-2323 or telus.com

EastLink

- 902-903-6297 or eastlink.ca

BC Wildfire Services Claims

There is a claims process through BC Wildfire that may be available if your property was damaged by wildfire suppression activities.

To initiate the claims process, please email: BCWSClaims@gov.bc.ca.

A background document titled “Compensation for Fire Control Damage” can be found at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/about-bcwildfire-service/bcws-policies/policy_99_compensation_for_fire_control_damage.pdf



CONTACT INFORMATION

- Golden & Area Emergency Management Program:
 - golden.ca/emergencyprogram
 - Kyle.hale@goldeneoc.ca
 - 250-344-7473
- Emergency Support Services (ESS) at ess.gov.bc.ca
- BC Wildfire Service website: wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/map
- Insurance Bureau of Canada: 1-844-227-5422 or ibc.ca
- ICBC: 1-800-950-1498 or icbc.com
- BC Hydro: 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or bchydro.com
- BC Conservation Office: 1-877-952-7277
- Canadian Red Cross: 1-888-350-6070 redcross.ca

USEFUL LINKS

- Water and Food Quality: Interior Health Authority
<https://interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/natural-disasters-and-emergencies/wildfires>
- Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality and Health Effects of Wildfire Smoke BC Centre for Disease Control
<https://bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/wildfire-smoke>
- Farm/Ranch Wildfire Plan Workbook: Preparing for and Responding to Wildfire
<https://bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/Resources/BC-Farm-Ranch-Wildfire-Plan-2019-workbook.pdf>
- Last-Minute Checklist for Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire FireSmart BC.
<https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/firesmart-last-minute-wildfire-checklist/>
- Propane Safety Canadian Propane Association
https://propane.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CPA_Wildfires-Safety-Fact-Sheet-2023.pdf
- Landslide and Flooding Risks Due to Wildfires:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/resource-roads/local-road-safety-information/landslide_flooding_risks_due_to_wildfires-brochure.pdf
- Province of BC's Disaster Financial Assistance Program: Key Information.
<https://www.gov.bc.ca/disasterfinancialassistance>
- Fire Recovery Guide. Canadian Red Cross:
https://redcross.ca/crc/documents/Fire-Recovery-Guide_2017_v3_1.pdf
- Canadian Red Cross website: <https://redcross.ca/>



SIGN UP NOW FOR COMMUNITY NOTIFICATIONS

INCLUDING EVACUATION ALERTS & ORDERS

In times of crisis, it is important residents have access to trusted, timely and accurate information to ensure their own safety and that of their family and loved ones. **Alertable** is a multi-purpose communication service used to send alerts to residents, businesses, and visitors during critical events like fires, extreme weather, landslides or floods as well as for relevant day-to-day communications, such as water advisories.

Alertable notifications can be set up for text, email, and landline calls.