

Canadian OHS Professionals – Wildfire Alert and Employer Responsibilities



The 2025 wildfire season is officially under way, with the first major blaze igniting in mid-May and over 100 active wildfires burning nationwide by the end of the month. As of May 28, there are approximately **1,267 fires** scorching more than **283,000 hectares**, and nearly **21,000 people** have been evacuated across Canada.

In **Manitoba**, five fires were classified as out of control in mid-May, including a massive 100,000 ha fire north of Whiteshell Provincial Park and a 42,000-ha blaze in the northwest. These infernos forced the evacuation of roughly **1,000 residents** from Lac du Bonnet and contributed to a total of about **17,000 evacuees** in northern Manitoba alone.

Employer Responsibilities

Under provincial and federal OHS laws, employers must:

- **Assess wildfire and smoke hazards** as part of your job hazard analysis.
- **Implement safe work procedures** to limit exposure to smoke, heat, and fire.
- **Provide and maintain respiratory protection** (e.g., N95 respirators) when air quality deteriorates.
- **Train workers** on emergency plans, safe work procedures, and PPE use before the wildfire season intensifies.

- **Review and update your emergency response plans** to address wildfires, ensuring drills cover evacuation routes, communication protocols, and accommodations for vulnerable workers.

Key Resources

To help you prepare, respond, and comply, OHS Insider offers comprehensive guides and tools. Please review:

Wildfire-Specific Guidance

- [Wildfire Safety Guide](#)
- [Employer Duties to Protect Workers from Wildfire Smoke – Know the Laws of Your Province \(OHS Insider\)](#)
- [Wildfire Smoke Protection & Compliance Game Plan \(OHS Insider\)](#)
- [Wildfire Safety Tips and Techniques](#)
- [Wildfire Smoke Safe Work Procedures](#)
- [Wildfire Smoke Safety Policy](#)
- [April 14 Wildfires – Keep Your Family Safe](#)

Additional Emergency Planning Resources

- [Fire Emergency Response Plans – Know the Laws of Your Province \(OHS Insider\)](#)
- [Fire Prevention Compliance Game Plan \(OHS Insider\)](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness & Response Policy \(OHS Insider\)](#)
- [How to Implement a Portable Fire Extinguisher Safety Program \(OHS Insider\)](#)

Please ensure these resources are incorporated into your site-specific safety plans, training sessions, and emergency drills. Stay vigilant—wildfire conditions can change rapidly, and a well-prepared workplace is the best defense for your team.