

Wildfires Threaten Canada Mine Employees



Wildfires tearing through portions of Canada's Northwest Territories are affecting workers at the area's three major diamond mines but have not yet encroached on operations.

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Thousands of residents have been evacuated from the area amid dangerous circumstances caused by more than 200 fires, according to a government [Facebook](#) page. Yellowknife, which is at the heart of the wildfires, is home to a number of employees from [De Beers' Gahcho Kué mine](#), the company said last week. The [Burgundy Diamonds-owned Ekati deposit](#) and [Rio Tinto's Diavik site](#) also have several Yellowknife-based workers.

“Over the past few days, De Beers has watched with deep concern the growing extent of the unprecedented wildfires in the Northwest Territories, which have led to the evacuation of eight communities,” De Beers noted. “With the safety and well-being of employees and their families affected by the situation in the [Northwest Territories] top of mind, De Beers is working to support employees affected by the evacuations to enable them to be with their loved ones.”

The fires are approximately 135 kilometers from Ekati and about 200 kilometers from Gahcho Kué. Currently, they do not present a threat to operations, the owners explained. All three companies are working to support the affected communities. Diavik Diamond Mine donated CAD 250,000 (\$185,523) to the United Way Northwest Territories, while De Beers has contributed \$50,000.

“We are also working closely with our more than 40 Gahcho Kué colleagues who have evacuated [affected areas],” De Beers noted. “About 30% of the Gahcho Kué workforce lives in Yellowknife, and the company is watching the situation in the [Northwest Territories] capital city very closely.”

Image: Wildfires in Yellowknife. (Burgundy Diamond Mines)