



# Emergency Management in BC: Reference Manual

### Foreword

Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC), under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, has developed an online *Emergency Management Training Manual* designed to build a common understanding of emergency management in British Columbia (BC).

The manual is designed as a reference guide to support the core Emergency Management principles applied in BC. It is meant to compliment the Emergency Management training that is offered through EMBC. It will provide a comprehensive overview to:

- BC's emergency management framework
- The roles and responsibilities of all levels of government in preparing for and responding to major emergencies
- The systems, processes and structures for mitigating, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies

While the manual does not cover everything you may encounter in helping your community, it will help you see emergency management from a broad perspective.

### Audience

The manual is intended for individuals involved in various levels of the emergency management field, including:

- local government and emergency response personnel
- senior and elected officials
- emergency response agencies
- volunteer organizations
- health and social service agencies
- provincial government staff
- private sector representatives

### How to Use this Manual

The *Emergency Management Reference Guide* is divided into nine modules and supplementary information is attached as ‘additional reading’ and ‘templates’ at the end of each module. The Manual is structured as follows:

- **Module 1: Introduction to Emergency Management** – provides a basic understanding of emergency management in BC.
- **Module 2: Emergency Management Programs** – provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of individuals and families, local, provincial and federal governments and First Nations in emergency management.
- **Module 3: BC’s Emergency Response Management System** – provides an overview of the the framework for a standardized emergency response in BC.
- **Module 4: Emergency Planning** – provides key information on the creation of local government emergency plans and emergency operations centres.
- **Module 5: Emergency Operations Centre** – provides an overview of the purpose, roles and functions of an emergency operations centre.
- **Module 6: Supporting People in Emergencies** – provides key information about supporting individuals and families during, and in the aftermath, of an emergency.
- **Module 7: Human Resource Management** – provides key information for creating a healthy emergency response environment and becoming an effective leader.
- **Module 8: Emergency Response** – provides best practices for managing an emergency response, such as effective communication.
- **Module 9: Emergency Financial Assistance** – provides an overview of the financial requirements associated with an emergency response.

### Maintaining this Manual

The *Emergency Management Reference Guide* will be updated to ensure it remains accurate, relevant, and continues to reflect the evolution of emergency management in BC. For the most up to date version, please refer to the website at [www.pep.bc.ca](http://www.pep.bc.ca)



# Introduction to Emergency Management

## 1.0 Overview

British Columbia is a large and diverse province, with rugged mountain ranges and vast bodies of water—and its unique geography and varied climate results in a range of potential hazards. Flooding is one of BC's most frequent hazards, along with large wildland urban interface fires. Severe weather is a threat to all parts of the province, with the potential for tsunamis, landslides, avalanches and storms. A severe earthquake is also an ever present threat. In addition to these natural hazards, there is also the potential of human-caused emergencies, such as hazardous material spills or infrastructure failures that could threaten lives and cause extensive damage in the province. There are a total of fifty-seven identified hazards that threaten the province.

While no area within BC is immune from the threat of hazards, effective emergency management can reduce the impact on the community. Emergency management is a continuous and integrated process involving the efforts of individuals, private sector, local, provincial and federal governments to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities and establish required resources to be able to respond effectively to an emergency.

In BC, local authorities (i.e., municipalities, regional districts, First Nations and federal parks) are responsible for planning and responding to emergencies within their jurisdictional areas. Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC) provides leadership in emergency management on behalf of the Province. EMBC works directly with local governments, provincial ministries, other jurisdictions and volunteers in a coordinated effort to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

### 2.0 Evolution of Emergency Management

Over the past century, Canadians have experienced some tragic events. There are historical records and anthropologic evidence of devastating hurricanes on the east coast and earthquakes in the west that date back hundreds of years. In 1917 a major explosion in Halifax harbour resulted in immense loss of life and property and intense suffering for the survivors—this incident highlighted the need for, and is widely considered to have shaped, emergency management in Canada.

It has only been in the last 60 years that formal government sponsored emergency management systems have existed in Canada. Many of the original emergency management efforts were civil defence oriented, and military models of emergency management were augmented with civilian volunteers. Gradually, the focus shifted from a national effort of emergency management to a greater emphasis on emergency planning at the community level. In the 1950's, the focus on emergency preparedness was increasing and by the late 1960's, all provinces had passed emergency management legislation and were forming their own emergency programs. During this time, individuals with expertise in fire, police or military services fulfilled the emergency management requirements of the community.

In the 1970's and 1980's, there was a growing awareness that catastrophic disasters required extraordinary response from all levels of government. It was during this time that emergency management began to emerge as a distinct field from that of first response (i.e., fire, police and emergency medical services). By the 1990s, emergency management was becoming more integrated into the wider policy and management framework—and the focus of emergency management began to shift from being highly task-specific to more strategic and long range.

The earthquake that struck San Francisco in October of 1989 proved to be a powerful catalyst to the development of emergency management in North America. Citizens could now witness the devastation and the rescues in real time on television, and the political will to produce an emergency management model for BC led to the creation of the *Emergency Program Act* in 1993. The information in this *Act* provided a new framework for emergency management and required municipalities to develop emergency plans.

Recent years have witnessed a host of large-scale disasters of various kinds throughout the world. Attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in 2001, Bali in 2002 and 2005, Madrid in 2004, London in 2005, and the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot have increased the profile of emergency management in responding to the threat of terrorism worldwide. The unprecedented loss of life and devastation of the 2004 tsunami that hit South Asia has alerted coastal communities for the continued need to prepare for this type of event. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina alone destroyed 300,000 homes and displaced about 800,000 people. The linkage between climate change and extreme weather events has highlighted the requirement for comprehensive emergency management. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), West Nile Virus and the risk of Pandemic



Influenza brought to the forefront the need for health professionals to build upon existing health response frameworks and strengthen ties with emergency management.

Much has changed in emergency management during the last two decades and the practice of emergency management is still evolving and growing. This evolution is, to a large extent, in response to various threats to human and natural resources. Also as science and technology have improved the ability to anticipate catastrophic disasters, the responsibility to reduce the potential for massive losses of human lives and property has increasingly been assumed by governments and other emergency management agencies.

Preparing to deal effectively with the threat of additional emergencies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a high priority for all levels of government. In BC, the Province recognized that the increasingly complex nature of emergency management required a comprehensive management structure to ensure a highly coordinated and organized response to all incidents. The Province established the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS), based on the Incident Command System (ICS) created in the United States, to provide the structure for integrated emergency management within the province. BCERMS is now mandatory for all provincial government agencies, and recommended for local government.

### 3.0 Emergency Legislation

The authority and responsibility for emergency management is established in a number of federal and provincial acts.

#### 3.1 Federal Legislation

Two federal statutes set out the broad responsibilities of the Government of Canada for emergency preparedness and response. These Acts are the *Emergencies Act* and the *Preparedness Act*, their responsibilities are:

- *Emergencies Act* – defines four categories of emergencies in which the federal government may be required to act: public welfare emergencies (i.e., natural or human disasters); public order emergencies (i.e., threats to internal security); international emergencies (i.e., external threats to Canada or its allies); and war.
- *Emergency Preparedness Act* – defines what the federal government and its institutions must and should do to ensure they are always prepared in an emergency.

#### 3.2 Provincial Legislation

The *Emergency Program Act* sets out the broad responsibilities for emergency management within the province. Outlining the responsibilities of local authorities, provincial ministries and crown corporations. The following sections from the Act identify the obligations of a local authority:

- Section 6 (1) – “A local authority is at all times responsible for the direction and control of the local authority's emergency response.”
- Section 6 (2) – “A local authority must prepare or cause to be prepared local emergency plans respecting preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters”.
- Section 6 (3) – “A local authority must establish and maintain an emergency management organization to develop and implement emergency plans and other preparedness, response and recovery measures.”

The *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* provides additional detail regarding local authorities' emergency management responsibilities. The regulation requires local authorities to prepare emergency plans that reflect the assessment of the relative risk of occurrence of a hazard and the potential impact on people and property. The emergency plans must address all the jurisdictional areas for which the local authority has responsibility. In addition, local authorities must complete periodic updating of the local emergency plan as well as establish and maintain a training program that includes exercises for all emergency response staff.

In summary, a local authority must:

- define the potential emergencies that could affect their jurisdictional area
- provide policy guidance and direction to emergency management organizations
- conduct an assessment of the risk of occurrence and the potential impact of a hazard on people and property within their jurisdictional area
- establish procedures for review and revision of local emergency plans
- conduct training and exercises for all emergency response staff
- identify procedures for obtaining emergency resources, including personnel, equipment, facilities and financial resources
- establish procedures by which the local emergency plan is to be implemented
- establish procedures for notifying persons threatened by emergencies
- coordinate the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical services to victims of emergencies
- establish priorities for restoring essential services.

### 3.3 Local Authority Bylaw

Each community government must pass a bylaw in order to provide the appropriate delegation of authority to the emergency program executive committee to operate as a directive body. This bylaw will

authorize and empower the development and maintenance of an emergency program by an executive committee. Each regional district government must pass an additional bylaw to extend the service throughout all the electoral areas of the regional district.

The implementing bylaw should specify the organization of the emergency program, delegate authority to an Emergency Program Executive Committee and outline the responsibilities of the local authority.

Bylaws should be reviewed following each local government election to ensure that newly elected officials are made aware of their responsibilities to support the emergency program and to ensure the provisions of bylaws are up to date.

Passing the bylaw reinforces awareness of the Emergency Program Executive Committee to the council or board and demonstrates their commitment and support for the local emergency program.

Emergency programs may be shared between jurisdictions by agreement/bylaws. Emergencies do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, many communities have benefited by an integration of emergency programs. As an example, a municipality may integrate their plans with a regional district.



### 4.0 Emergency Management Cycle

Emergency management cycle is based on the four pillars of emergency management – mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. They are all interconnected. The activities within the various phases take place concurrently and in support of the others. For example, recovery needs to begin shortly after response activities are initiated, and mitigation activities often start prior to recovery being complete and carry on while preparedness activities are underway. The cycle as a whole is an ongoing process.

This four-phase cycle of emergency management—mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery—is illustrated by the diagram below:



A comprehensive emergency management program is based on the four-pillar approach:

- **Mitigation and Prevention** – means actions taken to eliminate or reduce hazards and their impacts. Mitigation involves actions taken to protect lives and property, such as dike enhancements, land-use management and public education.
- **Preparedness** – means measures undertaken in advance to ensure that individuals and agencies will be ready to react, by developing emergencies plans, mutual aid agreements, resource inventories, training, exercises, and emergency communications systems.

- **Response** – begins when an emergency is imminent or as the event occurs. Response encompasses the activities that address the direct effects of an incident and are designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury and property damage. Local government is responsible for emergency response. As indicated by the situation, response activities include:
  - gathering information and prioritizing response activities
  - investigating the nature and source of the threat
  - allocating scarce resources and lifesaving needs (e.g., evacuation, search and rescue, emergency medical assistance)
  - restoring critical infrastructure (e.g., communication systems, transportation, utilities)
  - ensuring continuity of critical services (e.g., public works).
- **Recovery** – focuses on actions to restore a community to as close to pre-disaster state as possible. Recovery measures include activities such as:
  - Establishing resiliency centers
  - Supporting evacuees directly impacted by emergencies
  - Providing financial assistance and restoring economic activity
  - Managing donations
  - Developing initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents.

The emergency management cycle is applicable to emergency planning conducted by all levels of government, as well as organizations, businesses, and individuals as they develop personal or family emergency plans.

## 5.0 Principles of Emergency Management

The principles of emergency management frame the key underlying beliefs and goals of emergency management. The principles aim to guide the design, implementation and ongoing improvement of frameworks, programs, procedures, guidelines and activities that taken together comprise the emergency management systems of Canada.

1. **Responsibility** – all levels of society in Canada have responsibilities in regard to emergency management. Individuals, organizations, businesses and all levels of government have duties to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies or disasters.
2. **Comprehensive** – a comprehensive approach to emergency management should be adopted across the mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery components. This comprehensive

all-hazards approach should promote partnerships across all areas of society and levels of response.

3. **Partnerships** – Good partnerships, based on effective collaboration, coordination and communication, are key to effective emergency management.
4. **Coherency of Action** – emergency management requires collaboration, coordination and integration by all partners in order to most effectively apply emergency management resources and execute activities. Coherency of action relies on clear roles, responsibilities, authorities and capacities of all partners.
5. **Risk-Based** – a systematic assessment of hazards, threats, risks and vulnerabilities should be carried out before appropriate emergency management measures are developed. Risk management practices should facilitate improved decision-making by clarifying the types of risk, including the causes, likelihood of occurrence and severity of consequences.
6. **All-Hazards** – hazards should be identified, assessed and then prioritized against potential vulnerabilities. Assessing the risks associated with all hazards in an integrated way helps reduce the vulnerability of people, property, the environment and the economy.
7. **Resilience** – resilience is the capacity of a community or agency to bounce back or absorb the impact of emergencies or disasters and resume business. A community may even use the emergency to “build back better.”
8. **Clear Communication** – clear communication by appropriate authorities to all stakeholders is a critical and continuous process before, during and after an emergency. Authorities must continually develop and maintain solid communication linkages during all phases of emergency management.
9. **Continuous Improvement** – lessons learned and knowledge generated from experiences, observations, and reflections should be used to continually improve practices and prevent the same challenges from recurring. Continuous improvement should be shared widely and form an integral part of every emergency management function.
10. **Code of Ethics** – while no single code of ethics has yet been agreed upon for the profession, the Code of Ethics of the International Association of Emergency Managers, with its emphasis on respect, commitment and professionalism is generally accepted as the standard for emergency managers.

