



**MEMORANDUM**

**Date** 25 September 2025

**To** Residents of Kelowna participating in the October 2025 wildfire evacuation exercise

**From** National Research Council Canada

**Re** **Community wildfire evacuation exercise in Kelowna, BC on 25 October, 2025**

*The National Research Council (NRC) will be observing the drill organized by the City of Kelowna on October 25, 2025. The purpose of this research is to understand residents' behavior and experiences during an evacuation, with the goal of improving modeling tools and evacuation planning for wildfire emergencies. Researchers will count traffic at key locations (e.g., at the assembly point) and also invite participants to complete a 10–15 minute survey about their experience.*

*All data will be anonymized and used solely for research purposes. Responses gathered will not be traceable to individual drill participants.*

*For more details, including participation requirements, risks, privacy protections, and contact information, please refer to the full document below.*

## **What is this study?**

The National Research Council of Canada's Construction Research Center (NRC-CONST) will be observing an emergency community wildfire evacuation exercise ("drill" hereafter) in Kelowna.

The drill, organized by City of Kelowna's Fire Department, will simulate an evacuation drill in the neighbourhoods of Wilden and Magic estates in which drill participants will be evacuated from a hypothetical wildfire emergency scenario. A research team from the NRC will observe the drill in order to study evacuation performance and conduct a voluntary survey with residents participating in the drill.



## Why is the study being done?

Our main objective is to better understand residents' behavior and experiences during a community wildfire evacuation. The insights gained from the research will be used to inform and improve modeling tools and to assess community vulnerability and evacuation plans.

## What will you be asked to do?

You have indicated that you will be participating this planned community wildfire evacuation drill (short) on October 25, 2025. During the drill you will receive an email announcing a wildfire evacuation notice and be asked to evacuate your home.

If you would like to volunteer to participate in the NRC research study linked to this drill, please indicate your willingness to participate by placing a **letter sized white piece of paper on your vehicle (e.g., on your windscreen)**, so that researchers observing will know which vehicles to count as part of the study's data collection.

Staff from the research team and the City of Kelowna will observe evacuation traffic at key locations and collect anonymized data. This data will be used solely for the purposes of research and individual responses and feedback will not be personally traceable to individual drill participants.

Immediately following the drill, members of the NRC research team will invite participants to complete a survey about their experience in completing the evacuation exercise. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete and can either be completed on paper or online. NRC staff will provide both printed surveys and an online link to the survey at the final assembly area for the drill.

Your participation in placing a letter sized white piece of paper on your vehicle and filling out the follow-up questionnaire is voluntary and will help NRC researchers learn more about your experience during the drill. However, you can participate in the drill without being part of the research.



## Potential harms and benefits

Participation in this studied drill carries similar risks to those that would be encountered during a strategic evacuation. There will be no individual compensation offered in exchange for participation in this study. By participating in this investigation, participants will, however, have the benefit of becoming more familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and will help support future strategies to improve community wildfire evacuations.

## Privacy and confidentiality

All of the information gathered during this study through observation or questionnaire will remain strictly confidential unless we are required by law to disclose it.

The data from human observers and questionnaires are completely anonymous. Results of the research will be reported as averages across a large number of people with no specific identifier.

## Secondary use of data

The primary purpose of this study is to better understand wildfire evacuation.

Deidentified data from the study may be re-analyzed in potential future projects on community evacuation, for example, to inform the development of computer simulations or to publish peer reviewed articles in scientific journals.

Anonymized numeric output data may also be published in publicly accessible scientific databases.

No identifying information will be published.

## Compensation

You will be compensated for your time participating in the drill through complimentary refreshments provided by drill organizers. No additional



compensation will be provided to those who volunteer to complete the post-event survey.

## Participation requirements

In order to volunteer to participate in the research, you must

- Have participated in the community evacuation exercise on October 25, 2025

## Liability

The drill is organized independently from the research activities and any liability related to participating in the drill lies with the drill organizers.

## Who to contact if you have any concerns or questions?

If you wish more information or if you have questions, you may contact the principal investigator, Dr. Nouredine Bénichou, at 343-990-8788 or by e-mail at [nouredine.benichou@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca](mailto:nouredine.benichou@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca).

## Ethics review

This study has been approved by the NRC Research Ethics Board (NRC-REB) under protocol number 2025-72. REB review seeks to ensure that research projects involving humans as participants meet Canadian standards of ethics. Any questions or concerns about the ethics of this study may be directed to the NRC-REB Secretariat, [NRC-REB@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca](mailto:NRC-REB@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca), (613) 949-8681.