



# Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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British Columbia is facing historic fire conditions and extremely hot dry weather. The fires burning in the Cariboo and other regions are still very active and concerning to all. For the past four weeks members of Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue have been helping in the fight against these raging fires.

Members are working a minimum of eight days under the direction of the Office of the Fire Commissioner then are rotated out. Today August 4<sup>th</sup> at 06:00 we sent up our fourth replacement crew to relieve Firefighters Jason Gaffney and Dustin Bean. Lieutenant Cody Hunsberger and Firefighter Ben Westlake are en route today to lend aide in the wildfire suppression efforts. We are already planning our 5<sup>th</sup> deployment team for next week as we see that fire conditions are not improving.

Since our first deployment July 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 our crews have been operating out of Williams Lake, Soda Creek, and Springfield. Our SSIFR crews have been working alongside numerous other BC Fire Departments setting up residential roof sprinklers, fuel reduction, and suppling the wildland firefighters with massive amounts of water.

To date over 400,000 hectares have burnt this year alone, and is being recorded as one of the most destructive fires in BC history. This past week we have seen the impact on our local air quality due to the wildfires. Conditions are expected to change but residents with respiratory illness should avoid too much exposure outside until it passes.

Our conditions on Salt Spring Island are also becoming more extreme. For the past few weeks we have been in an extreme fire danger rating for the island. We also faced several 30/30 crossover days this month. Crossover conditions are very concerning for the Fire Department, as fires that start during these periods, start easily and grow fast. These conditions occur when our local temperatures exceed 30 degrees and less than 30 percent humidity. When we hit these conditions, we face a heightened fire threat. On August 2<sup>nd</sup> SSIFR crews responded to a grass fire on Furness Road. This fire occurred during a 30/30 crossover period. Firefighters were able to contain the fire very quickly with little damage.

As we move deeper into our hottest and driest months, I urge the public to be very vigilant and report any columns of smoke to 9-1-1. All open burning is still banned throughout the island.

I will continue to provide updates on our members' progress as they develop. For all those battling the fires, and supporting the efforts in British Columbia, thank you and stay safe, our thoughts are with all those affected by these devastating fires.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arjuna George', written in a cursive style.

Arjuna George  
Fire Chief  
Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue