
Courtesy translation

In case of forest fire

Spring 2024

This guide was written to provide support for people faced with or having faced a forest fire. Read it to find out what to do if your area is under threat. You'll also find all the instructions and recommendations to safeguard your home or business, if you are affected by fire or smoke.

Help Is Available!

Pay attention to your reactions and those of your loved ones after experiencing a disaster:

- Anxiety, distress or frequent crying
- Apathy or loss of energy
- Aggressiveness
- Difficulty concentrating or confusion
- Increased alcohol or drug use

Psychosocial support is available to you. Psychosocial intervention professionals are available to support, advise and direct you to resources tailored to your needs or those of your loved ones. Call Info-Social, at 811, and select option 2 to speak with a professional. This service is free and confidential, and it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Translated from the original French.

The information in this guide is also available online at :

[Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires)

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Air tankers: caution is called for

When the Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU) must step in to help fight a forest fire, air tankers are sometimes used as reinforcements for forest firefighters.

These air tankers, which must fly to a nearby lake and fill up with water to do their job, are above all else emergency vehicles; and while what they do may be impressive, it is important to resist the temptation to get close to them to better watch their maneuvers. Boaters and swimmers must make way for these aircraft, i.e., return to shore.

If vacationers are on the lake when an air tanker approaches, it will advise them of its presence by circling the lake without touching the water. This serves as a message for them to essentially clear the way. Air tanker pilots have a very good view of the activity at a given lake, and when they begin their descent to go fill up, they have first ascertained that it is safe to do so. They must nonetheless be able to count on the cooperation of everyone in the vicinity.

Also, should you be near the site of a fire on which air tankers are dropping water, you should leave the area whenever and as quickly as possible (as a safety precaution). When an air tanker drops its load, it is releasing the equivalent of six tons of water which, needless to say, could seriously harm persons who find themselves nearby.

Should you be unable to leave the area where the water will be dropped, hide behind a tree (on the side opposite from the approaching plane) and hang on tight. Should there be no trees nearby, lie facedown on the ground, with your head facing the direction from which the air tanker is approaching.

Finally, when a drone is sighted within the perimeter of SOPFEU operations, all flight operations are halted until the drone leaves. Canadian aviation regulations concerning free flight stipulate that drones must be at least 9 km from a disaster zone, including a forest fire, or those responsible will incur a fine.

To learn more

sopfeu.qc.ca/en

Carbon monoxide poisoning

Use of fuel-burning appliances

Forest fires can sometimes affect electrical infrastructure and cause blackouts. If you are using fuel-burning appliances inside a building (devices that run on propane, wood, fuel oil, gasoline or natural gas), you should be aware that these devices can produce carbon monoxide, an odourless, colourless gas that can be fatal. You should protect yourself by using a battery-powered carbon monoxide detector.

Instructions to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

- Follow the usage, maintenance and safety guidelines for your fuel-burning appliances.
- If they are designed for outdoor use, don't use them indoors, and keep them as far away from doors and windows as possible.
- Never operate them in an enclosed space, even if the door is open.
- Never obstruct an appliance's air intake or exhaust system.
- Never use a gas-fired kitchen range or portable stove for heating purposes.

If your carbon monoxide detector goes off, or if you or someone else in your household is experiencing symptoms such as headache, nausea, fatigue, vomiting, dizziness or weakness, act immediately:

- Go outside.
- Dial 911 or call the Centre antipoison du Québec (poison control centre) at 1-800-463-5060.
- Leave the door open to ventilate the premises thoroughly.
- Have your fuel-burning appliances inspected by a professional before using them again.

Use of auxiliary equipment

Auxiliary heating, cooking or barbecue equipment designed for outdoor use, camping equipment, and non-electrical pumps and generators powered by gas or gasoline can release carbon monoxide and result in serious or fatal poisoning. Never use such equipment indoors or near doors and windows.

Carbon monoxide poisoning

Use a generator

Install the generator outside your home, away from doors and windows, on an elevated base sheltered from the elements. This is important to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

Turn off the main breaker in your home before plugging in the generator, then plug your electrical devices into the generator's power outlet. If you are using extension cords, make sure they are safe and are approved by a body recognized by the Régie du bâtiment du Québec. Never allow power cables to lie in water.

