



Giving Hope Today



BC Wildfires Report 2017

Presented by The Salvation Army

BC Wildfires Report



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Executive Summary

This past summer represented the worst fire season in British Columbia's history. With more than 900 fires burning across the province, the government of British Columbia declared a state of emergency. In response, The Salvation Army put in place an Emergency Response plan to provide support to those in need.

From day one we began to deploy our Emergency Disaster Services ("EDS") mobile kitchens and personnel. We activated our Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate logistics across the province, provided a Government Affairs liaison to the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre in Victoria to assist with emergency response efforts, and we launched a fundraising appeal across the country, which brought in close to \$1.7 million dollars to help victims of the fire.

As the number of fires continued to grow, so did our response. Across B.C. over 672 Salvation Army personnel and an army of volunteers were on the front lines providing practical support to first responders and evacuees. While crews continued to fight the flames, Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services personnel were there to welcome evacuees, feed them, shelter them and help meet their immediate needs in 12 designated arrival locations across the province.

In addition to practical support, our emotional and spiritual care specialists offered support to families dealing with the trauma. Over the course of several weeks, 97 Salvation Army officers and Emotional & Spiritual Care specialists provided 2819 hours of spiritual support to 10,310 people in 12 communities. As evacuation orders were lifted, The Salvation Army representatives were there to welcome people home.

The Salvation Army will remain active in the affected communities caring for and assisting individuals families and communities until we get through this.

For a comprehensive look at the areas impacted and the support provided, we have prepared this report.

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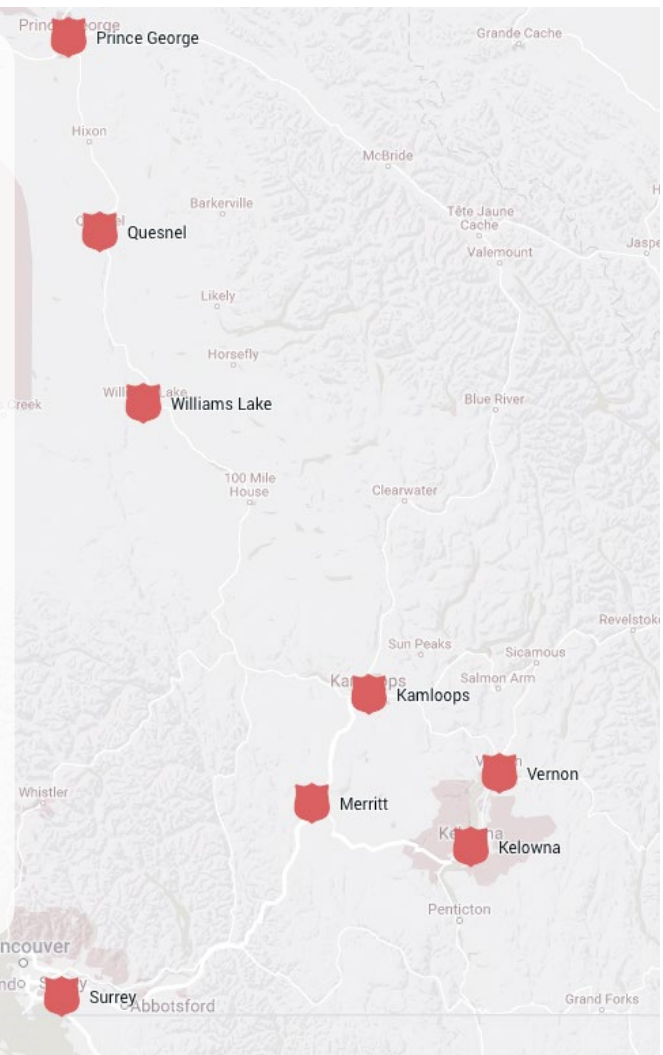


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Communities where The Salvation Army responded:

- The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services Dispatched **13 Emergency Response Units** (Mobile Kitchens) and teams to **12 communities** impacted by the BC Wildfires
- Over the course of what has now been called 'the worst disaster in BC history', The Salvation Army provided over **260,000 items of food and hydration**
- **97 Salvation Army Officers** provided emotional and spiritual support to more than **10,300 individuals**
- An additional army of more than **670 volunteers** assisted us in meeting the immediate needs of those impacted/displaced.
- With the help of our generous donors, we raised in excess of **\$1.7 million** which will enable us to continue helping people as they rebuild their lives and their communities.



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The Salvation Army Emergency Operations Centre

As the fires raged, the British Columbia Divisional Emergency Disaster Services Director, John McEwan, under the direction of the Divisional EDS Policy Group, activated The Salvation Army Emergency Operations Centre in Abbotsford to coordinate all Salvation Army emergency response efforts.

