

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

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Scope

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) has the authority under the *Emergency Program Act* of British Columbia to order the evacuation of an area to provide and maintain public safety of residents from an existing or imminent threat in a specific area. Once an area is evacuated the RDBN may task the RCMP and or other agencies to maintain the security of the evacuation zone through closure of roads and installation of staffed checkpoints.

While an area is under an evacuation order, only the RDBN has the authority to issue permits to evacuees and other non-response individuals to allow entry into an evacuation zone. This 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 in doing so.

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

1. Provide for the Health and Safety for 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:

- Completion of the Evacuation Order Entry Permit by the applicant.
- Review of the Application for Entry into the Evacuation Order Area by the Emergency Operation Centre and Incident Commander.
- Entry Approval or Denial issued to applicant by the EOC.

Permit Approval Process

Permit Application Procedure

All applications will be processed as follows:

1. Requestor fills out the Evacuation Order Area Permit form including location specifics, reasons for access, etc.
2. Local Authority/First Nation/EOC receives completed Evacuation Order Area Access Application form.
3. Using the BCEMS as a guideline, the EOC will confirm if the application is approved for processing or is denied.

4. Daily, at a pre-determined and agreed upon time, the EOC will communicate the Permit requests approved for processing to the hazard-specific Subject Matter Expert (SME) for recommended approval/denial based on issue of safety due to emergency event
5. EOC makes decision for the final approval/denial of the Permit
6. EOC will then complete, sign-off on, and issue numbered, standardized Permits to the approved requestor(s)
7. EOC will simultaneously create an EOC Master List of the approved Permits and keep a copy of all denied and approved permits on file.
8. Permit holders will receive a safety briefing from the EOC at the time they receive the permit.
9. 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 in order to gain temporary access
10. Permit holders will present themselves at the checkpoint at the specified time/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 (i.e., radio towers).

Third Priority: Requests to reduce economic loss (for example, requests to enter for the purpose of feeding or watering livestock). These requests will require substantiation by qualified parties.

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

The following applications will be denied for processing:

- Requests to protect property such as
 - buildings
 - automobiles
 - personal property
- Requests that would compromise the safety of the applicant or first responders.
- Requests which interfere with the implementation of the RDBN's emergency plan.

Conditions for Temporary Access

All Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Have a valid reason for entry and a written action plan including access route and a secondary egress route if available.
- If required, the applicant must agree to enter the area with an escort (RCMP or other approved escort).

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- Agree to the time limit to be inside the evacuation zone set by the EOC and the Incident Commander.
- Must indicate understanding of and sign the provided liability waiver in advance of entry.
- Present substantial evidence that an economic loss can be mitigated through permitted entry in the case of requests to reduce economic loss. That 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 the applicant proposes to take.
 - evidence that the applicant has the means and ability to accomplish their objectives.

Once a permit is issued it can be revoked without advance notice by the EOC Director or the Incident Commander and enforced by the checkpoint personnel should conditions change and/or deteriorate.

Original copies of the permit must always be in the possession of the approved applicant/escort and must be surrendered to the check point personnel as the party exits the evacuation zone. All vehicles entering an evacuation zone MUST have an EOC issued Entry Permit for each person entering the area, including the driver. Each person issued an Entry Permit must present government issued photo ID at the specified checkpoint.

The RDBN will not be responsible for the issuing of permits for personnel operating under 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 designed and issued by the authority under which they are operating.

Evacuation personnel will not permit the entry of any person(s) or vehicle(s) into an evacuation zone that does not have a valid Evacuation Order Area Permit.

Provincial and Federal Response Access Permits

- The RDBN is not responsible for issuing permits for Provincial or Federal Response staff and their support personnel entering into an evacuation order area.
- People and equipment working on response efforts independent from the Provincial or Federal efforts will not be granted access permits by the RDBN to access an evacuation order area.

Temporary Access Permits

- Permits to enter into 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, as determined by the Incident Commander.
- No permits are being issued to re-enter and remain in an evacuation order area.
- These permits must be approved by the Incident Commander.

- The person entering the order area may require an escort at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

Essential Service Access Permits

- Essential Service Access Permits will be granted on a case-by-case basis to providers of essential services who require access into an evacuation order area to maintain infrastructure.
- In the case of both Essential Service and Company Essential Service Access Permits, the person listed on the permit form must present company or employee ID along with the required government issue photo ID at the specified checkpoint.
- These permits must be approved by the Incident Commander.

Agriculture Access Permits

- Entry for agricultural access will be considered for farm activities on properties identified with owner authorization only on a case-by-case basis and will depend on property location, and the current event situation.
- Must provide proof of ownership or other evidence that the applicant is authorized to operate or manage the operation.
- Applications involving more than one personnel per operation must be accompanied with evidence of requirement for multiple personnel.
- Premise Identification Number 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 under an Evacuation Alert, or under no alerts or orders, to pass through an area that is under an Evacuation Order.
- Travel will be restricted to specific dates and time of travel, and to a predetermined route.
- The permit holder is not to detour from the route that is described on the permit.

Local Authority and First Nation Access Permits

- The RDBN will assist Local Authorities and/or 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.
- Local Authority or First Nation must provide a person of authority to process entry permits, for their residents, at the RDBN EOC or digitally.
- The Local Authority and/or the First Nation must provide a letterhead template and logo which will appear on all permits being processed on their behalf.

Basic Necessities Drop-Off Permits

- Basic Necessities Drop-Off Permits will be issued on a case-by-case basis for parties to deliver supplies for drop-off at main checkpoints. These permits will not allow people past the checkpoint.

- Delivering parties can accompany the goods being delivered to the checkpoint. The goods must be picked up at the checkpoint and the person delivering the materials must exit the area immediately following the drop-off of goods.
- No person delivering goods will be allowed to travel into the evacuation order area to deliver supplies.
- Basic Necessity Drop-Off Permits will not be granted for delivery of fuel or equipment for the purposes of facilitating response efforts independent from the Provincial, Federal or EOC response efforts.
- Fuel in tidy tanks identified for vehicle use or general use will be allowed.
- The parameters of these permits will be enforced by RCMP members at the Checkpoints.
- Deliveries must occur during the period specified.
- Government issued photo ID for the person listed on the permit form must be presented at the specified checkpoint.
- The person entering the order area may require an escort at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

Escorts

A person entering the Evacuation Order area may require a qualified escort at the discretion of the hazard-specific SME or EOC. In this case, access may be subject to the availability of an escort, within the time limit identified on the permit. Escorts may be required for individuals with vulnerabilities or increased risk, or when the nature of the emergency event calls for it. It is recommended that an escort be considered for all individuals/agencies passing-through an evacuated area, as reasonable.

Waiver of Liability

The EOC must review the following waiver with each individual gaining access to an Evacuation Order area and receive indication of understanding from the individual before requiring them to sign the following liability 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 confirm that I am aware of the nature and extent of the risks associated with entering the evacuation 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 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 judgment as to the nature and extent of the risks in entering the evacuation area. I voluntarily accept all physical and legal risks resulting from my actions and choices in entering the evacuation area. In consideration for being permitted to temporarily enter the evacuation 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 my next of kin may suffer or claim as a result of my entry into the evacuation area, including any 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 evacuated area. As such, no minor may enter an evacuated area and to this end proof of the birth date of the applicant must be viewed and recorded on every Evacuation Order Area Permit.