# 2

## Emergency Management Programs

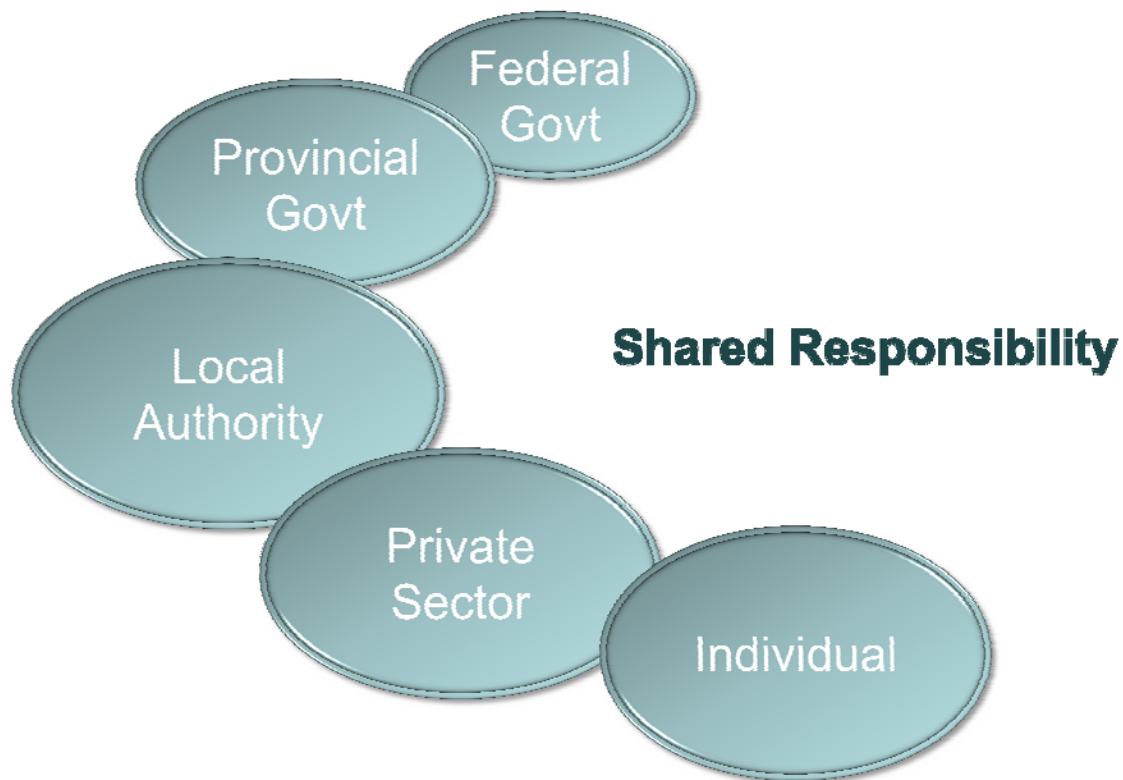
### 1.0 Introduction

Emergency management in British Columbia is a community based, all hazards approach which begins with individuals. Depending on the nature and scope of the emergency, local government, provincial government, federal government and other agencies may be involved. However, the majority of emergencies are handled at the local level.

Individuals, occasionally with help from neighbours, plan and respond to a wide range of emergencies, such as power outages or flooding. When the emergency is beyond the scope of what an individual can handle, the local government steps in to provide assistance. Assistance may range from a fire crew attending a house fire to the management of a large-scale evacuation of the community.

If the scale, complexity or duration of the emergency threatens to exhaust municipal resources, the local government may call on the provincial government for assistance. Similarly, if the capacity of the provincial government is exhausted, the province may call on the federal government for assistance. The federal government may contribute its own resources, or look to other provinces or the international community for assistance in response to a large-scale emergency.

As the diagram depicts, emergency management is based upon an integrated model of shared responsibility with the federal government, provincial government, municipal government, the business community and individual citizens who have a responsibility to be prepared for emergencies.



## 2.0 Individual and Family

Each citizen is responsible for their personal emergency preparedness. Knowing what to do when a major emergency occurs in the community and what personal preparedness measures are needed (such as a family emergency plan) will strengthen their ability to care for themselves. It is recommended that individuals be prepared for up to 72 hours.

Before being able to see to the needs of the community, individuals tasked with a public safety role must ensure that they are personally prepared so that they are able to devote their attention to the emergency at hand. Personal and family preparedness must be considered by all citizens and, as leaders in emergency management, leading by example is critical.

Certain types of events like severe storms or power outages may dictate that people shelter in-place, while others like wildland-interface fires may require an evacuation with little notice. An important step towards personal preparedness is compiling both a survival kit as well as a Grab 'n go kit. A Grab 'n go kit can form part of the larger survival kit, though it needs to be self-contained and light enough to easily be carried. Ideas for items that individuals should plan to include in their survival kit to be prepared for up to 72 hours are listed on the following page.

### **Basic items you will need to survive for 72 hours:**

- **Water** - at least four litres of water per person per day (including small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order)
- **Food** - that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods (remember to replace the food and water once a year)
- **Manual can opener**
- **Flashlight and batteries**
- **Candles and matches or lighter** (remember to place candles in sturdy containers and to put them out before going to sleep)
- **Battery-powered or wind-up radio** (and extra batteries)
- **First Aid Kit**
- Special items such as **prescription medications, infant formula and equipment for people with disabilities**
- **Extra keys** for your car, house, safe deposit box etc
- **Cash** in smaller bills, change for pay phones, banking information
- A copy of your emergency plan including **contact information**
- Copies of identification papers (licenses, birth certificates, health cards)
- Copies of all insurance policies and contact info for insurance agent

### **Recommended additional kit supplies:**

- A change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- Sleeping bag or warm (foil) blanket for each household member
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Garbage bags for personal sanitation
- Toilet paper and other personal care supplies
- Safety gloves
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, fasteners, work gloves)
- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel
- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- Things to keep children busy
- Information and pet supplies if taking pets along



Another way to enhance personal preparedness is to get involved within your community's emergency program. It could be as simple as accessing the community or regional district website and learning more about the local emergency program or attending public education events. For those looking for a higher level of involvement, there are various volunteer organizations that play a part during emergencies such as Emergency Social Services or Emergency Radio Communications.

### 3.0 Local Government

When an emergency extends beyond individual capability, it becomes the responsibility of the local government (i.e., municipality or regional district).

Most emergencies in BC are managed by local governments at the first response level (site) and do not require activation of the emergency management structure [as described in Module 3]. The first level of emergency response is provided by fire and/or police services and may involve the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). For specific hazards such as flooding, severe storms, and infrastructure failures, public works or engineering departments may provide a first level of response. Other first responders, such as the RCMP and British Columbia Ambulance Service, have a provincial mandate but with a local presence through detachments or stations. These agencies are usually accessed through 9-1-1 and have internal dispatch arrangements.

First level response may also include mutual aid. Examples include agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions for additional fire or police resources, or arrangements with Emergency Social Services for support to families. These resources are activated by the Incident Commander and coordinated at the Incident Command Post.

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is also activated by the EOC. It is most often activated by an incident commander in small localized events such as house fires, but in larger scale responses the EOC manages ESS through operations.

While the Emergency Program is not directly involved in the management of the first level of emergency response, it does have a role in the effective coordination of local emergency resources. Through the planning and exercising process, information is shared between emergency responders to gain a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Emergency programs for local authorities are similar for First Nations governments. First Nations may adopt these roles and responsibilities through Band Council Resolution or bylaw. Treaty First Nations have local authority responsibility under provincial legislation.

### 3.1 Emergency Management Committees

Local governments usually establish two emergency management committees: Emergency Executive Committee and Emergency Planning Committee. The names and structures of these committees may vary slightly from community to community, and in some cases there may be overlap or merging of the two committees (e.g., elected officials may participate in both committees).

#### **Emergency Executive Committee**

The purpose of the Emergency Executive Committee is to oversee the process of planning and responding to an emergency within the jurisdiction of the local authority. The Emergency Executive Committee is responsible for setting policy direction to ensure all aspects of the community's Emergency Management Program are addressed, including approving the Emergency Plan, establishing the emergency program budget, and appointing the Emergency Program Coordinator, as well as potentially other key emergency response personnel (e.g., Emergency Social Services Director).

The Emergency Executive Committee is a sub-committee of the local Municipal Council or Board. This committee consists of the following representatives: Mayor and/or Council Representation, Regional District Chair, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Emergency Program Coordinator.

#### **Emergency Planning Committee**

The Emergency Planning Committee is responsible for planning a community's Emergency Management Program. The Emergency Planning Committee is comprised of local government personnel, agency representatives and volunteers, and is usually chaired by the Emergency Program Coordinator.

The Emergency Planning Committee consists of the following representatives:

- Emergency Program Coordinator
- Chief Administrator Officer
- Senior representatives from all departments including:
  - fire
  - police
  - public works
  - engineering
  - parks and recreation
  - finance
- BC Ambulance representative
- Regional Health Authority representative
- Emergency Social Services Director
- Information Officer
- School District representative

Representatives from other organizations or agencies who may become committee members or attend specific meetings including:

- Provincial and federal agencies
- Utilities
- Community groups
- Volunteer organizations
- Neighbouring jurisdictions
- Business and industry
- Mutual aid partners

The Emergency Planning Committee usually meets monthly and may have sub-committees to deal with specific aspects of emergency planning, response operations, training/exercises, and/or recovery.

### 3.2 Emergency Program Coordinator

The Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) is a key position in the Municipal Emergency Program. The EPC is responsible for the management and coordination of emergency preparedness, response and recovery and for developing and maintaining an emergency program for the community. The EPC receives policy direction and support from the Emergency Planning Committee.

The EPC must possess strong leadership and communication skills, and be able to work with elected officials as well as volunteers. They must work well under stress and be able to manage a team within an emergency operations center during response. Ideally the EPC position is full-time and filled by an individual who can commit to the various aspects of emergency preparedness and management, rather than an individual who also has first response duties, such as a Fire Chief or Police Chief).

Key responsibilities of an EPC are as follows:

- Develop and maintain community emergency plans
  - Coordinate, review and update the local Emergency Response and Recovery Plan and Emergency Program Strategic Plan
  - Provide advice to departments in developing and maintaining specialized emergency plans (e.g., Emergency Social Services, Emergency Radio Communications)
  - Supervise the work of various emergency committees or sub-committees
- Liaise with internal staff and external agencies
  - Coordinate with provincial and regional counterparts in the development of emergency preparedness and response plans
  - Provide a single point of contact for the local emergency program and maintain up-to-date contact lists

- Build relationships with internal staff and external agencies that have emergency response roles
  - Establish and maintain up-to-date resource lists (e.g., how to obtain specific resources)
- Provide training and exercise to staff, volunteers and the community
  - Identify community training needs and design, develop and deliver training and exercise materials, as required
  - Promote, coordinate and conduct regular education/awareness, training and exercises for local government staff, EOC staff, volunteers and the public
- Develop, promote and maintain volunteer programs
  - Manage and/or support various volunteer-based programs such as: Emergency Social Services, Emergency Radio Communications, Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness
  - Provide volunteer management, volunteer recognition, funding and other support, as required
- Assist with emergency operations
  - Establish a primary Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and identify back up EOC facility
  - Acquire, maintain, test and replenish EOC equipment, supplies and installations
  - Coordinate or advise on assigning personnel to fill functions within the EOC
- Provide finance and administration on behalf of the emergency program
  - Prepare an annual budget, based on direction of the Emergency Executive Committee
  - Acquire, manage and monitor funding for the emergency program, such as: Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) funding or Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA)
  - Maintain all program records, statistics and other relevant information
  - Coordinate the purchase and tracking of all equipment, materials and supplies

### 3.3 Local Volunteer Programs

Emergency volunteers come from every corner of the province and from all walks of life. Their community spirit, dedication and commitment to helping others keeps BC strong.

#### Emergency Social Services

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of their citizens. In order to meet this legislated requirement, most communities have established an Emergency Social Services (ESS) Program comprised of local volunteers and/or staff.

ESS provides short-term assistance to individuals who are forced to leave their homes due to fire, floods, earthquakes or other emergencies. ESS assistance includes food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, and family reunification and is typically provided for 72 hours. This period provides evacuees with the opportunity to plan their next steps including securing alternate accommodations, contacting insurance agents, families and friends, or local non-profit agencies.

### **Emergency Radio Communications (ERC)**

Major emergencies can involve the efforts of various levels of government and multiple response agencies that must be able to coordinate resources, share information, and make effective decisions. When communications are impaired, the inability to share and access critical information can seriously hinder the response and recovery efforts. Emergency Radio Communications (ERC) can provide the necessary skills and resources to ensure continuation of the ability to communicate when normal methods fail due to damage to infrastructure or system overloads.

ERC volunteers provide communication during states of emergency when all other services fail. When cellular towers and antennas are blown down, amateur radio provides communication between the outside world and the public in areas affected by an emergency.

ERC establishes communication linkages with emergency response personnel at various sites, such as:

- Incident Command Post
- Emergency Operation Centre
- ESS Reception Centre/Group Lodging
- Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre
- Agencies
- Utilities
- Non Government Organizations

Some of the communication technology available to ERC includes:

- Voice – radio, satellite, cellular
- Text – packet, e-mail, airmail
- Image – photos, videos

### **General Service Volunteers**

General Service volunteers offer short-term support to emergency response. These volunteer services range from drivers, exercise facilitators, first aiders, manual workers, to additional clerical support staff.

## 4.0 Provincial Government

### 4.1 Emergency Management British Columbia

Emergency Management British Columbia, or EMBC, was formed to be the coordinating agency in the BC provincial government for cross government emergency management activities. EMBC provides executive coordination, strategic planning, and multi-agency facilitation and maintains effective working relationships in an increasingly complex emergency management governance environment.

