

Evacuation Order Area Permit Policy and Procedures
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Revision Number	Section Revised	Description of Change	Effective Date
0	Initial document approval		October 4, 2019
1	Entire document	Formatting changes of entire application	August 11, 2022
2	Entire document	Formatting, changes to permit approval process.	July 10, 2024

Scope

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) has the authority under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* of British Columbia to order the evacuation of an area to provide and maintain public safety of residences from an existing or imminent threat. Once an area is evacuated by the RCMP or Search and Rescue (SAR), the RDBN may contract other agencies to maintain the security of the evacuation area through closure of roads and the instillation of staffed checkpoints.

While an area is under an Evacuation Order, only the RDBN has the authority to issue area access permits to evacuees and other non-response individuals. These permits allow entry into an Evacuation Area. The following policy will guide the RDBN, and other agencies working with the RDBN, as to the circumstances under which permits may be issued, and the procedures to be followed when doing so.

British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS) identifies eight response goals:

1. Provide for the health and safety of all responders.
2. Save lives.
3. Reduce suffering.
4. Protect public health.
5. Protect government infrastructure.
6. Protect property.
7. Protect the environment.
8. Reduce economic and social losses.

The RDBN will use these goals as a guideline to determine what entry permit requests will be accepted for review. This is a three-part process.

1. Completion of the Evacuation Order Entry Permit by the applicant.
2. Review of the application by the emergency operation centre (EOC) and the incident commander (IC).
3. Entry approval or denial issued to applicant by the EOC.

Permit Approval Process

Permit Application Approval

All applications will be processed as follows:

1. Requestor fills out the Evacuation Order area permit form by 1:00 pm (or a different time as determined and by Ops Chief) on the day before access is requested. Same-day requests cannot be processed., All sections of the form must be complete for the permit application to be processed. It is not the responsibility of the RDBN to

follow-up on incomplete information. Incomplete applications will be automatically denied.

2. RDBN receives completed application form.
3. Using the BCEMS as a guideline as well as up-to-date fire information provided by the IC, the EOC will confirm if the application is approved or denied. This will include email confirmation to the Ops Chief of conditions from the IC.
4. If approved, the EOC Director or Deputy signs off on the permit and Operations staff assign a number to each approved permit (format YY-000).
5. EOC Ops staff will update the Access Permit Tracking List of all permits and keep a copy of all permits on file.
6. At the designated time, Ops staff will contact all requestors to communicate the decision for their permit application.
7. Permit holders will have the permit waiver of liability explained to them and will voluntarily sign the waiver with full indication of understanding of the terms and conditions.
8. Permit holders will present themselves and the signed permit at the checkpoint during the specified time and location.

Application Priorities

Priority will be given to requests as follows:

First Priority: Requests to protect public health or the health of responders.

Second Priority: Requests for the protection of government and/or critical infrastructure.

Third Priority: Requests to reduce economic loss and the support of livestock.

Fourth Priority: Requests to retrieve pets, personal belongings, personal documents, and medications.

The following will be denied:

- Requests to protect property or belongings.
- Requests that would compromise the safety of the applicant or first responders.
- Requests which interfere with the implementation RDBN's Emergency Plan

Conditions for Temporary Access

All applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be 19 years or older as of the requested entry date.
- Have a valid reason for entry and a written action plan including access route and a secondary egress route.
- If required, the applicant must agree to enter the area with an approved escort.
- Agree to the time limit to be within the Evacuation Area set by the RDBN and the IC.

- Must indicate understanding of, and sign, the provided liability waiver.
- Present substantial evidence that an economic loss can be mitigated through permitted entry in the case of requests to reduce economic loss. The evidence may include but is not limited to:
 - Proof of ownership or other evidence that the applicant is authorized to operate or manage the operation.
 - The applicant's purpose for entry.
 - The action that the applicant intends to take.
 - Evidence that the applicant has the means and ability to accomplish their objectives.

Once a permit has been issued, it can be revoked without advance notice by the EOC Director or the IC. The checkpoint personnel may also revoke the permit if conditions change or deteriorate.

Original copies of the permit must always be in the possession of the approved applicant or escort and must be surrendered to the checkpoint personnel as the party exits the Evacuation Area. All vehicles entering the area must have an EOC issued permit for each person entering the area. Each person issued a permit must present government issued photo ID at the checkpoint.

The RDBN is not responsible for the issuing of permits for personnel operating under the authority of the provincial or federal government. All personnel operating under the authority of the provincial or federal government will be required to display an entry pass designated and used by the authority under which they are operating.

Evacuation personnel may never permit the entry of any persons or vehicles into an evacuation area that do not have an Evacuation Order Area Permit.

