

GN #-## Wildland Firefighting

Guidance to fire departments to ensure safety for firefighters responding to wildland fires and/or wildland urban interface events.

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Background

Many fire departments respond to grass/brush/vegetation/wildland fires and/or have the risk of wildland urban interface events. These incidents are complex, dangerous and require proper training, procedures, tactics and resource coordination to effectively manage.

Fire departments should work collaboratively with their Joint Health & Safety Committees/Health & Safety Representatives, other fire departments and relative stakeholders (including the Ministry of Natural Resources) to ensure effective planning and operations.

Concerns/hazards

Wildland fire incidents come with many risks and hazards, including but not limited to strenuous work and heat stress, putting responders at risk of sudden medical emergencies. Other risks and hazards include rapid fire spread (especially in grass fuels), traumatic injuries, inhalation injuries and working with/around aircraft.

Actions for employers

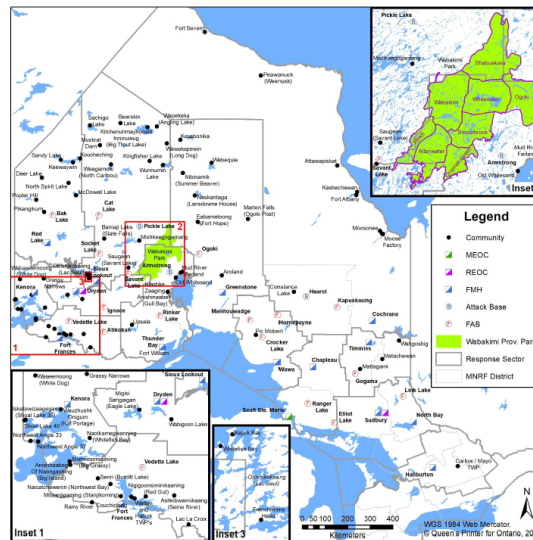
Employers must:

- Complete a Community Risk Assessment in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 378/18 Community Risk Assessments* to determine the risk of wildland fires within their community.
- Provide information and instruction to workers through training, so that they understand the hazards and are prepared to safely execute procedures and work required to mitigate the hazards.
- Provide written measures through procedures or guidelines, so that operations to mitigate the emergency are coordinated.
- Ensure firefighters are equipped with the personal protective equipment and respiratory protection appropriate to the hazards.

Employers should:

- Understand whether their municipality is located within a fire region where the Ministry of Natural Resources Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) operates, or outside of the fire regions and follow Ontario's Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) protocols. Also note whether the fire is located within a Municipal Protection Area (MPA) or Crown Protection Area (CPA) and if any agreements exist, as that will help identify the responsible party for the fire as well as for cost collection purposes.

Provincial Map of Communities



- Understand how that location impacts their access to resources and whether they would work in conjunction with Ministry of Natural Resources Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) crews.
- If located within a fire region, establish a working relationship with the Ministry of Natural Resources Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and ensure planning to be able to work effectively together.
- Develop public education and risk mitigation programs (such as Fire Smart) aimed at reducing the risk of wildland fires.
- Implement burn bans, in coordination with the Ministry of Natural Resources and/or neighbouring fire departments and other stakeholders including federal and provincial parks and conservation authorities, aimed at reducing the risk of wildland fires.
- Pre-plan potential wildland fire locations so that topography, access, water supply locations, etc. are well understood and integrated into a response plan.
- Identify the capabilities of mutual aid partners and establish those relationships and plans so that they can be effectively utilized when required.
- Ensure firefighters are equipped with equipment appropriate to the circumstances, and that the equipment is maintained and utilized in accordance with manufacturer recommendations, that workers are appropriately trained on the equipment and that the equipment is, to the degree possible, compatible amongst all agencies that may be responding to the emergency together. Conduct joint training and exercises amongst all agencies when possible that may be responding to the emergency together, so that the

response is effectively coordinated. As outlined in the training below, firefighters are to be aware of danger zones of Ministry of Natural Resources Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) aircraft types (Helicopters, Airtankers, Fixed -Wing) and safety during water bombing. To inquire about training, please contact your local AFFES Fire Management Headquarters (FMH) for guidance on the appropriate course and agreement process:

- SP103: Wildland Firefighter Training for Fire Agencies
- SP230: Wildland Fire Strategies and Tactics for Fire Departments

Each course provides different requirements and has sections for working around wildland fire.

- In rural areas without access to sustainable water supply, ensure that rural water supply options are identified, and established.
- When working in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) crews and/or other fire departments, ensure interoperability and the effective use of unified command and common communications. Contact your local AFFES FMH to determine the state of the Wildland Urban Interface Program.
- Utilize proven tactics, consistent with training, to ensure the safe response to the incident and effective mitigation of the emergency.

Applicable regulations and acts

Read:

- [Ontario Regulation 378/18 Community Risk Assessments](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
 - clause 25(2)(h) for taking every precaution reasonable to protect workers
- [Forest Fire Protection Act](#) – Section 21
 - • FM:1:01 - Responsibilities assigned to municipalities
 - • FM:2:03 - Responsibilities for emergency planning
 - • FM:3:01 - Municipal Agreements and cost collection
 - • FM:3:13 - Interagency Response Operating Guidelines

Relevant standards

- [NFPA 1140 – Standard for Wildland Fire Protection](#)
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Related

[Guidance Note 2-1: Incident Command](#)

[Guidance Note 3-3: Heat and Cold Stress](#)

[Guidance Note 3-5: Exposure to Noxious Weeds](#)

[Guidance Note 4-1: Firefighters Protective Equipment](#)

[Guidance Note 4-7: Wildland Firefighting and Personal Protective Equipment](#)

[Guidance Note 4-9: Respiratory Protection](#)

[Guidance Note 6-12: Rehabilitation During Emergency Operations](#)

[Guidance Note 6-41: Safety Around Helicopters](#)

[Guidance Note 7-1: Safe Training](#)

[Guidance Note 7-3: Training Plans](#)
