Wildfire may impact child care facilities with structural and equipment damage, fire, smoke, ash, soot, chemicals, and water from fire suppression systems or firefighting. Impacts from power outages and boil water advisories must also be addressed.

Work with your insurance company agent to determine what information is needed and what actions to take to get your facility ready to operate. They may also recommend accredited restoration and cleaning contractors for your situation.

Below are the most immediate steps that should be followed once it is SAFE to enter the premises.

1. **Protect Yourself:**
   - Wear protective personal equipment (PPE) that includes a mask and gloves when assessing and cleaning your establishment.
   - Follow current respiratory protection guidelines appropriate for your situation. Further information is available from [Alberta Labour](https://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/fort-mcmurray-wildfires.html).
   - Use a flashlight to look for hazards. If you detect or suspect any source of heat or smoke, notify the fire department immediately.
   - Watch for hazards, including:
     - Slip, trip and fall hazards from unstable structures, or wet and slippery surfaces;
     - Sharp objects such as metal pieces, concrete or wood;
     - Ash, soot and demolition dust;
     - Hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, pesticides, paint, batteries, and fuel containers which have been partially damaged or destroyed;
     - Propane cylinders for heating or from a BBQ.
2. **Be careful when near fire retardants and fire residues**

- Fire retardant contains ammonia which can
  - sting eyes, cuts, scratches or sunburnt skin
  - irritate intact skin
  - cause coughing/wheezing
  - cause gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.

- Soot and ash can cause symptoms including:
  - eye and skin irritation
  - respiratory issues

  These symptoms may be significant depending on the type of soot/ash, amount of exposure, and underlying respiratory conditions.

- Smoke can irritate the skin, nose, throat, lungs and eyes and can cause coughing and wheezing. For more information on health effects from wildfire smoke, please see [Wildfire Smoke and Your Health](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-wildfire-smoke-and-your-health.pdf) available at http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-wildfire-smoke-and-your-health.pdf

- Flush your eyes thoroughly with water and/or skin thoroughly with water and a gentle soap solution if contact with fire retardant, soot, ash or smoke.

- If you have respiratory symptoms such as coughing, move away from the area, take any prescription inhalers as directed, and if you are having trouble breathing, seek medical attention promptly.

3. **Check Your Utilities:**

- Check that electricity, hot and cold running water, sewage system, and gas utilities are in proper working order. If you are not sure if the utilities are safe to use, contact utility provider

- Do not try to use any electrical appliances or power that may have come in contact with fire, water, or fire retardant until they have been checked and cleared for use by a qualified electrician.
4. Use Your Water Supply Safely:

- Flush all hot and cold water-using fixtures by running the tap for five minutes. If your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a longer period of time.
- Building maintenance and superintendent staff of buildings with larger water service connections (e.g. hotels/motels, malls) should review “Water Flushing Procedure for Large Buildings Affected by the Fort McMurray Fire” [link](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-water-flushing-procedures-large-buildings-affected-by-wildfire.pdf).
- Your facility may reopen under a boil water advisory. Review “How to Use Water Safely in Your Child Care Facility During a Boil Water Advisory” for information on how to use water safely, and what to do after the boil water advisory has been lifted. Information is available at: [link](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-how-use-water-safely-child-care-facility-bwa-fmm-fire.pdf).
- You do not need to boil your water to clean the facility prior to opening. You may need to boil water to sanitize surfaces.

5. Discard foods, medicines, toiletries, toys, and other items impacted by smoke, heat, ash and chemicals

There will be items that, after inspection of your facility, need to be properly disposed of. Before disposing items, make sure that you inventory those items as part of your fire insurance claim.

**Foods:**

Food can be damaged by unsafe temperatures, smoke, ash, soot, fire retardant chemicals, water and loss of power during a fire.

- Discard food stored in the refrigerators, coolers and freezers IF the temperature was greater than 4°C at any time. Please note that the temperature may have exceeded 4°C when the power was disrupted and then returned to 4°C.
- Discard any food that has spoiled, even if the cooler remained at 4°C at all times.
- Discard foods/items exposed to heat, ash, chemicals, soot, water and smoke including:
  - open foods
  - packaged foods, including paper, cardboard boxes, plastic, cellophane
• single service items/utensils which also includes individually plastic-wrapped items
• bottles and jars of food with screw top lids or crown/crimp caps.
• Discard damaged, dented or bulging cans

• Be safe. If in doubt, throw it out.
• Clean and sanitize canned foods/drinks exposed to smoke only.
• Use proper garbage receptacles and containers when discarding food products to minimize potential issues related to odour and attraction of pests.
• Follow current local guidelines on where food waste may be discarded.