EMBC enhances public safety and resiliency for individuals and communities throughout BC and reduces property and economic loss from actual or imminent emergencies by:

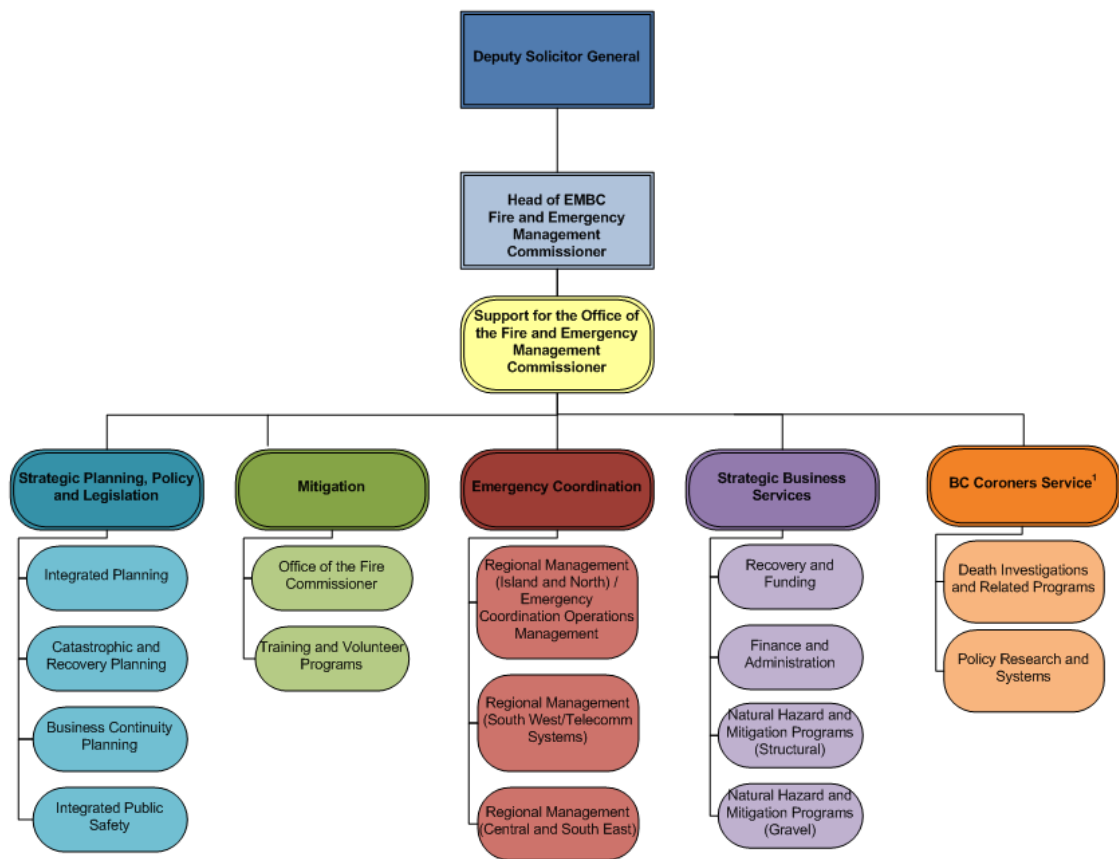
- Providing leadership, expertise and resources to promote individual and community awareness and preparedness
- Advising the Province, and local authorities on emergency prevention strategies
- Coordinating and ensuring timely responses to emergencies.
- Providing training and support to volunteers and local government

#### **EMBC Structure**

EMBC, under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, is the overarching organization encompassing five strategic business units; Strategic Planning, Policy and Legislation, Mitigation, Emergency Coordination, Response, Strategic Business Services and the Coroners Service.

The diagram on the next page shows the EMBC organizational chart.





<sup>1</sup>The Chief Coroner will report directly to the Deputy Solicitor General to support independent decision-making for statutory responsibilities

EMBC's headquarters is located in Victoria. There are also six regional emergency management offices in Kamloops, Nelson, Prince George, Surrey, Terrace, and Victoria (as the map shows).



Regional EMBC staff are responsible for implementing and maintaining planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities at the regional level. Regional staff work with local governments year round to provide training and support before, during, and after emergencies. Regional managers coordinate the integration of key regional stakeholders and maintain critical linkages between local government, provincial and federal staff, First Nations, industry, volunteers, and the public.

During large-scale emergencies, the emergency management structure is activated when a BC community or any significant infrastructure is threatened by an emergency. Regional managers are responsible for the activation of the PREOC to support local government response. PREOCs are co-located with regional emergency management offices. Similarly, the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) and possibly the Central Coordination Group (CCG) may be activated at the provincial

level to facilitate a provincial response to a large-scale event. *[Module 3 provides more detail about BC's emergency response structure and functions of the PREOC, PECC and CCG].*

### **Emergency Coordination Centre**

As a primary point of contact, the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) allows the province to benefit from a one window approach to reporting emergency incidents. The ECC operates 24/7, to facilitate response to reports of human-made and natural disasters that occur throughout the province. This includes but is not limited to dangerous goods spills, search and rescue operations, motor vehicle incidents, flooding, urban interface fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, urban fires, and body recoveries. ECC staff liaise with representatives from numerous federal, provincial, municipal and private sector agencies, the public, media, as well as national and international counterparts in response to these calls.

The ECC receives approximately 7,600 incidents and 300,000 calls annually. 50,000 of those calls are directly associated with problem wildlife and violation reports on behalf of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation Officer Service (MOE COS).

ECC liaise on a daily basis with Regional and HQ EMBC staff with regard to incidents and general information “traffic” related to emergency management in BC.

### **Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (T.E.A.M.S.)**

Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (TEAMS) is a critical component for staffing the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centres (PREOC) during response to all-hazard emergencies. TEAMS members are provincial employees from various ministries trained in the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS). Through inter-ministry agreements, they are available on short notice and can supplement EMBC staff during emergency activations where additional capacity is required.

## **4.2 Provincial Ministries**

In addition to EMBC, (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General) other provincial ministries and crown corporations also have legislated emergency management responsibilities. EMBC is responsible for providing coordination with provincial ministries and crown corporations in support of local government response. Local governments access support from those ministries through the PREOC.

## **4.3 Provincial Volunteers**

More than 13,000 volunteers around BC provide assistance to their local jurisdiction, some of whom are registered as provincial volunteers. Volunteers respond to an average of 6,000 incidents a year, in all kinds of weather, any place, any time.

### **ESS Mobile Support Teams**

Local authorities are normally able to handle most of the community's ESS requirements through their existing ESS team. When additional ESS support is required locally, and mutual aid from surrounding communities is exhausted, a request for assistance is made to the Province for the deployment of ESS Mobile Support Teams (MSTs).

Mobile Support Teams (MSTs) provide short-term support to local ESS teams during an emergency. MSTs are able to travel on short notice to any community and provide on-the-spot training, mentoring and consultation for local ESS personnel. There are five regionally based teams throughout the province comprised of experienced and highly trained ESS volunteers.

An Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) may request MST assistance through a Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (or PREOC). [Module 3: BCERMS provides a description of an EOC and PREOC.] EMBC is responsible for costs associated with training, exercising, and deploying MSTs.

### **Emergency Radio Communications**

During emergencies, a proven means of communication has been emergency radio communications, notably amateur radio. EMBC, through the Provincial Emergency Radio Communications Society (PERCS), is aligned with the many amateur radio clubs throughout BC, thereby linking hundreds of volunteer amateur radio operators who are available to assist with communications in the event of an emergency.

EMBC maintains, through volunteer Station Managers, communications equipment at each of the PREOCs to allow contact with local and regional emergency operations centres through the radio operator network. The communications equipment used is capable of both voice and digital (data) communications. EMBC has deployable kits that can provide the same communications capabilities in the field supporting site or local operations.

### **Search and Rescue**

Search and Rescue (SAR) teams respond to calls for stranded, lost, or injured persons. SAR responders have extensive specialized skills, which may include navigation, tracking, rope rescue, swift water and avalanche training. SAR may also assist the coroner with recovery of the deceased.

Most SAR teams are organized as registered volunteer societies and have varying degrees of association with the local municipality. The police force of jurisdiction has the responsibility for Ground and Inland Water SAR. The BC Ambulance Service, Coroner, or Department of National Defence may also task SAR groups.

### PEP Air

Search and Rescue for missing and downed aircraft is the responsibility of the Department of National Defence and is coordinated by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) located in Victoria. PEP Air assists DND during search and rescue missions when additional resources and local knowledge is required.

As a BC-wide volunteer aviation organization, PEP Air is also dedicated to the provision of air search support to the Ground and Inland Water Search and Rescue Program.

### Road Rescue

Road Rescue Teams provide vehicle extrication, rope rescue and other specialized rescue services in response to motor vehicle accidents. Responders attend to out-of-jurisdiction motor vehicle accidents across the province.

Road Rescue training may include hazardous material awareness, embankment rescue, fire suppression, and First Responder training in addition to extrication training. BC Road Rescue organizations include Fire Departments, Road Rescue Societies, and SAR teams.

## 4.4 Provincial Emergency Management Structure

### Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC)

A PREOC has overall responsibility to:

- Coordinate the province's response to emergencies and disasters within a PEP region
- Coordinate regional provincial and agency support for a local authority, First Nations or other provincial ministry or agency
- Prioritize the deployment of provincial resources on a regional basis and/or to those designated critical by the PREOC
- Report directly to and take policy direction from the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC)
- Provide the PECC with situational information on events within the region including PREOC activities in support of local authorities
- Request resources from the PECC whenever appropriate and/or sufficient resources are not available within the region. Additional resources may include, but are not limited to, those provided by provincial, federal or international agencies as well as the private sector

### Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC)

The emergency operation centre established and activated at the provincial coordination support level to facilitate and coordinate the provincial government's overall priorities and objectives in a significant emergency management event. The PECC is located at the EMBC Keating Office Headquarters in Victoria.

## 5.0 Federal Government

### 5.1 Public Safety Canada

At the federal government level, Public Safety Canada (PSC), through the *Emergency Measures Act*, develops programs and policies to prepare for national disasters. PSC oversees Canada's involvement in international emergency preparedness matters, and provides federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) to help communities rebuild following a disaster. This program is administered through provincial and territorial governments and funding is only available when the money spent by the province/territory exceeds the amount designated, as defined by the population base.

PSC develops national policy, response systems, and standards, and issues alerts to help protect Canada's critical infrastructure. PSC also works closely with other emergency management organizations across Canada, , and provides support to regional partners and first responders in the form of funding (e.g., JEPP), tools, and training. The Government Operations Centre (GOC), located in Ottawa, is the centre for monitoring and coordinating the federal response to emergencies. Regional operational support to the GOC is provided through PSC's network of regional offices.

### 5.2 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is one of the federal government departments responsible for meeting the Government of Canada's obligations and commitments to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and for fulfilling the federal government's constitutional responsibilities in the North. INAC is responsible for emergency management on non-treaty First Nations land. Most of the Department's programs are delivered through partnerships with Aboriginal communities and federal-provincial or federal-territorial agreements. INAC also works with urban Aboriginal people, Métis and Non-Status Indians (many of whom live in rural areas) through the Office of the Federal Interlocutor.

### 5.3 First Nations Emergency Services Society

The First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) is funded by INAC to support First Nations in preparing for emergencies. FNESS assists First Nations with training and developing emergency plans. INAC may also authorize FNESS to go into communities during an emergency to support the First Nations with evacuations when an evacuation alert or order is required.





# British Columbia Emergency Response Management System

## 1.0 Introduction

The British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) is a comprehensive provincial emergency management system that ensures a coordinated and organized response to all emergency events. BCERMS provides the framework for a standardized emergency response in BC.

BCERMS is based on the Incident Command System (ICS), which was originally developed as a fire response management system in the United States. ICS has been widely adopted by first responders and emergency management programs throughout North America. ICS has been tested in a range of emergencies and is designed to provide an appropriate emergency response no matter what type of emergency is involved, and no matter how many agencies or jurisdictions are involved. BCERMS has adopted many features of the ICS for application to emergency response within BC.

Specifically, BCERMS is designed to:

- Standardize the process for the delivery of a multi-ministry, multi-agency coordinated response to all emergencies
- Guide lead ministries and Crown corporations in preparing their emergency plans
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities at each designated level of response

The provincial government endorsed the standards established for BCERMS in 1992, and through policy has mandated its application for all provincial ministries, agencies, and Crown corporations. BCERMS is recommended for use by local governments, regional districts, First Nations, and the private sector. BCERMS has been widely adopted by many key response agencies as the standardized process for organizing and managing a response to emergencies in BC.

### 1.1 Response Goals

BCERMS supports a prescribed set of response goals, set out in priority order, to:

1. Provide for the safety and health of all responders
2. Save lives
3. Reduce suffering
4. Protect public health
5. Protect government infrastructure
6. Protect property
7. Protect the environment
8. Reduce economic and social losses

### 1.2 Key Components

The five components of BCERMS are summarized as follows:

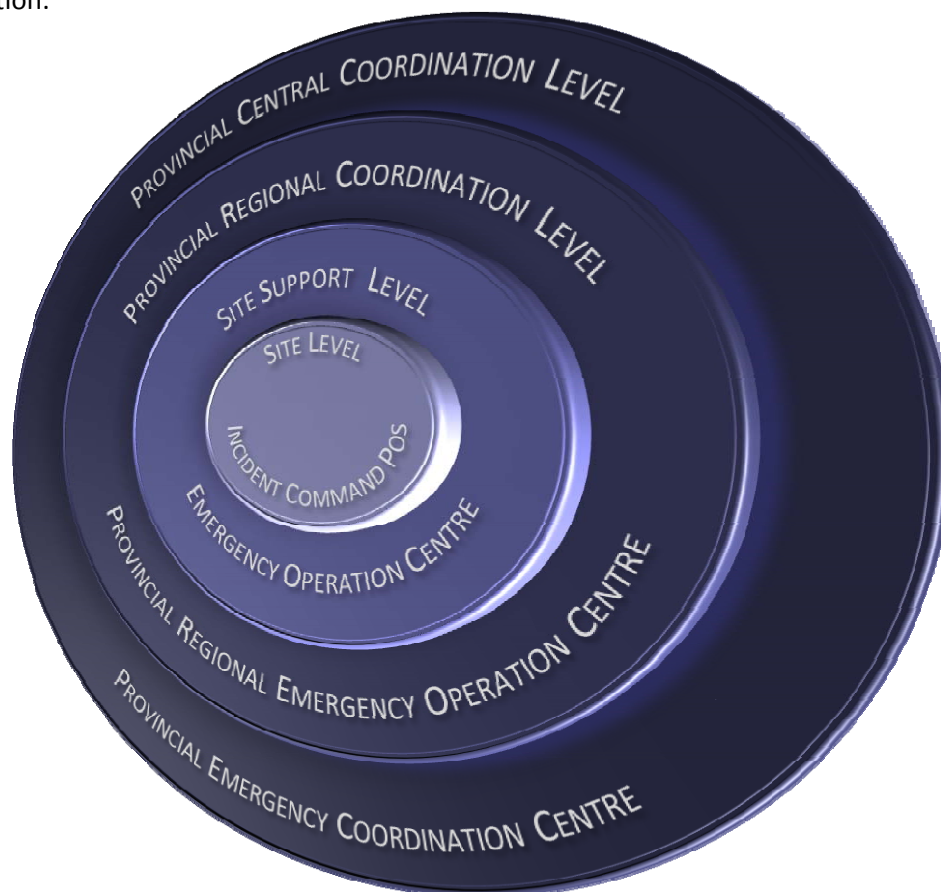
<b>Operations &amp; Control</b>	BCERMS provides a common organizational structure and approach for the management of personnel, equipment, facilities and resources. BCERMS enhances communications between agencies in responding to an emergency, and provides a response structure based on ICS.
<b>Qualifications</b>	BCERMS defines a standard for the management of each functional area and level within the emergency response management system.
<b>Technology</b>	BCERMS establishes the use of common technology in support of emergency operations.
<b>Training</b>	BCERMS mandates the training of designated personnel to meet established standards.
<b>Publications</b>	BCERMS defines common standards for forms, reports, instructional terminology, and other written material.