Don't overload the generator's capacity. Once every eight hours, turn it off and let it rest for an hour. Before refueling, turn it off and let it cool down.

Once the power has been restored, turn off the generator and unplug it before turning on the main breaker in your home.

Read the manufacturer's instructions when you purchase your generator and follow the installer's instructions if it was installed by a professional.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/carbon-monoxide-poisoning](https://quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/carbon-monoxide-poisoning)
[Quebec.ca/use-your-equipment-safely](https://quebec.ca/use-your-equipment-safely)

Food conservation

Pantry

When a residence is located within a zone touched by a forest fire, hermetically packaged non-perishable food (e.g. canned food, cookies, cereals, pasta) can be consumed; however, it is important to thoroughly clean the containers before opening them.

Non-perishable foods that are not hermetically packaged (e.g. flour, salt, sugar) should not be consumed. As well, all food that smells of smoke, including animal food, should be discarded.

Refrigerator

Following a power outage lasting for more than 6 hours, carefully sort the food in your refrigerator and freezer to avoid food poisoning.

Only the following refrigerated foods can be consumed, provided they show no signs of deterioration:

- Whole fresh fruits and vegetables, pasteurized fruit juices
- Blocks of firm cheese (such as cheddar, Swiss, mozzarella), parmesan, cheese slices, processed cheese, butter, margarine, yogurt
- Jams, jellies, marmalades, sweet spreads, peanut butter
- Mustard, ketchup, relish, commercial mayonnaise, salad dressings, BBQ sauces, taco sauces, olives, pickles
- Baked fruit pies, cakes, muffins, cookies

Don't hesitate to discard these foods if their appearance is abnormal. Discard all other food, even if it appears normal to you.

Medications

Don't take medications left in your refrigerator, take them back to your pharmacy.

Food conservation

Freezer

Partially thawed food with frost on the packaging can be refrozen if it is still hard in the center.

Raw food that has thawed but remained at a temperature of 4 °C or less can be cooked immediately and either eaten right away or refrozen after cooking.

Food that has thawed completely—including blocks of firm cheese, baked goods (such as bread, muffins, bread dough, unfrosted cakes, fruit pies and cookies), pasteurized fruit juices and fruit—can be refrozen if the containers are intact.

Finally, perishable food that has thawed completely must be in the compost bin or thrown out if it has been exposed to temperatures above 4 °C. Perishable food includes meat, poultry, fish and seafood, dairy products, eggs and prepared dishes containing eggs whether raw or cooked.

Note that food in a well-functioning freezer will usually keep for approximately:

- 48 hours if the freezer is full;
- 24 hours if the freezer is half-full.

Vegetable garden

Should there be dust or soot particles on your fruit and vegetables grown above ground, such as strawberries or lettuce, follow these recommendations when you harvest them:

- Carry out a visual inspection of the crops while harvesting them. Discard any plants, fruits and vegetables that appear to have deteriorated or smell of smoke.
- Clean and rinse harvested plants, fruits and vegetables with drinking water.
- Wipe or scrub food surfaces, where necessary.
- Peel all foods having a peel.
- Remove the outer leaves of lettuce.

Vegetables that grow in the ground are not likely to be contaminated and need only to be carefully washed before being eaten.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/en/health/nutrition/food-safety/keep-throw-away-power-outage-flood](https://quebec.ca/en/health/nutrition/food-safety/keep-throw-away-power-outage-flood)
1-800-463-5023

Health effects of smoke

The smoke from a forest fire can travel great distances, in concentrations that can vary significantly due, in part, to the behaviour of the fire, the type of fuel and atmospheric conditions.

Smoke is more likely to bother the following individuals:

- Young children
- The elderly
- Individuals with respiratory problems (asthma, bronchitis, home-assisted ventilation, restricted breathing capacity, emphysema, etc.)
- Individuals with heart problems

If despite all precautions taken you do not feel well, call Info-Santé at 811. For any other medical emergency, call 911.

