

Buck Creek Wildfire

# Community Re-entry Information



# welcome home!



**This booklet is intended for Brazeau County and Town of Drayton Valley residents and businesses who have been evacuated due to the Buck Creek wildfire.**

We thank everyone for their patience and understanding as we work to return life back to as normal as possible. Please use this booklet to help guide you in our re-entry.

Returning home may be stressful and overwhelming. Call **1-877-303-2642** for free, 24/7 mental health support.

We extend our sincere gratitude to first responders, staff, and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to keep our community and residents safe.

Please be aware that the wildfire danger still exists in our region and you should be prepared with your emergency kit in the event the situation worsens. Follow directions of first responders as you re-enter, and be cautious in areas affected by fire.



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# Buck Creek Wildfire

## ✓ Re-entry Checklist

If you are re-entering the evacuation zone, here are steps you need to take:

- ☐ Read your Re-Entry booklet for important information
- ☐ When re-entering your community, drive carefully and follow the instructions of any road crews or officers. Be prepared for heavy traffic.
- ☐ Upon returning home, check your property for damage.
  - ☐ Photograph/document any damage and call your insurance company.
- ☐ Check your utilities (gas, power, water, internet). Do not attempt to restore any gas or electricity on your own. Contact your utility providers if your utilities are not working. If you smell gas, exit your home IMMEDIATELY and call your utility provider or 911.
- ☐ Contact your relatives/loved ones to tell them where you are.
- ☐ Do not allow anyone to enter areas damaged by fire.
- ☐ If you are digging on your property, submit a request online anytime at ClickBeforeYouDig or call 1-800-242-3447 (Mon – Fri, 8:00am - 4:30pm). Visit [utilitysafety.ca/wheres-the-line/click-before-you-dig/homeowner-overview/](http://utilitysafety.ca/wheres-the-line/click-before-you-dig/homeowner-overview/) for more information.
- ☐ Check the official Brazeau County and Town of Drayton Valley websites and Facebook pages for any important updates on re-entry.

If you are struggling with your mental health, call the free 24/7 Mental Health Helpline at **1-877-303-2642**.

**Please be patient and flexible: re-entering an evacuation area can be a slow process and plans can change based on the situation. Have patience with crews, businesses, and with fellow residents.**



# Buck Creek Wildfire

## ✓ Re-entry Checklist for Businesses

If you are re-entering the evacuation zone, here are steps you need to take:

- ☐ When re-entering your community, drive carefully and follow the instructions of any road crews or officers. Be prepared for heavy traffic.
- ☐ Upon returning to your business check your property for damage.
  - ☐ Photograph/document any damage and call your insurance company.
- ☐ Check your utilities (gas, power, water, internet). Do not attempt to restore any gas or electricity on your own. Contact your utility providers if your utilities are not working. If you smell gas, exit IMMEDIATELY. Call your utility provider or 911.
- ☐ Do not enter or allow anyone else to enter areas damaged by fire.
- ☐ Throw out all food that may have spoiled, especially items that have sat out for an extended period or were in a fridge/freezer that may have lost power.
  - ☐ Contact a Public Health Inspector for food safety assistance ([www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/eph.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/eph.aspx))
- ☐ If you are digging on your property, submit a request online anytime at ClickBeforeYouDig or call 1-800-242-3447 (Mon – Fri, 8:00am - 4:30pm). Visit [utilitysafety.ca/wheres-the-line/click-before-you-dig/homeowner-overview/](http://utilitysafety.ca/wheres-the-line/click-before-you-dig/homeowner-overview/) for more information.
- ☐ Check the Brazeau County and Town of Drayton Valley websites and Facebook pages for any important updates on re-entry.

If you are struggling with your mental health, call the free 24/7 Mental Health Helpline at **1-877-303-2642**.

