Wildfire readiness gap: 61% of Canadians aren't concerned despite a series of record-breaking wildfire seasons

As risk is rising across Canada, Intact Insurance shares actions homeowners can take to improve home protection this wildfire season.

TORONTO, May 7, 2026 /CNW/ - A recent national survey found that nearly two-thirds of Canadians (61%) remain not very or not at all concerned about wildfires[1], despite an estimated 60% of Canadian communities being located in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), where human settlements meet or intermingle with wildfire-prone forests and grasslands[2]. This striking disconnect persists even as the scale of wildfire activity continues to grow. 2025 was Canada's second-largest wildfire season on record by area burned, with approximately 8.9 million hectares affected, an area larger than the combined landmass of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, forcing the evacuation of over 75,000 people[3].

Once concentrated in western provinces and territories, wildfires are now increasingly reaching regions across the country that were not traditionally at risk. According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)[4], the amount of land burned across Canada has surged by 81% over the previous decade. A changing climate is accelerating this trend, lengthening the wildfire season[5], with hot, dry, and windy conditions that create more dry fuel, more lightning ignitions, and stronger winds to spread the flames. The result is a risk that now touches many communities coast to coast, and a growing urgency for at risk Canadian homeowners to take steps to protect their home.

"Wildfires are unpredictable, but our response to them doesn't have to be. We just need to be smarter about prevention. As wildfire risks are increasing across Canada, small actions taken today – such as clearing gutters, creating space around the house, and moving combustibles – can help to meaningfully reduce the risks of wildfire damage. Through our Keep it Intact prevention program, we aim to help Canadians protect what matters most by turning trusted guidance into concrete steps that can make a real difference," says Mel Wright, Vice President and Head of Intact Insurance's Keep It Intact prevention program.

Spring into action: Taking steps to reduce wildfire risks at home

Windblown embers, capable of travelling up to two kilometres[6] on average, can land on dry vegetation and debris in gutters, roofs, and yards, turning small sparks into fast-moving fires that threaten homes and cause costly damage. It often takes personal experience to prompt action. Those who have experienced property damage are significantly more likely to take preventive steps, but 69% have not yet felt the need to take action[7]. A few preventive actions now is a step towards reducing risk.

---

[1] Based on a survey from Léger commissioned by Intact Financial Corporation and conducted from March 13 to 16, 2026, among 1,639 Canadians aged over 18. Results were weighed to ensure representativeness by gender, age, region, language, and household composition. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size yields a margin of error no greater than ±2.43%,(19 times out of 20).

[2] *Mapping Canadian wildland fire interface areas,* Canadian Forest Service, Government of Canada

[3] *Canada's Top 10 weather stories of 2025*, Government of Canada

[4] *A Decade After the Fort McMurray Wildfire: Where Do We Stand on Wildfire Risk and Preparedness?* IBC.ca

[5] *Wildfire-Ready*, Intact Centre on Climate adaptation

[6] *Why we focus on embers*, firesmartbc.ca

[7] Based on a survey from Léger commissioned by Intact Financial Corporation and conducted from March 13 to 16, 2026, among 1,639 Canadians aged over 18. Results were weighed to ensure representativeness by gender, age, region, language, and household composition. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size yields a margin of error no greater than ±2.43%,(19 times out of 20).

Top prevention tips :

- Remove needles, leaves, and other debris from gutters, roofs, decks, balconies. Regularly clean vents.
- Store firewood and combustibles at least 10 metres from the house, and never under decks.
- Keep grass trimmed under 10 cm and landscape with low-growing, well-spaced shrubs and other fire-resistant plants.
- Remove nearby conifers within 10 metres of the house, trim low-hanging branches, and prune trees to maintain a 2-metre

ground clearance.

- Clear all combustible ground cover (mulch, plants) within a 1.5-metre perimeter around your house.

