



# Wildfires in Saskatchewan

## benefits



Wildfire is an important and natural part of Saskatchewan's forest ecosystems. Plants and animals are well-adapted to fire; some even require it to thrive.

50°C

Jack pine cones need the temperature to open and release their seed



Fire releases nutrients to the soil, removes diseased trees and harmful insects, and opens the forest canopy so sunlight can reach the forest floor.

70

On average, a given area of forest will burn every 70 years in natural boreal systems.



## risks



Wildfires can threaten communities, essential infrastructure, timber and other things people value. There is no place for unplanned, human-caused fires. Do your part to prevent wildfires.

100+

Saskatchewan communities are in or near the forest.



Fire threatens lives, creates hardships for people, property and businesses, and impacts all utilities, including roads, power lines and communication towers.

## timber

A 10,000-hectare wildfire in the commercial forest burns enough wood to build almost 10,000 homes.

Wildfires have only two causes.



lightning



# of Fires\*



people

44% lightning 56% people  
\*Ten-year average

We can't prevent **lightning**, but we can track it. On average, lightning causes about half of all our wildfires.

Lightning fires can start anywhere, including very remote areas, where it may be desirable to allow them to play their natural role in the ecosystem.

Every year, about half of Saskatchewan wildfires are started by **human activity**. These include:

- Campfires
- Industrial activity
- Cleanup projects that get away
- Vehicle and ATV exhaust
- Arson

Human-caused fires usually start in accessible areas, near communities and roads, posing a greater threat.

Saskatchewan's wildfire priorities:  
**every wildfire is assessed.**

The ministry assesses every wildfire and makes a decision about the best way to manage every single fire. Many factors are considered, including:

Lives at risk	Weather
Location of the fire	Other wildfire activity
Features and areas threatened	Firefighter safety
Burning conditions	Potential ecological benefits

Saskatchewan's wildfire priorities guide fire management decisions, allowing the ministry to:

- protect what's most important – human life and communities are always the top priorities, followed by critical public infrastructure, major industrial infrastructure, commercial timber, remote structures and natural resources;
- manage firefighting resources effectively; and
- let wildfire play its natural and beneficial role on the landscape.

35.5 million

hectares of forest in Saskatchewan

560,000

10-year average of hectares burned



## myth



Wildfires outside arbitrarily chosen areas are simply allowed to burn, regardless of the threat.

## fact



The ministry assesses every wildfire, no matter where it is, and makes decisions about how to manage it. Fires threatening communities ALWAYS receive the highest priority.

## myth



When a wildfire is detected, the goal should always be to put it out as quickly as possible.

## fact



It is not always appropriate, or possible, to put out every wildfire. Effective management may mean protecting property in an area, or monitoring a remote fire.

How do we find wildfires?

aircraft 35%



Government of SK

aircraft 5%



private and commercial

staff 13%



Government of SK

public 31%



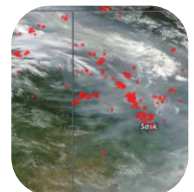
1-800-667-9660 | 911

towers 10%



42 fitted with cameras

other 6%



includes satellite imagery

What are the valuable things we protect?



human life, communities and homes



industrial and commercial property



timber



public infrastructure



recreational and trappers' cabins

Saskatchewan fights wildfires ...

... from the air



### Saskatchewan's air tanker fleet

- Four Convair 580A land-based air tankers
- Six CL215 water skimming aircraft
- Seven 'bird dog' aircraft that guide the tankers



### Contract helicopters

- Short- and long-term contracts during the wildfire season
- Used in initial attack, crew transport, water bucketing, reconnaissance for planning and mapping

... on the ground

### Heavy equipment

- Crawler tractors expose mineral soil to create fire guards that limit fire movement

### Ground crews

- Ministry staff
- First Nations and northern community contract crews
- Emergency fire personnel

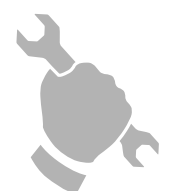


... behind the scenes



Specialized staff support the ministry's air and ground wildfire operations in many critical areas, including:

- Weather
- Geographic Information Systems and mapping
- Wildfire science
- Equipment maintenance and transport
- Radio communications
- Aircraft maintenance
- Safety
- Administration



# Protect your home and community from wildfire