## 2. Response Structure

Agencies must be able to work cooperatively with one another in an organized response structure, while maintaining full authority and responsibility for their respective jurisdictional roles. Much like ICS, BCERMS uses a common structure to support and coordinate response activities. BCERMS defines the structure for managing an emergency in four levels of response:

- Site Level
- Site Support Level
- Provincial Regional Coordination
- Provincial Central Coordination

BCERMS expands on the ICS principles established for the site level to three additional *off-site* levels of support for the emergency incident: site support, provincial regional coordination, and provincial central coordination.



The above diagram shows the relationship of the various emergency response levels and the primary communication linkages.

### 2.1 Site

The site is the first level of response activity and the vast majority of all incidents are managed effectively at this level. Resources are applied to solve the problems presented by an emergency incident and ICS is used to manage the response. Agencies that typically provide a site level response are police, fire, and ambulance.

The Incident Commander is responsible for all direction at the site. This includes overall responsibility for the safety and health of all personnel operating at the site. The response is conducted from an Incident Command Post (ICP).

### 2.2 Site Support

In larger incidents, responders on-site may require policy, coordination, and resource support. An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is set up off-site, and ideally, in a pre-designated facility, to provide this support. EOCs are normally activated at the request of the Incident Commander or senior official. EOCs may be established by any level of government or the private sector in an effort to support the entire response or that of an individual response agency.

The role of the site support level is to provide support to the incident site and to coordinate and manage all non-site activities.

Emergency Operations Centre responsibilities include:

- Policy direction and support
- Information collection, evaluation and display
- Coordination of off-site agencies and operations
- Prioritization of resources if multiple sites
- Resource management
- Public information and warning

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SITE AND SITE SUPPORT			
	SITE	SITE SUPPORT	PROVINCIAL-REGIONAL SUPPORT
<b>Evacuation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivers orders to door</li> <li>Sets up detour signs</li> <li>Staffs road blocks</li> <li>Provides security for evacuated areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes Evacuation Order</li> <li>Obtains approvals and signatures</li> <li>Coordinates planning for evacuation routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receives evacuation order from local authority</li> <li>Supports EOC with evacuation, ESS support if required</li> </ul>
<b>Flooding</b>	Fills and places sandbags	Orders sandbags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receives and processes sandbag order</li> <li>Arranges for and confirms transportation of sandbags to community</li> </ul>
<b>Wildland/Urban Interface Fire</b>	All direct fire-fighting activities	Coordinates public information activities	Coordinates multi-jurisdiction response and coordination
<b>Landslides</b>	Clears debris	Arranges for geotechnical assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates multi-jurisdiction response and coordination</li> <li>Identifies and makes available subject matter experts</li> </ul>

Table 2.2 shows some examples of how similar activities would differ between site and site support

### 2.3 Provincial Regional Coordination

The Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) coordinates, facilitates, and manages information, policy direction, and regional resources in support of local authorities and provincial agencies responding to an emergency at the provincial regional coordination level.

This level provides emergency response services where incidents cross local authority boundaries or where local authorities are not organized to fulfil their role (as well, in the unincorporated area of Stikine). Together with the provincial central coordination level, this level integrates overall provincial support to the incident and is generally staffed by local and/or regional provincial representatives.

The Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC):

- Manages the assignment of regional ministry and agency support for the response to an emergency

- Where an event impacts multiple jurisdictions, the PREOC prioritizes the deployment of critical regional resources in accordance with risk to life and safety
- Where no Local Authority exists, the PREOC directly manages the response
- The PREOC reports directly to and takes policy direction from the PECC (central coordination level)
- The PREOC requests resources from the PECC whenever resources are not available within the region, including military or international support

### 2.4 Provincial Central Coordination

The provincial central coordination level manages the overall provincial government response and prioritizes provincial government objectives in response to the emergency requirements of the other levels. It also serves as the coordination and communication link with the federal disaster support system.

A Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) is established at the provincial central coordination level to direct and coordinate the provincial government's overall emergency response and recovery efforts. The Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC):

- Manages the provincial government response and provides policy direction for regional emergency operations
- Supports PREOC(s) operations by managing the assignment of provincial support to the regional levels
- Ensures adequate province-wide mobilization and allocation of critical assets
- Implements the BC Emergency Public Information Plan
- Facilitates the acquisition of federal disaster support through Public Safety Canada



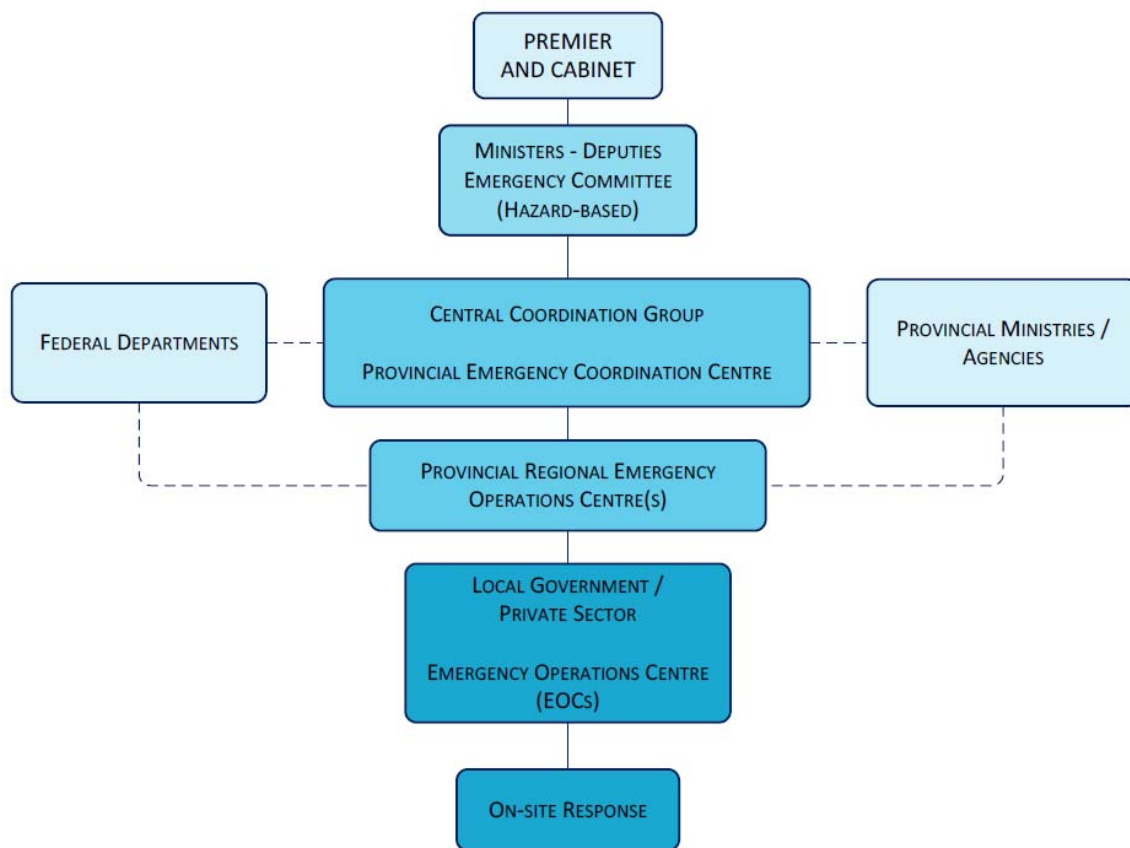


Figure 2.4

Figure 2.4 depicts the structure for managing an emergency within the four levels of response designated by BCERMS.

### 2.5 Central Coordination Group (CCG)

The Central Coordination Group provides strategic direction to all provincial level support and coordination through the PECC to provincial ministries and federal agencies and resources supporting the emergency.

One of the important aspects of BCERMS is the commonality of structure at all levels of the response system. **Module 5: Emergency Operations Centre provides further detail about the EOC structure and its corresponding functions.**

# 4

## Emergency Planning

### 1.0 Introduction

Emergency planning aims to prevent emergencies from occurring where possible, and when an emergency does occur, good planning should reduce, control or mitigate the effects of the emergency. Preparedness is a continuous process involving the efforts at all levels of government, private sector and non-governmental organizations to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities, and identify required resources. Emergency preparedness is an ongoing process that should evolve as lessons are learned and circumstances change.

Local government has direct responsibility for the safety of its citizens and an emergency plan is a key component of a local emergency program. The emergency plan provides an overview of the community's response organization and policies, establishes the overall authority for conducting emergency operations, describes the hazards that the plan intends to address, and assigns responsibility for emergency planning and operations. When an emergency threatens or strikes, the community must be prepared to take immediate action.

An Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is a central location where response personnel can coordinate and make decisions in support of emergency response activities at the site level. Emergency preparedness involves as much pre-planning as possible and the designation of a variety of emergency facilities can enhance response logistics when an emergency occurs. The EOC integrates personnel, procedures, communications and equipment into a common system with responsibility for coordinating an emergency event. This module examines the key components of emergency planning in support of the development of an integrated emergency management system.

## 2.0 Emergency Planning

The process of developing an emergency plan is the responsibility of the local authority as legislated through the *Emergency Program Act*. The local authority must support the idea of emergency planning, provide funding for it, and appoint the members of the emergency planning committee who initiate the process. When the work of the emergency planning committee is complete, elected officials will be asked to approve the local emergency plan.

### 2.1 Steps in the Planning Process

Emergency planning begins with establishing a risk profile to determine the priorities for developing plans and ends with a review and revision of the plan, which re-starts the whole cycle. Although there are many ways to prepare an emergency plan, steps in the process include:

1. Conduct a hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis (HVRA)
2. Develop the emergency plan
3. Gain approval of the emergency plan
4. Exercise the plan and evaluate its effectiveness
5. Review, revise, and maintain the plan

### 2.2 Planning Principles

Emergency planning must meet legislated requirements and be based on risk profiles of the community. The emergency plan needs to have a concept of operations built into it that allows for scalability based on the needs arising from the emergency, regardless of the hazard or size of the event. The emergency plan should be modular in layout to keep individual sections small enough to be effectively used during an emergency, and consist of a number of documents or supplementary plans that focus on actions and procedures. Explanatory and background information should be kept to a minimum in the emergency plan. Lastly, there should be integration between planning documents and the local government's training curriculum.

Emergency planning is a shared responsibility and must involve all partners—including all levels of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, individual citizens and volunteers. Integrated planning brings together key agencies to ensure roles and responsibilities are defined and understood, and duplication is avoided. Integrated planning can be complex and challenging but the rewards are obvious when disparate agencies are able to respond to emergencies in a coordinated manner. Community partner agencies should be represented in the planning process:

- **Business and Industry representatives**—the role of local business, industry, and utilities needs to be considered when planning for emergencies.

- **Health Care representatives**—health care services that are required during an emergency have provisions within the *Health Authorities Act*, with the exception of services provided by physicians and the BC Ambulance Service. The Ministry of Health requires health authorities to develop emergency plans, fulfill emergency response roles, and share resources with other health authorities if required.
- **Schools Board representatives**—representatives of school boards(s) should be included on the local authority emergency planning committee, and school emergency plans need to be coordinated and integrated with the local authority emergency plan.

Most of the emergency planning principles for a local community apply to the emergency planning activities of other agencies or institutions and, to a certain extent, emergency planning in business and industry.

### 3.0 Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis

Prior to developing a response plan, potential hazards must first be identified and prioritized based on the frequency and severity of the impact to the community. The purpose of the emergency planning process is to produce a realistic analysis of the potential hazards and to develop a response program that will deal effectively with their impact. A hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis (HRVA) is intended to provide a community with a quantitative comparison of risks that may exist.

Definitions for each of these terms are:

- **Hazard**—a source of potential harm, or a situation with a potential for causing harm, in terms of human injury; damage to health, property, the environment and other things of value; or some combination of these.
- **Risk**—a concept that takes into consideration the likelihood that a hazard will occur, as well as the severity of possible impacts to health, property, the environment, or other items of value.
- **Vulnerability**—describes the people, property, infrastructure, industry, resources, or environments that are particularly exposed to adverse impact from a hazard event.
- **Impact**—the physical/environmental, social, economic and political consequences or adverse effects that may occur as the result of a hazard event.

The HRVA is mandated by the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* of the *Emergency Program Act*. Section 2(1) of this regulation requires local authorities to prepare emergency plans that reflect:

*“The local authority's assessment of the relative risk of occurrence and the potential impact on people and property of the emergencies or disasters that could affect all or any part of the jurisdictional area for which the local authority has responsibility.”*

The HRVA report is the foundational document for any local emergency program and should be completed before a strategic plan or any emergency response and recovery plans are written. When completed, the HRVA will guide response actions by identifying the hazards that pose the greatest risks to the community, the type and degree of damage that can be expected for each hazard, and the types of resources that will most likely be needed to respond. Hazard subject matter experts should be consulted during the HRVA process.

EMBC has developed an online HRVA toolkit to assist emergency planners in conducting an HRVA  
[link]:<http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/hrva/toolkit.html>

Diagram 3.1 shows the HRVA may indicate that the most frequently occurring emergency does not necessarily hold the greatest threat. For example, while flooding may occur frequently within a community, the greatest risk may be an earthquake due to its devastating consequences. With limited time and resources, emergency planners should first determine risk reduction action items based on the severity of the risk.

