

KENYON

EMERGENCY SERVICES

CASE STUDY

Canada wildfire evacuation

BACKGROUND

In May 2016, a wildfire started just south of the town of Fort McMurray, Canada. The fire quickly became out of control, and Canadian authorities ordered the immediate and total evacuation of the town's 80,000+ residents.

This would be the largest evacuation in Canadian history. Complicating the evacuation were the lack of time, the shutdown of the commercial airport, intermittent closure of the only highway going south caused by the rapidly changing direction of the fire and the people evacuating through burning areas.

CHALLENGES

With the government focused on getting resources to bring the fire under control, a prominent natural resource company immediately acted, focusing on the safe shutdown of their facilities, building temporary landing strips and chartering evacuation aircraft.

The residents had only hours to leave their homes, some with only the clothing they were wearing. Some drove or travelled by bus, while many others made their way to a landing strip and boarded special evacuation flights to various locations.

The challenge faced once people were out of the danger zone was how to provide a single point of contact for the employees, subcontractors and their family members who were with them and the general public who had evacuated with others.

The evacuees needed critical information such as shelter locations and addresses in destination cities, location of missing loved ones, assistance getting prescriptions, financial assistance guidance and when they could go home.



SOLUTIONS

Kenyon was contracted to establish a single point of contact, centralizing data, answering questions, and quickly getting accurate information out to all those affected, along with regular updates.

Drawing on experience in previous evacuation operations, Kenyon recommended activating their call center, which included data management teams and notification teams to provide follow-up calls to the evacuees. Using Kenyon Response,

our proprietary crisis management software, we activated and widely publicized a free phone number and a specific email address.

Kenyon continued their operation during a critical period of transition from shock to recovery. Based on practice experience, we adjusted the number of agents available, and the scripts being used to help guide calls through the transitional phase.



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RESULTS

During this operation, Kenyon was able to collect identification, welfare, and location information from those affected, as well as provide information to them such as incident details, wildfire conditions, plane information, bus route changes, and shelter locations. It also allowed employees to provide updates on their location and welfare. The systems provided the client with complete visibility of the status of the employees.

With Kenyon's support, the client and those affected have access to critical information needed to face the crisis and, more importantly, to facilitate a more fluid transition to their new normal.

If you would like to know more about Kenyon Emergency Services, visit kenyoninternational.com or contact kenyon@kenyoninternational.com