**Medicines and toiletries:**
• Discard any medicine or toiletries exposed to smoke or high temperatures, even if the package isn’t opened.
  o Single-use items, like diapers
  o Lotions, creams and diaper wipes
  o Sanitizers and disinfectants
• Follow current local guidelines on where medicines and other chemicals may be discarded.

**Toys, Furniture and Equipment:**
• Discard any toys or play equipment damaged by fire.
• Discard porous items that cannot be laundered that were affected by fire suppression chemicals, such as books.

6. **Clean building and facilities:**

**Restoration contractors:**
• As much as possible, work with and through your insurance company. They will know reputable restoration and cleaning contractors that can help you and that know the proper standards to follow.
• If you decide to choose your own restoration contractor, check their references and certifications.
• If there are questions or issues arising, contact the Service Alberta Consumer Contact Centre (toll free number is 1 877 427 4088). They can help provide you with more information about various consumer issues.
Building exterior:
- Wear protective personal equipment (PPE) that includes a mask and gloves when cleaning your establishment.
- Wet down remaining fire debris. Do not wash the fire debris into the street.
- Scrape up fire ash and soot remaining on the property as much as possible, place it in plastic bags or other containers that will prevent it from being disturbed.
- Safely dispose of any fire debris, such as broken glass, bits of metal, wood debris.
- Follow local guidelines to dispose of all waste.
- If the facility was totally destroyed by fire then the restoration company will look after this for you as they begin the demolition and recovery process.
- Use a hose, sprayer or pressure washer on the building exterior, parking lots, walkways, vehicles, outdoor furniture and play equipment.
- Be careful when using pumps, pressure washers or generators in enclosed spaces. Carbon monoxide may be present in confined or poorly ventilated areas from the operation of pumps, generators, or pressure washers.
- Outdoor equipment may have been impacted by fire retardants that can be toxic to fish and some plants, and may make people and pets sick if ingested. Fire retardants can also cause eye irritation, dry skin and sting cuts and scrapes on your skin.
- Wash down outdoor furniture with clean water and detergent to remove residual fire contaminants. To clean windows and glass, use clean water and a razor blade tool to help to remove the sticky residue.
- NEVER use bleach as the reaction between bleach and fire retardants will produce harmful and explosive gases.

Outdoor play areas:
- For children’s play areas and equipment, clear away any debris and ensure water that may have been used for fire suppression is gone.
- If there is fire or structural damage to play equipment, consider blocking access to the area until play equipment is repaired, removed or replaced.
- Use mild detergent and clean water to wash children’s outside toys, play equipment, and recreational equipment.
• Sand, gravel or other loose materials placed beneath playground equipment should be removed and replaced whenever there is visible presence of ash, silt and small debris.

• If you suspect or know a sand box was impacted by fire or firefighting materials, the sand should be replaced.

**Air circulation:**

• A professional should be consulted to clean, restore and restart any facility’s HVAC systems.

• Circulate air inside the facility by using a fan and open windows, providing there is no smoke or air quality advisory for the area.

• Limit the amount of time that doors and windows remain open during windy conditions, to prevent any ash/debris left over from the fires from coming into the facility.

• Ozone generators do not function as “air cleaners” despite advertising claims.

**Building interior:**

• There may be smoke damage and soot in the building after the fire. Contact your insurance company and fire restoration company as soon as possible.

• The fire restoration contractor will be able to give you more information about:
  - Preventing further damage;
  - Determining which things can or cannot be properly cleaned;
  - Thoroughly cleaning and deodorizing the building before people are allowed back in.

• Use PPE as appropriate, such as masks, rubber gloves, rubber boots, long sleeved shirt and pants.

• Wash all interior surfaces with mild detergent or appropriate cleaning solution and rinse thoroughly. Include all locations where there is any ash, dust or the odour of fire including inside of closets and cupboards.

• Wash interior of windows thoroughly.

• Wet wiping or mopping is safer and more effective than dry or dust mopping.

