



# Welcome Home!





# STAY SAFE

*A State of Local Emergency is still in effect and active wildfires are still a concern nearby.*

*Fox Creek remains under an evacuation alert. Please be prepared to evacuate the community on short notice if conditions change.*

***IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A FIRE,  
PLEASE CALL 310-FIRE (3473)***

## **IMPORTANT:**

**DO NOT DRIVE OVER ANY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING HOSES. FOLLOW THE DIRECTION OF THE FIREFIGHTERS**

Fire Apparatus, water tanks, and equipment are still positioned in the area. Please avoid them. Dozer guards (fire breaks) have been created to limit the spread of fire.

Please be aware of activity in your area.

If you notice the residue of fire retardants on your property (red stains) use water or biodegradable household cleaners. Never use bleach to clean areas where fire retardants have been used.

**DO NOT GO INTO BURNT AREAS AROUND THE COMMUNITY. BURNT TREES WITH COMPROMISED ROOT SYSTEMS ARE DANGEROUS.**

**CAUTION: ASH PITS – An ash pit is a hole in the ground filled with ash, possibly containing hot embers beneath. They are often found near the base of trees and in areas with deep organic soil. Ash pits are a danger to residents and their pets returning after a wildfire has gone out. Residents returning to their homes are reminded to stay vigilant and be aware of this danger. If you find an ash pit, do not step in or around it. If you're concerned about its location or giving off a lot of heat, please contact [welcomeback@foxcreek.ca](mailto:welcomeback@foxcreek.ca).**



## A Letter From Our Chief

It has been two and a half of the longest weeks of my life. For two and a half weeks I watched my team work day in and day out to do whatever they could think of to protect and save our community. The hours were long, and the work was hard, but to be able to welcome you all home with very little damage to Fox Creek is something I did not think was going to be possible a couple of weeks ago. To say I am proud of the work that was done in our community would be an understatement.

Not only did I have the pleasure of leading the Fox Creek Fire Department, but I also had the honor to work alongside departments from High River, Flagstaff, Lacombe, Siksika, Wheatland County, Rockyford, Debolt, Grande Cache, Bentley, Cypress Forestry, Oregon, Fox Lake, Rider Ventures, Rimbey and Tsina. The support and expertise that Fox Creek received from around the Province, Country and the States has been like nothing I have ever seen before. It is because of this help and our neighbour's willingness to answer the call that we are able to come home.

Welcome back Fox Creek. Please remember to be respectful of any equipment that may still be out. Stay away from any areas that have been burned—it is still dangerous. We will be living with an active wildfire right on our doorstep for the remainder of the summer. While I know this is not what you want to hear, please be ready to go on very short notice should we have to make that call again. I know that leaving your home is not something that is easy to do, but if the day comes that you are asked again, please take it seriously and know that there is still a threat right next to town.

However, because of the protective guards in place and the moisture that we have received, right now, it is safe for you to be home. Enjoy your families and being together, enjoy your summer and the fun that it always brings and remember to be grateful for what we have.

Chief Brian Davidson  
Fox Creek Fire Department



## Welcome Home Fox Creek

For a while, I wasn't sure how this message was going to look, but the fact that I get to welcome every single resident back to their homes is something to celebrate.

Our team fought day in and day out to get us to this point. When you look at a map and see that the Fire has essentially surrounded us, it is incredible to think that the work that was done by the teams on the ground may be the reason we are still standing – for that, I believe that we will forever be grateful.

Being away from our homes was challenging. A challenge that I think we were able to rise above and get through. We know there were struggles, and we are committed to being there to help you get through whatever those may have been. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our support staff in the days to come, they will be sure to point you in the right direction and connect you with people or services that will be able and willing to help.

Many town staff have been working hard to get us to today. This means that we may see a delay in the opening of some of our services and facilities. We ask that you stay patient as staff work to get our day-to-day functions back on schedule and slowly start opening things up again.

We are not out of the woods yet. While we received a good amount of rain the last couple of days, allowing us to come home, our reality is that we will be living all summer with two active wildfires surrounding our community. Because of this, we are asking that residents be ready to go very quickly should the need arise. Take comfort in the fact that there are trained professionals monitoring the fires around our Town and you will only be asked to leave again if necessary for your safety. While we are hopeful that does not happen, please take it seriously if it does and follow the directions that you are given. Because of this, we will remain under an Evacuation Advisory for the time being.