Even if you are in good health, follow the advice below to protect yourself from the effects of the smoke:

- Listen carefully to public notices and warnings about the presence of smoke or the air quality.
- Avoid outdoor activities when the air quality index is poor.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity, even if you are far from the affected area. Wind can carry pollution from forest fires over great distances, and there can be significant amounts of fine particles and combustion residue in the air, which can cause breathing problems.
- Close the windows and doors of your home, along with the air exchange system, when there is smoke outdoors.
- If you must go outside, wearing an N95 mask may be a protective measure worth considering. An N95 mask that fits snugly around the face can reduce the respiratory symptoms and discomforts caused by smoke (coughing, irritation, and sore throat).

To protect your pet from the harmful effects of smoke, let dogs and cats go outside only to relieve themselves and avoid outdoor exercise during smoke episodes.

Home evacuation

Evacuate your home if the authorities require you to do so or if you feel that your health or safety is compromised. Take your pets with you, if possible. However, do not jeopardize your safety if you are unable to find them or take them with you.

Instructions and recommendations for a safe evacuation :

- Close the doors and windows of your home and lock its doors before leaving.
- If you have the time, and if possible:
- Abundantly water the ground around your house, as well as the roof.
- Shut off the electrical supply.
- Shut off the natural gas supply so as to ensure your own safety and the integrity of your installations. Note that your municipality's fire department can also see to it that your natural gas supply is shut off in an emergency situation.
- If you smell an odour of gas or if natural gas equipment damage is visible, immediately leave your home and contact the emergency service of your natural gas distributor, Énergir or Gazifère.
- If you leave your home of your own volition for safety reasons, inform your municipality by indicating the time of your departure and the location of your temporary housing, for example, with family members, neighbours or friends, and your contact details.
- If you go to a temporary housing centre set up by the authorities, where services will be offered to you, register with the staff on-site. The housing centre may not accept pets. Make other arrangements for them (e.g. a shelter, kennel or at a family member's home).
- As a last resort, if you leave your home without taking your pets, leave a note on the main door to notify first responders.

Notify your service providers (e.g. Hydro-Québec, telecommunication services, gas company, housekeeping services, etc.) of your situation and work out with them the necessary arrangements. A list of your service providers, their contact information and your account information should be part of your emergency kit.

Remember that designated, competent authorities actively monitor evacuated areas in order to ensure that the sites remain secure.

Inform your loved ones

Tell you family members and friends of your situation, preferably by text messages, emails or messages in the social media to avoid overburdening telephone lines.

Home evacuation

If you need to take some time off from work, notify your employer within a reasonable time and agree with them on the arrangements to be made.

When evacuating, respect the signage in place and, where applicable, the safety perimeters established by the authorities.

Before leaving your home, follow the guidelines and recommendations included in the Plan Your Travel section.

Take your emergency evacuation kit with you, if you've prepared one. Otherwise, if you have the time, and without putting yourself in danger, take the following essential items for each member of your family:

- Medications
- Personal hygiene items
- A change of clothes
- Blankets
- Money
- Your identity papers and those of the members of your family
- Your house and car keys
- Milk, baby bottles and diapers for infants
- Electronic devices and adapters/charging devices
- Items needed for the well-being of individuals with special needs
- Items that your service dog or pet needs

Your medication

If you need a refill and can't get to your regular pharmacy, you can go to another pharmacy to get your medication.

To facilitate the transfer of your prescriptions, have the labels affixed to medication containers or pillboxes at your usual pharmacy on hand, along with your health insurance card.

Before you leave home, please make sure to store all medication in a safe place, following the storage instructions provided by your pharmacist.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/evacuate-your-home](https://quebec.ca/evacuate-your-home)

Home evacuation

Pets

Include an emergency kit in a box or container that can be easily loaded into a vehicle; a week's supply of food and water for each animal; and transport cages, a leash, a harness, or any other customary restraint equipment. You should also bring a litter box, a litter supply and, if possible, a few personal items to calm and comfort the animals if necessary.

As a last resort, if you leave home without bringing your pets, mark their presence on the main door of your residence in order to inform first responders and to keep the animals safely inside:

- Never leave pets tied up or confined outdoors.
- Set them free in a well-ventilated, windowless room (bathroom, garage, storeroom).
- Place food and water in receptacles that won't spill. If possible, have a tap drip into a large container or partially fill a bathtub.

