FRC PRE-CONFERENCE WUI WORKSHOP

Steve Debienne, Fire Chief, High River Protective Services, Member, CAFC Climate Committee

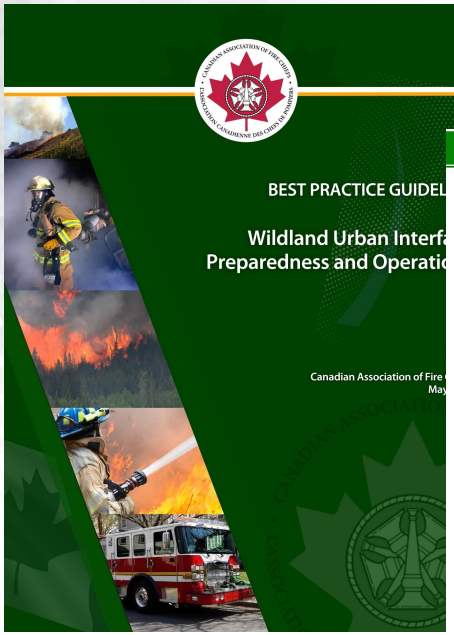
Ryan Cail, Deputy Fire Chief Operations, City of Kamloops Fire Rescue, Member, CAFC Climate Committee

Goals for Today

- Interactive discussion on Wildland-Urban Interface planning for your communities
- Capability and experience exchange, sharing lessons learned in the Wildland-Urban Interface
- Development of an action plan for your departments

CAFC Best Practice Guideline: Wildland Urban Interface Preparedness and Operations

Outlines best practices for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to the impacts of WUI incidents on communities.



Fire Chief Guidance for Wildland Urban Interface Operations.

The following guideline was developed by the CAFC Climate Committee, with input from the membership. It consists of a question that serves as a prompt, general guidance, and space a you to develop specifics for your jurisdiction or community.

Question	Guidance	Space available
Preparedness & Mitigation		
1. Does your department have a standard of practice for WUI preparedness?	• **If yes, begin with your standard. If not, proceed through the guidelines.**	
2. What is your experience with wildfire in your community, or how fires burn in the WUI environment?	• If you don't have experience, you may wish to become familiar with wildlife indices and behaviour. • Could you obtain certification relevant to your area for everyone in the department? • Do you have access to a behaviour analyst FBAN? • Are your personnel provided with the appropriate level of Personal Protective Equipment? • Have you identified and contacted the local Provincial wildfire agency representative to discuss pre-planning and collaboration?	
3. Does your department have the necessary planning documents, which may include a community wildfire protection plan, a community wildfire resilience plan, a wildfire defence plan, a response plan, and a mitigation guideline?	• If not, look for the expectations in your province or territory. • A risk assessment of the community should be conducted. • What is the layout of your community, and how would the fuel, weather and topography of your community play a role during wildfires? • This can include the water protection plan, power supply backups, tanks, egress, etc.	
4. Do you currently use the	• Connect with the provincial	

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Question	Guidance	Space available for notes
FireSmart (TM) program in your community?	FireSmart coordinator. • You can consider the whole 7 principles of FireSmart ™ • What bylaws can be put in place to ensure the hardening needed to advance FireSmart-ing communities?	
5. Have you identified critical infrastructure/ values at risk?	• If not, conduct heat maps and critical risk assessments.	
6. How will you maintain communications during an emergency?	• Engage with your local dispatch and communications provider to assess system capacity and resiliency.	
7. What emergency management plan or program is used in your community?	• This needs to be clarified in advance of an emergency.	
8. Does your community utilize early wildfire detection technology?	• If not, reach out to other departments to better understand the operational and situational-awareness benefits. • Research funding streams available to support new technology	
9. Does your emergency management plan/program comply with your mutual aid partners' emergency management plan/program? (if applicable)?	• If not, reach out to partners to discuss how this will work.	
10. Who is your wildland agency and key stakeholders in your community that would play a role in wildfire response?	Key stakeholders can be: • Engagement with Indigenous partners, cultural burnings, and burn prescriptions • Wildland Agencies • Emergency Management • Fire Marshals and Fire	

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DRAFT

PURPOSE

The exchange closes the gap between guidance and local practice

NOT A COURSE

A structured environment for fire-service leaders to compare what they do, learn from real experience and decide what can change at home.

THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

- What are other departments doing?
- What is working—and what is not?
- Where are our capability gaps?
- What can we realistically improve?

The session ends with 2–3 actions for implementation.

COHORT DESIGN

A deliberately small cohort makes candid comparison possible

8–10

participating departments

RECOMMENDED PARTICIPANTS

- Fire Chiefs and Chief Officers
- Operations and training officers
- WUI / FireSmart leads
- Key wildfire partners

SMALL BY DESIGN

Enough diversity to expose different operating models.

Few enough participants to create trust, practical detail and real airtime for every department.

OUTCOMES

Four hours are designed to produce three tangible outputs

01

Department WUI Profile

Completed before the exchange so time is spent comparing not introducing.

02

WUI Exchange Action Plan

Each department leaves with 2–3 prioritized, owned and measurable actions.

03

CAFC Lessons Summary

Anonymized themes, innovations and barriers inform national priorities.

Attendance is an input. Departmental change is the outcome.

EXCHANGE MODEL

The model moves departments from assessment to shared learning

01	02	03	04	05	06
ASSESS	EXCHANGE	CHALLENGE	APPLY	ACT	SHARE
Our risk and capability	What peers are doing	How systems perform	What fits locally	2–3 improvements	National learning

A complete learning loop not a stand-alone event

The exchange begins with local self-assessment and ends with knowledge returned to the Canadian fire service.

Pre-work protects the four hours for discussion

ONE-PAGE WUI PROFILE

Distributed before the exchange

- Community profile
- WUI risk
- Staffing & apparatus
- Wildfire history
- Training level
- Wildfire agency relationship
- FireSmart / mitigation
- Greatest strength
- Greatest capability gap
- One question for peers

Result: introductions become context; exchange time becomes substance.

FOUR-HOUR AGENDA

The agenda alternates comparison, challenge and commitment



0:00	Welcome	2:00	Scenario exchange
0:15	Rapid exchange	2:50	Lessons learned
1:00	Capability exchange	3:25	Action plans
1:50	Break	3:50	Closing commitments

10%
presentation

90%
exchange, scenario and action

The clock is structured; the conversation stays adaptive.

0:00–0:15

The opening surfaces the cohort's real priorities

"What is the single biggest WUI challenge facing your department?"

01	02	03	04
PURPOSE	**EXPECTATIONS**	**CONFIDENTIALITY**	**OUTCOMES**
Why the exchange exists	Candid, practical participation	Open discussion norms	What departments leave with

The facilitators will capture answers and uses the common themes to shape the session.

0:15–1:00

Each department makes its WUI reality visible

7–10

minutes per department / Group

Facilitator pivot: What common challenges are appearing?

01	OUR COMMUNITY	Population, area, staffing, WUI environment, wildfire history
02	OUR CAPABILITY	Training, equipment, preplanning, mitigation, mutual aid, agency relationship
03	OUR EXPERIENCE	One strength, one struggle, one hard-earned lesson

1:00–1:50

Six capability lenses keep the conversation operational

01 Community risk

02 Prevention & mitigation

03 Training & firefighter safety

04 WUI operations

05 Command & interoperability

06 Evacuation & public safety

For each lens: Who is doing this well? How? What blocks adoption elsewhere?

Readiness starts before the fire

COMMUNITY RISK

- Locate the highest-risk WUI areas
- Make risk information accessible to responders
- Identify access, egress, water and vulnerable infrastructure

Know the risk.

PREVENTION & MITIGATION

- Integrate FireSmart into department and community work
- Assess structures and neighbourhoods
- Complete mitigation before wildfire season

Reduce it early.

Firefighter safety shapes every tactical choice

TRAINING & FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

- Understand wildland fire behaviour
- Define minimum WUI competencies
- Train structure triage and protection
- Know withdrawal criteria

WUI OPERATIONS

- Conduct structure triage
- Assign resources deliberately
- Select tactical options
- Maintain escape routes and safety

Doctrine becomes useful only when crews can apply it under changing conditions.

Interoperability and evacuation must work as one system

COMMAND & INTEROPERABILITY

- Integrate municipal and wildfire agencies
- Use Unified Command
- Align terminology and communications
- Absorb outside resources effectively

EVACUATION & PUBLIC SAFETY

- Clarify evacuation authority
- Coordinate decisions with fire operations
- Know routes and traffic constraints
- Plan for vulnerable populations

ONE OPERATING PICTURE

Shared command, shared triggers, shared communications.