**Please be patient and flexible: re-entering an evacuation area can be a slow process and plans can change based on the situation. Have patience with crews, other businesses, and residents.**

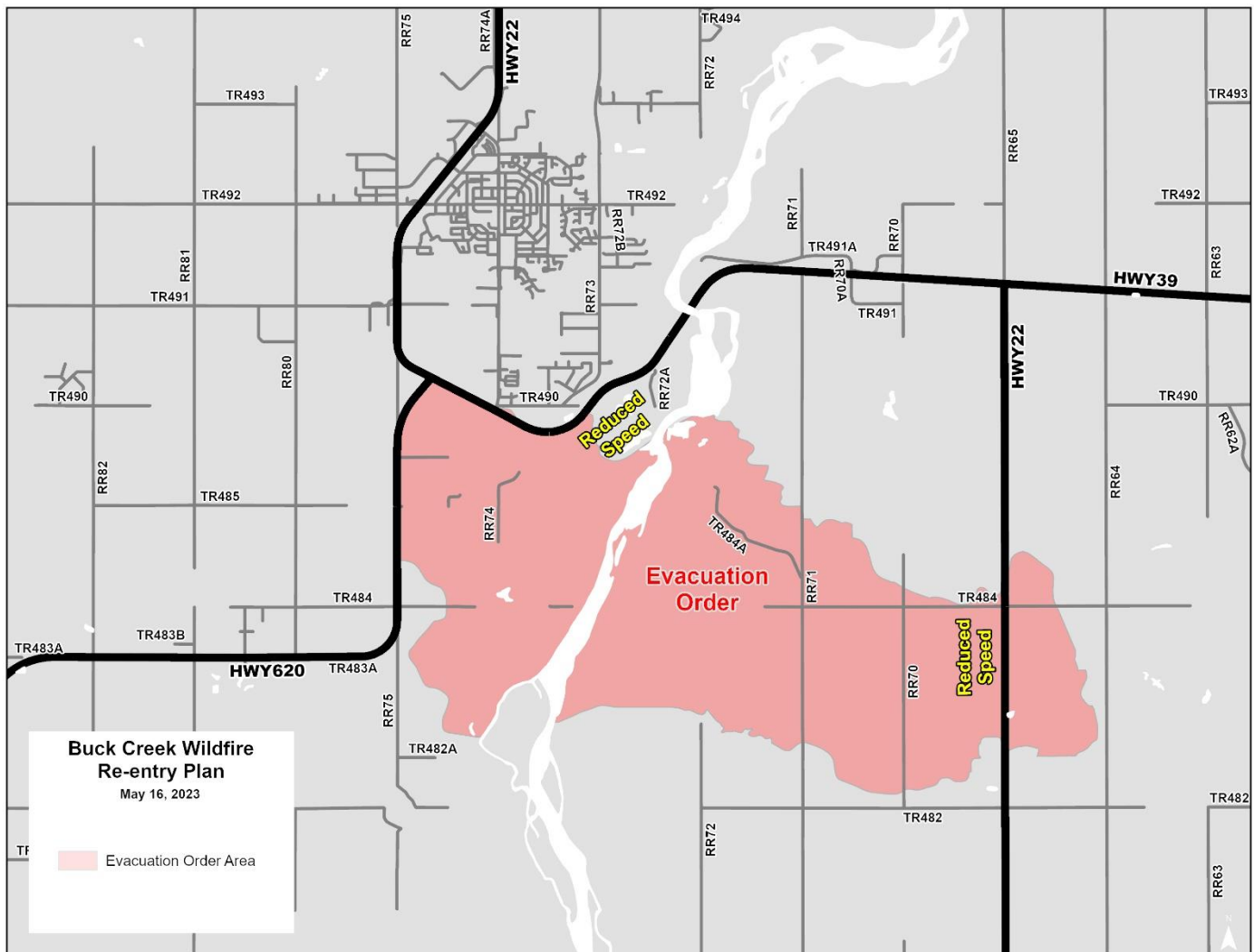


# Mandatory Re-Entry Routes

The evacuation order has been lifted for all areas EXCEPT the area marked in red on the map below.