Your accommodation may not accept pets. In that case, arrange alternative accommodation for them (at a family member's or friend's home or at a boarding facility where pets are temporarily housed; or contact a shelter that may exceptionally offer to take them in while you evacuate).

Farm animals

Farm animal owners and their staff should be aware of the risks to their animals and prepare an emergency plan and kit for their farm. The plan should include risk reduction measures, means of evacuation or confinement of animals, and means of sustenance (water, food, electricity) in the event of prolonged confinement. For more information, please visit the **Emergency Preparedness for Farm Animals** Web page.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/evacuate-your-home](https://quebec.ca/evacuate-your-home)

House cleaning

A number of actions need to be taken to effectively and safely clean your home after significant smoke damage:

- To eliminate odours, ventilate rooms adequately for a number of hours by opening windows and setting up portable fans to help “push” odours outside.
- While wearing gloves, remove dust and soot with soap and water.
- Do not use a broom or a vacuum because they tend to displace dust, rather than remove it.
- Thoroughly clean children’s toys and items that you use often.
- Wash all clothing that smells of smoke.
- Dispose of soaking wet materials that were used to extinguish the fire (such as plasterboard and glass wool insulation) and check that the wood’s moisture content is below 15%. Ventilate the space, paying particular attention to the risk of mould development.
- If necessary, clean the ventilation systems and their components. Replace filters, as needed, and turn ventilation systems back on.
- Consult a garment and textile cleaning specialist to arrange for the cleaning of dirty or smoke-damaged fabric items (e.g. sofas and mattresses) or toys and stuffed animals.

If in doubt, call Info-Santé at 811. In the event of a serious problem or urgent need, call 911 or go to your hospital emergency.

House cleaning

Avoid any risks due to stored chemicals:

- Follow the instructions on the manufacturer's label or safety data sheets. This information is usually available on the manufacturer's Website. You can also consult the data sheets in the Répertoire toxicologique of the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESTT): reptox.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/Pages/to-english-users.aspx.
- Don't mix incompatible cleaning products together, as this can generate irritating and toxic fumes.
- Air out rooms that have been contaminated by fumes from spilled chemicals. If a chemical presents a fire hazard, don't use electrical devices.
- Wear the necessary protection equipment in accordance with safety guidelines.
- Don't attempt to move unlabeled or broken containers of chemicals or damaged propane cylinders without first consulting your local fire department or your municipality.
- Don't smoke, eat or drink when near spilled chemicals.
- Contact your municipality for information on how to dispose of chemical waste. Ensure adequate ventilation during storage.
- Check your oil, heating oil or gasoline, tanks, etc. Plug any leaks and contact the Urgence-Environnement service of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs at **1-866-694-5454**.
- In the event of a chemical spill, contact a specialized firm for assistance and notify your insurer.

House cleaning

Avoid the risk of mould developing due to water damage from firefighting efforts:

- Clean and try to ensure that any water damage is completely dry within 24 to 48 hours.
- Adequately ventilate your house.
- Dispose of porous materials severely damaged by water, such as:
 - Sheets of plasterboard
 - Rugs
 - Cardboard tiles
 - Insulation materials
 - Mattresses, furniture upholstered or covered with fabric
- If you find mould, clean the affected areas immediately with a clean cloth and all-purpose cleaner. The use of bleach is not recommended. Thoroughly dry the surface.
- To avoid unnecessary exposure to mould spores, wear protective glasses, rubber gloves and a dust mask.

Immediately clean any injury—even minor—with clean water and soap, then dress the wound with a sterile bandage. For wounds that are deep or soiled, see a doctor as soon as possible. Also make sure your tetanus vaccination is up to date.

Avoid pushing, pulling or lifting a load that is too heavy or too bulky for you to handle. If you do, you could strain yourself and experience muscle problems in your back, shoulders or knees:

- Avoid carrying objects that are too heavy; avoid straining.
- Minimize the weight of each load you carry.
- Use the proper equipment for carrying and handling loads.
- Make it a team effort so they everyone does their share.
- Make each load as compact as possible so that you can get an easy grip on it and hug it close to your body.
- Minimize the walking distance you have to travel while carrying loads.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/health](https://quebec.ca/health)

[Quebec.ca/clean-up-your-house](https://quebec.ca/clean-up-your-house)

Quality of well water and condition of the well

Is your water suitable for consumption?

