

2023

PREPARING FOR AND RESPONDING TO A **WILDFIRE EMERGENCY**

PEI FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE'S FARM SAFETY PROGRAM



Acknowledgment

This document was created by the PEI Federation of Agriculture's Farm Safety Program, with special thanks to [AgSafeBC](#) and [AgSafeAB](#) for the use of their resources and information on wildfire emergency preparedness.

Cover image: Google Earth Pro



1. Introduction

This year on Prince Edward Island, a dry spring and regular high winds, along with more downed trees than ever, unintentional fires may occur more than normal as a result of increased amounts of fuel for these fires. To best respond to a forest fire, have as much emergency planning in place as possible.

Understanding what to do before an emergency occurs will provide your farm with the best opportunity to control injuries and minimize damage to your operation. This document may be used as a tool to help guide responses for forest fire emergency management, specific to farms.

Disclaimer: This document is intended as a guide only. The PEI Federation of Agriculture assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided in this document. This document should only be used as a guide or workbook, not an official plan.

Key Information

- With regards to burning restrictions and burning permits, please contact the Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division at 902-368-6450
- Fire bans and restrictions may be in place across much of PEI. Check the [Fire Weather Index](#) online before making a decision regarding burning - it is updated daily from March 15th to November 30th
- Familiarize yourself with the [Categories of Outdoor Fires](#), which will determine if you need to apply for a burning permit

2. Reporting Wildfires and Forest Fires

Who do I call to report a wildfire on PEI?

To report a wildfire, forest fire, or grass fire emergency, call 911 and include the following information:

- Community name where the fire is occurring
- Route number and/or road name
- Civic number of the property where the fire is occurring or a civic number near the fire location
- Your name and phone number

How can I contact a fire department?

Non-emergency phone numbers are listed on the [Fire Services page](#), along with website links.

Wildfire Threat: On-Property Risk Reduction

When the trees downed by Fiona dry out to the point that they become tinder for a serious fire, dangers such as lightning, campfires, and brush fires become major areas of concern for unintentional fires across PEI.

Producers can take many actions before a wildfire occurs to reduce the likelihood or impact of a wildfire on the property. Besides direct flame contact, wildfire spread can impact agriculture operations in the following ways:

- Sparks or embers may travel 2 km or more in advance of the wildfire
- Radiant heat can ignite combustible or flammable materials (including structures or fuel storage) within 10 m (32 feet) and potentially damage crops within an even greater distance

Removing combustible vegetation and other materials around buildings is one of the most effective ways of protecting the operation.

Have fire extinguishers available at the following sites:

- Chemical storage (any pesticide, herbicide, fungicide, or fertilizer) sites.
 - In addition, have spill clean-up materials readily available
- Fuel storage site(s), including any vehicles with slip tanks
- Propane storage sites
- All tractors
- Balers
- Combines
- Shops/machinery storage and near welding equipment

Extinguishers should be checked at least annually to assure they're in good working order. Even if a unit is only partially discharged, the extinguisher must be recharged.

3. Farm Operation Information

This emergency guide should include basic information about your farm to help outside organizations provide appropriate assistance.

While there is no need to repeat farm information you may have elsewhere, ensure the following details are readily available.

Vehicles and Response Equipment/Resources

Understanding the types of vehicles and special equipment that may be available in a wildfire emergency helps you plan for response. A complete inventory of equipment is important for insurance purposes. You may want to share this list with neighbors.

Vehicle / Equipment Type	Number on Property or Farmstead	Number Available Nearby (location other than farmstead)
✦ Tractor, Front-end Loader, or bulldozer		
✦ Plow or Other Implements		
✦ Water Truck		
✦ Livestock Trailer		
✦ Utility Trailer		
✦ Pickup Truck		
✦ Portable Water Pump		
✦ Irrigation line (Portable? Yes/No)		
✦ Generator		

Water Sources

Identify locations of surface water (ponds and streams) on any of your properties that may be accessible by vehicle and may be available to support fire response. Be aware that some water supply systems (wells) may also be vulnerable to power outages or disruptions, which means they may not be reliable in emergency situations.