Everyone entering the community must use one of the approved routes (map attached; no other routes will be open to traffic until further notice):

- **Arriving from the West:** travel east on Highway 620
- **Arriving from the North:** travel south on Highway 22
- **Arriving from the East:** travel west on Highway 39
- **Arriving from the South:** travel north using Highway 22



# Utilities

Check your utilities upon re-entry. If your utilities are not working, ***do not attempt to repair them yourself***. Call your utility provider immediately.

## Gas

- What if I smell gas?
  - If upon entry of your home you smell gas, leave immediately and call the ATCO Gas Emergency Line at 1-800-511-3447.

## Water

- Is the water safe to drink?
  - Yes, the water is safe to drink. Please run your taps for 5 minutes to ensure you have fresh water.
- What do I do if my well or cistern has been affected by the wildfire?
  - Your water supply may be contaminated if your well or cistern was physically damaged. If you see damage, contact a public health inspector (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/eph.aspx>)
- What if the water is a strange colour?
  - For more information on water quality and testing, visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-using-water-safely.aspx>

## Power

- What if I see exposed wires?
  - Do not touch an exposed wire or downed power line. Call Fortis Alberta at 310-WIRE (9473).

## Internet

- My internet is down, what do I do?
  - Contact your internet service provider for issues with connectivity.
    - TELUS: 1-877-226-1796
    - Shaw: 1-888-811-9177

# Upon Re-Entering Your Home

Alberta Health Services has a number of resources for actions to take when you return home: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-protecting-yourself-and-your-family.aspx>

# Garbage, Waste Disposal & Recycling

## **Q: When will garbage be picked up?**

**A:** Residential garbage pick up for Drayton Valley residents will be Thursday, May 18 and Friday, May 19. The regular pick-up schedule will resume the following week.

## **Q: Where do I put garbage?**

**A:** Place garbage in your municipal bins. Throw out any food that has spoiled or that you suspect has spoiled. Do not mix bleach with other cleaning chemicals.

## **Q: Are there any landfills open?**

**A:** The Drayton Valley landfill will operate with normal business hours. There are no tipping fees on residential waste only for all residents who had been evacuated through Wednesday, May 24.

Brazeau County transfer stations will resume normal operating hours, however the Buck Creek and Violet Grove transfer stations will remain closed until further notice.

## **Q: Can I burn garbage?**

**A:** No. There is still a Total Fire Ban in place and burning garbage is never permitted.

# Property Damage & Insurance

## **Q: What if I notice my property has been damaged?**

**A:** Document the damage (photos can also be helpful). List all damages/destroyed items. Call your insurance representative and/or company before undertaking any repair work/fixes.

If possible, try to assemble proof of purchase, photos, receipts, and warranties.

Keep all receipts related to cleanup and repairs, or replacements.

## **Q: Will insurance providers be coming to the community to do assessments?**

**A:** Please speak to your insurance provider directly as they will be able to give you the best information on their plans to assist. There is a public information session planned for Thursday, May 18 with insurance providers anticipated to be in attendance. Watch our website and social media for details.

## **Q: Should I clear out damaged trees from my property now?**

**A:** Burnt trees with root damage may be a hazard, so use caution. Firefighters may also be working on foot on hotspot areas in treed areas. For their safety, do a thorough check to ensure they are not in the area before utilizing heavy equipment.



# Disaster Recovery Funding

## **Q: Is there going to be Disaster recovery money?**

**A:** Municipalities will be applying to the Province of Alberta to recover costs incurred during the incident. Work with your insurance company on any claims.

Should our municipalities be approved for Disaster Recovery Funding for Non-insurable losses or damage may be eligible for Government of Alberta Disaster Recovery Funding. Visit <https://www.alberta.ca/disaster-recovery-programs.aspx> for more information.

## RCMP

The RCMP remain in the area to serve and protect the community in their regular policing duties and to maintain traffic control points.

