



DISTRICT

WILDFIRE EVACUATION PROTOCOL



Table of Contents

Communications Network

Program:

1. Purpose

2. Scope

3. Guiding Principles

- 3.1 Student and Employee Safety
- 3.2 Coordination with Emergency Authorities
- 3.3 Continuity of Operations
- 3.4 Timely and Accurate Communication

4. Definitions and Evacuation Terminology

- 4.1 Wildfire Threat / Heightened Risk
- 4.2 Evacuation Alert
- 4.3 Evacuation Order
- 4.4 Tactical Evacuation
- 4.5 Evacuation Rescind
- 4.6 Reception / Reunification Site

5. Roles, Responsibilities and Chain of Command

- 5.1 Superintendent / Designate
- 5.2 District Emergency Response Team
- 5.3 School Administrator / Site Incident Lead
- 5.4 Teachers and Support Staff
- 5.5 Transportation
- 5.6 Facilities
- 5.7 Human Resources
- 5.8 Communications
- 5.9 Information Technology
- 5.10 Other District Personnel

Wildfire Response Levels:

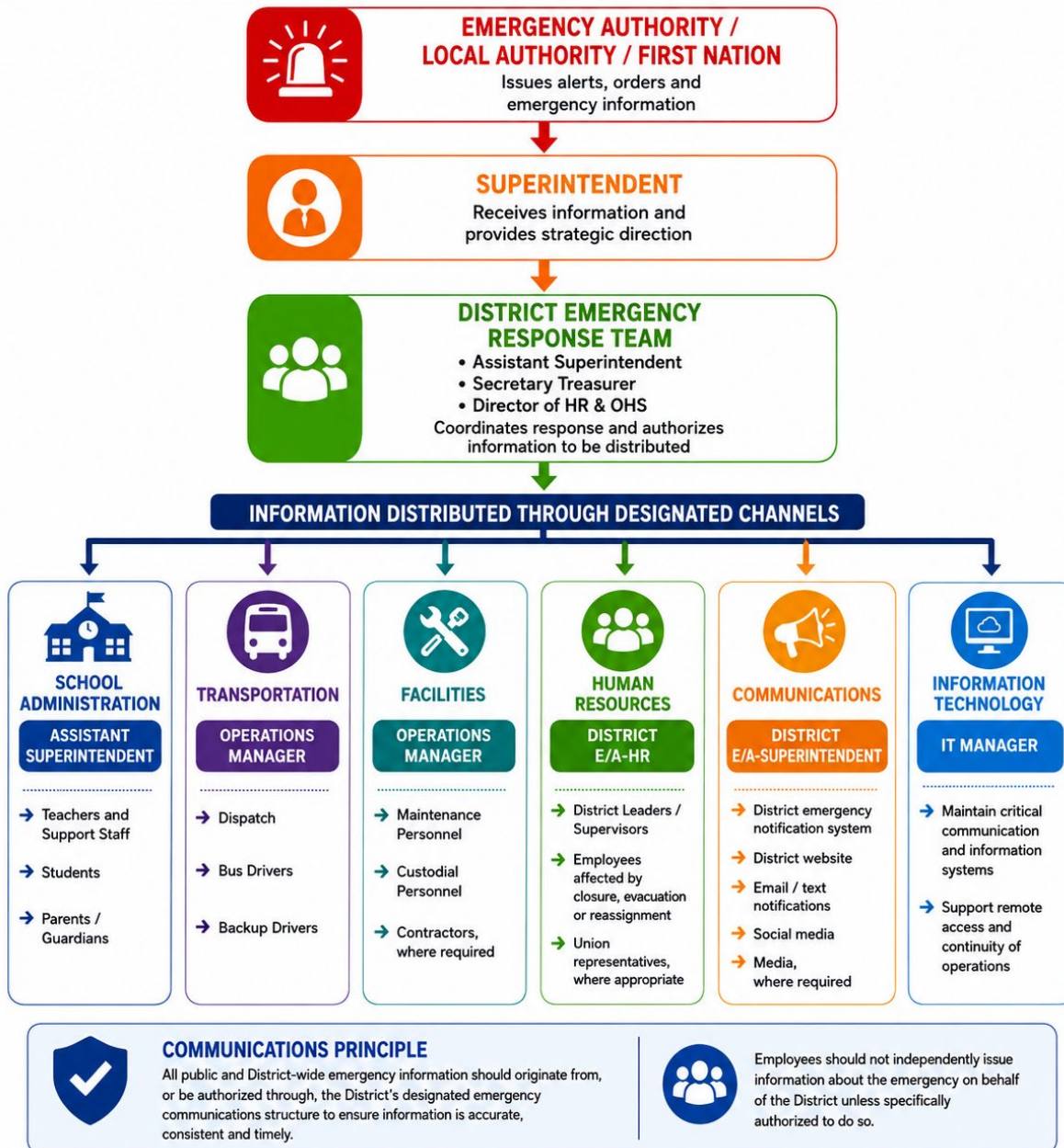
6. Level 1 – Threat/Heightened Monitoring

