
Bulletin Number: 2024-04

Subject: Preparation for Wildfire Season and Severe or Adverse Weather Conditions

Date Issued: May 15, 2024

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Distribution: Continuing Care Homes Type A, B, & C (Formerly Long-Term Care, Designated Supportive Living, and Hospice) and Supportive Living Accommodations

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Purpose:

Areas throughout Alberta are at risk of wildfires and a higher chance of severe or adverse weather conditions such as extreme heat events. Affected operators of continuing care homes and supportive living accommodations may need to activate their contingency plans for evacuation and/or severe or adverse weather. This bulletin provides reminders and resources to assist operators with responding to these situations.

Background:

On April 1, 2024, the *Continuing Care Act* and *Continuing Care Regulation* were released along with updates to the *Accommodation Standards – Continuing Care Home, Supportive Living and Continuing Care Health Services Standards*. Within these standards are requirements for contingency plans to address the impacts of evacuations and severe weather conditions and operator obligations to submit a Duty to Notify form to Alberta Health when contingency plans are activated.

Key Messages:

Alberta Health monitors the Alberta wildfires and severe or adverse weather situations. Operators are required to report to Alberta Health the activation of a contingency plan. Information is also available for operators to support their efforts.

Managing for Wildfire Season

The health, well-being and safety of residents in continuing care is most important.

- Review contingency plans for evacuation, and ensure executable plans are in place if evacuated for multiple days.
- Monitor the local fire situations on the [Alberta Wildfire Status website](#) as well as the [Alberta Emergency Alert website](#).

- For sites that are required to evacuate due to wildfires, the requirement to submit a [Duty to Notify](#) within 48 hours will be temporarily relaxed. The safety and security of residents takes priority. The Duty to Notify must be submitted after the safety and security of residents is assured.
- Keep current any plans to contact guardians and families in case of an evacuation.
- Alberta Health's Continuing Care Licensing Office will continue to follow up on submitted Duty to Notify information until the residents have returned to their home facilities.
- Keep the Continuing Care Licensing Office updated on changes to resident living arrangements (returning home when an order is lifted/moving to another facility/going to stay with family members temporarily).

Managing for Severe and Adverse Weather

Severe or adverse weather events can put the health, well-being and safety of residents in continuing care at greater risk. Operators may need to activate risk mitigation procedures and actions to address an extreme heat event. Like wildfire emergencies, activation of a contingency plan for severe or adverse weather events requires the submission a [Duty to Notify](#) form.

Review the information and resources from:

- Alberta Health: [Extreme Heat – Learn about extreme heat events and how to protect yourself and others](#)
- Alberta Health Services: [Heat Warning Information](#)
- Weather alerts - https://weather.gc.ca/index_e.html?layers=alert
- Alberta Air Quality Health Index – https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/ab_e.html

Licensed Continuing Care Homes and Supportive Living Accommodations experiencing extreme heat issues should take all available measures to mitigate the situation. This may include, but is not limited to, using fans, air conditioners, and applying ice packs.

- Fans can help move cooler air indoors during the late evening and early morning hours but should not be relied upon as a primary cooling method during extreme heat events.
- For additional tips, download the [Extreme heat information sheet: adult care facilities](#)

A reminder, hydration is critical during an extreme heat event.

Duty to Notify:

Continuing care service providers and operators in Alberta are required to report to Alberta Health any serious event or incident that has occurred, or that has the potential to occur through the Duty to Notify process. A [Duty to Notify – Decision Guide](#) has been published to assist operators in completing the [submission form](#).

Operators are encouraged to contact the Continuing Care Licensing Office at cclo@gov.ab.ca or (780) 644-8428 if they have questions, concerns or require additional information.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the residents in your accommodations.

Resource:

[Continuing Care Website](#)