

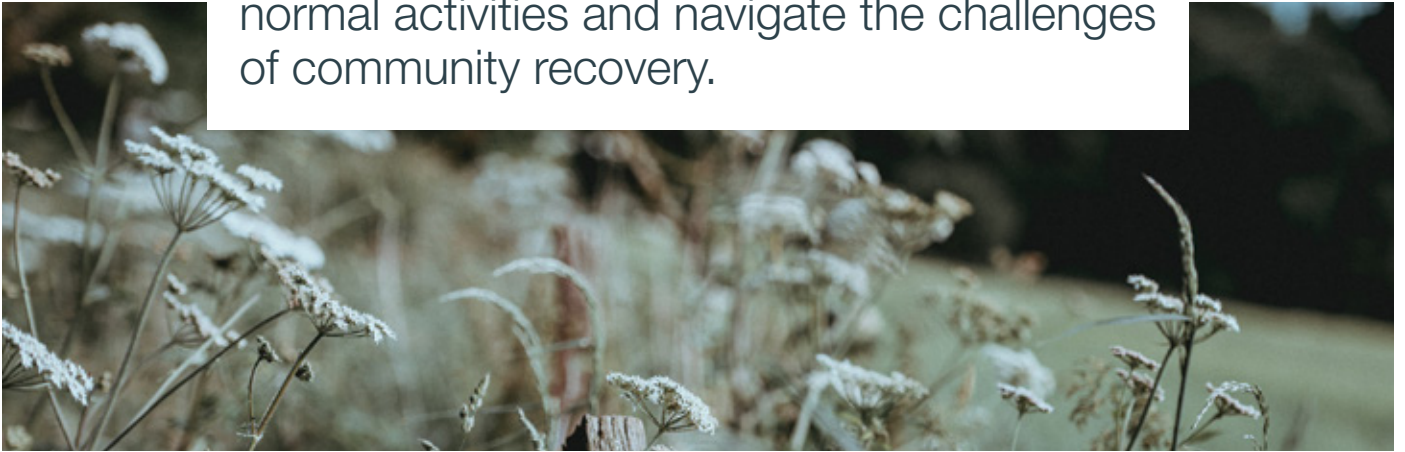


Guidelines for
COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY

Updated May 14, 2026

Returning home after a wildfire evacuation can be stressful and emotional.

This document provides guidance for community members to safely resume normal activities and navigate the challenges of community recovery.



As of the May 14, 2026 publication of this document, wildfire WWF017 is classified as being held, which means residents may be asked to evacuate again.

A wildfire is classified as “being held” once it has been completely contained, meaning a perimeter has been established around the wildfire. The perimeter could be a fire guard, or combination of guard and natural barriers such as a body of water or rocky terrain. It may still exhibit activity and smoke, but is considered contained.

Occasionally, extreme winds or unusual conditions, may cause a held wildfire to return to out of control.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR SAFETY FIRST

The safety of residents and first responders is the top priority. Please exercise extreme caution and adhere to all directions from first responders.

IMMEDIATE HAZARDS

- **Active Fire:** If you see fire within 30m (100ft) of your home, call 911 and leave immediately.
- **Gas Leaks:** If you smell gas, exit your home IMMEDIATELY and call 911 or TRL Gas Co-Op.
- **Electrical Hazards:** Stay at least 10 metres away from downed power lines or damaged poles. Contact FortisAlberta at **310-WIRE**.
- **Ash Pits:** Be aware of deep, burning ash pits in forested areas. These are holes filled with hot embers and can cause serious injury. Do not step in or around them.
- **Trees:** Fire-damaged trees can become unstable and fall without warning due to burned roots or internal damage. Contact an arborist for trees on your land.

MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Residents with complex medical conditions should delay their return until local healthcare facilities are fully operational. This includes those who are:
- More than 36 weeks pregnant or have high-risk pregnancies
- Receiving cancer treatment, dialysis, or home oxygen
- Dealing with chronic respiratory issues like severe asthma





RESTORING UTILITIES



FortisAlberta website

ELECTRICITY (FORTISALBERTA)

Power has been out in affected areas since approximately 4:30 p.m. on May 11, 2026. Power will not be restored automatically to areas that were de-energized for safety.

