



# 2025 Wildfire

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Interim After Action Review

## **Land Treaty Acknowledgment**

We recognize that Manitoba is on Treaty 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and remain committed to working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people as we walk the shared path in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

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## Executive Summary

The 2025 wildfire season was among the most severe and complex in Manitoba's history. An early start, extreme fire behaviour, and prolonged dry conditions resulted in 445 wildfires and more than 2.38 million hectares burned. Tragically, two Manitobans lost their lives. The scale of the emergency prompted one of the largest evacuation operations in provincial history, impacting 59 communities and requiring 34 States of Local Emergency. More than 33,000 Manitobans were evacuated, including more than 4,100 air evacuations conducted by the Canadian Armed Forces, representing the largest domestic air evacuation operation ever undertaken in Canada.

Due to limited in-province accommodation capacity, more than 2,300 evacuees were temporarily hosted outside Manitoba, and the Canadian Red Cross mounted its largest domestic response, supported at its peak by the American Red Cross. Even communities not directly threatened by wildfire experienced some of the worst air quality on record.

There were significant impacts to communities, infrastructure, and critical services across the province. More than 1,200 Manitoba Hydro poles were damaged or destroyed, leading to prolonged power outages. Telecommunications disruptions, boil water advisories, and service interruptions affected communities throughout the season.

In response, Manitoba declared two provincial States of Emergency and requested federal assistance for air evacuations, humanitarian workforce support, and the establishment of congregate shelters. The response required unprecedented coordination across all levels of government, Indigenous leadership, First Nations communities, municipalities, emergency management partners, and non-governmental organizations. In this event and for the first time, Manitoba adopted a "One Manitoba" approach that resulted in a unified response across jurisdictions. Under this approach, Emergency Management partners were aligned on priorities and coordinated in action to ensure that resources were prioritized where the need was greatest across First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

## Purpose of this Interim Report

The Manitoba government has committed to conducting a comprehensive, provincial After Action Review (AAR) of the 2025 wildfire season to capture lessons learned and strengthen future preparedness, response, and recovery. This Interim Report, released in advance of the 2026 wildfire season, highlights:

- Early themes emerging from the provincial AAR process
- Concrete actions and improvements already implemented or underway to enhance readiness for the 2026 wildfire season
- Government's initial investments, outlined in Budget 2026, to strengthen community protections against wildfires

This interim report does not replace the final AAR. Rather, it reflects Manitoba's commitment to learning in real time and acting quickly on lessons that can reduce risk and improve outcomes in the near term.

## Provincial After Action Review Approach

Manitoba's provincial scale AAR is a comprehensive, multi layered, and collaborative system review that brings together:

- Bottom up input from communities, First Nations, municipalities, departments, workers, and other partners
- Independent, third party analysis led by Alberta Emergency Management Agency
- Strong Indigenous and municipal engagement
- A structured, phased review process culminating in a final report with recommendations in fall 2026

This approach is designed to ensure transparency, validate lived experience, and translate lessons learned into meaningful system level improvements.

## Actions Implemented for the 2026 Wildfire Season

Since the close of the 2025 wildfire season, Manitoba has undertaken a coordinated, multi departmental effort to strengthen provincial wildfire preparedness and response. Actions underway or completed are organized across seven key themes:

- A. Infrastructure, Equipment, and Operational Readiness** – Facility upgrades, planning for a new fire base and bunkhouses, additional value protection equipment, and improved air operations readiness.
- B. Workforce Capacity, Mobilization, and Training** – Expanded seasonal wildfire staffing, increased Incident Command System (ICS) training, strengthened redeployment processes, and enhanced wellness and psychological safety supports.
- C. Public Communication and Information** – Strengthened emergency communications, expanded use of MB Ready, and development of enhanced public and social media strategies.
- D. Governance, Coordination, and Collaboration** – Improved interagency coordination, strengthened partnerships with First Nations and municipalities, and increased regional and interjurisdictional collaboration.
- E. Health, Community Services, and Social Supports** – Improved evacuee registration, financial supports, culturally appropriate services, health system readiness, and supports for vulnerable populations.
- F. Planning and Preparedness** – Enhanced emergency planning, updated wildfire and Wildland-Urban Interface response guidelines (the Wildland-Urban Interface or WUI is the area where human development meets or transitions to the natural environment), improved coordination, and expanded preseason readiness activities across departments and communities.
- G. Finance and Administration** – Clearer compensation and reimbursement frameworks, improved financial delegations, and streamlined emergency funding processes.