7. Level 2 – Evacuation Alert

8. Level 3 – Evacuation Order/Tactical Evacuation

9. Evacuation Rescind, Re-entry, Recover

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FLOW



1. Purpose

Why this protocol exists and what it is intended to achieve

The purpose of this protocol is to establish a coordinated and effective response to a wildfire emergency that may affect District schools, facilities, students, employees, or school operations. It is intended to support timely decision-making, minimize risk, and protect the safety and well-being of students, employees, and others within the school community.

This protocol is informed by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities and provincial emergency and evacuation guidance provided through EmergencyInfoBC. It is intended to complement the District's existing emergency management plans and school-based emergency procedures.

The protocol establishes a clear chain of command and defines the roles and responsibilities of District and school-based personnel.

It also establishes procedures for:

- monitoring and responding to an emerging wildfire threat;
- responding to an Evacuation Alert, Evacuation Order, or Tactical evacuation;
- coordinating with local authorities, First Nations, emergency responders, and other agencies, as appropriate;
- safely evacuating and accounting for students and employees;
- transporting students to designated evacuation or reunification locations;
- communicating timely, accurate, and consistent information to employees, students, families, and the broader school community;
- reunification of students with parents, guardians, or other authorized individuals; and
- supporting continuity of District operations and the safe resumption of school operations following an evacuation or wildfire emergency.

2. Scope

Who and what the protocol applies to

This protocol applies to all District schools, facilities, programs, employees, students, and other individuals under the care or responsibility of the District who may be affected by a wildfire emergency.

The protocol is intended to guide the District's preparation for and response to wildfire events that may:

- threaten or directly affect a school or District facility;
- result in an Evacuation Alert, Evacuation Order, or Tactical evacuation;
- affect the safe transportation of students or employees;
- result in road closures or restricted access to a school, facility, or community;
- affect students or employees while participating in District activities away from their regular school or worksite;
- disrupt normal school or District operations; or
- require the temporary closure, relocation, or evacuation of a school or District facility.

This protocol applies during instructional and non-instructional hours where District operations, facilities, students, or employees may be affected.

The protocol is intended to complement existing District and school-based emergency plans and procedures. Where an Evacuation Order or other emergency direction is issued by a Local Authority, First Nation, police, fire department, or other authorized emergency agency, the District will follow the direction of the appropriate emergency authority.

Each school and District facility is responsible for maintaining site-specific emergency information, including evacuation procedures, primary and alternate evacuation/reunification locations, emergency contact information, and procedures for accounting for students, employees, volunteers, and visitors.

The Superintendent or designate has overall authority for activating the District's wildfire emergency response and coordinating District operations, subject to the direction of the applicable emergency authorities.

3. Guiding Principles

Principles that guide District decisions before, during and after a wildfire emergency

3.1 Safety of Students and Employees

The safety and well-being of students and employees is the District's primary consideration in all wildfire emergency decisions.