Forest fires can affect the quality of drinking water. Contamination can come from the fire itself, from the products used to fight it, or from chemicals leaking into the soil and groundwater, for example from leaking chemical tanks.

If you have any concerns about the colour or taste of your water, contact the authorities responsible for the network before consuming it.

Water from a municipal water system. Is it safe to drink?

If the water in your home comes from a distribution network, it is potable, that is, suitable for consumption, unless the municipal authorities in charge advise you otherwise. You can thus drink or use it for meal preparation or to brush your teeth, for example.

Your water comes from your individual well. Is it safe to drink?

If the fire has not reached your neighborhood...

There is little risk that the quality of your well water will be affected. But it's still worthwhile to

- check the condition of the well.
- take the opportunity to have your water analyzed for microbiological parameters by an accredited laboratory, as recommended twice a year.
- disinfect your well according to the recommendations on the Web page **La qualité de l'eau de mon puits**, produced by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs and available online in French only, if microbiological contamination is detected in your well water.

If the fire has reached your neighbourhood...

The quality of your well water may be affected. We recommend that you

- check the condition of your well.
- check the water's microbiological and physicochemical parameters.

See pages 17 and 18 for more information.

If your well can no longer be used following a forest fire, it is important to obstruct it, to avoid creating a vector of contamination toward the groundwater table.

Quality of well water and condition of the well

Check the condition of your well

After a forest fire, visually inspect your well by checking the following details:

- The installation must be fitted with a secure cover, resistant to weather, contaminants, vermin and, if exposed to the risk of immersion, to water ingress.
- The ground around the installation must be finished in such a way as to keep out stagnant water and to prevent water from running off towards the installation over a distance of one metre around it.
- The installation must be visually identifiable.

If the fire has reached your property, your well may be damaged. This damage, and the presence of debris, can lead to contamination. We recommend that you have your well inspected by a specialist. If your well can no longer be used following a forest fire, the specialist can plug it in accordance with regulations, so as not to create a vector of contamination to the groundwater table.

Checking the quality of drinking water

Deteriorating well conditions following a forest fire can lead to microbiological contamination of the water. We recommend that you have the microbiological quality of your water tested by an accredited laboratory.

If microbiological contamination is detected in your well water, disinfect your well according to the recommendations in the French language pamphlet **La qualité de l'eau de mon puits**.

Until you know whether your well water is safe to drink, please use bottled water for drinking, food preparation, beverages, ice cubes, and baby bottles.

Physical and chemical parameters

Deteriorating well conditions following a forest fire can lead to microbiological contamination of the water. We recommend that you have the microbiological quality of your water tested by an accredited laboratory.

If microbiological contamination is detected in your well water, disinfect your well according to the recommendations in the French language pamphlet **La qualité de l'eau de mon puits**.

Until you know whether your well water is safe to drink, please use bottled water for drinking, food preparation, beverages, ice cubes, and baby bottles.

Quality of well water and condition of the well

Microbiological parameters

In the aftermath of a forest fire, when the fire has approached the well and degraded its condition, and when vehicles, buildings, or other facilities in the vicinity have been affected by the fire, chemicals can seep into the ground and contaminate the well water.

Ask the responsible authorities for advice. If necessary, have the physicochemical parameters of your well water analyzed before consumption. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to have specific parameters analyzed.

Water analysis

All analyses must be performed by a laboratory accredited by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs. The results will determine whether your well water meets the standards of the Regulation respecting the quality of drinking water for microbiological and physicochemical parameters. The analyses must show that there is no contamination, as this is when the well water will be considered potable again. To find your nearest accredited laboratory, please visit the Centre d'expertise en analyse environnementale du Québec website, providing French language information only, at [ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/PALA/Ila03.htm](https://www.ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/PALA/Ila03.htm).

To learn more

<https://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/potable/depliant/index.htm>

<https://www.ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/PALA/Ila03.htm>

Residual materials

When returning to your home after a fire, remove and dispose of any waste and garbage in accordance with established standards. Contact your municipality, or your MRC, if you have questions about the management of your waste materials. You can also refer to RECYC-Québec's "**Ça va où?**" App (French language information only).