Collectively, these actions reflect a significant strengthening of Manitoba's emergency management system ahead of the 2026 wildfire season.

## Looking Ahead

The final provincial AAR, to be released in fall 2026, will provide an independent, evidence based assessment of the 2025 wildfire season, including validated findings and recommendations to guide longer term system improvements. Together, the actions already implemented and the ongoing review process demonstrate Manitoba's determination to move toward a more resilient, adaptive, and collaborative approach to managing wildfires and other emergencies grounded in shared learning, accountability, and partnership.

## Introduction

### 2025 Wildfire Season Overview

The 2025 wildfire season was among the most severe in Manitoba's history. The season began early and escalated rapidly, resulting in 445 wildfires and more than 2.38 million hectares burned, the largest area affected by wildfire in the province in the past 30 years. More than 33,000 Manitobans were evacuated and tragically, two Manitobans lost their lives as a result of wildfire in the Lac du Bonnet area. The air evacuation effort conducted by the Canadian Armed Forces was the largest domestic air evacuation operation ever undertaken in Canada.

Extreme fire behaviour, prolonged dry conditions, and sustained operational demands placed significant pressure on Manitoba's wildfire response system and emergency management partners. The scale and duration of the season required extraordinary coordination across provincial departments, municipalities, First Nations communities, Indigenous governments, the federal government, non governmental organizations, and international partners. The response tested existing plans, systems, and capacity across Manitoba's emergency management framework.

The 2025 wildfire also saw the implementation of a "One Manitoba" approach in provision of provincial support to communities and evacuees. The One Manitoba approach ensures that the response operates as a single system during a disaster or emergency to provide equitable support for all Manitobans, including Manitobans living both in First Nation and non-First Nations communities. It is a people-centred approach that ensures that supports and resources are available and prioritized for those who are most in need during a disaster, meeting the needs of fellow Manitobans who have been affected by a crisis, irrespective of complex governance landscapes or established jurisdictional responsibilities.

### Impacts to Communities and Infrastructure

The impacts of the 2025 wildfire season were widespread and profound. More than 59 communities were affected, prompting one of the largest evacuation operations in Manitoba's history. More than 33,000 residents were evacuated, including over 4,100 air evacuations conducted by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Critical infrastructure was significantly impacted. More than 1,200 Manitoba Hydro poles were damaged or destroyed, leading to prolonged power outages. Telecommunications disruptions affected multiple communities, boil water advisories were issued, and postal and other essential services were suspended in several areas. Due to the large number of evacuations and limited hotel accommodation capacity within Manitoba, congregate evacuation centres were established to ensure that evacuees had a place to evacuate to. In addition, more than 2,300 evacuees were temporarily relocated outside the province, primarily to Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Evacuees were greatly affected by the wildfires and their experiences during the evacuation. Many of the experiences were shared among evacuees, including the stress of evacuation, the fear and uncertainty of losing homes and community, separation from family, caregivers, and friends (particularly for children and youth), missing school or work, economic losses for businesses and employees, and the social disruption of a displaced and fragmented community.

Evacuees from remote northern communities faced additional challenges, including unfamiliar risks and challenges in urban environments, abrupt changes in diet, and an increased sense of isolation from their familiar community, familial, and social settings. In general, feedback from evacuees and from departments highlighted the need for culturally appropriate services, childcare, public health management, continuity of care for chronic conditions, and specialized support for vulnerable populations with a focus on mental health and addictions. During evacuations, day-to-day routine matters such as prescriptions, dialysis appointments, prenatal services, public health programs and basic primary care, can result in negative outcomes if not properly coordinated and delivered.

Due to the large number of evacuations and limited hotel accommodation capacity within Manitoba, congregate evacuation centres were established to ensure that evacuees had access to shelter, food and basic supports. Congregate evacuation centres add additional stressors and challenges for evacuees, including the need for enhanced safety measures for women and girls. At the same time, evacuation experiences were not uniform across communities, with some evacuees expressing that congregate shelters provided meaningful benefits in communal living, access to recreation and supporting cultural and social needs.