- Each resident will need to contact Fortis, there will be a door knocker on the door handle to call for them to come and turn it on with you.
- Your power will not be turned on until you call.



TRL Gas website

NATURAL GAS (TRL GAS CO-OP)

If you require assistance relighting gas appliances, smell gas, or have other questions or concerns upon returning to your property or residence, call TRL Gas Co-op Ltd. at **1-800-727-5259**.

WATER AND SEWER

- **Flushing Systems:** Run cold water taps for 1-5 minutes to refresh the water in your pipes.
- **Inspections:** Check septic systems for damage or sewage leaks. Check sump pumps and livestock watering devices.

FOOD AND APPLIANCE SAFETY AFTER OUTAGES

Assessing food safety after an evacuation involves considering the length of power outages and the impact of fire or smoke damage.

Because the temperature within an appliance can vary based on its contents, accurate timelines for how long food stays safe are difficult to provide; however, the following general guidelines should be followed.

INSURANCE DOCUMENTATION

It is highly recommended that you take plenty of photos and create a written inventory of all contents in your refrigerators and freezers before discarding them.

WHEN TO DISCARD FOOD

Ultimately, if you are unsure if perishable food is safe to eat, it should be discarded according to local disposal guidelines.

DISCARD THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IMMEDIATELY:

- **Temperature-Compromised Food:** Any food stored in refrigerators or freezers if the temperature rose above 4°C at any point. Note that temperatures may have exceeded 4°C during a power disruption even if the appliance currently reads 4°C
- **Spoiled or Open Items:** Any food that appears spoiled, even if the fridge remained at 4°C, as well as any previously opened foods.
- **Smoke-Damaged Goods:** Dry goods like flour, sugar, or spices if they were impacted by fire or smoke, even if the package is unopened.
- **Porous Packaging:** Any smoke-damaged food products in plastic or paper-based packaging, as these materials are porous.
- **Non-Airtight Containers:** Smoke-damaged food in containers with caps or lids, as they may no longer be airtight.
- **Damaged Canned Goods:** Canned food where the can is bulging, rusted, or severely dented.
- **Raw Produce:** Any raw vegetables or fruits that were not refrigerated.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING APPLIANCES

If your fridge or freezer was not physically damaged by fire, you can clean and disinfect it after disposing of all unsafe food.

- Unplug the fridge and freezer.
- Rinse or blow out (using an air hose) the coils and compressors.
- Clean the inside of the appliance with soap and water, then rinse with clean water.
- After cleaning, sanitize the interior with a bleach and water mixture. Mix 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) of household bleach per 4 cups (1 L) of water.
- Leave the doors of the fridge and freezer open to let them dry out.
- Once the fridge and freezer are dry, reconnect the power.
- Wait until the inside temperature of the fridge reaches 4C before refilling it with food.
- Wait until the freezer is cold enough to freeze food before refilling it.

Note on Replacement: Contact your insurance company to determine if a full replacement of a fridge or freezer is both necessary and covered.

If replacement is required, follow all municipal guidance regarding the proper disposal of large appliances.

CLEANING YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

When cleaning ash and soot, wear N95 masks, gloves, long sleeves, long pants, and boots to reduce exposure to fine particles.

OUTSIDE CLEANING

- **Fire Retardants (Red Residue):** Use water or biodegradable household cleaners to remove stains. NEVER use bleach on retardant residue, as it can react to form toxic fumes.
- **Surfaces:** Pressure wash or scrub exterior walls, driveways, decks, and window.
- **Avoid:** Do not use air hoses or leaf blowers to clean ash, as this will spread particles into the air and your home.

INSIDE CLEANING

- **Walls and Surfaces:** Wash with a steam cleaner or white vinegar.
- **Fabrics:** Steam clean carpets, upholstered furniture, and mattresses to neutralize smoke odours and carbon film.
- **HVAC:** Replace filters in heating and air conditioning units before use to avoid circulating ash.

INSURANCE AND DOCUMENTATION

Do not throw away any property (other than spoiled food) or start major cleaning until you have contacted your insurance company.

- **Document Everything:** Take photos and videos of all damage to your home and belongings.
- **Inventory:** Create a list of all damaged or destroyed items, including discarded food.
- **Save Receipts:** Keep all receipts for cleaning supplies, professional repairs, and living expenses during the evacuation.