## Fraud & Scams

It is important to be careful of frauds and scams during this time. Fraudsters may prey on your emotional state or your desire to fix/repair your property. Here are common scams to be aware of (not an exhaustive list):

- Fraudulent insurance claims
- Identity theft
- Price gouging
- Fake solicitations for donations/charities
- Contractor fraud
- Law enforcement/emergency responder impersonation
- Volunteer impersonator
- Government official/department impersonation

How to protect yourself from scams/frauds:

- Don't be intimidated by high-pressure sales tactics; don't be afraid to say no.
- Protect your personal information (name, address, birthdate, Social Insurance Number, date of birth, credit card information, and emails/passwords). Be wary of providing any information unless you have verified the person you are providing it to and you trust who you are speaking with.
- Watch for offers/pleas that play on emotions.
- If receiving a call, ask for the information in writing.
- Ask for ID from anyone claiming to be from an organization/business and verify the person's identity by calling the organization directly.
- For businesses, ask for proof of a legitimate business license.
- Be wary of offers for discounted services.
- Make sure contractors get proper permits to do any work on your property. Try to get at least 3 quotes for work being done to ensure you are getting a reasonable price and avoid scams. Offers that seem "too good to be true", often are.
- Verify charities with the Canada Revenue Agency to determine if they are legitimate.

I suspect someone is committing fraud/scams, or I am a victim of a scam. What do I do?

- You can report it to the RCMP on their non-emergency line: 780-542-4456.
- You can also report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre by phone or online:  
<https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm>

## Healthcare

Alberta Health Services has indicated that the Drayton Valley Hospital and Care Centre emergency department will be operational the morning of Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m.

Fire services have duty crews staffed and augmented contracted services to ensure emergency services continue.

If you have a condition or concern that you anticipate you may need the emergency department you may choose to delay your return until hospital services resume.

The Shale Medical Clinic is open for walk-in service beginning early afternoon on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Mental Health

Being evacuated from your home is stressful and can be overwhelming. It's important to take care of your mental health. There are many resources available:

- If you need to talk, call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642
- Crisis Text Line - Text CONNECT to 741741
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- Addiction Helpline – 1-866-332-2322
- Family Violence – Find Supports – 310-1818
- Drayton Valley Family and Community Support Services – connect to counselling and mental health resources - call 780-514-2204

Alberta Health Services also has a great document with information and resources for those affected by wildfires: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/news/page14070.aspx>

## Air Quality & Sensitivities

**Q: I have medical sensitivities. How is the air quality? Is it safe to come home with the air quality?**

**A:** You can find the current Air Quality Health Index for the Drayton Valley area at <https://www.wcas.ca/> and [https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial\\_summary/ab\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/ab_e.html)

The region is still experiencing heavy smoke due to the ongoing wildfire. If you have medical concerns, take necessary precautions and consider delaying your return if you are more comfortable doing so. Wearing an N95 mask may assist in easing breathing difficulties.

For more information on respiratory health and air quality, visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/wildfire-smoke-health.aspx>

If you have any concerns about your health due to air quality, seek medical attention or call 811.

Smoke can also be harmful to pets. Try to keep your pets inside as much as possible and make sure they have lots of water. If your pet has trouble breathing, contact your vet.

## **Pets, Wildlife, and Livestock**

### **Q: What do I do if I find animal carcasses?**

**A:** Animal carcasses must be properly disposed of to prevent disease transmission and prevent scavenger activity. Visit <https://www.alberta.ca/livestock-mortality-management.aspx> to learn more about proper disposal methods.

### **Q: My livestock is missing. What do I do?**

**A:** Complete a missing livestock form here: <https://lis-ab.com/information/missing-stolen-strays/forms/> or call Butch Harris 403-783-0421

### **Q: I can't find my pet. What do I do?**

**A:** In the Town of Drayton Valley, contact the Community Peace Officer at 780-898-4575 to report a missing pet. If you registered a pet during the evacuation, we will be in contact regarding reunification.

## **Schools/Childcare**

### **Q: Are schools open/operating?**

**A:** Wild Rose School Division (<https://www.wrsd.ca/>) and Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Schools (<https://www.staratholic.ab.ca/>) will re-open schools on Tuesday, May 23.