Even communities not directly threatened by fire experienced serious consequences, including some of the worst air quality on record, affecting public health and daily life across large parts of the province.

## Why an After Action Review is Required

The magnitude and complexity of the 2025 wildfire season underscored the need for a comprehensive, provincial AAR. The season revealed strengths in collaboration, leadership, and community resilience, while also highlighting gaps, challenges, and areas where Manitoba’s emergency management system can be further strengthened.

Undertaking a structured AAR following a major emergency is essential to ensure that lessons learned are systematically captured, validated, and translated into meaningful improvements.

Given the scale of evacuations, the involvement of multiple jurisdictions, and the impacts to First Nations communities, municipalities, and critical services, a coordinated provincial review is required to assess system level performance rather than isolated organizational responses.

## Purpose of this Interim Report

The Manitoba government has committed to conducting a comprehensive provincial AAR, working in partnership with First Nations, Indigenous governments, municipalities, and emergency management partners. The provincial AAR is being supported by independent third party Emergency Management experts from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, who are reviewing internal reports and conducting in depth interviews with key stakeholders.

This Interim Report is being released in advance of the 2026 wildfire season to:

- Highlight early themes emerging from the AAR process
- Identify actions and improvements that have already been implemented or are underway across government to strengthen preparedness, response, and coordination for the upcoming wildfire season

This interim report does not represent the final findings of the provincial AAR. It outlines preliminary actions identified and implemented across government. A comprehensive final report, including validated findings and recommendations, will be completed in fall 2026. However, with the last evacuees returning home in October 2025, Manitoba has already taken significant steps to act on early lessons learned to enhance readiness ahead of the next hazard season.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Output</b>
Phase 1	Nov 2025–March 2026	Internal reviews	Lessons learned
Phase 2	Mar–Apr 2026	Interviews & analysis	Systemic themes, gaps, strengths
Phase 3	May–Fall 2026	Synthesis & reporting	Final recommendations

# **Actions and Improvements Implemented or In-Process for 2026 Wildfire Season:**

Following the unprecedented challenges of the 2025 wildfire season, Manitoba has undertaken a coordinated, multi departmental effort to strengthen preparedness, response, and resilience based on early stakeholder feedback and internal reviews. The actions underway have been grouped into seven broad themes, each reflecting a critical dimension of provincial readiness for the 2026 wildfire season and beyond, under each theme you will find actions being undertaken by Manitoba government departments. While the actions below are listed under a single department, there has been significant collaboration between departments in improving preparedness and response capacity, particularly for evacuee support through Emergency Social Services.

## **A. Infrastructure, Equipment and Operational Readiness**

- **Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures / Manitoba Wildfire Service**
  - Continuing development of a new base and fire centre near Thompson.
  - Finishing construction of a new bunkhouse at Grace Lake to support increased crew capacity.
  - Conducting preseason aerial firefighting tactical exercises, including participation from contract operator Babcock Canada. Also working with Babcock Canada and helicopter operators to review airspace management, confirm that current guidelines remain appropriate, and implement targeted improvements where needed.
  - Addressing critical facility repairs to ensure the safety and sustainability of existing facilities.
  - Increasing capacity with \$1.2 million to upgrade the Manitoba Wildfire Service's weather information and fire mapping systems. This upgrade will help with modelling and predictions, enabling more lead time for evacuations.
  - Negotiations underway to build a new initial attack and fire base in the Thompson area.
  - Investing \$1.1 million for aerial firefighting services.
  - Three new water bombers have been ordered and the first plane will be delivered in 2031.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure / Manitoba Emergency Management Organization**
  - Undertaking process improvements, exercises and training to ensure that Manitoba Emergency Management Organization (EMO) staff are current and ready for Manitoba Emergency Coordination Centre activation.

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Office of the Fire Commissioner**

- Tendering for three self contained Value Protection trailers, which carry equipment such as pumps, sprinklers, and hose used by fire fighters to protect critical infrastructure and structures threatened by wildfire. The trailers are arriving through the 2026 fire season to augment existing resources.

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Northern Affairs Branch**

- Tendering for two structural Value Protection trailers for Northern Affairs Communities and acquiring additional wildfire equipment for four remote communities. Six staff members have been identified to receive specialized training on the operation and deployment of the fire trailers.

- **Innovation and New Technology – Public Safety Communications Services**

- Based on lessons learned from the 2025 wildfire, assessing to determine if additional radios are needed, and developing a plan and process to redistribute and deploy provincial radio resources during an emergency.

- **Education & Early Childhood Learning**

- Contributing to provincial emergency transportation readiness by working with school divisions to develop an inventory of school busses and drivers to support evacuation needs.
- Working with Public Service Delivery to expand pre-approved vendor listings to support school continuity and transportation needs.
- Strengthening the department's readiness to support emergency responses by ensuring access to appropriate equipment, supplies, and logistical tools required to rapidly support child-friendly spaces, youth programming, and school continuity during extended evacuations.

## **B. Workforce Capacity, Mobilization & Training**

- **Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures / Manitoba Wildfire Service**

- Expanding seasonal staffing including three new Initial Attack crews and continued active recruitment for seasonal and full time roles.
- Investing \$1.2 million to add 19 firefighters, improving response capability, sustaining preparedness levels and supporting better co-ordination during increasingly complex wildfire events.
- Expanding training opportunities for full time staff with more personnel completing courses in fireline leadership, Incident Command System (ICS) roles, fire behaviour, and prescribed fire.
- Continuing training of new Emergency Fire Fighters and working with communities to train additional wildland firefighters to work for Manitoba Wildfire Service on a casual basis.

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Office of the Fire Commissioner**

- Staffing additional full time and casual staff for Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and wildfire response duties with a view to having them in-place prior to or early in the 2026 wildfire season.
- Expanded instructor pool for ICS training at the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), in Canada Task Force 4 (CAN-TF4), and across the public sector to facilitate increased output of ICS trained staff for employment in Incident Management Teams. Incident Command System or ICS is a standardized approach to command and coordination of emergency response that provides a common hierarchy which enables responders from multiple agencies, such as fire and police departments, to work together more effectively.
- Coordinated delivery of an increased number of ICS courses and arranged for out-of-province instructors to deliver position specific courses to Manitoba government staff including personnel from the OFC, CAN-TF4, the Manitoba Wildfire Service and Manitoba Parks, as well as a number of local authorities. This is expected to increase the availability of qualified personnel to staff key positions in wildfire and all-hazards Incident Management Teams throughout the 2026 wildfire season.
- Maintaining robust duty officer system and training additional staff for OFC Emergency Operations Centre functions.
- Through the OFC's Manitoba Emergency Services College — Delivered seven Wildland Firefighting for Structural Fire Fighters courses since Sept 2025 and will deliver six more courses by April 30, 2026.

- **Public Service Commission**

- Establishing a workforce mobilization and redeployment process to support rapid activation, if needed, while maintaining operational continuity.
- Engaging the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union (MGEU) on a memorandum of understanding or agreement governing redeployment, hours of work, and related terms, should wildfire response redeployments be required. Also engaging with MGEU to review findings and employee feedback from the 2025 Wildfire Season.
- Developing employee facing guidance for redeployed staff, supported by pre deployment orientation and post deployment debriefing. Also delivering pre season learning sessions for senior leaders, focused on readiness to support teams during emergency events.
- Designing an employee wellness and psychological safety approach tailored to emergency response, including proactive wellness check ins, a standardized pathway for trauma informed post incident debriefing, and post deployment supports.

- **Families / Emergency Social Services**

- Increasing emergency response staffing capacity to better support evacuees and enhancing psychosocial supports to deliver a culturally appropriate approach, trauma-informed care, resiliency and responding to escalated situations.
- Strategies are being developed for additional supports required as part of a large evacuation such as safety and security procedures, cultural supports and family supports.

- **Education & Early Childhood Learning**

- Improving staff redeployments response times by maintaining a staff roster including an inventory of skills and training received. This will enable quicker re-deployment when needed; recognizing the need to redeploy and the number of staff could be scaled up depending on the magnitude of an event.
- Strengthening staff preparedness and capacity by identifying and delivering training; including but not limited to ICS, equity, anti-racism, secondary and vicarious trauma, stakeholder management, and others.

