# **Wildfire Comms Toolkit** **| Resources & Best Practices | Ontario**

*Prepared: June 2025*

**Introduction**

Whether you are preparing for an evacuation, encouraging preparedness, increasing safety awareness, or keeping people informed during an evacuation, clear and concise communication is key.

During unpredictable weather and weather-related events such as wildfires, information can move quickly. Information must be accurate, consistent, and factual.

This toolkit was created to support communities during wildfires to share up-to-date, consistent, and accurate information with members and neighbouring communities. It includes best practices in communicating during a crisis, messaging, social media, and web assets to support information sharing with those impacted.

We have prepared this toolkit to be easily adaptable for different communities and situations. Each piece may be changed to suit your unique needs. Areas for customization have been highlighted in yellow and [brackets].

**Communications Best Practices During Crisis**

Care for Wellbeing

Fear, uncertainty, and displacement can take a heavy toll on individuals and families, especially the most vulnerable. Including local support in your communications will remind people that help is available. Free mental health and wellness support is available 24 hours a day through the Hope for Wellness Helpline at 1-855-242-3310 or online at [www.HopeForWellness.ca](https://www.HopeForWellness.ca). Support is available in English, French, Cree and Ojibway (Anishinaabemowin) on request. Children and youth can also call the Kids Help Phone anytime at 1-800-668-6868 or text FIRSTNATIONS to 686868.

Incident Updates

Provide regular updates about the incident. Each update should include:

* Date and time of the update
* Information about the event. For example, for a wildfire you'll want to include location, size, impact to people, property and transportation routes
* Current actions being taken in response to the incident
* Information to ensure the safety and wellbeing of members (e.g., resources and support available)
* Date and time that the next update will be provided (e.g., “Our next update will be provided tomorrow by 3 p.m.”)

Use multiple communication channels:

* Website
  + Establish a web page where you can post updates
  + Create an alert banner or a spotlight on your homepage that links people to the wildfire updates web page. Ideally, the alert of the spotlight should be at the top of the webpage using a bright colour to grab people’s attention when they visit your website
  + If you are unable to maintain website updates, create an alert banner or spotlight on your homepage with information and a link to where people can find more information, such as your social media channels or another agency that provides information about the wildfire impacting your community
* Social media channels
  + Post updates and other helpful information on your social media channels. This could include travel advisories/road closures, reception areas, resources, and support for those who have been evacuated, etc.
  + Share photos of response efforts
  + Consider always having a post pinned—or featured—at the top of your social channels, whether it’s pointing to where to find further information or an important piece of information, such as a message about an evacuation order
  + Encourage followers to reshare the information so others in the area are seeing the latest updates
  + Leverage both in-feed and story posting across platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Most social media platforms do not have chronological feeds, meaning the latest posts aren't always the first to be seen.
  + Include local hashtags and tag other community accounts who can support distributing updates. If you are unable to monitor your social media channels, make sure you note that on your channel, through a featured post and indicate where people can find information
* Traditional media (TV, print, and radio news)
  + Consider reaching out to the media to help get your message out. This could be in the form of a news release that’s sent to local media outlets (print/online, radio, TV) or a public services announcement (PSA):
    - A PSA is a brief public interest message sent to TV and radio stations with the goal of having them share information at no cost
    - PSAs can also be posted to your website or social channels

**Resource Links**

Below are links to publicly available resources that may help you communicate with your members to prepare for and respond to a potential wildfire situation.

# **Wildfire Information and Evacuation Status**

* [Ontario Forest Fires](https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-fires)
* [Ontario Forest Fire Updates](https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-fires#section-3)
* [Ontario Forest Fire Info Map](https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/ForestFireInformationMap/index.html?viewer=FFIM.FFIM)
* Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources Social Media (EN):
  + X (Twitter): [@ONForestFires](https://x.com/ONforestfires)
  + Facebook: [@ONForestFires](https://www.facebook.com/ONforestfires/)
  + Instagram: [@onforestfires](https://www.instagram.com/onforestfires/)
* Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources Social Media (FR):
  + X (Twitter): [@ONFeudeforêt](https://x.com/ONfeudeforet)
  + Facebook: [@ONFeudeforêt](https://www.facebook.com/ONfeudeforet/)
  + Instagram: [@ONFeudeforêt](https://www.instagram.com/onfeudeforet)
* [Wildfires](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/wildfires.html) (Government of Canada programs, policies, and initiatives)
* [Ontario - Air Quality Health Index - Summary](https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/on_e.html)
* [FireSmoke Canada](https://firesmoke.ca/)

**Wildfire Safety**

* [Government of Canada - Wildfire smoke, air quality and your health: Overview](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/healthy-living/environment/air-quality/wildfire-smoke.html)
* Ontario Traveler Information: [511 Ontario](https://511on.ca/#:Alerts)

# **Wildfire Support**

* [Ontario Emergency Management](https://www.ontario.ca/page/emergency-management)
* [Ontario Health: Indigenous Services and Resources](https://www.ontariohealth.ca/getting-health-care/indigenous-services-resources)
* [Ontario Health](https://www.ontariohealth.ca/)
* Mental health: [Hope for Wellness helpline](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/)
  + Telephone 1-855-242-3310
* [Indigenous Primary Health Care Council](https://iphcc.ca/)
* Kids’ health: [Kids Help Phone](https://kidshelpphone.ca/)
  + Call: 1-800-668-6868
  + Text: 686868
  + [Message online](https://connect.crisistextlineca.org/chat?&_ga=2.28923900.1579291203.1748627242-965419274.1748627242)
* Children and families
  + [Jordan's Principle](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824)
  + [Supporting Inuit Children](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1536348095773/1536348148664)
* Financial
  + [Service Canada Centre: Ontario](https://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/tbsc-fsco/sc-lst.jsp?prov=MB&lang=eng)
  + [Emergency Management Assistance Program](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1534954090122/1535120506707)

**Wildfire Preparation**

* [Ontario - Weather Conditions and Forecast by Locations](https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index_e.html?id=ON)
* [Government of Canada – Get Prepared](https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/hzd/wldfrs-en.aspx)
* [Fire protection in First Nations communities](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1317842518699/1535120096924#chp1)

# **Wildfire Prevention**

* [National Indigenous Fire Safety Council](https://indigenousfiresafety.ca/en)
* [Canadian Red Cross Wildfire Information and Support](https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/get-help-disaster-relief-and-recovery/wildfire-information-and-support)
* [Wildfires: Before, During & After](https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/types-of-emergencies/wildfires)
* [FireSmart Canada](https://firesmartcanada.ca/)
  + Facebook: [@FireSmart Canada](https://www.facebook.com/FireSmartCanada)
  + Instagram: [@firesmartcanada](https://www.instagram.com/firesmartcanada/)
  + LinkedIn: [@FireSmart Canada](https://www.linkedin.com/company/firesmart-canada/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_search_srp_all%3B9BcsfBJNQVi7zAZKKZcxjg%3D%3D)
* [Ontario Outdoor Fire Restrictions](https://www.ontario.ca/page/outdoor-fire-restrictions)
* Report a wildfire:
  + Northwest & Northeast Region: Call 310-FIRE (3473)
  + French and Mattawa Rivers; Outside Fire Region: Call 911