Where conditions are uncertain or changing rapidly, decisions will prioritize the safe evacuation and movement of students and employees and will consider the time, transportation resources, road access, and other requirements necessary to evacuate safely.

3.2 Coordination with Emergency Authorities

The District will work collaboratively with Local Authorities, First Nations, police, fire departments, BC Wildfire Service, Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, and other emergency response agencies, as appropriate.

The District will rely on official emergency information and will follow Evacuation Orders and other directions issued by the authority having jurisdiction.

District decisions will take into consideration current information regarding wildfire conditions, evacuation status, road access, transportation routes, and the advice or direction of emergency officials.

3.3 Authority

Emergency roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority will be clearly established in advance.

The Superintendent or designate will provide overall District direction during a wildfire emergency. School administrators and District department leads will carry out their assigned responsibilities within the established emergency response structure.

All schools and departments will maintain procedures to account for students and employees during an evacuation or relocation.

3.4 Preparedness

Where a wildfire presents a potential threat, the District will monitor conditions and may take precautionary measures before an Evacuation Alert or Order is issued. These measures may include preparing transportation resources, reviewing evacuation routes, confirming reception and reunification locations, modifying activities, preparing communications, or proactively closing or evacuating a school where circumstances warrant.

An Evacuation Alert will be treated as a period of active readiness and preparation for the possibility of evacuation on short notice.

3.5 Communication

The District will provide timely, accurate, and consistent information to employees, students, parents/guardians, and other members of the school community as it becomes necessary during a wildfire emergency.

Emergency communications will be coordinated through the District's designated communications structure and will distinguish clearly between an Evacuation Alert, Evacuation Order, Tactical evacuation, and Evacuation Rescind.

Where possible, communications will identify:

- what has occurred;
- what action the District is taking;
- what students, employees, and families are expected to do;
- where students will be located or reunited with their families, where appropriate;
- where official updates will be provided; and
- when the next update can reasonably be expected.

3.8 Continuity of District Operations

The District will take reasonable steps to maintain critical operations during and following a wildfire emergency.

Priority will be given to functions necessary to support student and employee safety, emergency communications, transportation, facilities, information technology, payroll, human resources, and other essential District operations.

Where a school or facility cannot safely operate, the District may establish alternate work locations, temporary learning arrangements, employee reassignment, remote work, or other continuity measures, as appropriate.

3.9 Recovery and Safe Re-entry

The rescinding of an Evacuation Order does not, by itself, mean that a school or District facility is ready to reopen.

Prior to reopening, the District will assess whether the facility and surrounding conditions support the safe return of students and employees. Considerations may include facility condition, air quality, utilities, road access, transportation, staffing, availability of emergency services, and any continuing wildfire risk.

The District will communicate reopening decisions and expectations to employees and families before normal operations resume.

4. Definitions and Evacuation Terminology

Common terminology used throughout this protocol

4.1 Wildfire Threat / Heightened Risk

Wildfire activity may potentially affect a school, District facility, community, transportation route, or District operation, but no Evacuation Alert or Order currently affects the site.

4.2 Evacuation Alert

Issued when there is a potential threat to life and safety and people in the affected area should be prepared to evacuate on short notice. An Alert does not mean evacuation is immediately required; it is a period of active readiness.

4.3 Evacuation Order

Issued when there is an immediate or significant threat to life and safety and people within the identified area are required to leave. An Evacuation Order is mandatory.

4.4 Tactical Evacuation

An immediate evacuation undertaken when a threat to life and safety develops so rapidly that there is insufficient time to issue or follow the normal Evacuation Alert and Evacuation Order process. A Tactical Evacuation does not require a preceding Alert or Order and will be treated as Level 3 - Evacuate.

4.5 Evacuation Rescind

Notice that an Evacuation Order has been lifted. A rescind does not, by itself, mean a school or District facility is ready to reopen.

4.6 Reception / Reunification Site

A designated safe location where evacuated students and employees are received, accounted for, and where students may be released to an authorized parent, guardian, or other approved individual.