Fox Creek, thank you for helping this wildfire incident go as smoothly as possible. You left the community, as hard as it was, quickly and efficiently allowing our first responders to get to work immediately. While it seems like so long ago, your cooperation truly made operations get off to a smooth start, so things were in place if the fire turned – giving our town a fighting chance.

Welcome Home Fox Creek – we sure hope it is for good.

Mayor Sheila Gilmour

# FOX CREEK—EAGLE FIRE

## RE-ENTRY CHECKLIST

When re-entering an evacuation zone, here are steps that you need to take.

- Read your re-entry booklet for important information.
- When re-entering Fox Creek, drive carefully and follow the instructions of any road crews or officers. Be prepared for some traffic.
- Upon returning home, check your property for smoke damage. Make sure you photograph / document any damage and call your insurance company.
- Run your taps, both hot and cold for a least 5 minutes to clear any stagnant water in your lines.
- Contact your relatives / loved ones to tell them where you are.
- Do not enter any areas that are damaged by fire.
- Check the Town of Fox Creek Facebook Page and Website for any important updates on re-entry.

**If you are struggling with your mental health, call the free 24/7 Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642.**

**Please be patient and flexible; re-entering an evacuation area can be a slow process and plans can change based on the situation. Have patience with crews, businesses, and with fellow residents.**

**FIRE STATUS AND FIRE BAN**

## ABOUT THE FIRE ....

**Q: Is the wildfire out?**

A: The wildfire is still active, and crews remain on scene. Please be aware that you will continue to see fire activity (smoke, flareups, hotspots) in the coming days.

**Q: If the fire is still burning, why are we allowed back home?**

A: Fire experts have determined that it is safe at this time for the public to re-enter the community. But it is important to note that conditions can change quickly, and so we encourage all residents to stay tuned to local channels, to stay up to date on current developments and always be prepared with an emergency kit and essential items.

## If you notice fire activity, call 310-FIRE (3473)

**Q: If there still a fire ban in place?**

A: Yes, the Town of Fox Creek has a **TOTAL FIRE BAN** in effect. No outdoor burning is permitted. Existing fire permits are cancelled, and no new fire permits will be issued until the TOTAL FIRE BAN is lifted. No wood campfires are allowed, even in approved fire pits. Portable propane fire pits, gas/propane stoves and barbecues, and catalytic or infrared style heaters are permitted.

**Q: What does being under an evacuation alert mean?**

A: The Town of Fox Creek remains under an evacuation alert, which means you need to be ready to leave your home on short notice if fire conditions change. Fox Creek continues to be surrounded by two active wildfires, the community needs to be prepared to leave their homes again quickly if the situation changes.

If we are required to leave again please remember the following:

- Do not put your sprinkler on unless you are asked to do so. The Town's water reserves are important to manage during a wildfire, homes that are at risk will be protected by the department.
- Do NOT turn off your main water supply. If sprinklers are required, they may be hooked up to your homes supply. Utility bills will be adjusted accordingly.
- Close all your windows. Smoke may be heavy in the area with wildfires so close.
- Bring enough to be comfortable for a MINIMUM of 72 hours, knowing that very well could be longer.

**A note about ATVs / OHVs:** We are strongly urging citizens to avoid using ATVs/OHVs at this time due to the continued dry conditions and the risk of igniting a new fire. Please avoid using ATVs wherever possible until fire conditions improve.

## TREE SAFETY FOLLOWING WILDFIRES

**Q: What do I need to know about trees affected by the wildfire?**

**A:** After a wildfire, it's crucial to be mindful of the dangers that damaged trees can pose. Trees can be severely damaged by a wildfire in many ways, including: leaf/needle scorch, root/trunk/branch damage, inner trunk tissue injuries, and bud death. Moreover, the environment surrounding the trees (such as scorched earth and water-stressed conditions), can also affect them. To prevent injuries, it's essential to be aware of these potential hazards and take precautions to stay safe. Here are some tips:

- Check the tree's location and whether it's leaning or tilting.
- Look for visible damage to the outside of the tree.
- Examine the canopy of the trees to ensure that there are no overhead hazards.
- Inspect the tree's limbs, stems, and roots for signs of deterioration.
- Even if the tree appears to be in good condition, it may have internal damage that could weaken its structure.
- Watch out for wildlife that may have been displaced from the trees.