More advanced upgrades:

- Create a firebreak around your home using non-combustible surfaces (mineral soil, rock, concrete, or stone) within 1.5 metres of your house.
- Maintain a 15 cm non-combustible gap (cement board or metal skirting) between the ground and house siding.
- Install non-combustible fencing (cement fibre, metal, chain link, or stone)
- Install 3 mm non-combustible screens on all external vents (except dryer vents).
- Install multi-pane or tempered-glass windows and exterior fire-rated doors.
- Install Class-A fire-resistant roofing (cement fibre, metal, or asphalt shingles).
- Install non-combustible siding (stucco, metal, stone, or cement fibre board).
- Retrofit all deck components to fire-rated materials with a continuous, non-gapped surface.
- Replace worn or missing weather stripping on all doors, including garage doors.

Keep It Intact

In 2025, Intact launched a national prevention program called Keep It Intact. The program provides an array of tools and practical advice to empower Canadians in protecting their properties. With many easily implemented and proven tips, homeowners can take proactive steps to help prevent or reduce damage from extreme weather.

The Wildfire Protection Service

Intact's Wildfire Protection Service is offered at no additional cost to eligible customers in Alberta and British Columbia. When communities are threatened by active wildfires, the third-party provider may be deployed to help protect homes by removing combustible materials, setting up temporary sprinkler systems, and sealing ember entry points. The service also supports preparedness and response through on-site assessments, temporary fire-retardant applications where appropriate, and other prevention measures carried out in coordination with local authorities, helping safeguard homes. For more information on Intact's Wildfire Protection Service visit: Wildfire Protection Service Q&A.

The Jiffy app, helping homeowners protecting their home

With 20% of Canadians naming "finding it hard to secure reliable contractors[8]" as one of their top three barriers to taking additional steps to protect their home against extreme weather, access to trusted professionals emerges as a notable challenge. Jiffy helps homeowners handle seasonal maintenance and make their home more resilient to severe weather, by connecting them with vetted experts for on-demand home maintenance and repair services. Jiffy currently operates in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton and Montreal.

For more prevention tips and seasonal checklists, visit keepitintact.ca.

About Intact Financial Corporation

Intact Financial Corporation (TSX: IFC) is a global provider of property and casualty insurance founded on core values and a belief that insurance is about people, not things. Intact's success is fueled by its 32,000 employees worldwide who embody the company's purpose: to help people, businesses and society prosper in good times and be resilient in bad times. To achieve its ambitions, Intact seeks to ensure customers are its advocates, its people are engaged and the company is one of the most respected.

Intact is the largest provider of property and casualty insurance in Canada and has successfully exported its strengths across North America, the UK, and Europe. Its growing commercial and specialty solutions network now spans over 150 countries. With a customer-driven mindset, Intact has expanded its operations to include insurance distribution, restoration and prevention.

Intact solidifies its outperformance by leveraging its competitive advantages: global leadership in data and AI for pricing and risk selection; deep claims expertise and integrated supply chain network; and strong capital and investment management. Intact's total annual operating Direct Premiums Written has tripled over the last decade to $25 billion.

Explore Intact's offerings at intactfc.com.

[8] Based on a survey from Léger commissioned by Intact Financial Corporation and conducted from March 13 to 16, 2026, among 1,639 Canadians aged over 18. Results were weighed to ensure representativeness by gender, age, region, language, and household composition. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size yields a margin of error no greater than ±2.43%,(19 times out of 20).

SOURCE Intact Financial Corporation

For further information: Media Inquiries: Caroline Audet, Manager, Media Relations and Public Affairs, +1 (416) 227-7905, media@intact.net; Investor Inquiries: Geoff Kwan, Deputy SVP, Finance and Chief Investor Relations Officer, 1 866 440-8300 ext. 20022, ir@intact.net

https://newsroom.intactfc.com/2026-05-07-Wildfire-readiness-gap-61-of-Canadians-arent-concerned-despite-a-series-of-record-breaking-wildfire-seasons