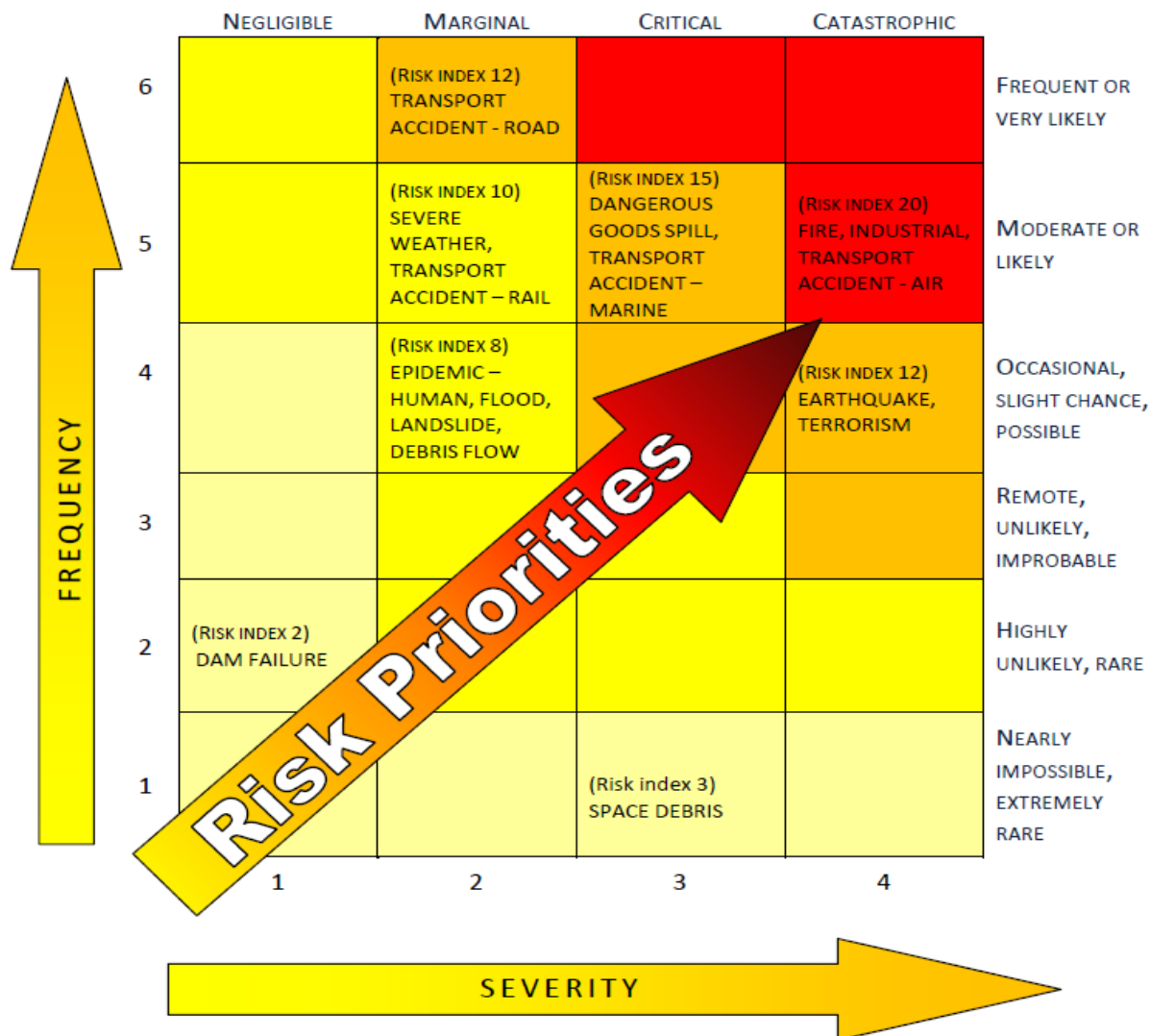


Diagram 3.1 Example of an HRVA chart

It is important to be aware of the dangers that exist in the community and to design an emergency plan with those hazards in mind. Hazards can be classified into three categories: natural (e.g., earthquakes), technological (e.g., hazardous materials spills) and intentional (e.g., terrorism or civil disturbance).

In the Province of BC, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, avalanches, interface fires, severe storms and hazardous material spills are some of the hazards that could threaten lives and cause extensive damage. The chart on the next page summarizes the natural hazards and human-caused or technological hazards that have the potential to adversely impact the province.

### British Columbia's Hazards

NATURAL HAZARDS	HUMAN / TECHNOLOGICAL HAZARDS
<b>Atmospheric</b>	<b>Transportation Incidents</b>
Snowstorms	Surface vehicle accidents
Blizzards	Aviation related incidents
Ice storms and ice fogs	Ships, boats, barges & ferries
Geo-magnetic storms	Train, subway, light rail crash
Hailstorms	Bridge collapse
Windstorms	Tunnel accident or fire
Hurricanes/cyclones	<b>Energy / Utility Incidents</b>
Thunderstorms	Fuel shortage
Lightning	Power outage
Tornadoes	Water shortage
Dust and Sandstorms	Communication problems
Avalanches	<b>Fires / Explosions</b>
Cold / exposure	Wildland Interface
Heat waves	Industrial
Global weather	Residential
<b>Geological</b>	Health care
Landslide	Arson
Land subsidence/sinkholes	Bomb / explosion
Earthquake	<b>Structural failure / accident</b>
Expansive soils	Dam / levee failures
Hydrologic/Tsunamis	Building collapse
Floods and flash floods	Bridge collapse
Storm surges	<b>Hazardous materials</b>
Droughts	HAZMAT / Oil spills
Erosion	Chemical / WMD
Ice jams	Sour Gas

### 4.0 Emergency Plans

This section outlines the different types of local emergency plans, the factors to consider in developing plans, and the importance of exercising the plans and training key staff. Local emergency plans need to include the following components:

- Human Services Management Plan
- Response Plan
- Evacuation Plan(s)
- Emergency Information Plan
- Emergency Centre Operation Plan
- Training and Exercise Plans

The local emergency plan is maintained and updated by the Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) and should be reviewed annually for necessary additions or deletions to maintain the accuracy of the information. The EPC should establish a process to enable staff to document and submit suggested changes to the local emergency plans in written form.

#### 4.1 Local Emergency Plan

An emergency plan needs to be comprehensive in that it specifies how to prepare for emergencies, mitigate their effects, respond if one occurs, and recover from their impacts.

Local authorities are required to prepare an emergency plan as per the provisions of the *Emergency Program Act*. Most local authorities have emergency plans that outline their requirements for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. As summarized in Module 1, the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* requires the emergency plan to include:

- the potential emergencies that could affect all or any part of the local authority's jurisdictional area
- an analysis of the relative risk of occurrence of a hazard and the potential impact on people and property within the jurisdictional area
- the commitment of the local authority to provide policy guidance and direction to the emergency management organization and the process by which it will be provided
- a periodic review and establish procedures to update the local emergency plan
- emergency response exercise and training program for all emergency response staff to whom responsibilities are assigned in the plan



- procedures for obtaining emergency resources, including personnel, equipment, facilities and financial resources, from sources within or outside of the jurisdictional area
- procedures by which the local emergency plan is to be implemented
- procedures by which persons who may be harmed or who may suffer loss are notified of an emergency
- the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical services to victims of emergencies, whether that provision is made from within or outside of the jurisdictional area
- priorities for restoring essential services provided by the local authority that are interrupted during an emergency
- recommendations to service providers regarding priorities for restoring essential services not provided by the local authority that are interrupted during an emergency
- confirmed, potential or anticipated assistance and resources of other levels of government or other non-government bodies

Development of the emergency plan begins with the creation of an emergency program overview, whose audience is senior elected officials and senior local authority administrators. This document provides a high level overview of the emergency program, including: a synopsis of the concept of operations; direction and control; procedures for activation of the community emergency operations centre; notification procedures; and procedures for declaration of a local state of emergency. The emergency program overview is based upon the HVRA for the community which is usually signed off by the Mayor/Chair/Chief, and makes reference to a list of other supporting emergency plans.

### 4.2 Human Consequence Management Plan

Emergency management practitioners have identified that without considering the human element there is a gap in emergency response and recovery. A Human Consequence Management Plan addresses the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, information, and medical services to people affected by emergencies. [Module 7: Supporting People in Emergencies provides more information about planning for the provision of essential social services to those affected].

### 4.3 Response Plan

The Response Plan is hazard specific and builds upon HRVA conducted during the development of the emergency plan. The provincial HRVA has identified 57 hazards of consequence to British Columbians, such as flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes.

The Response Plan must outline the necessary procedures for reducing the impact and addressing the vulnerabilities posed by the specific hazards identified in the HRVA. The key components of a Response Plan are:

- an overview of anticipated impacts from identified high-risk hazards
  - identification of vulnerable geographic locations, populations and facilities/infrastructure
  - specification of public warning/information requirements
  - identification of special resource requirements and procedures for locating resources
  - references to other plans
- **4.4 Evacuation (s) Plan**

Every community should have an evacuation plan to meet the requirement to coordinate the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical services to victims of emergencies. The legislation that includes an evacuation provision is the *Emergency Program Act* (through local and provincial declarations), *Fire Services Act*, *Wildfire Act*, and *Health Act*.

An Evacuation Plan should provide for both minor evacuations of a limited area (e.g., a fire or gas leak) and major evacuations affecting a large portion of the population (e.g., a major chemical release). Evacuation Plans should be flexible enough to accommodate both sudden emergencies and situations with an advance warning and provide “shelter-in-place” for people who cannot leave an area safely. Evacuation Plans must also provide for two distinct groups of people: ‘population at risk’ and ‘host population’ who will look after the evacuees.

### 4.5 Emergency Information Plan

The Emergency Information Plan provides guidance to the Information Officer and local authority spokespersons with regard to public information, media relations and internal communications. In emergency response and recovery, it is critical that all information being disseminated is timely, accurate and authoritative. As a priority, information should address vital life safety concerns followed by more general information.

Prior to the release of information, efforts must be made to coordinate key messaging with response agencies, neighbouring local authorities, and other levels of government. Multiple sources of information may confuse the public or lead to serious or life-threatening consequences. The key elements of an Emergency Information Plan are:

- identification of qualified Information Officers and appropriate spokespersons
- list of media, community, and response agency contacts
- prepared key messages (e.g., public service announcements and emergency instructions)
- procedures for establishment of a call centre
- checklists for information meetings and media briefings

- information facility setup instruction and supply lists
- policies and procedures regarding information coordination and release

### 4.6 Emergency Centre Operation (EOC) Plan

The EOC Plan provides guidance for managing, operating and staffing the EOC during response and recovery. The EOC Plan is a supporting document to the jurisdiction/agency's Emergency Plan and other departmental response plans. The key elements of an EOC Plan are:

- authority matrix for activating the EOC (i.e., at least three officials should be listed who are authorized to activate the EOC Plan and initiate a call out)
- conditions under which an EOC is activated and activation procedures
- checklists and procedures for all EOC functions and roles
- forms, templates and other documentation needed to operate an EOC

The EOC Plan should be tested regularly (e.g., annually) to ensure staff and volunteers are familiar with their emergency roles, and policy and procedures are effective. The lessons learned through training and exercising will assist the EPC to update and maintain the EOC Plan as an effective document.

### 4.7 Training and Exercise Plans

All personnel who have been assigned to perform a function identified in the emergency plan must be adequately trained in order to meet their obligations. A training plan needs to reflect learning objectives required to reach the desired outcome. A training plan should consider the following factors:

- Training is based on the needs of the emergency management organization
- Training reflects current policies, standards and best practices
- A training calendar is established
- Training is accessible (i.e., location and timetable suitable for staff or volunteers)
- Internal and external training options are considered
- Training is interactive
- Training evaluation process is in place

Validation is an important aspect of the planning process and experience shows that exercises are a practical, efficient, and cost-effective way to test the plan. Exercising the plan is a valuable way to assess the effectiveness of the training program. The benefits of an exercise plan are:

- Promote emergency preparedness

- Test or evaluate emergency operations, policies, plans, procedures or facilities
- Train personnel in emergency management duties
- Demonstrate operational capability
- Reveal planning weaknesses and resource gaps
- Improve coordination and integration
- Improve individual performance and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Develop enthusiasm, knowledge, skill and willingness to participate in response activities
- Gain public recognition of the emergency management program

Individual exercises are part of an overall exercise program. The exercise program consists of several types of exercises chosen to develop and reinforce emergency response knowledge, skills and abilities. There are five different types of exercises:

- Orientation—introduces participants to, or provides a refresher on, the emergency plan and associated procedures. The seminar is conducted through lectures, panel discussions, media presentations, or discussing various scenarios and required actions.
- Drill—tests a single emergency response function and often involves an actual field response. A drill is an effective means of evaluating and improving a single, or relatively limited, component of the response system.
- Tabletop—allows, participants to practice problem solving for emergencies by discussing actions and appropriate decisions based on a scenario. Discussions are usually based on a described emergency scenario and supported by additional problem inputs.
- Functional Exercise—simulates an emergency that includes a description of the situation, a timed sequence of messages, and communication between players and a simulation group. Participants practice coordinated, effective response in a time-pressured, realistic yet simulated emergency.
- Full-Scale Exercise—is as closely related to reality as possible. A full-scale exercise adds a field component to a simulated functional exercise through actual and simulated messages. A full-scale exercise tests the actual deployment of seldom-used resources and often involves the public and media.

### 5.0 Emergency Facilities

Operational and support facilities are required during an emergency event to fill a variety of functions, such as management and oversight, evacuation, mass care, donated goods processing, and communications. Pre-designated facilities may include:

- Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)
- Reception Centre
- Group Lodging Facility
- Resilience Centre
- Information Centre

The location of an emergency facility should be based on an analysis of potential threats to the community as the facility must be able to survive an emergency. The HRVA will help to determine whether a particular geographic location is vulnerable to a specific hazard. Each facility should be evaluated based on its ability to survive the range of anticipated hazards and continue to function effectively.

Budgetary and space restraints often make it difficult to dedicate a facility solely to emergency response, so many emergency facilities will serve an alternate purpose on a daily basis. While community-based facilities can be suitable emergency facilities, certain criteria should be considered:

- Accessibility
  - Can staff/volunteers/evacuees easily access the facility?
  - Is parking adequate for cars, buses, delivery trucks, etc?
  - Is the facility available/usable year-round and all-day (e.g., 24/7)
  - Does the facility have handicapped access?
- Operations
  - Can the facility quickly and easily be converted to emergency use?
  - Can exercises be held annually to practice activating and converting the space for emergency use?
  - Can the facility accommodate minimum requirements for sustained operations (e.g., backup generator for power and lighting)?
  - Is the local authority/facility owner in agreement?
- Suitable amenities
  - Are required amenities available (e.g., kitchen, washrooms, showers, phones)?
  - Are multiple functioning rooms available?
  - Are washrooms adequate?
  - Is furniture suitable (e.g., elementary school equipment is often 'child size')

- Security
  - Can adequate security measures be established?