Non-hazardous wastes

- Non-salvageable food should be disposed of in the usual manner. Compost it if you can.
- Demolition waste that is salvageable (wood, metal, aggregates) should be taken to a sorting centre or an ecocentre.
- Electronic equipment that is not re-usable should be taken to a drop-off site designed for this purpose.

Contact your municipality (or your MRC) to find out how to dispose of the following types of waste:

- Demolition waste that has been in contact with water and is not salvageable (porous materials, carpeting, insulating materials, gypsum plasterboard, etc.)
- Debris scattered around your yard, whether or not it is recyclable
- Furniture and household articles that have been in contact with water and are not salvageable (mattresses, clothing, furniture, plush toys, cutting boards, etc.)
- Large household appliances that are not re-usable (kitchen range, freezer, washer, dryer, refrigerator, etc.) must be returned to a designated drop-off point or collected via a special collection service in your municipality

Hazardous wastes

Medications that are expired or have been contaminated with smoke or soot should be returned to a pharmacy.

Certain hazardous household waste products (gasoline, fuel oil, household pesticides, aerosols, solvents, etc.) may be taken to your local ecocentre. Other such waste products (batteries, mercury lamps, paint and paint containers, oils, electronic equipment, etc.) may be taken to a drop-off site.

Handle hazardous waste carefully and be sure to wear the required protective equipment. If in doubt, contact your municipality's fire department.

Returning home

Should you need to return to your home **BEFORE** the fire is completely extinguished

- Sometimes, roads will be reopened to traffic well before a fire is totally extinguished. This allows residents to access the territory, and more importantly, go check on the condition of their house or cottage.
- If the fire is still ongoing, there could be residual smoke, smudges and even flames in certain areas. It is best to be extremely cautious and avoid these zones.
- Forest firefighters generally bring a lot of equipment (pumps, hoses and pluviometers) to the scene of a fire; these must never be touched or move.
- When numerous helicopters are called to step in and help fight a fire, specific landing places are prepared. These sectors must be avoided and people should never go near the helicopters.
- Areas where helicopters or air tankers can dump water must be avoided.
- Forest fires can damage both trees and their roots, leaving them unstable. Impacts and strong winds can cause these trees to fall, which requires anyone in the forest to remain extremely vigilant.
- The site of a forest fire will be very dry and highly flammable. It is critical to stay prudent and avoid all actions that could possibly start a new fire (e.g., cigarettes, campfires, burning trash, ATVs, etc.).
- Prohibition from flying (through a NOTAM) remains in force in an active fire zone to not hinder SOPFEU's firefighting efforts.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires)

Returning home

You may return home if the return has been authorized and your safety is not in jeopardy.

Before returning to your home

- Make sure your first visit back is during the day, when any problems will be easier to observe.
- Take pictures and document all damages to have a record of the impact and condition of the site.
- Notify your insurance company and if your home is mortgaged, your financial institution, of the events.
- Check whether any major works are called for. Verify every nook and cranny of your home to identify all of the issues, including:
 - downed power lines (call 911 immediately);
 - gas or propane odours;
 - significant debris;
 - smudges that could spark a new fire;
- Cautiously enter your home and identify any signs of structural damage (due to fire or water used to extinguish the flames), including:
 - sagging roof sections;
 - damages to the home's structure/frame;
 - leaning walls;
 - cracks in the ceiling;
 - slumping floors;
 - doors that won't shut.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires)
rbq.gouv.qc.ca

Returning home

Cleaning and rebuilding

Before beginning to have repairs done, contact local authorities (ZEC, the municipality, the RCM, etc.) to learn more about waste management standards, regulations governing renovations, etc. This will ensure that you handle waste materials responsibly and according to the laws and regulations in force.

- Rely on specialized companies to assess the damages, clean up and disinfect.
- Make sure the contractor to whom you entrust repairs or rebuilding has all of the necessary permits.
- Consult the Check a contractor's licence page, at rbq.gouv.qc.ca, by first clicking on the English tab, to verify whether a contractor holds a valid licence if work is required. Ask for a contract containing the contractor's licence number, a detailed description of the work, and a schedule for completion.
- Contact your service providers (electricity, telecommunications, etc.) to restore your services if needed.
- Keep all of your invoices associated with repairs and cleaning.