## **C. Public Communication and Information**

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Northern Affairs Branch**

- Concluded, in partnership with the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), three in person regional engagement sessions in Winnipeg (Eastern Region), Dauphin (Western Region), and Thompson (Northern Region), which featured updates and lessons learned from last year's wildfire season and previewed preparedness measures for the upcoming season.

- **Transportation and Infrastructure / Manitoba Emergency Management Organization**

- Continued to build and develop MB Ready as Manitoba's premier bilingual source for emergency information, including the addition of new data sources such as 511 highway data, integration of alerts from the national Alert Ready system, and new capabilities, including a downloadable mobile app to be launched in May, 2026.
- Partnered with Communications and Engagement Division and have engaged a consultant to develop a social media strategy to enhance communication, engagement and information dissemination during emergencies.

## **D. Governance, Coordination, and Collaboration**

- **Transportation and Infrastructure / Manitoba Emergency Management Organization**

- Strengthened regional collaboration through the Local Authority Partner Network to enhance the ability of local authorities to work together when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from major emergencies and natural disasters.
- Establishing partnerships to enhance emergency management supports for First Nations by fostering stronger collaboration, supporting the development of training programs and working to support preparedness conversations.

- **Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures / Manitoba Wildfire Service**

- Participating in interjurisdictional and national work to build Canada's domestic wildfire response capacity (personnel, aircraft) as well as to build prevention and mitigation systems.

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Northern Affairs Branch**
  - Hosted a virtual wildfire preparedness town hall with cottage associations and contact persons from across the 40 Cottage Areas. Discussions emphasized development of an emergency preparedness plan for each cottage subdivision, updating emergency contact lists, and strengthening communication protocols.
  - Hosting a half day tabletop wildfire exercise at the Northern Affairs Branch regional workshop with council leadership from all 48 Northern Affairs Communities in May 2026, as well as wildfire preparedness discussions at the Northern Association of Community Councils spring meeting.
- **Innovation and New Technology / Public Safety Communications Services**
  - Revising and formalizing processes to improve communications between emergency services during major emergencies.
- **Families / Emergency Social Services**
  - Aligning per diem funding with Canada to ensure all evacuees receive comparable financial supports while they are away from their homes.
  - Developing a secure online evacuee registration form to be available on the Manitoba government website, making evacuee registration easier, and working to align with the Canadian Red Cross registration forms to streamline the financial support process.
- **Justice**
  - Amended the operating agreements for the First Nations Safety Officer Program to support the deployment of First Nations Safety Officers outside of their communities without an order under The Emergency Measures Act.

## **E. Health, Community Services and Social Supports**

- **Families / Emergency Social Services**
  - Working with municipalities to prepare communities for pre-registration and evacuation readiness of residents.
  - Working towards expanding hotel locations across Manitoba to increase the availability of accommodations for evacuees.
  - Establishing in-time availability of emergency supplies for evacuees during the onset of a response such as those required to meet infant needs and hygiene items.
  - Establishing a process for pre-loaded payment cards and e-transfer capability for evacuee incidental payments.

- **Health, Seniors and Long Term Care**

- Convening the health system, public health, federal, community and Indigenous health partners, such as Indigenous Services Canada – First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Keewatinohk Inniniew Minoatawin Inc., Four Arrows Regions Health Authority, Manitoba Metis Federation, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc., Southern Chiefs Organization, Ongomiizwin, First Nations Health and Social Services Secretariat of Manitoba, and others, to further strengthen pre-season health focused preparedness and planning, building on existing collaboration and based on 2025 lessons learned.
- Enhancing community-health guidance and coordination, including development of a guideline on best practice for public health staff deployed to support reception centres and congregate settings.