4.7 Quick Reference

Status	Meaning	District Response
Wildfire Threat	Potential wildfire risk; no Alert or Order affecting the site	LEVEL 1 - MONITOR
Evacuation Alert	Be prepared to leave on short notice	LEVEL 2 - PREPARE
Evacuation Order	Leave the affected area immediately	LEVEL 3 - EVACUATE
Tactical Evacuation	Immediate danger; little or no warning	LEVEL 3 - EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY
Evacuation Rescind	Evacuation Order has been lifted	RECOVERY / ASSESS BEFORE REOPENING

5. Roles, Responsibilities & Chain of Command

Clear accountability supports timely and coordinated action

5.1 Superintendent / Designate

Provides overall District direction; receives official emergency information; authorizes strategic decisions, closures, proactive evacuations and District-wide direction, subject to emergency authority instructions.

5.2 District Emergency Response Team

Assistant Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, and Director of HR & OHS. Coordinates the District response and authorizes information to be distributed through designated channels.

5.3 School Administration

Assistant Superintendent coordinates school administration communications. School administrators activate site procedures, account for students and employees, and implement District and emergency authority direction.

5.4 Teachers and Support Staff

Maintain supervision and accountability for assigned students, follow site and emergency directions, and support orderly evacuation and reunification.

5.5 Transportation

Operations Manager coordinates dispatch, bus drivers, backup drivers, transportation capacity and authorized evacuation routes.

5.6 Facilities

Operations Manager coordinates maintenance personnel, custodial personnel, contractors where required, facility conditions and alternate sites.

5.7 Human Resources

District E/A-HR coordinates employee-related communications and supports District leaders/supervisors, employees affected by closure, evacuation or reassignment, and union communication where appropriate.

5.8 Communications

District E/A-Superintendent coordinates the District emergency notification system, website, email/text notifications, social media and media communication where required.

5.9 Information Technology

IT Manager maintains critical communication and information systems and supports remote access and continuity of operations.

5.10 Other District Personnel

Carry out assigned emergency responsibilities and follow the established communications and command structure.

6. Wildfire Response Levels

Operational actions escalate from monitoring to preparation to evacuation

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 1 — WILDFIRE THREAT / HEIGHTENED MONITORING

Potential wildfire risk; no Alert or Order currently affects the school or facility.

6.1 Activation Criteria

- Wildfire activity may potentially affect a school, facility, community, transportation route, or District operation.
- No Evacuation Alert or Order currently affects the school or facility.

6.2 District Actions

- Monitor official emergency information.
- Establish District situational awareness.
- Notify appropriate members of the District Emergency Response Team.
- Identify potentially affected schools, facilities and transportation routes.
- Confirm emergency contacts and communication channels.
- Confirm primary and alternate evacuation/reunification locations.
- Review transportation availability and alternate routes.
- Prepare communications for employees and families.
- Consider impacts to field trips, outdoor activities and extracurricular events.

6.3 School Actions

- Review school emergency procedures.
- Confirm student and employee accountability information.
- Confirm student medical, mobility and other evacuation support requirements.
- Review evacuation routes and designated assembly areas.
- Ensure emergency supplies are readily accessible.

6.4 Transportation / Facilities Actions

- Monitor transportation routes and potential road closures.
- Review bus and driver availability.
- Assess facilities and potential wildfire impacts.
- Confirm alternate evacuation routes and receiving locations.

6.5 Communications

- Determine whether proactive communication to employees/families is required.
- Prepare messaging in the event the situation escalates.

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 2 — EVACUATION ALERT

An Alert affects the school, District facility, surrounding community, or an area that may significantly affect operations or transportation.

7.1 Activation Criteria

An Evacuation Alert has been issued affecting the school, District facility, surrounding community, or an area that may significantly affect school operations or transportation.

7.2 District Emergency Response Team Activation

- Activate District emergency coordination.
- Establish District Incident Lead.
- Confirm liaison with the applicable Local Authority, First Nation and/or emergency response agency.
- Establish frequency of situation updates.
- Determine whether schools remain open, close early, or proactively evacuate.