- Identify and map out all water hookup locations - outdoor taps & hoses – that may be used to set up a sprinkler system
- Check the spouts on all outdoor water hookup locations to ensure they function properly
- Y valves/splitters on larger water sources may be helpful to optimize water flow to different areas

Water Source Type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pond - man-made or natural • Well - conventional or high capacity • Stream 	Location

4. Livestock

(Skip to section 5 if you don't have livestock on your farm)

Livestock Type	Number (min./max. number of animals if applicable)
Dairy, Lactating	
Dairy, Non-lactating	
Young Dairy Stock	
Bulls	
Beef Cattle	
Horses, Donkeys	
Sheep	
Goats	
Swine	
Poultry	

Plan for Possible Evacuation of Livestock

- Identify at least two possible evacuation routes from your farm.
- Arrange in advance for a place to shelter your animals. Plan ahead and work within your community to establish safe shelters for livestock, such as fairgrounds, other farms, racetracks, and feedlots.
- Set up transportation. You may need access to a portable loading ramp for livestock.
- In case animals are evacuated to a centralized location such as fairgrounds and will interact with other animals, make sure your animals have sufficient identification (e.g., ear tags or brands) and up-to-date vaccines.
- Gather temporary fencing materials (stakes, ribbon/wire) or other means for containing livestock in case of evacuation, such as gates or panels.

If time is short, the priority animals for livestock relocation off-site are:

Type of Livestock	Number

Prepare a farm emergency kit for livestock

Put all emergency supplies in one location, and let everyone know where it is.

- Current list of all animals
- Supplies for temporary identification of your animals, such as plastic neckbands and permanent markers to label animals with your name, address, and telephone number
- Basic first aid kit
- Handling equipment such as halters, lead ropes and blankets, and wire cutters to quickly free animals in an emergency
- Water and feed for 5-7 days, along with water and feed buckets
- Emergency equipment such as flashlights and batteries

For a more extensive list of considerations for livestock in emergency situations, visit the Government of Canada's (Public Safety Canada) page:

<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/frm-nmls-eng.pdf>

5. Insurance Considerations

Meet with your insurance agent or broker or government program representative at least annually to review your farm's insurance coverage. For some producers, business interruption coverage or loss of profit insurance may be beneficial.

- Understand your policy and be aware of what is included and what is excluded
- For example, for livestock farms:
 - Are your losses covered if livestock are harmed indirectly in a wildfire?
 - Does completed stock such as hay and feed need to be stored inside a structure to be covered by insurance?
 - Is the potential loss of livestock covered if animals are moved from the farm to a safe location due to the threat of a wildfire?
- For crop farms:
 - Are both harvested crops and crops in progress (generally, crops in the ground) insured?
 - Does the coverage include direct and indirect losses to crops, including yield, quality, and loss of stock?
 - Does coverage include losses due to a prolonged power outage due to a wildfire?
- Have photographs of the property and assets in their current state and condition and file them in a secure location (i.e., with insurance documents)
- Some things like fencing, hay and straw (or other bedding) stored outdoors, and manure storage structures may have to specifically be added on to a farm policy

Other Considerations

Learn about the evacuation status. There are three phases of an evacuation:

- **Evacuation Alert** – A warning is issued about an imminent threat to life and property. Moving livestock to safety is encouraged during the Evacuation Alert phase when time is available. People are asked to be ready to leave on short notice. This is also a good time to move children and the elderly to safety.
- **Evacuation Order** – During an Evacuation Order, the local police of jurisdiction may strictly enforce traffic flows that move residents to safety.
- **Evacuation Rescind** – An Evacuation Order is rescinded when it is determined to be safe for residents and livestock to return home.

Staying informed: Making sure that staff, including temporary foreign workers, have the proper knowledge and training to react should a fire occur will help to keep your family, employees, and farm safe while reducing the chances of potential injury and damage.

Visit <https://firesmartcanada.ca/> for more resources on fire prevention in your community.