Provincial and Federal Response Access Permits

- The RDBN is not responsible for issuing permits for provincial or federal staff and or their support staff.
- People and equipment working on response efforts independent from the provincial or federal efforts will not be granted permits by the RDBN to access an Evacuation Order area.

Temporary Access Permits

- Permits to enter an Evacuation Order area for a critical reason will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will depend on property location and the current event situation. These permits will likely have a time limit and may require an escort.
- These permits must be approved by an IC.

Essential Services Access Permits

- Essential Services Access Permits will be granted on a case-by-case basis to providers of essential services who require access into an Evacuation Area in order to maintain infrastructure.
- In the case of both essential services and company essential services access permits, the person listed on the permit form must provide company ID along with the government issued ID.
- These permits must be approved by the IC.

Agriculture Access Permits

- Entry for agricultural access will be considered for farm activities on properties identified with owner authorization on a case-by-case basis and will depend on property location and the current event situation.
- Must provide proof of ownership or evidence that the applicant is authorized to support the operation.
- Applicants involving more than one personnel per operation must be accompanied by evidence of as to why multiple personnel are required.
- Premise ID and/or Range Tenure number are required if applicable.

Pass Through Permits

- The purpose of the pass-through permit is to allow the permit holder to travel from an area that is not under an Evacuation Order to pass through an area that IS under an Evacuation Order.
- The permit holder is not to detour from the route specified.

Local Authority and First Nation Permits

- The RDBN will assist local authorities and First Nations in issuing permits for their residents to enter an Evacuation Order Area when requested by the governing body. The RDBN's role is only to facilitate the process in partnership with local authorities or First Nations.
- The requestor must provide a person of authority to process entry permits for their residents at the RDBN EOC or digitally.
- The requestor must provide a letterhead template and a logo which will appear on all permits being processed on their behalf.

Basic Necessities Drop-Off Permit

- This permit will be issued on a case-by-case basis for parties to deliver supplies for drop off at main checkpoints. These permits do not allow people past the checkpoint.
- The goods being dropped off must be picked up at the checkpoint and the person delivering must exit the checkpoint area immediately after.

- These permits will not be granted for delivery of fuel or equipment for the purpose of independent community response.
 - Fuel in tidy tanks identified for vehicle use or general use will be granted.
- Deliveries must happen in the time specified.
- Government issued photo-ID must be present at the checkpoint before drop-off occurs.

Escorts

A person entering an Evacuation Order Area may require a qualified escort at the discretion of the EOC or IC. In this case, access may be subject to the availability of escorts within the timeframe specified on the given permit. Escorts may be required for those with vulnerabilities or an increased risk, or when the nature of the emergency event calls for it. It is recommended that an escort be considered for all people passing through an Evacuation Order area, as reasonably practicable.

Waiver of Liability

The EOC must review the following waiver with each individual gaining access to an Evacuation Order area. They must also receive indication of understanding from each individual before asking them to sign the following waiver provided on the Evacuation Order area permit.

APPLICANT WAIVER OF LIABILITY – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

I understand and confirm that I have voluntarily chosen to enter into an area that is under an Evacuation Order due to the extreme and imminent risk to life and safety. I can confirm that I am aware of the nature and the extent of the risks associated with entering the Evacuation Order area, including but not limited to, the risk of property damage, personal injury and death. I confirm and acknowledge that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and other responding agencies, and their respective officers, agents, employees, contractors, and volunteers (collectively, "The "Released Parties") may not be able to assist or protect me while I am in the Evacuation Order area. I also understand that the risk of danger to life and safety may change suddenly and dramatically, and without warning, and confirm that I have made my own judgement as to the nature and extent of the risks in entering the Evacuation Order area. I voluntarily accept all physical and legal risks resulting from my actions and choices in entering the Evacuation Order area. In consideration for being permitted to temporarily enter the Evacuation Order area, I hereby agree to release and forever discharge and hold harmless the Released Parties from and against all liability of any kind for any loss, damage, expense or injury, including death, that I or any of my next of kin may suffer or claim as a result of my entry into the Evacuation Order area, including such loss, damage, expense or injury, including death, caused by the negligence of the Released Parties.

Minors

An applicant cannot waive the rights of any third party or minor. Accordingly, if the applicant is accompanied by another person, both persons must sign separate waivers (entry permits). With respect to minors, a parent or other adult will **NOT** be legally able to waive the RDBN's liability for allowing a minor to enter an Evacuation Order area. As such, no minor may enter an Evacuation Order area and to this end proof of the birth date of the applicant must be viewed and recorded on every Evacuation Order area permit.