### **Q: Are there any childcare options open?**

#### **A: Early Childhood Development Centre**

The ECDC will be sharing all re-entry information to families through the REMIND app as well as on its Facebook page. Community members can also reach the program manager Bernice Taylor through email [ecdc@draytonvalley.ca](mailto:ecdc@draytonvalley.ca) or call the centre at 780-514-2248 for more info.

#### **Drayton Valley Family Dayhome**

Families with children returning to child care at registered Family Day Homes will receive regular updates via [Facebook](#). Program specific details will be communicated through email. Parents with any questions or concerns may call or text Coordinator Jennifer Paterson at 780-621-2123

#### **Drayton Valley Preschool**

The program will be following all re-entry plans as set out by Wild Rose School Division. The re-opening will coincide with students returning to class. Preschool Director Amanda Tremblay will be

updating registered families via email or through the [FB page](#) . You can reach the director Amanda Tremblay at 780-202-0246 or e-mail [dvpteacher@gmail.com](mailto:dvpteacher@gmail.com)

## Resources for Businesses

**Q: I am a business in Drayton Valley. Is there anything else I need to know about or do for re-entry?**

**A:** Each businesses' needs will be individual to their service, but some common considerations business owners will need to think about are:

- Is your property damaged in any way? If so, contact your insurance company immediately. Document any damage and take pictures as well.
- If you are a food-based business, is there any food spoilage that needs to be addressed? Alberta Health Services has information available:  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-food-facility-power-outage.pdf>
- Do any safety/health inspections need to be completed before you can reopen?
- Have your employees been contacted and are they able to return to work?
- Do you need to restock supplies?
- Is there any clean-up or sanitation that needs to be done?
- Have you communicated with your customers about when you will reopen, or if your services are currently limited?

**Q: Is the municipality going to use local vendors/businesses for the recovery efforts?**

**A:** The municipality is working with as many local vendors as possible and feasible at this time.

## Available Services

**Q: What services/businesses are open?**

**A:** Prior to re-entry, the Emergency Response Team Services connected with critical essential services so that residents' immediate needs can be met (food, fuel, medical, and finance). Other services may be limited while businesses work on getting back to full operations, so please have patience with local businesses.

**Q: What municipal facilities/buildings are open?**

**A:** As our municipal staff are primarily working on the emergency and re-entry response, some facilities may be limited. Full operations are expected to resume by Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please call the Town of Drayton Valley at 780-514-2200 or Brazeau County at 780-542-7777.

## Fire Status & Fire Ban

**Q: Is the wildfire out?**

**A:** The wildfire is still active, and crews remain on scene. Be aware that you will continue to see fire activity (smoke, flareups, hotspots) in the coming days. Residents in the county will experience hotspots and smoke for some time. Property owners will need to be vigilant and watch for fire dangers near property in the months ahead as hot spots continue to burn.

**Q: If the fire is still burning, why are we allowed back home?**

**A:** Fire experts believe that it is safe at this time for the public to re-enter the community, as the fire is being held. This means that the wildfire is not likely to spread beyond predetermined boundaries under prevailing conditions. At this point, fire crews will finish establishing control lines working inwards to the burned area, conduct fuel management activities and mop-up (extinguishing a fire) in close proximity to residential structures.

Conditions can change quickly. Stay tuned to our Facebook and the Alberta Emergency Alert website and app to stay up to date on current developments. Always be prepared with an emergency kit and essential items.

If you notice fire activity near a home, call 911. Other fire in burnt areas is expected.

**Q: Is there still a fire ban in place?**

**A:** Yes. Brazeau County/Drayton Valley have a Total Fire Ban in effect. Outdoor burning is prohibited. Existing fire permits are cancelled and no new fire permits will be issued until the Total Fire Ban is lifted. Wood campfires in fire pits are also prohibited. Portable propane fire pits, gas/propane stoves and barbecues, and catalytic or infrared-style heaters are permitted.

