

# In case of forest fire





# In case of forest fire

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!

Following a disaster or other disturbing event, unusual physical, emotional and behavioral reactions may be experienced.

Stay mindful of reactions that can emerge after going through an emergency situation, such as:

- Anxiety
- Loss of interest or energy
- Withdrawal or aggressive behavior
- Increased intake of alcohol, drugs or medication
- Deterioration of health issues

Suitable psychological support can help face responsibilities arising from the situation. You can call Info-Santé by dialing 811 and select the Info-Social option to talk to a social worker. This free and confidential service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## 2023 edition

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The information in this guide is also available at [Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/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.




### To learn more

Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU)

 [sopfeu.qc.ca](http://sopfeu.qc.ca)

 1 800 463-3389

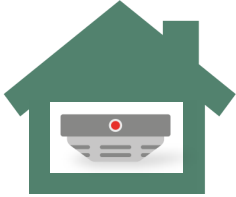
Urgence Québec

 [Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires)



# Carbon monoxide poisoning

## Use of fuel-burning appliances



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 .



**Don't go back inside, even for a few minutes, until authorized to do so by a firefighter.**



# Carbon monoxide poisoning

## 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.**

## Use a generator

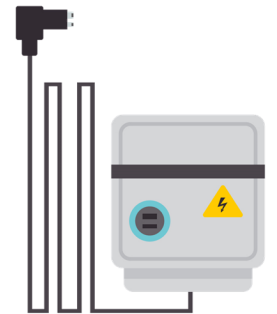
Install the generator outside your home, away from doors and windows, on an elevated base sheltered from the elements. This is important to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

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

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and Urgence Québec

➤ [Québec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/carbon-monoxide-poisoning](https://quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/carbon-monoxide-poisoning)

➤ [Use your equipment safely | Québec.ca](https://quebec.ca)



# 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.

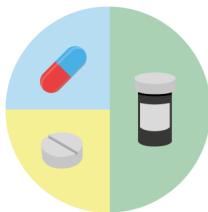
## Refrigerator

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, if left closed, 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

Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation



[Quebec.ca/sante/alimentation/salubrite-des-aliments/conserver-jeter-panne-courant-inondation](https://quebec.ca/sante/alimentation/salubrite-des-aliments/conserver-jeter-panne-courant-inondation)

(In French only)



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.
- Breathe into a damp cloth when in the presence of thick smoke, and be sure to keep the cloth in front of your mouth and nose in order to avoid inhaling smoke.

To protect your pet from the harmful effects of smoke, do not leave it outside.

### To learn more

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux



[Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/  
emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires)



## 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.
- 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.



### 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.**

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.



## 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.

**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

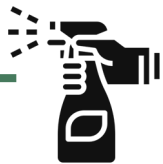


### To learn more

Ministère de la Sécurité publique



[Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/  
emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires)



## 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.

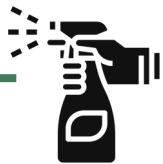


**If in doubt, call Info-Santé at 811.**  
**In the event of a serious problem or urgent need, call 911 or go to your hospital emergency.**

### To learn more

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

- [Québec.ca/en/homes-and-housing/healthy-living-environment/finding-and-eliminating-mould-from-your-home](https://quebec.ca/en/homes-and-housing/healthy-living-environment/finding-and-eliminating-mould-from-your-home)
- [Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires)



## 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 (CNESST): [reptox.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/Pages/to-english-users.aspx](https://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.



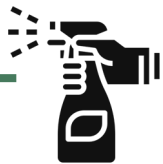
### To learn more

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

[Québec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/health-and-environment](https://quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/health-and-environment)

Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

[cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en](https://cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en)



## 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.

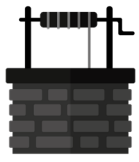
### To learn more

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

 [Québec.ca/en/homes-and-housing/healthy-living-environment/finding-and-eliminating-mould-from-your-home](https://quebec.ca/en/homes-and-housing/healthy-living-environment/finding-and-eliminating-mould-from-your-home)

Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

 [cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en](https://cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en)



# Quality of well water and condition of the well

The main ways that a forest fire can affect water quality are:

- Change in periods of snow melt and water quantity that help to recharge ground water
- Change in the water's microbiological, physical and chemical quality as a result of the foam used to control the spread of the fire and the presence of ash, fire debris and sediments due to soil erosion
- Change in the water's aesthetic properties, such as taste, colour and odour
- Deterioration in the condition of the well

## Water from a municipal water system

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.

## Water from a private well

If the water in your home comes from an individual well, it should be considered non-potable, that is, unfit for consumption, even if it appears clear and odourless. Until you know whether the well water meets the standards, bring it to a rolling boil for one minute before drinking it or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water can be used for drinking, preparing food, drinks and ice, as well as preparing baby bottles.



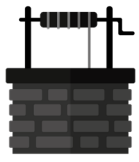
**If you have any concerns about the colour or taste of your water, contact the authorities responsible for the network before consuming it.**

## Check the condition of your well

**In the wake of a forest fire, visually inspect your well by checking the following:**

- The facility must be equipped with a secure cover, weather resistant and resistant to contaminants, vermin-proof and, if the facility could become immersed, resistant to water infiltration.
- The ground surface within one metre around the facility must be finished and graded to prevent standing water and to keep water from running toward the facility.
- The facility must be identifiable as a well.

