

Devolution Fact Sheet Fire Management Program

This fact sheet explains what the you can expect from the transfer of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's Fire Management Program to the Yukon government's Department of Community Services on April 1, 2003.



An air tanker drops retardant

If you see a wildfire, please call this number... immediately! Fire Hotline 1-888-798-FIRE (3473)

Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Yukon Fire Management Centre
91790 Alaska Highway
Department of Community Services
Government of Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Phone: (867) 667-3375

Toll Free (in Yukon): 1-800-826-4750 ext. 3375

www.gov.yk.ca/depts/community/firemanagement/index.html

How to get there:

If driving up the Two-Mile Hill from the City Centre, turn north onto the Alaska Highway. Take your first left. The Regional Fire Management Centre is the office building located south of the Pentecostal Church.

FireSmart Information

Ph: (867) 456-3970 (until April 30th)

Effective May 1, the new FireSmart is (867) 667-3013

Yukon Wildfire Update Line

Phone: 1-800-826-4750

Fire Management District Offices:

KLONDIKE

Dawson City: 1-867-993-5468
Old Crow: 1-867-966-3311

KLUANE

Beaver Creek: 1-867-634-2256
Haines Junction: 1-867-634-2256

NORTHERN TUTCHONE

Carmacks: 1-867-863- 5271
Mayo: 1-867-996-2343

SOUTHERN LAKES

Teslin: 1-867-390-2531
Whitehorse: 1-867-456-3877

TINTINA

Ross River: 1-867-969-2243
Watson Lake: 1-867-536-7335

Fire Management Unit

On April 1, 2003, the Protective Services Branch of the Department of Community Services will assume responsibility for the Fire Management Program from the federal government under the terms of the Devolution Transfer Agreement.

The Fire Management Program is responsible for managing Yukon forest fires and enforcing the Government of Yukon's *Forest Protection Act*.

The Fire Management Unit works to prevent personal injury and loss of life and to minimize social and economic disruption resulting from wildfires.

Successful fire management depends on effective fire prevention, detection, suppression, and consideration of fire ecology relationships.

Centralized Fire Management

The Yukon Forest Fire Centre is responsible for the overall management of the Fire Management Program in the Yukon. Most of the program delivery is carried out from district attack bases throughout the Yukon.

The Yukon has five fire management districts:

1. **Kluane District** – Haines Junction & Beaver Creek
2. **Klondike District**– Dawson City & Old Crow
3. **Northern Tutchone District** – Mayo & Carmacks
4. **Southern Lakes District** – Whitehorse & Teslin
5. **Tintina District** -- Ross River & Watson Lake

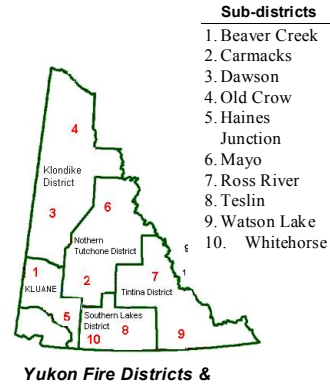
around communities and valuable resources need to be protected from fire.

Wildfire Prevention

The Yukon Fire Management Program maintains a Wildfire Prevention Program encompassing elements of *education* -- including programs like FireSmart, publications and classroom visits; *engineering* -- including prescribed fires or fires that are purposely lit to thin forests in an effort to reduce future risk; and *enforcement* of the legislation.

Government of Yukon programs such as the FireSmart program helps to increase wildfire prevention efforts in the Yukon. The FireSmart program reduces the risk of wildfire by providing the funding to remove deadfall and other flammable forest fuels; planting less flammable deciduous trees in and around communities; and burning prescribed fires where appropriate.

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Fire Policy & Devolution

Under the Devolution Transfer Agreement, Yukon will assume existing federal government policies such as the Zonation Policy. The Zonation Policy recognizes that wildland fire is an essential element of forest management and where possible, should be allowed to occur naturally. It also recognizes that areas

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Wildfire Detection

Fire Management has a variety of ways for detecting fires in the Yukon. Nine lookout towers located throughout the territory near communities are used to scan forest areas for smoke and fires. As well, patrol planes are regularly sent out to locate fires that may be burning in remote areas.

The public also plays an important role in reporting wildfires.

In 1998, the public reported more than half of the wildfires in the Yukon.

About Forest Fire Fighting

A variety of methods are employed to control fires, depending on the location and severity of the fire. During fire season, district offices within the Territory maintain fire crews in a state of readiness to respond quickly.

Various methods are employed to rapidly attack wildfires: "initial attack" teams use helicopters to deliver crews to fire sites and "bucket" water onto fires while air tankers drop retardant to slow the fire's progress.

After April 1, 2003 the Government of Yukon has the responsibility to contract and station fire crews on a seasonal basis throughout the Yukon.

A typical fire unit consists of a crew boss and two members, although crew sizes may vary. After initial notification of a fire, a helicopter usually brings three or more fire fighters from other support crews to the ground with pumps, hoses and other equipment. Fire fighters use trucks around communities and work closely with volunteer fire departments.

The fire fighting equipment used to fight fires will be the same after April 1, 2003 as in the past. Equipment includes both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

Some of the aircraft used in a fire season:

- A Douglas DC6 air tanker, which can hold over 11,000 litres of retardant used to "box-in" remote fires before

fire fighters arrive. The environmentally friendly retardant used contains a fertilizer to encourage first generation growth following a burn.

- The "Firecat" air tanker group normally consists of three planes and a light engine support plane. The combined capacity of the three Firecats (each holds about 3,295 litres), matches the holding capacity of one DC6.
- Light-engine aircraft or "bird-dogs," direct the aerial tankers to drop locations and direct any other fire-fighting aircraft in the airspace within the fire district. During a fire, the bird-dog has airspace authority over a five-mile radius.



Three Conair Firecat air tankers on the tarmac at the Dawson City air tanker base.

- Patrol planes fly pre-determined routes to locate lightning-started and other fires.

Partners

Facts & Statistics

The Fire Management Program records a variety of statistics regarding fire management each year. As of April 1, 2003 the Government of Yukon's Fire Management Program will update statistics on an annual basis. Fire statistics 1992-2002:

Year	Lightning Caused	Human Caused	Total Fires	Hectares Burned
1992	68	48	116	37,815
1993	77	59	136	115,104
1994	185	70	255	421,710
1995	76	71	147	261,380
1996	83	66	149	91,067
1997	43	70	113	11,470
1998	87	110	197	343,672
1999	119	40	159	194,456
2000	23	31	54	7,653
2001	50	18	68	17,334
2002	30	39	69	36,335.6

The Yukon is a member of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Through mutual aid

sharing agreements, the Yukon can obtain assistance from other provinces and territories or can assist other fire agencies if more resources are needed. In addition to co-ordinating services for the provinces and territories, the interagency often co-ordinates the resource sharing with the United States and other countries.

Yukon Wildfire Update Line 1-800-826-4750

On this phone line you can obtain information about forest fires burning in the Yukon, burning restrictions, weather conditions and any campfire or burning bans in effect.

This information is updated regularly from May to September each year.

The Fire Management Program will maintain this service for the upcoming fire season.

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