From the Operations Centre, Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) trained personnel strategized where personnel and Community Response Units (mobile kitchens) would be dispatched, handled pertinent logistics and travel arrangements, with plans changing by the minute due to erratic wildfire conditions and resulting evacuees. With additional EDS crews from Alberta on stand-by, our BC teams tirelessly dedicated their efforts to provide the immediate support first responders needed, and serve more than 1,000 meals to first responders and evacuees each day.



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The Provincial Emergency Operations Centre

On July 12th, BC Salvation Army Government Affairs Director, Patricia Mamic, was appointed to the Provincial Emergency Coordinator Centre (PECC) located in Victoria to assist with emergency response efforts at the provincial level. The PECC is the highest level of provincial government coordination with regard to emergency situations and uses the Incident Command System (ICS) to respond to the needs of six Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centers (PREOC's) in British Columbia. Working closely with the government, we offered our Emergency Disaster Services daily, providing logistical, operational, emotional, tactical, and physical support and direction to all affected areas of the province as per their requests.

Given that The Salvation Army provides urgently needed response in crisis situations as part of a Memorandum of Understanding with the province through Emergency Management BC, it was imperative for us to be part of the larger management system as fires threatened the entire province.

Feeding Thousands of Evacuees

By the morning of July 15th, the situation worsened as more than 224 fires burned out of control and forced a mass evacuation order for the entire city of Williams Lake; a town of over 11,000 people. In the following hours, the erratic fire activity forced nearly 36,000 people to flee their homes and make their way to Evacuation Centers across the province. While fire crews continued to battle the flames, Salvation Army EDS personnel were there to feed and hydrate them, comfort them and help meet the needs of evacuees in 12 designated arrival locations across BC.

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Reception Centre Support

As the number and immensity of fires continued to grow across multiple regions of BC, local Salvation Army personnel and an army of volunteers were on the frontlines offering hope and practical support to first responders and evacuees at Reception Centers, as well as providing urgently needed food services, personnel and counseling support at group lodging facilities, and helping to bring calm by providing evacuees with vital information at Meet and Greet stations.



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Emotional and Spiritual Care

For the thousands of people displaced, stressed, and left with little certainty, the opportunity to just talk to someone made such a profound difference; and for Capt. Mark Dunstan of the ESC team, it was his purpose. "I was privileged to listen to their stories and if they needed something, I'd try to provide that for them."

As July ended, we continued to offer thousands of individuals the emotional and spiritual care support they needed as further Evacuation Orders were issued and some were lifted, allowing other families to re-enter their communities. On August 18th, most of the major evacuation orders were rescinded and many evacuees were allowed to return home.

As thousands of people returned, Salvation Army representatives were there to welcome them back and provide some of the essentials they needed as they prepared for the unknown; some having lost everything.

We deployed Emotional and Spiritual Care Specialists assisting evacuees return to community and helping them deal with the devastation and resulting trauma. Additional team members provided meal services to those who were in need of nourishment in areas including Williams Lake, Kamloops, Prince George, and Quesnel.

Salvation Army support remains until long after the initial emergency has passed. Personnel continue to serve in affected areas across the province as we remain committed to transforming and re-building the lives and communities of wildfire victims. "We are honored to help serve in a time of need," says Major Robin Borrows of the Nelson Corps, "it is always our great privilege to provide support to our neighbours and help restore hope when all seems lost."

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Kelowna



573 meals served



763 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



3,003 drinks served



872 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



2,997 snacks served



267 volunteer workers



15 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



3,094 volunteer hours



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Kamloops



12,766 meals served



417 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



55,402 drinks served



1,444 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



36,874 snacks served



433 volunteer workers



56 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



4,154 volunteer hours



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Williams Lake



11,421 meals served



475 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



14,854 drinks served



3,658 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



15,494 snacks served



185 volunteer workers



62 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



1,175 volunteer hours



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Prince George



19,583 meals served



1,501 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



37,692 drinks served



3,889 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



28,595 snacks served



1,162 volunteer workers



197 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



7,338 volunteer hours



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Vernon



848 meals served



21 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



1,836 drinks served



111 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



2,003 snacks served



172 volunteer workers



3 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



1,074 volunteer hours



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Surrey



3,897 meals served



46 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



3,274 drinks served



51 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



1,792 snacks served



180 volunteer workers



5 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



1,487 volunteer hours



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Other Locations



1,728 meals served



2,396 drinks served



2,509 snacks served



50 Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



250 Emotional & Spiritual Care hours



285 people helped by Emotional & Spiritual Care Workers



287 volunteer workers



2,093 volunteer hours





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