7.3 School Actions

- Activate school emergency procedures.
- Account for all students, employees and visitors.
- Prepare students and employees for possible evacuation.
- Prepare emergency student information and medications.
- Identify students requiring additional evacuation assistance.
- Suspend non-essential activities.

7.4 Transportation Actions

- Place bus drivers on standby.
- Confirm backup drivers.
- Confirm bus capacity.
- Review evacuation routes.
- Identify alternate routes in the event of road closures.
- Prepare for immediate deployment.

7.5 Facilities Actions

- Monitor facility conditions.
- Support site preparation.
- Confirm alternate facilities/reunification locations remain available and safe.

7.6 Human Resources Actions

- Identify potential employee impacts.
- Prepare employee instructions.
- Identify critical District functions requiring continuity.
- Address employees who may personally be subject to an Evacuation Alert or Order.

7.7 Communications

- Notify employees and families of the Alert and District response, as appropriate.
- Provide clear instructions regarding whether families should attend the school.
- Establish the timing and location of the next District update.

7.8 Decision Point — Continue Operations, Early Dismissal or Proactive Evacuation

- Superintendent/designate reviews conditions and recommendations.
- Consider emergency authority advice, wildfire behaviour, transportation capacity, road conditions and evacuation time.
- Document decision and communicate direction.

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 3 — EVACUATION ORDER / TACTICAL EVACUATION

An Evacuation Order has been issued or emergency authorities direct an immediate Tactical Evacuation.

8.1 Activation Criteria

An Evacuation Order has been issued or emergency authorities direct an immediate/Tactical evacuation.

8.2 Immediate Actions

- Activate evacuation immediately.
- Follow emergency authority directions.
- Notify District Emergency Response Team.
- Initiate emergency communications.

8.3 Student and Employee Accountability

- Account for students, employees and visitors.
- Maintain class/group lists.
- Record students and employees boarding evacuation transportation.
- Conduct accountability check upon arrival at the receiving location.
- Immediately report anyone unaccounted for through the established emergency command structure.

8.4 Transportation and Evacuation

- Deploy buses and drivers.
- Follow the safest authorized evacuation route.
- Transport students to designated reception/reunification site.
- Maintain communication between Transportation, school administration and District Emergency Response Team.

8.5 Reception and Reunification

- Establish controlled reception area.
- Account for all arriving students and employees.

- Establish parent/guardian pickup area.
- Verify authorized pickup persons.
- Document every student release.
- Maintain supervision until all students are safely released or alternative arrangements are made.

8.6 Employee Responsibilities

- Remain with assigned students/groups unless otherwise directed.
- Follow Incident Lead/emergency authority instructions.
- Do not re-enter evacuated areas without authorization.
- Report personal evacuation circumstances to the designated supervisor/HR contact.

8.7 Communications

- Issue immediate notification to employees and families.
- Provide evacuation/reunification location when safe and appropriate to do so.
- Establish one official District information source.
- Provide scheduled updates until the immediate emergency has ended.

9. Evacuation Rescind, Re-entry & Recovery

A rescind begins assessment and recovery; it does not automatically authorize reopening

9.1 Evacuation Rescind

Confirm the Evacuation Order has officially been rescinded, where applicable.

9.2 Facility Safety Assessment

Assess facility condition, air quality, utilities, essential building systems and surrounding environmental conditions.

9.3 Employee Return

Determine employee return expectations and whether alternate work locations, reassignment or remote work are required.

9.4 Student and Family Communication

Communicate clear information about continued closure, alternate arrangements, reunification, return and reopening.

9.5 School Reopening Decision

Authorize reopening only when conditions support the safe return of students and employees.

9.6 Alternate Instruction / Work Arrangements

Establish temporary or alternate learning and work arrangements where required.

9.7 Employee and Student Supports

Arrange appropriate supports for employees and students affected by the emergency.

9.8 After-Action Review

Conduct a structured review of the response following a significant activation.

9.9 Protocol Review and Corrective Actions

Document lessons learned, assign corrective actions and revise the protocol where required.