In addition to identifying the location and building for a primary facility, it is important to develop a redundant capability at one to two alternate locations. In the event the emergency requires moving the primary facility, a pre-identified alternate with backup power and communications equipment will ensure continued operations. Just as with the primary location, the alternate facility should be located in order to minimize exposure from natural and human-caused hazards.

Once suitable facilities have been identified and agreements are established for their use, it is important to determine how best to use the facility for its intended emergency function. For example, usable space such as council/board rooms, auditoriums or meeting/training rooms should be investigated prior to an emergency (building or facilities staff should be consulted for further guidance in this regard). A pre-determined set up of an emergency facility will expedite the provision of emergency services.

### 5.1 Emergency Operations Centre

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a designated facility established by a community, jurisdiction, and/or agency to support disaster response and recovery. The EOC supports the incident site by coordinating and managing all non-site activities including:

- policy direction and support
- information collection, evaluation and display
- coordination of agencies and operations
- establishment of priorities
- resource management
- communications
- public information and warning

An EOC is responsible for the strategic overview (or big picture) of the emergency and does not normally directly control field assets; rather, operational decisions are made at an EOC and tactical decisions are made at the site. The functions common to all EOCs are:

- collect, gather and analyze data
- decision-making to protect life and property
- maintain continuity of the organization, within the scope of applicable laws
- disseminate decisions to all concerned agencies and individuals

EOCs vary in size and configuration and the key to designing an effective EOC is to ensure the facility meets the organization's requirements for response and recovery operations. In most instances, either staffing requirements or financial constraints will dictate the design and chosen layout. There are several factors to consider when determining the size and physical configuration of the EOC, including:

- **Staffing Requirements**—the size of the EOC will depend on the number of staff members required, which will be directly dependant on the type and scope of anticipated emergency events. When determining the optimal size for the EOC, you should consider the maximum number of people you are likely to have in the facility at any one time to ensure there is sufficient space to house both personnel and equipment.
- **Functional Requirements**—in any EOC set-up, representatives must have the capability of meeting their functional responsibilities, such as gathering information, setting priorities and coordinating multi-agency response. The EOC should be physically arranged to provide, at a minimum, space for the following:
  - All EOC functions (Management, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Admin)
  - Policy Group
  - Break-out/Meeting Rooms
  - Rest and Eating Areas
  - Storage

When designing the functional layout of the EOC, consider the following:

- EOC Director is in a position where she/he can maintain situational awareness and manage operations. She/he should be located in the main operations area with connecting communications and appropriate displays
- Functions that interface continually, are interdependent, or in direct support of each other are co-located(e.g., Operations and Planning sections and Logistics and Finance/Administration sections to facilitate communication)
- EOC functions are adjacent to displays that pertain to their role, allowing for ease of posting information and reference to situations
- Quiet meeting room is provided where emergency personnel can discuss priority problems and conduct management briefings away from the noise of operations and communications.
- Agencies that operate their own communication networks (e.g., police, fire, ambulance and public works) are located near the source of their communications or are able to move the system to a location within the EOC (e.g., radio communication)

- Offices, workstations or functional teams are positioned so there is adequate space between them to lessen noise levels and interference
- Security requirements are incorporated into the design to ensure unauthorized personnel do not have access to the EOC (e.g., position a security booth/desk near the entrance)
- Food and rest areas are situated away from the main operations area
- **Equipment and Resources**—to function effectively, the EOC must be adequately equipped with furniture, communications equipment, information displays and office supplies. When determining the equipment and resource requirements of the EOC, consider the following:
  - Building Systems—the EOC should be able to accommodate the requirements for short-term and sustained operations. Verify the EOC is adequately equipped with electrical power, water, sewer, heating and ventilation systems, and given primary power sources can fail, ensure a generator is available to provide back-up power for 2-3 days without refueling.
  - Furniture—determine whether workstations need to be fixed or movable. Movable furniture (e.g., folding tables) can provide greater flexibility during activation and daily use of the facility. Workstations must be ergonomically suitable to meet the needs of staff who may be required to work long hours during a sustained activation. This is particularly important if workstations are equipped with computer equipment.
  - Communications—equip the EOC with survivable communications systems for internal operations and connectivity to the site(s), other EOCs, and key response and recovery organizations. Provide alternative communication methods to ensure continued operations (e.g., landline telephone, satellite phone, cellular phone, computers, internet/email, VHF/UHF radio and Amateur Radio). Develop a layout plan for activation of phone, fax and data lines. All cables, switches and outlets should be labeled to conform to the layout plan. This will facilitate easy set up and re-configuration of the EOC. Developing mobile capability that can be re-located to an alternate location can also affect the EOC's configuration.
  - Information Displays—the ability to gather, share and evaluate information is critical to all EOC functions. In addition to providing adequate wall space to post information, ensure that both manual (e.g., flipcharts/whiteboards) and electronic (projector/screen) equipment are available to facilitate the display of information.
  - Office Supplies/Equipment—consult with EOC staff for any specific supply requirements when assembling office supplies for the facility. Staff will be more comfortable in their work environment if they have access to the items they depend on daily. Consider storing maps and other reference material in the EOC for quick access.
  - Food/Rest Areas—designated food and rest areas are important for the health and well-being of staff. In the event staff must remain on-site for extended periods, sleeping facilities

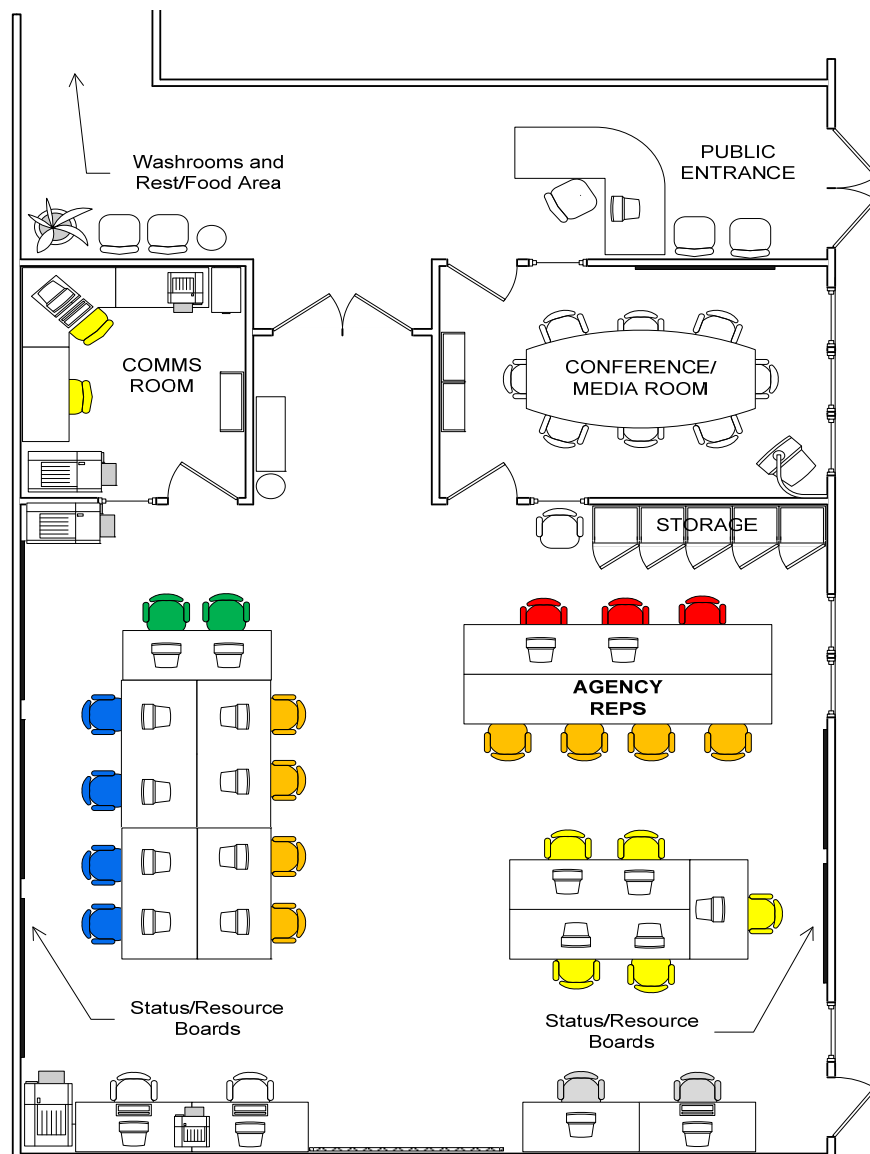


will also be required. The EOC layout should provide for minimum interference between operations and support areas such as eating, sleeping, health and sanitary facilities.

### Sample EOC Floor Plan

An EOC floor plan should include a basic furniture layout, location of displays and maps, and any communication requirements. The EOC floor plan, once it is approved, should become part of the organization's EOC plan.

The EOC's layout and configuration will change many times based on experience and evaluation. The optimum layout can be determined only through exercises or actual emergency operations. It may take several activations before the best configuration is determined.



### Department Operations Centre

In some emergencies, response agencies that require unique local support for their operations may establish a Department Operations Centre (DOC). A DOC is primarily concerned with supporting the operations of the agency and ensuring regular activities continue. The DOC will focus on such issues as staff scheduling and obtaining, coordinating and directing highly specialized resources for the agency to fulfill its mission. The Agency Executive may be located at the DOC. The EOC's relationship to a DOC is usually one of policy direction and support or assistance in facilitating resources or actions at the request of the DOC Director. A DOC, if established by a provincial agency, must utilize the BCERMS standards; however, it is recognized that many of the functional positions outlined in these guidelines will not be applicable. DOCs established by provincial agencies may call for support from a Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) or their Ministry's Regional Emergency Operations Centre (MREOC), if activated.

## 5.2 Reception Centre

Reception Centres are facilities designated as safe gathering places for people displaced from their homes due to an emergency. At the Reception Centre, individuals can register and receive Emergency Social Services (ESS) as well as information about the emergency. The Reception Centre has been referred to by various names, such as Evacuation Centre, Registration Centre, or Disaster Relief Centre. The correct term, Reception Centre, describes the initial function of the centre – to “receive” evacuees who have been forced from their homes because of an emergency or disaster.

Facilities identified as Reception Centres should be surveyed for functional appropriateness. While the most commonly used facilities are those owned by the local authority (e.g., recreation centres, arenas), other large buildings may be suitable such as:

- School/college gymnasiums
- Church halls
- Fairground buildings
- Hotel conference rooms
- Private service group halls

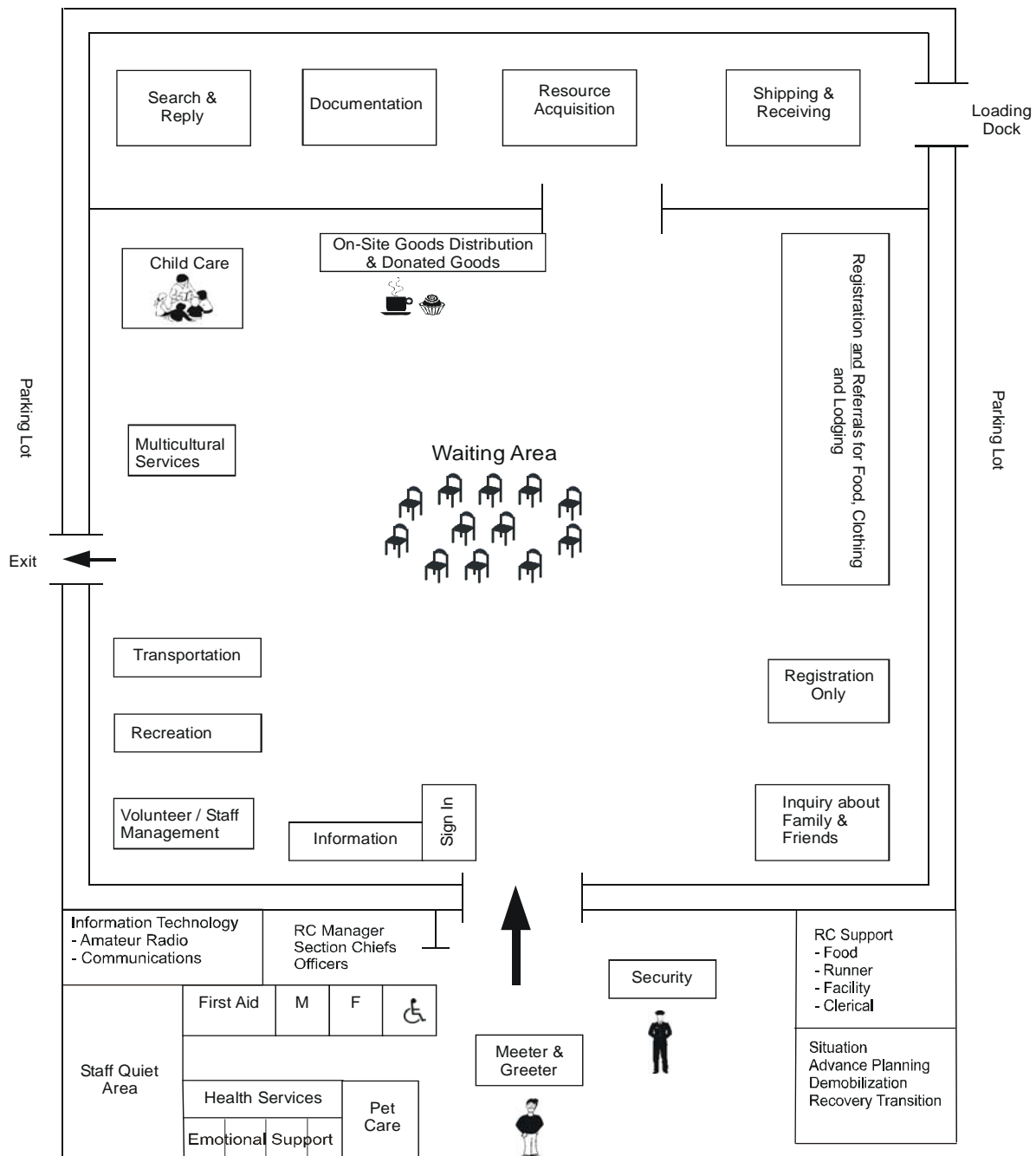
In the event that a safe, suitable facility is not available (e.g., following an earthquake), a site may be selected and tents or trailers brought in for ESS workers to provide the same emergency social services to evacuees. Examples of sites include:

- Municipal parks
- Camp grounds
- School playing fields

- Parking lots

## Sample ESS Reception Centre Floor Plan

Below is a sample floor plan for an ESS Reception Centre. Keep in mind that this is only an example and the actual set up will be determined by a number of variables. For this reason, it is beneficial to consider optional set-ups if the primary one, for whatever reason, is ineffective.



