

Emergency Support Services – Evacuee Guidance for Registration and Eligibility

Emergency Support Services (ESS) provides short-term temporary services and information to individuals and households that have been evacuated due to a nearby hazard or disaster. The ESS Program provides safety-net supports on a case-by-case basis to underinsured persons who are displaced by hazards.

The process for **determining eligibility for ESS supports** requires the evacuee to meet with an ESS responder at a designated Reception Center to complete a **needs assessment**. If deemed eligible, the evacuee may be issued **referral vouchers** for one or more of the following: food, clothing, lodging and incidentals.

ESS is a referral-based program and does not issue cash or reimbursements to evacuees. If you have been evacuated due Interface Wildfire contact your home/tenant insurance provider to notify of the evacuation order to inquire about your insurance coverage and supports.

Next Steps for households under an Evacuation Order:

Step 1 - Exit the Evacuation Order zone by following the travel route provided by your First Nation or Local Government and contact your insurance provider:

BC Residents who are being evacuated from their:

- **primary residence** are asked to contact their homeowner/tenant insurance provider to notify them of the evacuation order and to make arrangements for supports. The Insurance Bureau of Canada can provide insurance information at 844-227-5422 or www.ibc.ca
- **secondary residence or vacation/recreation property owners/renters** are not eligible for ESS supports and are asked to return to their primary residence.

Travelers and visitors:

- If you are visiting in an area that is under evacuation order or alert please leave the area immediately and contact your travel insurance provider to notify them of the evacuation order and to arrange supports.
- Stranded travellers are asked to connect with the nearest Reception Center. Your nearest Reception Center can be found at <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/wildfires-2021/>.

Step 2 - Self-Register with the Evacuee Registration & Assistance (ERA) tool through <https://ess.gov.bc.ca> so that your loved ones and communities know that you are safe.

- Note that self-registration does not equate eligibility for ESS supports.
- If you are unable to self-register online, please call ESS Info Centre 1-800-585-9559 for assistance OR go to your designated Reception Center to register in-person.

Step 3 - Receptions Centers are designated facilities where evacuees from specified Evacuation Order Zones may obtain information on the hazards in the area:

- Always contact your insurance provider before seeking out ESS supports.
- Evacuees may opt to meet with an ESS volunteer to **complete a needs assessment to discuss referral options** while at the Reception Center. Referrals are like vouchers for supports that may be arranged during the needs assessment interview.

Step 4 – The Needs Assessment is a conversation-based interview with an ESS Volunteer that is designed to determine evacuee eligibility for short term ESS supports (referrals). ESS Short term supports are assessed on a case-by-case basis may include one or more referrals for lodging (billeting, group lodging, etc.).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Commercial accommodations options are in short supply across Alert and ORDER Zones in BC; therefore, evacuees are asked to pre-arrange billeting options with friends and family in safe zones wherever possible. Those who do not have access to billeting options may be offered temporary lodging in a group or dormitory setting.

Referral vouchers based on eligibility – please see some of the options below:

- **Lodging referral:**
 - **Option 1: Billeting with family / friends**
 - sometimes paired with a referral for groceries
 - **Option 2: Group Lodging**
 - Secure dormitory style sleeping facility, includes access to meals/snacks and hygiene stations (no food referrals required).
 - **Option 3: Commercial lodging** – based on availability and need; evaluated on a case by case basis when vacancy is limited
- **Clothing referral** – evacuees may be eligible for one-time referral in areas that went straight to Evacuation Order; may not be available in areas where an Alert was issued prior to Order (case-by-base basis).
- **Fuel referral** - evacuees may be eligible for a one-time only referral for fuel voucher and/or gas cards to meet immediate transportation needs (from Reception Center to lodging).
 - NOTE: ongoing transportation requirements and related costs for employment and/or to check on property/business/livestock are not eligible for ESS. Please contact your home/tenant or business insurance for assistance and coverage for these issues.

Notice: Those who self-evacuate without an evacuation order or pre-authorization from a First Nation or Local Government will not be eligible for ESS Supports.