Animal reintegration

Farm animals

Avoid handling, moving, or transporting farm animals left behind for four to six weeks after exposure to smoke.

Pets

If your pet experiences coughing or breathing difficulties, or has any other health concerns following exposure to smoke, please contact a veterinarian.

To learn more

[Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/what-to-do-before-during-after-emergency-disaster/forest-fires)

Travel planning

Take the following advice before you leave:

- Check with **Québec 511** to find out about road conditions, either by calling **511** or visiting the Website **Quebec511.info/en/default.aspx**.
- Comply with the signs posted, particularly in the vicinity of forest roads, regardless of the means of transportation used (car, on foot, ATV, canoe, aircraft).
- Respect the safety perimeters established when there is a ban on access to and movement in the forest. Authorities can issue these bans as a preventive measure or because there is a fire burning in the area you wish to go to in the forest.
- Determine a number of escape routes, since a forest fire can restrict or block traffic.
- Keep the windows of your vehicle closed and circulate air inside the vehicle only to prevent smoke from entering the vehicle.
- Make sure that nothing is missing from your car's emergency kit and that it is in the trunk of your vehicle.
- Inform your loved ones of your trip and the route that you will take.

Transport by convoy

Depending on the situation, a transport convoy may be organized. This type of transportation enables residents who are isolated because of a nearby fire to replenish their supplies or evacuate their home, if necessary.

In such case, follow the authorities' instructions:

- Follow the escort vehicle.
- Passing is not allowed.
- Never stop.
- Take only the route intended for this purpose.

To learn more

Quebec511.info/en

Yard cleaning

Precautions when cleaning your yard

- **Never touch downed power lines or electrical installations.** If you see a downed power line, call 911.
- If you see a downed telecommunications line or cable, contact the service provider. You can usually find an orange label with the provider's contact information on or near telecommunications devices. Never touch lines or devices that are on the ground.
- Carefully remove all debris from your yard.
- Properly manage your waste materials.

Farm animal

Farmers should consult the following French language Web page for information concerning deadstock: [Quebec.ca/agriculture-environnement-et-ressources-naturelles/sante-animale/obligations-proprietaires-gardiens-animaux/gestion-animaux-morts-ferme](https://quebec.ca/agriculture-environnement-et-ressources-naturelles/sante-animale/obligations-proprietaires-gardiens-animaux/gestion-animaux-morts-ferme).

Animal found on your property

Dispose of an animal carcass as follows:

- Use a shovel or disposable plastic gloves to lift the carcass.
- Place the carcass in a sturdy plastic bag. Close the bag securely, place it in a second plastic bag and close the second bag.
- Put the bag in a trash can where it will be disposed of during regular waste collection.
- Clean the items you used to handle the carcass and wash your hands with soap and hot water.
- Contact your municipality if you find the remains of an animal too big to be disposed of in a plastic bag.

To learn more

hydroquebec.com/safety/distribution-lines/avoid-accidents-pruning-felling-trees
[Quebec.ca/clean-up-your-yard](https://quebec.ca/clean-up-your-yard)

Yard cleaning

Recommendations for addressing the risks associated with felling trees

Follow these recommendations for addressing the risks associated with felling trees

- Contact your municipality for information on the by-laws in effect before any work to cut down trees.
- Use equipment in good working order, designed for the job, and follow the manufacturers' recommendations.
- Be sure all safety features are in good working order.
- Wear personal protective equipment meeting the standards in effect: chainsaw safety chaps, safety boots for the use of a chainsaw, safety glasses and safety helmet.
- If felling the tree proves to be too complex, for example, owing to the presence of a structure (swimming pool, shed), call on a specialized enterprise.
- Never attempt to fell a tree that comes, or could come, within 3 metres of a live power line. Call on an enterprise accredited by the electrical grid operating entity. If in doubt, contact Hydro-Québec.
- Use proper work methods and adopt proper work postures.

To learn more

hydroquebec.com/safety/distribution-lines/avoid-accidents-pruning-felling-trees
Quebec.ca/clean-up-your-yard