- **Housing, Addictions and Homelessness**

- Developed an Indigenous community led shelter and support model for individuals struggling with substance use during evacuations, which can be delivered as an evacuation site or integrated into hotel-based relocation approaches.
- Providing culturally centered harm reduction supports and interventions within congregate evacuation sites. This includes harm reduction training for ESS staff across congregate sites.
- Implemented integrated planning approaches across Housing Addictions and Homelessness and service delivery organizations including mental health, addictions, public health, primary care, and home care resources to support populations impacted by community relocations.
- Coordinating mental health and substance use supports for families residing in hotel accommodations in partnership with Shared Health, service delivery organizations and funded community agencies.
- Implemented pathways to Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine clinics and detox resources for individuals struggling with addictions and individuals who may have withdrawal management needs.
- Collaborating with addiction service providers to deliver cultural supports and a managed alcohol program to address withdrawal management needs for evacuees.
- Established a process with homeless shelter partners to identify evacuees presenting within the shelter system and connect them with appropriate repatriation supports or ongoing evacuation supports, as applicable.

- **Education & Early Childhood Learning**

- Engaging with partners such as Ka Ni Kanichihk, Toy Box and Blue Thunderbird to explore child and youth supports and services they may offer during the response season.

## **F. Planning and Preparedness**

- **Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures / Manitoba Wildfire Service**
  - Conducting full postseason and preseason activities (real time and post incident reviews, staff engagement, and discussions with internal and external partners).
- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Office of the Fire Commissioner**
  - Drafting a comprehensive WUI and Wildfire Response program guidelines for the OFC and the Manitoba Fire Service (MFS) to facilitate preparation, mobilization, deployment, and demobilization of resources for WUI and wildfire response incidents. These will be introduced to the MFS and local authorities in April 2026.
  - Host virtual wildfire season technical briefings in April 2026 for the MFS to inform fire chiefs, deputy chiefs, and municipal officials on the WUI and wildfire response guidelines, reimbursement framework, and associated processes for notifying, mobilizing, deploying, and employing MFS personnel for provincial wildfire response operations and to discuss OFC AAR recommendations.
- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Northern Affairs Branch**
  - Continue to advance wildfire preparedness by maintaining the Duty Officer program, completing ongoing Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessments across Northern Affairs Communities, refining internal command structures and reporting processes, enhancing community and departmental communications, and supporting development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Northern Affairs Communities and Cottage Areas affected during the 2025 wildfire season.
- **Public Service Commission**
  - Coordinating pre-season planning across government to identify workforce support requirements during peak demand periods, including support for timely operational decision-making should staff redeployments be required at reception centres and congregate shelters.
- **Families / Emergency Social Services**
  - Increased the number of dedicated resources to support the Emergency Social Services program and strengthening preparedness to broaden the supports provided by the program.
  - Improved preparedness by advancing ICS and Emergency Operations Centre training for management and staff with roles within the emergency social services structure.
  - Established a Deputy Ministers working group with departments that provide services within the Emergency Social Services program to build out all aspects of the response for the 2026/27 hazard season. This includes, Justice, Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, Advanced Education and Training, Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, Education and Early Childhood Learning, Agriculture, Public Service Commission, and Public Service Delivery.

- **Education & Early Childhood Learning**

- Working to improve data sharing between government departments, the Canadian Red Cross and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning to strengthen planning and coordinated responses for child friendly spaces, youth programming, and school continuity. This includes planning for space, resource allocation and pupil transportation needs during extended community evacuations occurring during the school year.
- Improved preparedness by advancing ICS and Emergency Operations Centre training for management and staff with roles within the departmental structure.

- **Transportation and Infrastructure / Manitoba Emergency Management Organization**

- Reviewed and initiated updating of Manitoba's Emergency Plan, which lays the foundation for provincial preparedness for all major emergencies and natural disasters.
- Coordinating the delivery of a provincial scale AAR, including developing AAR training for local authorities, government departments and emergency management partners.
- Evaluated and improved annual hazard seminars; training and exercises to ensure Manitoba Emergency Coordination Centre operational readiness.
- Supporting wildfire-affected communities in the development of post-disaster recovery plans. This includes meeting with community leadership to identify recovery priorities and actions, based on resources provided by the Canadian Centre for Recovery and Resilience.
- An investment in Budget 2026 of \$1 million to convert 15 term staff, to 15 new permanent positions.

## **G. Finance and Administration**

- **Municipal and Northern Relations / Office of the Fire Commissioner**

- Improved upon the existing compensation framework for reimbursement of municipalities, First Nations, and other partners for costs incurred when their fire services are mobilized through the provincial Mutual Aid System. The OFC has incorporated feedback from local authorities, the Manitoba Fire Service, and other partners through the OFC AAR process, continued to adapt best practices from other jurisdictions, and applied lessons learned throughout the 2025 wildfire season to ensure more timely and equitable compensation for fire services mobilized to assist other communities during major emergencies.