An escalating scenario exposes where systems diverge

FAST-MOVING FIRE

- Hot, dry and windy conditions
- Fire moving toward a WUI neighbourhood
- Approximately 500 structures
- Municipal resources arrive first
- Wildfire agency is responding

The objective is to understand why—not force identical answers.



SCENARIO DESIGN

Four injects test decisions under pressure

01	INITIAL ATTACK	**10 hectares and growing**	Command • strategy • resources • information
02	STRUCTURES THREATENED	**Wind rises; spotting begins**	Triage • safety • withdrawal • reinforcement
03	EVACUATION	**About 2,000 residents threatened**	Authority • triggers • traffic • public messaging
04	RESOURCES ARRIVE	**Mutual aid and wildfire assets arrive**	Unified Command • staging • tracking • communications

After each inject: Would every department represented here handle this the same way?

The strongest lesson is the failure most likely to repeat

- Escalating fire behaviour recognized late
- Insufficient situational awareness
- Resources committed to undefendable structures
- Evacuation congestion
- Communications failures
- Structural / wildland interoperability

- Inadequate preplanning
- Resource tracking
- Water supply
- Firefighter accountability
- Public expectations
- Fatigue and sustained operations

What are we most likely to repeat?

What can we do before the next wildfire?

Source: CAFC WUI Fire Department Exchange framework

3:25–3:50

Learning becomes useful only when ownership is assigned

2–3

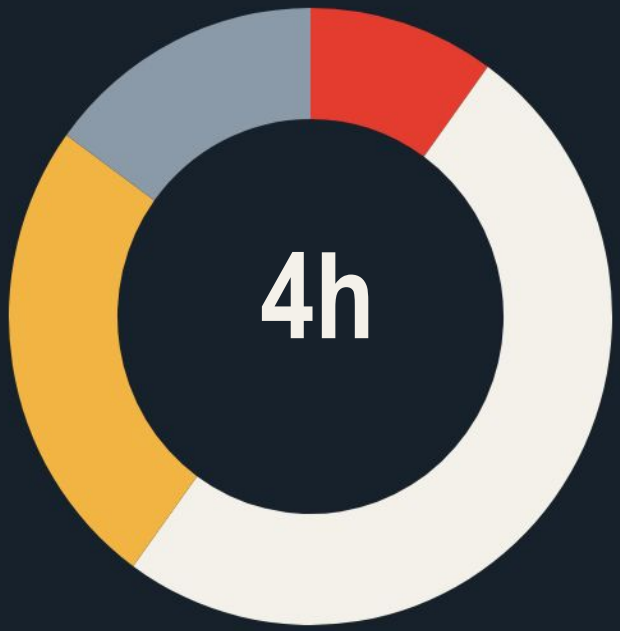
achievable departmental priorities

Examples: annual WUI training • updated preplans • joint exercises • mapped water supplies • radio interoperability • evacuation trigger points

GAP	—	What needs improvement?
ACTION	—	What will we do?
LEAD	—	Who owns it?
TIMELINE	—	When will it happen?
SUCCESS	—	**How will we know?**

Source: CAFC WUI Fire Department Exchange framework

Facilitation is mostly exchange—not presentation



- 10% PRESENTATION
- 50% PEER DISCUSSION
- 25% SCENARIO
- 15% ACTION & COMMITMENTS

What do you do? Why? What worked? What failed? What could another department adopt?

Source: CAFC WUI Fire Department Exchange framework

AFTER THE EXCHANGE

A 90-day reconnection converts intent into accountability

DAY 0 — **90** DAYS — FOLLOW-UP

Departments leave with owners, timelines and success measures.

The cohort reports progress, barriers, support needs and shareable lessons.

01	02	03	04	05
Actions completed	Actions underway	Barriers encountered	Assistance required	Lessons worth sharing

Local accountability feeds national learning.

Next Steps

- Bring action items back to your department
- Implement items in next 90 days
- Follow up and stay connected via the CAFC Chatroom
  - Scan the QR code below:

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Success is what departments change after they return home.



ASSESS → EXCHANGE → CHALLENGE → APPLY → ACT → SHARE

Thank You

Questions or feedback?

CAFC Chatroom for you to stay connected after the workshop: