



5.13 COVID-19 Pandemic Response Task Number Eligibility

5.13.1 GENERAL

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic event is considered an “emergency” within the meaning of both the *Public Health Act* and the *Emergency Program Act*. A recognized medical authority must declare that an emergency exists for the Emergency Program Act to apply. On March 17, 2020, a public health emergency was declared under the *Public Health Act*.

As a result, task numbers for local and First Nations governments will be available for eligible emergency response costs, effective on the date of this policy, and within the meaning of the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation.

Related Policies and Guidelines:

- [Policy 2.02 TASK AUTHORIZATION](#)
- [Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations](#)

5.13.2 POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) Costs accrued by First Nations and local governments responding to COVID-19 prior to the effective date of this policy (i.e. retroactive costs) will not be reimbursed.
- (2) Prospective COVID-19 pandemic response costs eligible for reimbursement by EMBC will include:
 - Incremental costs associated with activating an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) including activities related to planning, implementation or monitoring of any specific response actions or measures directed by the Province of British Columbia through the Public Health Officer or Emergency Management BC, or by federal counterparts in collaboration with First Nations governments within the Province.
 - Incremental costs related to any actions required to support additional health capacity including the establishment of testing stations, isolation facilities or others that may be requested or directed by a health authority.
 - Incremental costs related to the implementation of any provincial measures to restrict activities, movement or other actions directed by the province, federal government or First Nation in collaboration with the applicable Health Authority to manage COVID-19.



- Incremental costs for the continuation of locally-administered essential services. Included in local government and First Nations plans, essential services are considered critical to preserving life, health and basic societal functioning.
 - Costs associated with the organization of appropriately trained and equipped personnel, including volunteers, to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access support networks.
- (3) Emergency Management BC (EMBC) will work with First Nations and local governments to receive all response claims electronically in order to meet the expected demands, need for expedited payments, as well as to enable remote approvals by payment processing staff.
- (4) This is an iterative policy and may be adjusted in response to unanticipated consequences or to reflect the dynamic reality of the COVID-19 pandemic event.

5.13.3 CONDITIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES

Considerations:

Given the probable long-term economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic event on all Canadians and British Columbians, Local government and First Nations EOCs are asked to consider:

- Prudent use of staffing and physical assets;
- Employing the full range of employees that may be available, as well as volunteers, to implement necessary measures to sustain long-term activation of a local EOC; and
- Exercising patience when requesting expenditure authorization and resources from Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centres, given the all-of-society impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic event.

5.13.4 AUTHORITIES

Emergency Program Act

Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation

Lori Halls

Deputy Minister

Date: March 18, 2020