### 5.3 Group Lodging Facility

Group Lodging facilities are public facilities that are not normally used for living purposes, but have been adapted in an emergency to provide dormitory type accommodations for large numbers of people. Some people confuse Reception Centres with Group Lodging, believing that Group Lodging will address all evacuee needs or that dormitory sleeping accommodations are located in Reception Centres. While both of these scenarios are possible, Reception Centres and Group Lodging are separate entities with separate functional roles.

Group Lodging sites should be identified during the planning stage and must consider the following:

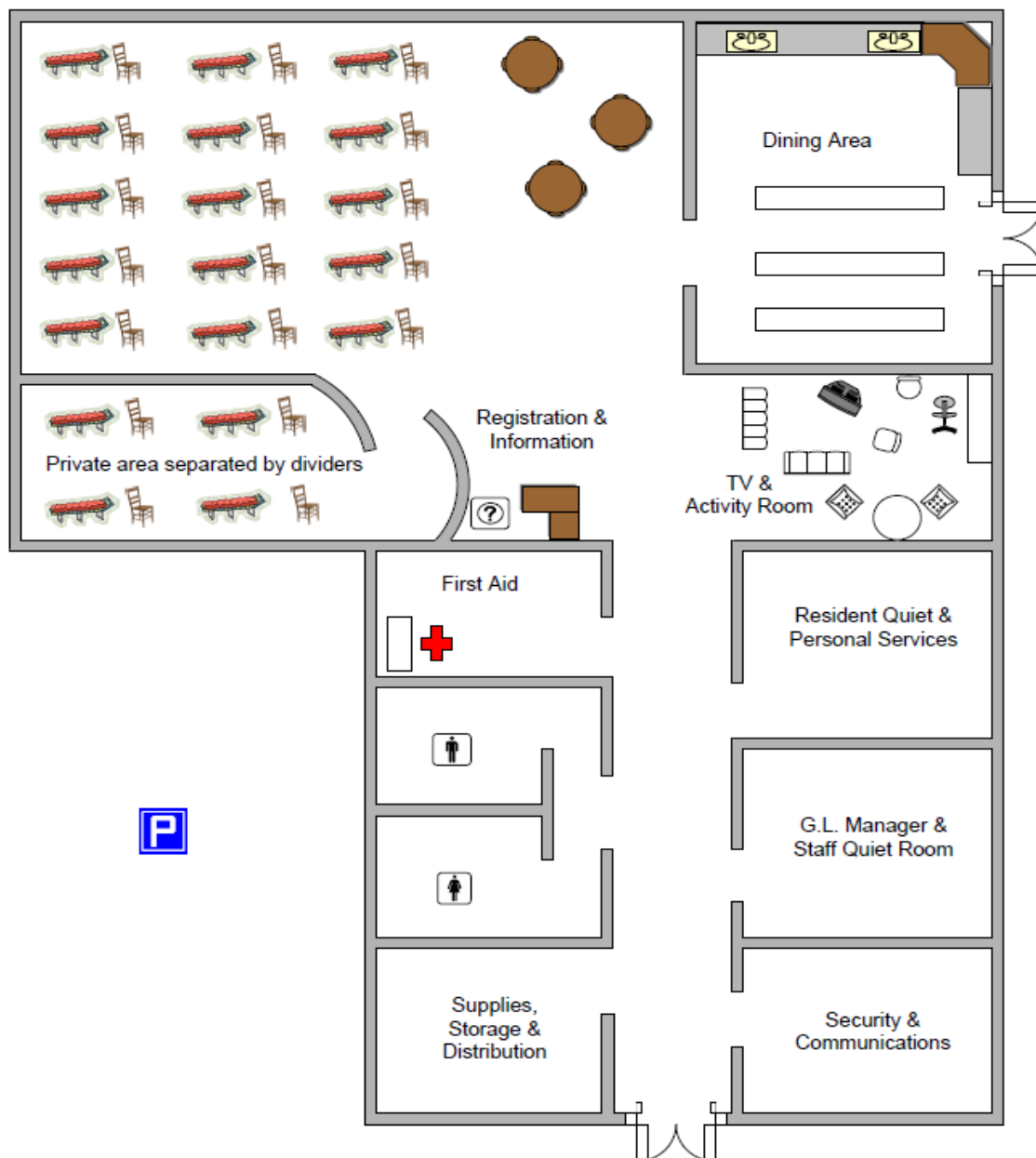
- potential total number of evacuees in community
- demographics of the community population (i.e., special needs)
- geographical nature of the community (e.g., bridges)
- high-risk areas in the community (e.g., river valley, shoreline, etc.)
- community resources

Determination of an appropriate Group Lodging site should be based on several criteria:

- Accessible by roads
- Available 24 hours a day, year round
- Large parking area
- Sufficient internal space and support amenities:
  - Sleeping facility/capacity
  - Washrooms
  - Showers
  - Kitchen facilities
  - Seating capacity
  - Telephone lines/phones
  - Public address system
  - Emergency generator
  - Handicapped facilities
  - General space (other than sleeping)
- Group Lodging Manager's office/area
- Check in/checkout area
- Information area
- First aid area

- Health care/emotional support room
- Storage area
- Shipping and receiving area
- Staff rest/break room
- Activity/recreation leisure area(s)

**Sample ESS Group Lodging Floor Plan**



### 5.4 Resilience Centre

A Resilience Centre is a “clearing house” of community recovery information. Alternately, it may serve as a storefront drop-in centre where clients can ask questions and pick up information materials in person. It may also serve as the interview centre for recovery clients, and should include small meeting areas or rooms to facilitate private conversations.

The Resilience Centre may also house a toll-free call service where Resilience Centre members address questions about recovery. The call service should also include a taped voice message that explains the centre's hours of operation and a telephone number that clients can call in an emergency.

In addition to Resilience Centres, other facilities may be required to facilitate community recovery including:

- Recovery Operations Centre—refers to the workspaces and meeting rooms used by the Recovery Director and staff of the Recovery Organization.
- Warehouse—community recovery may draw on the good will of the public in collecting and distributing clothing, household items, toys, and other goods for those affected by a disaster. Warehouse facilities may be needed to receive, sort, store, and disseminate goods purchased in bulk, as well as goods collected through donations.

### 5.5 Information Centre

One of the most critical functions of the EOC is to manage and coordinate the flow of information to and from the public. The priority for communication is always the people most directly affected by the emergency, such as evacuees, but many others will also have intense interest. Depending on the scope and scale of the incident, a variety of facilities may be required to meet the information needs of a range of stakeholders.

#### Information Officer Space in an EOC

- The Information Officer is usually one of the first functions to be staffed within the EOC. As the level of response activity can rapidly escalate, facilities for the Information Officer must be ready to go at a moment's notice. Within the EOC, the Information Officer workspace has requirements that differ from that of many other functions as follows:
  - Location
    - A room close to, but separated from, the EOC
    - Noise separation, solid walls, doors
    - Suitable room to give phone interviews
    - Ready connectivity to news media
- Communications

- Separate line for media calls
  - Cable TV hook-up
  - Portable radio
  - Fax machine
  - Computer optimized for multi-media (e.g., speakers, TV card, DVD reader/burner, colour printer)
- Display Services
  - Whiteboards and easels
- Prepared Materials
  - Up-to-date list of media contacts (e.g., radio, print, TV; local and national; Information Officer contacts in other responding agencies)
  - Backgrounders (maps, community profiles, fact sheets on response activities, key messages for specific hazards, prepared public service announcements)
  - Established links with other information facilities that may be established: media monitoring room, call centre, media briefing room, public meeting sites, and remote sites

### Media Monitoring Room

In larger activations staff may be dedicated to monitoring media reports. Provisions should be made for a media monitoring room separate from the EOC to facilitate this requirement. Strong coordination with the Information Officer must be maintained. As various sources of information may be monitored, multiples of media monitoring equipment should be available (i.e., televisions, radios, computers, recording equipment and phones).

### Call Centre

A common EOC function is to establish a means for the local population to receive updates and report information. A Call Centre with well-trained, efficient call takers is invaluable in relaying information about the event or consequences. It is also a valuable channel for the public to relate timely emergency-related information to the local authority. A Call Centre requires an array of phones and call takers.

A Call Centre should be separate from the EOC but nearby or with strong virtual links to the Information Officer. Some requirements for a call centre include:

- sound-shield from other facility users (e.g., separate room, dividers)
- ability to rapidly expand phone lines (e.g., toll free lines)
- display space (e.g., whiteboards, easels) or projector for key messages, timely updates, and commonly used phone numbers

- phone headsets
- access to computers/internet
- quick link to Operations to promote two-way information flow
- office supplies

An event may escalate rapidly and as such, facilities should be planned for a continuum of small to large activations. EMBC can assist local authorities with obtaining additional phone lines on an emergency basis. Additionally, volunteer groups and businesses in larger centres may be equipped to take on call centre functions in their own facilities.

### **Media Briefing Area**

The media is highly effective at disseminating information to the public. The information needs of the media can quickly become a distraction to other EOC activities if the requirements are not effectively managed. It is critical that all emergency information is disseminated through one official source, with an identified spokesperson. News conferences and briefings are a convenient way for the media to gain access to emergency officials.

A media briefing area should be established as early as possible in the response effort and is usually staffed by the EOC's Information Officer. The location of the media briefing area should be separate from the EOC and other operational activity. Common sites for media briefing areas include:

- entrances to municipal halls
- foyers to buildings
- medium-sized meeting rooms
- hotel conference rooms (as they are often equipped for these types of events)

The media briefing area must be connected to the EOC by phone and internet so that the information relayed through it to the media (and the public) is current and accurate. The space needs to be large enough to hold a panel of spokespersons at the front, organizers to the side, and media representatives at the back. Other considerations include: sufficient electrical outlets and phone lines, lighting, acoustics, backdrop (e.g., corporate logo), podium, microphone and speakers, name tents, and sign-in sheets.

### **Community Meeting Facility**

The facility for community meetings should be in a place that is convenient to residents. Sites should be identified prior to an emergency event and commonly include:

- Community halls



- Meeting rooms in recreational facilities
- School auditoriums
- Hotels where the majority of evacuees are staying
- Close to, but not in, Reception Centres

Such sites must be safe places where affected residents are out of the public eye and away from media. The room should be prepared with:

- Security at the door to ensure that only directly affected residents are admitted
- Whenever possible, direct access to the Incident Commander
- Display material (e.g., projector for video and pictures, maps on wall)
- Coffee, juice, snacks
- Potentially, baby-sitting services

As an adjunct to formal meetings, information can also be provided through kiosks or bulletin boards located at sites frequented by affected residents and travellers:

- Rural post offices/general stores
- Community halls
- Highway rest areas/ferry landings
- Chamber of Commerce



# Emergency Operations Centre

## 1.0 Introduction

Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) are key to emergency planning, response and recovery and crucial to saving lives and property. EOCs bring together people and resources to manage incidents that are beyond the capacity of a standard emergency response.

EOCs provide a means of centralizing and coordinating the efforts of government officials, response agencies and the private sector in managing an emergency response. They facilitate long-term operation, provide access to information, and help identify and allocate available and necessary resources.

As described in Module 3: BCERMS, an incident is managed from the Incident Command Post (ICP) at the *site level*, while at the *site support levels* (i.e., site support, provincial regional coordination and provincial central coordination) the incident is managed from an *Emergency Operations Centre*. In broad terms EOCs include:

- local authority Emergency Operation Centres (EOC)
- Department Operations Centres (DOC)
- Ministry Operation Centres (MOC)
- Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre (PREOC), and
- Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC).

BCERMS uses common terminology to enable various agencies and levels of government to effectively work together. In BCERMS, this common terminology is applied to the functions, position titles, and

facility designations within an EOC. It is recommended that an EOC utilize the BCERMS principles for organizing and managing EOC operations and activities.

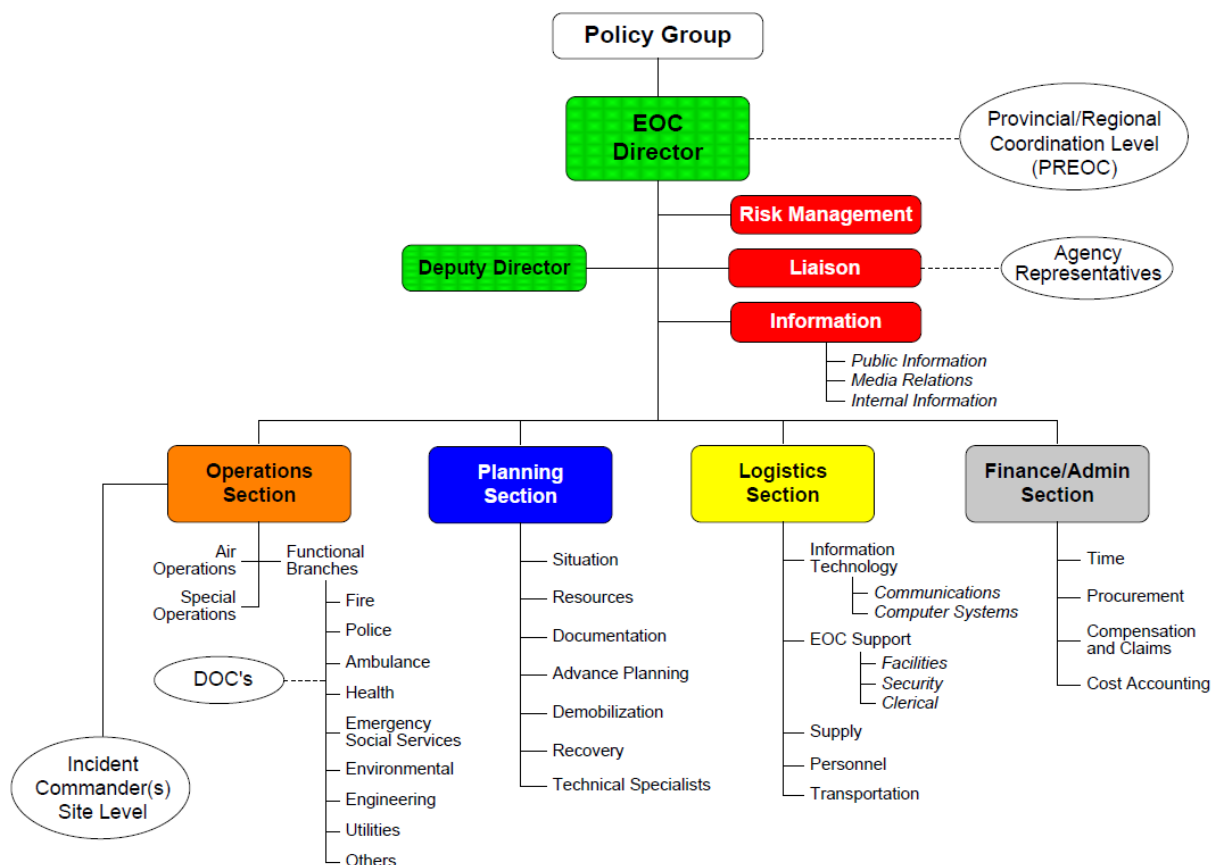
This Module describes the functions, position titles and responsibilities of positions common to an EOC. Module 4: Emergency Planning describes the physical components of an EOC facility.