• If vacuuming ash particles, use a vacuum with a unit that has a “HEPA” air filter, and change the HEPA filter often.

• Ash left in place is reduced into smaller particles and becomes harder to remove from carpets and surfaces.
• Clean and sanitize all ash-contaminated items, including toys, books and play equipment with mild detergent, changing the water frequently.

Chemical sanitizers include:
  ▪ chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100 - 200 ppm (approximately one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of potable water), or
  ▪ quaternary ammonium at a concentration of 200 ppm, or
  ▪ other approved sanitizers

NEVER use bleach on surfaces affected by fire retardant chemicals as the reaction between bleach and fire retardants will produce harmful and explosive gases.

**Food preparation, storage and service areas:**
• If you provide meals, including snacks to children at your facility, food spaces and equipment must be appropriately cleaned and sanitized.


• Clean, disinfect, and deodorize your fridge and freezer once you have discarded spoiled food. To do this:
  ▪ First unplug the fridge and freezer.
  ▪ Rinse or blow out the coils and compressors on the fridge and freezer.
  ▪ To clean the inside, use soap and water and then rinse with clean water.
  ▪ Sanitize the inside with a bleach/water mixture made by mixing 1 teaspoon of ordinary household bleach for every 4 cups of water.
  ▪ Leave the doors of the fridge and freezer open to help them dry out.
  ▪ Once the appliance is dry, reconnect the power.
  ▪ Wait until the inside temperature of your fridge has reached 4C before restocking it with food.
  ▪ Wait until your freezer temperature is at -18C before restocking it with food.
**Fabrics, carpets, and upholstered furniture:**
- Soot is oily and can stain cloth materials. It must be removed before you try to clean or deodorize those items.
- Steam clean carpets, drapes and curtains, changing the water frequently.

**Clothing, bedding, plush toys:**
- Launder all affected clothing such as plush toys, bedding and costumes. You may have to run numerous rinse cycles to extract all of the soot, ash, and smoke. Consider doing this laundering off-site using a machine tagged for heavy contaminants at a laundromat. These are usually marked as “oilers.”
- Professional assistance is recommended to remove soot and smoke odour from mattresses.
- Do not save plush toys or mattresses if they became wet from the building’s fire suppression system or firefighting activities. They are too difficult to clean, disinfect, and dry before a mould problem occurs.
- Furniture may be difficult or almost impossible to clean if it is upholstered, especially if the smoke odour has permeated into these furnishings. Upholstered furniture may be steam cleaned or may need to be replaced.
- Clean and sanitize all non-upholstered furniture and cribs with mild detergent, changing the water frequently.

**Electronics:**
- Contact your insurance company for information about restoring / replacing electronic devices.
- Otherwise, it is recommended that you carry all electronic equipment outside and “blow out” the components with an air hose, before equipment is turned on. Ash can cause static charges.
- Consider unplugging, rolling out and either blowing out or rinsing the coils and compressors on refrigerators and freezers (they must dry completely before repowering).
**Repair water damage:**

- If the facility was damaged by water, you will need to get rid of all excess water to prevent potential for mold growth.

- To help prevent mold growth, any water-damaged or water-stained surfaces and appliances should be checked for damage and cleaned and disinfected with a 1:10 parts household bleach to water solution (1 tsp bleach in 750 ml of water or 1 capful bleach in 1 gallon of water). (NEVER use bleach on surfaces affected by fire retardant chemicals as the reaction between bleach and fire retardants will produce harmful and explosive gases)

- Dry all wet items as soon as possible.

- Wet or waterlogged carpeting should be dried as quickly as possible and any underlay should be removed. Steam cleaning carpets with a disinfectant should be adequate.

- You may need to use a dehumidifier to help to remove excess moisture from the air inside the building.

- Let your insurance company and restoration contractor know as soon as possible if you find any visible mold growth or smell mold inside the building.

- If you discover a small amount of mold (typically under 10 square feet), and you wish to complete the work yourself, more information is available here: https://myhealth.alberta.ca/alberta/Alberta%20Images/abflood2013/Steps_to_Mould_Remediation_for_Private_Homes.pdf

Contact Alberta Health Services, Environmental Public Health, North Zone at 780-513-7517 to arrange an inspection prior to reopening.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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<tr>
<td>Edmonton Main Office</td>
<td>780-735-1800</td>
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<td>Calgary Main Office</td>
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