

Canadian oil city lifts wildfire evacuation orders

May 19 2024



Smoke spreads in multiple directions due to shifting winds in Fort McMurray Forest Area, Alberta, on May 13, 2024.

Residents forced to flee wildfires threatening a Canadian oil-producing hub were allowed to return home Saturday after evacuation orders were lifted.

"We are so pleased to be able to welcome people home and have them

return home safely," Fort McMurray Mayor Sandy Bowman said, thanking the more than 6,000 [residents](#) who had been ordered to leave for their "patience, resolve and strength."

Much-needed rains have reduced the intensity of the wildfire in western Canada's Alberta province and "significant progress" has been made to contain its northern edge, a city statement said.

However, more than 19,000 hectares (47,000 [acres](#)) continued to burn out of control, Alberta firefighters said in a Saturday morning update, which noted more forecasted rain.

The evacuation order for the Fort McMurray residents came Tuesday as the rapidly spreading fire approached the city.

In 2016, it was hit by a fire that prompted the evacuation of 90,000 people, in a major catastrophe that saw 2,500 buildings destroyed and billions of dollars in damage.

Canadian authorities have been bracing for the possibility of another devastating wildfire season, after the country's worst-ever last year saw blazes from coast to [coast](#), charring more than 15 million hectares of land.

A federal government tracker showed 114 active fires as of Saturday afternoon, including 42 in Alberta and 40 in westernmost British Columbia.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Canadian oil city lifts wildfire evacuation orders (2024, May 19) retrieved 30 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-05-canadian-oil-city-wildfire-evacuation.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.