A note about ATVs/OHVs: We are strongly urging citizens to avoid using ATVs/OHVs at this time due to the continued dry conditions and the risk of igniting a new fire. Please avoid using ATVs until fire conditions improve.

## **Tree Safety Following Wildfires**

**Q: What do I need to know about trees affected by the wildfire?**

**A:** After a wildfire, it's crucial to be mindful of the dangers that damaged trees can pose. Trees can be severely damaged by a wildfire in many ways, including leaf/needle scorch, root/trunk/branch damage, inner trunk tissue injuries, and bud death. Moreover, the environment surrounding the trees (such as scorched earth and water-stressed conditions), can also affect them.

To prevent injuries, it's essential to be aware of these potential hazards and take precautions to stay safe. Here are some tips:

- Check the tree's location and whether it's leaning or tilting.
- Look for visible damage to the outside of the tree.
- Examine the canopy of the trees to ensure that there are no overhead hazards.
- Inspect the tree's limbs, stems, and roots for signs of deterioration.
- Even if the tree appears to be in good condition, it may have internal damage that could weaken its structure.

- Watch out for wildlife that may have been displaced from the trees.

Remember to always exercise caution when in a treed area following a wildfire. By staying aware of the potential dangers and taking steps to avoid them, you can help keep yourself and others safe.

Please contact an arborist for assistance with trees on your property. If you notice damaged trees on municipal or public property, please contact either the Town of Drayton Valley or Brazeau County.

## **Donations & Volunteers**

### **Q: Where can I drop items off for donations?**

**A:** We are not seeking any physical item donations. Please do not bring donations to the municipality, as we do not currently have the resources to coordinate donations. If you would like to donate funds, the Drayton Valley Community Foundation is accepting donations through their website at <https://bit.ly/3pFgNht>

### **Q: Do you need volunteers to help with cleanup?**

**A:** No. There is no substantial cleanup required.

### **Q: Do you need volunteers for anything?**

**A:** No, not for the initial re-entry period. However, community groups welcome new volunteers. Example include Search and Rescue, the Community Foundation, and the food bank.

### **Q: I have equipment to help with cleanup. How can I help?**

**A:** Offers of assistance are appreciated, however there is a process to follow to ensure proper coordination of resources. Please send an e-mail to [EmergencySupportOffers@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EmergencySupportOffers@gov.ab.ca) if you would like to offer equipment to assist with the wildfire response and recovery. Individuals and equipment that arrive unsolicited may be turned away if they have not been pre-approved by the incident management team.

### **Q: I am a service organization offering to assist with recovery and re-entry, how can I help?**

**A:** As with equipment offers, please send an e-mail to [EmergencySupportOffers@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EmergencySupportOffers@gov.ab.ca) to offer assistance.

## **Other FAQs**

### **Q: I heard a rumour/someone posted something on social media?**

**A:** Please watch official Town of Drayton Valley and Brazeau County Facebook accounts and websites for legitimate, verified information. Sharing misinformation/unverified information can be harmful during an emergency situation and recovery process.

**Q: I've lost my job/income because of the fires. What do I do?**

**A:** Please visit the Government of Canada's website regarding Employment Insurance: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html> or visit the Government of Alberta website at <https://www.alberta.ca/income-support.aspx>

**Q: Where do I pick up my mail?**

**A:** Canada Post has rerouted mail to Spruce Grove (Spruce Grove Station Main, 360 Saskatchewan Avenue – open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Canada Post at [canadapost.ca/support](http://canadapost.ca/support) or 1-866-607-6301.

**Q: I lost my ID, drivers license, or birth certificate during the evacuation, what do I do?**

**A:** The Government of Alberta is offering free replacement of these documents until June 29. Visit a registry agent or call 310-4455, or visit <https://www.alberta.ca/emergency.aspx> for more information.



**[brazeau.ab.ca](http://brazeau.ab.ca)**  
**[draytonvalley.ca](http://draytonvalley.ca)**