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DEBRIS DISPOSAL

Residents are advised to follow current local guidelines on where waste can be discarded. If an appliance needs replacement, residents should follow all guidance from the County regarding disposal, for disposal bin locations please refer to the county re-entry map.

To ensure you have the most accurate and up-to-date locations, please visit woodlands.ab.ca/p/wwf017-evacuation-updates-information.

WHITECOURT LANDFILL AND TRANSFER STATION LOCATIONS

- **Whitecourt Regional Landfill:** 17km east of Whitecourt on Highway 43. Summer Hours: Mon-Thu (9:00 am - 5:30 pm), Fri-Sat (9:00 am - 4:30 pm).
- **Whitecourt Transfer Station:** 3209 41 Avenue. Open daily from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

COUNTY TRANSFER STATION LOCATIONS

County transfer stations operate Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- **Anselmo Transfer Station:** Sec Hwy 751, 18 km south of Hwy 43
- **Goose Lake Transfer Station:** Twp Rd 614, 2 km east of Sec Hwy 658
- **Doris Creek Transfer Station:** South of Sec Hwy 661 on Range Rd 55

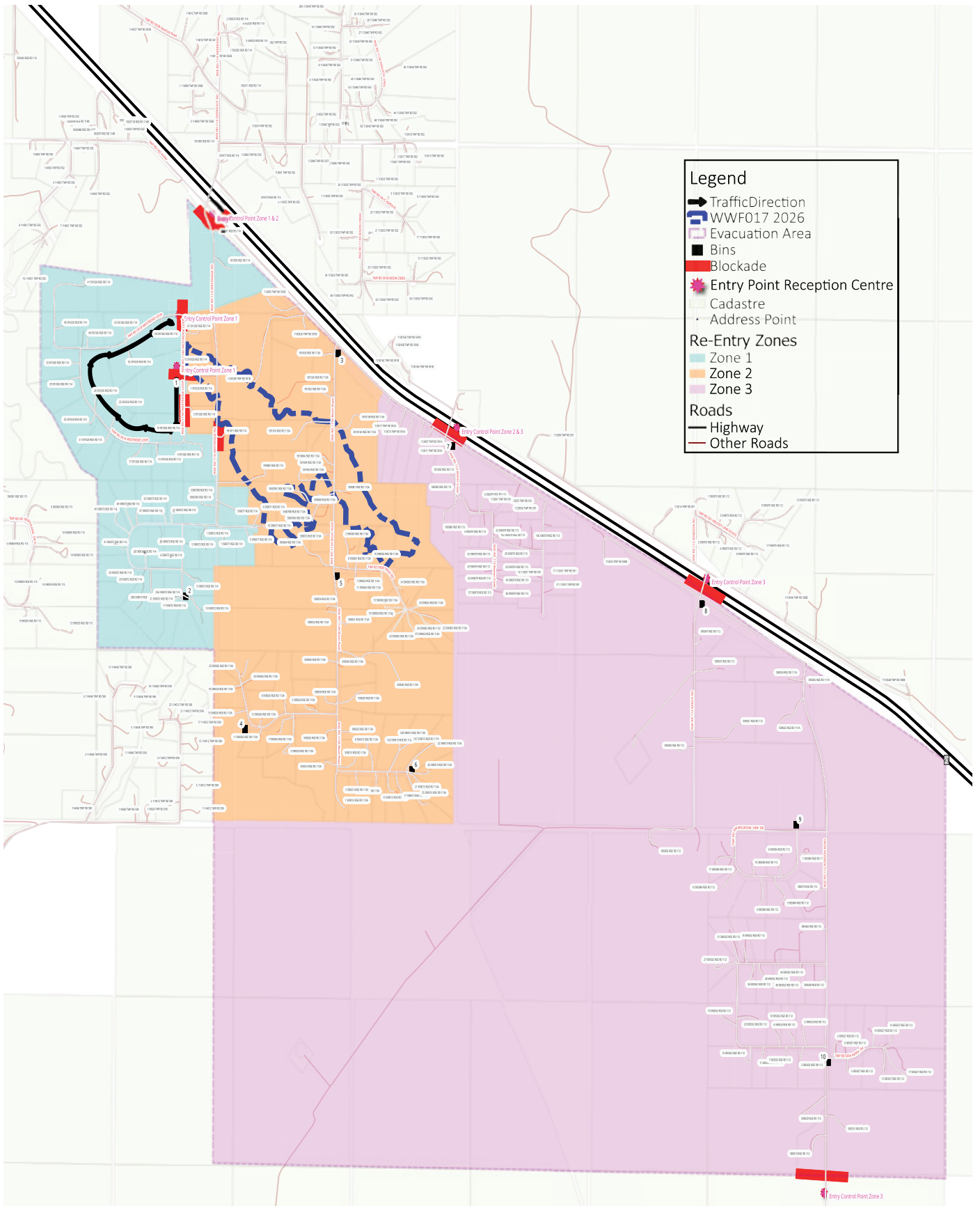
ADDITIONAL WASTE BIN LOCATIONS

To accommodate the spike in post-wildfire household waste disposal, the County has placed additional waste bins at strategic locations. These bins will remain until May 20. Consult the map on the next page for bin locations.

For up-to-date information on County waste management and other wildfire recovery topics, please scan the QR code below or visit woodlands.ab.ca/p/wwf017-evacuation-updates-information.



Wildfire Updates



Legend

- ➔ Traffic Direction
- WWF017 2026
- Evacuation Area
- Blockade
- ★ Entry Point Reception Centre
- Cadastre
- Address Point
- Re-Entry Zones**
- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3
- Roads**
- Highway
- Other Roads

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SUPPORT

Re-entering your community after a disaster is a marathon, not a sprint, and it is perfectly normal to feel a bit unmoored. Disasters often take a toll on mental health that lasts long after the physical damage is repaired. If you need a listening ear, Whitecourt offers free, single-session support with no referral required.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Disasters can magnify existing challenges like parenting stress or grief. These licensed therapist-led sessions are here to help you regain your balance.

- **When:** Every Thursday morning.