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.

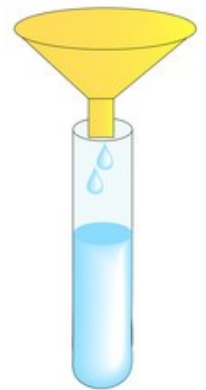


# Quality of well water and condition of the well

Following a forest fire, surface or poorly developed wells are more susceptible than drilled wells to contamination. A surface well is a water withdrawal facility with a diameter generally greater than 60 cm and a depth of not more than 9 metres from the ground surface. A drilled well is a water withdrawal facility that generally has a small diameter (15.2 cm) and is very deep (an average depth of 45 m in Québec) and is constructed by a well-drilling firm.

## Checking the quality of drinking water

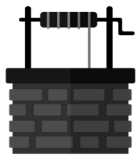
All analyses must be carried out by a laboratory accredited by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs. The results will determine whether your well water meets the standards of the Regulation respecting the quality of drinking water for the microbiological and physical and chemical parameters. The analyses need to show the absence of contamination, at which point the well water will again be considered drinkable. To find the accredited laboratory nearest you, visit the Website of the Centre d'expertise en analyse environnementale du Québec at [ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca](http://ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca) (In French only).



## Physical and chemical parameters

The use of fire-fighting foam near your well could affect water quality. In fact, this foam may contain certain compounds (for example, perfluorinated compounds) and result in increased nitrate and nitrite levels. As well, the presence of ash can augment the concentrations of certain metals (like iron and manganese) and be associated with the presence of contaminants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

**If you suspect contamination by physical and chemical parameters, do not drink the well water.** Boiling the water is not advisable, because doing so would only increase the concentrations in it. Bottled water only is recommended in these circumstances.



# Quality of well water and condition of the well

## Microbiological parameters

Following a forest fire, deterioration of the well or debris near it can lead to microbiological contamination of the water. If physical or chemical contamination is not a concern (see the previous section), but you're still unsure whether the water meets the microbiological standards, bring the water to a rolling boil for a minute before consuming it, or use bottled water.



**Should microbiological contamination be detected in your well water, disinfect your well as follows:**

- Use a landing net to remove foreign objects and deposits.
- Pour bleach into the well, being sure to mix it thoroughly with the well water. You can also hook up a garden hose and use it to ensure complete mixing. The amount of bleach required depends on the type of well, its diameter, depth and the thickness of the water column. Consult the tables of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs for the quantity required for disinfection, at [environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/potable/depliant/index-en.htm](http://environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/potable/depliant/index-en.htm).
- Where possible, wash and brush down the wall of the well.
- Turn on all the taps inside your home. When you detect the smell of bleach at each tap, turn the taps off and wait 24 hours before turning them back on.
- After 24 hours, turn the taps on and let the water run until the smell of bleach disappears.
- Test the water again 1 week and 4 weeks after disinfection of your well to determine whether the water meets the quality standards.

## To learn more

Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques

 [environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/potable/index-en.htm](http://environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/potable/index-en.htm)

 1 800 561-1616

Centre d'expertise en analyse environnementale du Québec

 [ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/PALA/Ila03.htm](http://ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/PALA/Ila03.htm) (In French only)



# 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.

## 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.

### 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.)

## 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.

### To learn more

Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques

 [environnement.gouv.qc.ca/matieres/inter\\_en.htm](https://environnement.gouv.qc.ca/matieres/inter_en.htm)

 1 800 561-1616

RECYC-QUÉBEC

 [recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/citoyens/mieux-recuperer/quoi-faire-avec-chaque-matiere](https://recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/citoyens/mieux-recuperer/quoi-faire-avec-chaque-matiere) (In French only)



## 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

Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU)

 [sopfeu.qc.ca/en](https://sopfeu.qc.ca/en)

 1 800 463-3389

Urgence Québec

 [Québec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/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;
  - 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.

### 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.
- Contact your service providers (electricity, telecommunications, etc.) to restore your services if needed.
- Keep all of your invoices associated with repairs and cleaning.

### To learn more

Société d'habitation du Québec

 [habitation.gouv.qc.ca/english.html](https://habitation.gouv.qc.ca/english.html)

 1 800 463-4315

Urgence Québec

 [Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/forest-fires](https://Quebec.ca/en/public-safety-emergencies/emergency-situations-disasters-and-natural-hazards/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 [Québec511.info/en/default.aspx](https://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

Ministère des Transports

 [quebec511.info/en/](https://quebec511.info/en/)

 511



## 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.

### 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.



### 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

Hydro-Québec



[hydroquebec.com/safety/distribution-lines/avoid-accidents-pruning-felling-trees.html](https://hydroquebec.com/safety/distribution-lines/avoid-accidents-pruning-felling-trees.html)



1 888 385-7252

