



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2023

New evacuee accommodation provides safety net for Tsilhqot'in and other First Nations

The Tsilhqot'in Nation has opened a group lodging centre to protect its community members, as well as Indigenous Peoples across the province, in the event of an evacuation due to wildfires.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation has worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) on the temporary group lodging accommodation centre, which will provide a culturally safe environment for up to 100 Tsilhqot'in Nation members and other Indigenous Peoples from across the province, if needed.

Accommodation offerings at the site, located adjacent to Tl'esqox (Toosey) in Riske Creek, include ranger tents, family-sized tents and spaces for RVs. Recognizing that August is peak tourism season when hotel room availability may be limited, this site is intended to be a supplementary resource, bolstering the region's capacity to host evacuees.

Last year, the Tsilhqot'in National Government, B.C., and the federal government renewed the five-year tripartite Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement (CEMA). This agreement enables the three governments to advance reconciliation through the development of a respect-based, government-to-government framework for emergency and wildfire management.

"Working under CEMA, and recently renewing it this year, has been a huge support to build up our Nation's capacity in emergency management," said Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair of the Tsilhqot'in National Government. "It has allowed the Nation to work with B.C. and Canada and bring our expertise to the table. Offering the group lodging centre stems from the calls-to-action in the Tsilhqot'in 2017 Wildfire Report, *"The Fires Awakened Us"*. We made a commitment to take care of our own during an emergency and today's announcement demonstrates our Nation's capability to lead and to do that."

To prepare for an evacuation, the Tsilhqot'in National Government urges everyone to put together an emergency plan and a grab-and-go bag.

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People are encouraged to pre-register. To sign-up for Evacuation Registration and Assistance, visit: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

Emergency Support Services are available to people who are evacuated from their home and require assistance, such as costs associated with accommodation, food, transportation and incidentals.

People are encouraged to follow all guidance, evacuation orders and alerts issued by the T̓silhqot'in National Government.

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Learn More:

For tips on how to prepare grab-and-go bags, visit: <http://www.preparedbc.ca/emergencykit>

To learn about how to prepare for wildfires, visit: <https://firesmartbc.ca/>

To pre-register with ESS, visit: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

Real-time wildfire information can be found on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app, or website: <https://wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/map>

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