**Remember to always exercise caution when in a treed area following a wildfire. By staying aware of the potential dangers and taking steps to avoid them, you can help keep yourself and others safe.**

## THE FOX CREEK NORDIC TRAILS ARE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Watch their Facebook page for more information.

### RCMP

The RCMP remain in the area to serve and protect the community in their regular policing duties. Extra members will be patrolling the Town to ensure a smooth re-entry process.

## AVAILABLE SERVICES

**Q: What services/businesses are open?**

A: Prior to re-entry, the Emergency Response Team connected with critical essential services so that residents' immediate needs can be met (food, fuel, medical and finance). Other services may be limited while businesses work on getting back to full operations, so please have patience with local businesses.

**Q: What municipal facilities / buildings are open?**

A: As our municipal staff are primarily working on the emergency and re-entry response, town facilities will be delayed in opening. Please follow our Facebook page and website for more information on when these services will be available.

## GARBAGE WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

**Q: When will garbage be picked up?**

A: Curbside garbage will be picked up Thursday May 25, 2023, and Saturday May 27, 2023, for the ENTIRE COMMUNITY. Services will resume as normal the following week.

## AIR QUALITY AND SENSITIVITIES

**Q: I have medical sensitivities. How is the air quality? Is it safe to come home with the air quality?**

A: You can find the current Air Quality information at:  
<https://www.iqair.com/ca/canada/alberta/fox-creek>.

The area is still experiencing heavy smoke due to the ongoing wildfire. If you have medical concerns, we advise taking necessary precautions or delaying entry until the air quality improves.

## MENTAL HEALTH

**Q: Where can I call if I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed?**

A: Being Evacuated from your home is stressful and can be overwhelming. It's important to take care of your mental health. There are many resources available:

- If you need to talk, call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642
- Crisis Text Line – Text CONNECT to 741741



- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 to text CONNECT to 686868
- Addiction Helpline – 1-866-332-2322
- Family Violence – Finds Supports – 310-1818
- Alberta Health Link – 811

## SCHOOL

**Q: When does school reopen?**

A: Follow the Northern Gateway School Division website and facebook page for more information on when the school will be opening.

## INSURANCE

**Remember to keep all receipts for cleaning and other expenses to provide to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.**

## UPON RE-ENTERING YOUR HOME

Power and Gas Services were never lost.

**Q: Am I able to use my water as normal?**

A: Run your taps hot and cold for at least five (5) minutes to remove stagnant water from your lines. You can drink, shower, do laundry, and use your water as you normally would.

Check your water and sewer systems including your sump pump.

## Assess Smoke Contamination

**IF you have SMOKE CONTAMINATION, do not throw anything away until you contact your insurance company.**

**Q: What should I do about my spoiled food?**

A: Refer to the Alberta Health Services “Returning to Your Home” document that can be found at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-returning-to-your-home.pdf>

**Q: How do I proceed with smoke decontamination and deodorizing inside my home?**

- A: To assist with smoke decontamination and deodorizing follow the steps below:
- Wash interior walls and hard surfaces with a steam cleaner or white vinegar.
  - Wash or dry clean clothing, linens, and bedding
  - Wash all moveable items with a steam cleaner or microfiber cloth. This includes children's indoor toys.
  - Disinfect and deodorize upholstery and fabric window treatments with spray deodorizing products available at most supermarkets. Do not use odor-masking sprays as they only cover up the problem and do not fix it.
  - You can also steam clean items such as carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture, and mattresses. Steam neutralizes the odor and carbon film left by forest fires.
  - Consider having your heating, ventilating and air conditioning units, and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash, and smoke residue. You can change filters when you first return home and then continue to replace them frequently.

**Q: How do I proceed with smoke decontamination and deodorizing outside my home?**

- A: To assist with smoke decontamination and deodorizing follow the steps below:
- Pressure wash or scrub exterior surfaces including walls, drives, decks, windows, and screens.
  - Wash all children's outdoor toys, play structures, and recreational equipment to remove any residual smoke and ash. Replace the sand in sandboxes with clean sand.
  - Make sure to wash your hands if they come in contact with ash.

*Thank you!*