- **Where:** Community Health Services Building (4707-50 Avenue, across from Repeat Boutique).
- **What to Expect:** A licensed therapist will listen and support you in exploring strategies to manage stress and overwhelm.
- **How to Book:** Call 780-706-3281 during the week you would like to attend. Walk-ins are welcome. What to Bring: Please bring your Alberta Health Care card.

MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORY

Keep these contacts handy for yourself or a neighbour as you navigate the recovery process.

Addiction Services	780-778-7123
Mental Health Services	780-706-3281
Whitecourt Healthcare Centre	780-778-2285
Mental Health Help Line (24/7)	1-877-303-2642
Addiction Help Line (24/7)	1-866-332-2322
Alberta Health Link	811
Life Medical Clinic	708-706-7080
Whitecourt Associate Clinic	780-778-2224
Primary Care Network	780-779-0079

ADDICTION SUPPORT

Whether you are seeking immediate help for substance use or you are a family member looking for guidance, these sessions provide a listening ear and a concrete plan.

- **When:** Every Wednesday morning.
- **Where:** Whitecourt Provincial Building – Room 207 (5052 – 52 Avenue, next to the firehall).
- **What to Expect:** A counsellor will listen, help you explore strategies to improve your situation, and provide tools and resources for your next steps.
- **How to Book:** Call 780-778-7123 during the week you would like to attend. Walk-ins are welcome, though booked clients are seen first.

If you are experiencing a medical or safety emergency, please call 911 immediately.



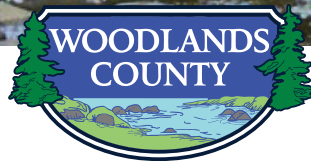
A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

Woodlands County would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all residents for your extraordinary patience and cooperation during the evacuation and re-entry process.

We understand the stress and uncertainty this incident has caused, and your strength has been a pillar of our community recovery.

We also express our deepest gratitude to our partners, including local emergency responders, utility crews, and neighboring municipalities, for their tireless support and dedicated response to this incident.

Together, we are rebuilding and ensuring a safe return for everyone.



MAIN MUNICIPAL OFFICE

Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane | Whitecourt, AB | T7S 1N3
Reception: **780-778-8400** (toll free at 1-888-870-6315)

REGIONAL MUNICIPAL OFFICE

61053A Hwy 33 | Fort Assiniboine, AB | T0G 1A0
Reception: **780-584-3866** (toll free at 1-866-584-3866)