



Indigenous Police Chiefs of Ontario

MEDIA RELEASE
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STRENGTHENING FIRST NATIONS EMERGENCY RESPONSE RESILIENCE: IPCO AND IWA LAUNCH CERTIFIED WILDLAND FIRE TRAINING INITIATIVE

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada - The Indigenous Police Chiefs of Ontario (IPCO) and the International Wildfire Alliance (IWA) are proud to announce a landmark partnership aimed at enhancing community safety and wildfire preparedness in First Nations across Ontario. With the support of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) this collaborative, multi-phase initiative will provide 100 learners from Indigenous communities throughout Ontario with certified and accredited wildland firefighting training. Successful participants will receive internationally recognized training from industry leading experts while building initial attack teams in their home community.

As climate change continues to drive more frequent and severe wildfire events, frontline readiness in First Nations communities has become increasingly critical. This initiative directly supports First Nations in developing trained personnel who can respond rapidly and safely to wildfire threats in their own territories.

“This partnership represents a significant investment and nationally scalable advance in Indigenous-led emergency response,” said Ashley Russell-Taylor, Operations Lead with IPCO. “By building qualified wildland fire teams within our communities, we strengthen sovereignty, protection, and resilience.”

Training will be delivered in alignment with both national and international standards, ensuring participants gain the knowledge, skills, and recognized certification required to operate effectively alongside provincial and national response agencies. Graduates will help fill a critical skills gap while promoting local employment and long-term sustainability in emergency services.





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“The IWA is honoured to work alongside IPCO to empower Indigenous communities with professional-level wildfire training,” said Alan Sinclair, IWA President. “Together, we are supporting safer communities and a stronger response to our growing wildfire challenge.”

The project will roll out across multiple regions in Ontario, with a focus on northern and remote First Nations communities, with training opportunities available to both new learners and those currently serving in community safety roles such as fire, wildfire, policing, and emergency management.

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