- **Innovation and New Technology / Public Safety Communications Services**

- Finalized an internal procedure to support public safety entities (such as police or fire departments) to acquire additional radio equipment on an expedited basis, when the large scale or scope of an emergency requires additional radios for first responders and incident managers to have effective communications.

- **Families / Emergency Social Services**
  - Improving financial readiness by establishing clear and agile emergency funding delegations and process. Formalizing agreements with partners and vendors for services that would be triggered as needed to support Manitobans impacted by an emergency and implementing streamlined reimbursement processes.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure / Manitoba Emergency Management Organization**
  - Administering the 2025 Wildfire DFA Program, which has included issuing nine advances to eligible municipalities for \$3.4M to date.

## **Budget 2026 Investments to Better Protect Communities from Wildfires**

In addition to the measures outlined above, Manitoba has made significant investments through Budget 2026 to help strengthen protection from wildfires.

- \$1.2 million to add 19 firefighters, improving response capability, sustaining preparedness levels and supporting better co-ordination during increasingly complex wildfire events
- \$1 million to add 15 more staff to Emergency Management Organization
- \$459,000 to add four more conservation officers
- \$1.2 million to upgrade the Manitoba Wildfire Service's weather information and fire mapping systems. This upgrade will help with modelling and predictions, enabling more lead time for evacuations
- Negotiations are underway to build a new initial attack and fire base in the Thompson area.
- Expanding wildfire training and creating more opportunities in partnership with northern Indigenous communities
- \$1.1 million for aerial firefighting services
- Three new water bombers have been ordered and the first plane will be delivered in 2031

To support communities in recovery, the government has launched the 2025 Wildfire Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program, providing financial support to municipalities and local authorities that were directly impacted or incurred significant costs while hosting evacuees. Eligible costs include pre-emptive preparation, emergency response operations, recovery and restoration activities, relief and recovery supports and long-term wildfire mitigation strategies.

## Conclusion

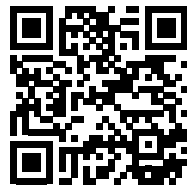
Since the 2025 wildfire season, the Manitoba government has taken decisive action to strengthen preparedness, response, and recovery across the province. The unprecedented scale and complexity of the 2025 wildfire season required Manitoba to examine not only individual responses, but the performance of the emergency management system as a whole. The actions outlined in this interim report demonstrate a clear commitment to learning from experience and acting to reduce risk ahead of the 2026 wildfire season.

Success for the 2026 wildfire season means that Manitoba enters the season with stronger readiness including updated plans and clearer authorities, better trained workforce capacity, improved infrastructure, equipment, and communications. Improved coordinated evacuation and reception centre processes and enhanced health, social, and cultural supports for evacuees.

This interim report reflects meaningful progress already achieved, while recognizing that continued work is required. The final provincial scale AAR, to be completed in fall 2026, will provide an independent, evidence based assessment of the 2025 wildfire season, including validated findings and recommendations to guide longer term improvements, and input from First Nations, Indigenous governments, municipalities, workers, and emergency management partners. Manitoba is committed to learning, continued engagement with First Nations, municipalities, and partners, and ongoing improvements identified through the AAR process.

The 2025 wildfire season tested Manitoba's emergency management system and the resilience of communities across the province. It also demonstrated the strength of collaboration between governments, Indigenous leadership, emergency responders, volunteers, and service organizations. Together, the actions underway and the completion of the provincial AAR position Manitoba to move forward with a more resilient, adaptive, and coordinated approach to managing wildfires and other emergencies, grounded in shared learning, partnership, and a commitment to protecting Manitobans.

As part of the Wildfire After Action Review, the Manitoba government wants to hear from Manitobans about what worked well and what could be improved. Whether you were personally impacted or simply want to share your perspective, your feedback is important and will help us prepare for future wildfire seasons.



Share your ideas here:  
**[engagemb.ca/after-action-report](https://engagemb.ca/after-action-report)**

APRIL 2026