## 2.0 EOC Organizational Structure

The EOC organizational chart below describes the structure of an EOC for the effective management of emergency response and recovery. In BCERMS, the EOC is organized around five major functions:

- Management
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

By maintaining the same organizational structure throughout the various response levels, operational effectiveness is optimized. The structure of the EOC is defined in the organizational chart as follows:



An EOC may be activated at the request of the Incident Commander (see below) or senior official to provide overall jurisdictional direction and control, coordination and resource support. When an EOC is activated, a Policy Group may be established to provide policy advice to the EOC.

Responsibilities of the five major functions in an EOC are summarized below:

**Management** – provides overall emergency policy and coordination of the response and includes: information management, risk management and liaison functions.

**Operations** – coordinates all operations in support of the emergency response through implementation of the EOC Action Plan.

**Planning** – collects, evaluates, and disseminates information; develops the EOC Action Plan and Situational Reports; maintains all EOC documentation.

**Logistics** – provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment and materials; ensures the EOC is operational.

**Finance/Administration** – provides financial activities and other administrative aspects.

While BCERMS terms at site and site support levels can largely be used interchangeably, there are some specific differences:

- At the site, the person with overall responsibility for response is the *Incident Commander*; whereas at site support levels the equivalent position is the *Director*.
- At the site, the Incident Commander plus supporting functions (Information, Safety and Liaison) are known collectively as *Command Staff*; whereas at the site support levels the EOC Director, Deputy Director and supporting functions are referred to as *Management Staff*.
- At the site, Command Staff includes a *Safety* function; whereas at site support levels the comparable function is *Risk Management*. The Risk Management function at site support includes greater emphasis on security and an enhanced scope related to safety issues.

### Unified Command

Unified Command allows organizations and agencies with jurisdictional or functional responsibility for the incident to jointly develop a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

Response on-site may be directed either by single command or unified command from a single on-site incident command post. Likewise, response and recovery coordination during site support at the EOC may involve either single or unified management. This is accomplished without losing or giving up organizational authority, responsibility, or accountability.

Applying Unified Command in the EOC means that any combination of organizations may work cooperatively to manage the EOC activities. In other words, the EOC Director position is filled by consensus among two or more members in Unified Management. For example, the Canadian Coast Guard may join the municipal EOC as co-directors to help coordinate response to an oil spill.

### 2.1 Common Identification

BCERMS has defined a common identification system for personnel filling positions within an EOC. The following colours are used to help quickly identify specific functions that work within an EOC, PREOC and PECC:

- Green – Director and Deputy Director
- Red – Liaison, Information and Risk Management Officer
- Orange – Operations
- Blue – Planning
- Yellow – Logistics
- Grey – Finance/Administration

Identification may take the form of a vest or armband. These identifiers do not preclude any personnel from wearing their agency's insignia or uniform.

### 2.2 Span of Control

Span of control indicates a supervisor can only effectively manage up to a maximum of 7 staff; 5 being ideal, with 3 – 7 as the norm. The situation will dictate the extent to which the major EOC functions are filled in response to an event. At a minimum, an active EOC requires only the EOC Director position be filled, while other functions are staffed based on the determination of the EOC Director as necessary.

When span of control is exceeded in any of the five major functions, additional EOC organizational elements should be activated. These elements are commonly referred to as:

- Branches
- Groups
- Units

The supervisor of each of the organizational elements in the EOC assumes the following title:

- EOC Director
- Section Chief
- Branch Coordinator
- Group Supervisor
- Unit Leader

### 3.0 EOC Functions

The functions outlined on the EOC organizational chart are separated into three broad categories: Policy Group, Management and General Staff. The primary responsibilities associated with each of the functions are described below.

#### 3.1 Policy Group

The Policy Group supports the emergency response effort by providing interpretation of existing policies, developing new policies to address emerging situations, and providing continuity of governance throughout the response and recovery effort. The Policy Group is comprised of the head of the organization (e.g., Mayor, Chair or Chief) and other senior executives.

While the Policy Group makes high level decisions regarding response and recovery efforts, it does not have direct responsibility for emergency management at the site. It is recommended that members of the Policy Group be available near the EOC for consultation during an emergency response.

A legal advisor is recommended for the Policy Group. The legal advisor provides guidance relating to interpretation of bylaws, regulations and legal requirements of emergency legislation. It is important that formal procedures be adopted to specify the responsibility and limitations of the Policy Group prior to an emergency event.

Policy Group responsibilities are:

##### **Policy Direction and Support**

- Advise on existing policies and examine the requirement for new or temporary policies to support response and recovery operations
- Keep apprised as to the status of the emergency event by reviewing EOC Situation Reports
- Consult with the EOC Director and/or Legal Advisors regarding any potential legal issues and recommended courses of action

##### **Set Expenditure Limits**

- Consult with EOC Director to determine appropriate expenditure limits for response and recovery
- Authorize local authority employees to perform services deemed necessary in response to the incident
- Authorize access to facilities and services of the local authority

### **Request for Outside Support**

- The EOC Director can request extraordinary resources and/or outside assistance from other local authorities, and/or provincial government.

### **Public Information**

- Upon request of the EOC Director, act as spokesperson for the jurisdiction and participate in media briefings

### **Recognition**

- Ensure steps are taken to acknowledge the contributions of response and recovery staff and volunteers

### **After Action Review**

- Establish the requirements for debriefing response and recovery personnel, and set a due date for the After Action Report

## **3.2 Management Staff**

Management Staff are responsible for the overall coordination of the emergency response at the site support level: information management, health and safety, risk management and liaison activities.

Management Staff is organized into the following separate functions: EOC Director, Deputy Director, Information, Risk Management and Liaison. The primary responsibilities of Management Staff are described below.

### **3.2.1 EOC Director**

The EOC Director has overall management responsibility for coordination between emergency response and supporting agencies in the EOC. Management responsibilities remain with the EOC Director until they are assigned to specific sections with the EOC structure. The EOC Director works in conjunction with Management to establish priorities for response within the affected area. The EOC Director:

- Assesses the magnitude of the situation to determine the appropriate level of EOC coordination
- Develops strategies to achieve incident objectives, approves the EOC Action Plan, and ensures all actions are coordinated within established priorities
- Establishes appropriate staffing levels for the EOC and approves all resource requests

- Ensures risk management principles are applied and adequate health and safety measures are in place for all activities
- Directs emergency public information actions, approves press releases, and other public information materials
- Liaises with Elected Officials and ensures inter-agency coordination is effective within the EOC
- Requests mutual aid and/or provincial or federal support

### 3.2.2 Deputy Director

The Deputy Director is responsible for supporting the EOC Director in all aspects of managing the EOC and for coordinating internal EOC functions. The Deputy Director undertakes special assignments at the request of the EOC Director and assumes the role of EOC Director in his/her absence. The Deputy Director:

- Communicates policy direction and action priorities to all staff
- Facilitates general briefings and debriefings at shift changes
- Assists the EOC Director in organizing and supporting the EOC staff, monitors their health and well-being, and conducts exit interviews during demobilization
- Assists the Planning Section Chief to prepare for EOC action planning meetings
- Ensures the effective flow of information, both internal and external to the EOC
- Ensure resource requests are prioritized and tracked

### 3.2.3 Information Section

The Information section is responsible for preparing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, EOC personnel, and other appropriate agencies and organizations. The Information section serves as the coordination point for all public information, media relations, and some internal information sources for the EOC. Responsibilities of the Information section are:

#### Public Information

- Ensures the public within the affected area receives accurate information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information
- Ensures that a Toll-Free Public Information Service (hotline or call centre) is established to provide helpful information and advice to the public



- Develops accurate messaging content for media briefings, website etc and distributes public information
- Coordinates with other agencies on public messaging

### **Media Relations**

- Serves as the coordination point for all media releases and responds to media calls
- Coordinates media releases with officials representing other affected response agencies
- Develops a format for press conferences and briefings in conjunction with the EOC Director
- Maintains a positive relationship with the media representatives, monitoring all broadcasts and written articles for accuracy

### **Internal Information**

- Develops messaging sheets and/or FAQ sheets to ensure consistent and accurate information sharing amongst EOC staff
- Maintains a web site established for EOC information
- Liaises with Information Officers established at PREOC, DOCs, MROC, EOCs and other agencies

### **3.2.4 Risk Management Section**

The role of the Risk Management section is to identify and recommend to the EOC Director, strategies for risk reduction and initiatives to promote safety and security. This includes timely, complete, specific, and accurate assessment of hazards and required controls.

Management shall evaluate the risk to personnel with respect to the purpose and potential results of their actions in each situation. In situations where the risk to personnel is excessive, activities shall be limited to defensive and protective operations. Responsibilities of the Risk Management section are:

### **Risk Management**

- Ensures good risk management practices are applied throughout the response organization and that every function contributes to the management of risk
- Protects the interests of all EOC participants, agencies, and organizations by ensuring due diligence in information collection, decision-making, and implementation
- Monitors situations for risk exposures and ascertains probabilities and potential consequences of future events

- Informs the EOC Director of all significant risk issues and provides factual information

### Safety

- Provides advice on safety issues and corrects any and all unsafe operations within or outside the scope of the EOC Action Plan
- Notifies the EOC Director of any safety issues and corrective actions

Note: While the Risk Management Officer is responsible for safety, it is recommended that a safety specialist be appointed who is familiar with all aspects of safety and relevant legislation.

### Security

- Ensures that appropriate security measures have been established to allow authorized access to the EOC facility

### 3.2.5 Liaison Section

The Liaison Officer is responsible for assisting and coordinating activities between the EOC Director and various representatives from other agencies or groups arriving at the EOC.

The Liaison section:

- Functions as a point of contact for representatives from other agencies arriving at the EOC
- Liaises with elected officials, other EOCs, the PREOC, DOCs, MROCs, and other organizations not represented in the EOC to communicate EOC guidelines, directives, Action Plans and situation information
- Assists EOC Director in ensuring proper procedures are in place for directing agency representatives, communicating with elected officials, and conducting VIP/visitor tours of the EOC facility

## 3.3 General Staff

The General Staff includes Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administrative responsibilities. These responsibilities remain with the Director until they are assigned to another individual. When the Operations, Planning, Logistics or Finance/Administrative responsibilities are established as separate functions in the EOC, they are managed by a section chief and can be supported by other functional units.

### 3.3.1 Operations Section

The Operations section is responsible for coordinating all jurisdictional operations in support of the emergency response through the implementation of the EOC's Action Plan. The Operations section

coordinates with the site level and DOCs, and is structured in accordance with key response functions (i.e., police, fire, ambulance, public works, and emergency social services). The Operations section:

- Ensures the EOC Director is kept apprised of all significant issues affecting Operations
- Coordinates all operational functions assigned to the EOC, and ensures assignments and operational objectives identified in the EOC Action Plan are carried out effectively
- Coordinates with any activated DOCs, MROCs and PREOC to convey resource requests and event status information
- Conducts Operational briefings
- Establishes Branches/Units to support the appropriate level of organization for the Section:
  - Operational Area Coordinator(s)
  - Emergency Social Services Branch
  - Agency Operation Branch - Human Services
  - Agency Operation Branch – Critical Infrastructure

### 3.3.2 Planning Section

The Planning section is responsible for collecting, evaluating and disseminating information about the incident, and developing the EOC Action Plan and Situation Report in coordination with other functions. The Planning section:

- Ensures EOC Director is kept apprised of all significant issues affecting Planning
- Collects, analyzes, and displays information and prepares Situation Reports
- In coordination with Section Chiefs, ensures Status Reports are completed and utilized as a basis for EOC Situation Reports and EOC Action Plans
- Prepares and distributes the EOC Action Plan and facilitates the action planning process
- Conducts Advance Planning activities and prepares reports
- Establishes Units to support the appropriate level of organization for the Section:
  - Situation Unit
  - Resources Unit
  - Demobilization Unit

- Documentation Unit
- Advance Planning Unit
- Recovery Unit
- Technical Specialists Unit
- Documents and maintains files on all EOC activities, including resource status information on all equipment and personnel assigned to the incident.

### 3.3.3 Logistics Section

The Logistics section is responsible for providing facilities, services, personnel, equipment and materials for the EOC and in support of site response. This includes: providing telecommunication services and information technology, locating or acquiring equipment, supplies, personnel, facilities, and transportation as well as arranging for food, lodging, security and other support services as required for the EOC and field requirements, such as support to Reception Centre(s). The Logistics section:

- Ensures the EOC Director is kept apprised of all significant issues relating to Logistics
- Works closely with Operations to establish priorities for resource allocation within the operational region
- Ensures critical resources are allocated according to direction and priorities set out by the Operations Section
- Establishes Branches/Units to support the appropriate level of organization for the Section:
  - Information Technology Branch (Communications Unit, Computer Systems Unit)
  - Transportation Unit
  - EOC Support Branch (Facilities Unit, Security Unit, Clerical Unit)
  - Supply Unit
  - Personnel Unit

### 3.3.4 Finance & Administration Section

The Finance and Administration section is responsible for all financial, administrative, and cost analysis associated with the event. The Finance and Administration section:

- Works with EOC Director to determine expenditure authority levels for the EOC

- Maintains accurate documentation and submits authorization forms to appropriate authorities
- Maintains all financial records (e.g., time sheets)
- Ensures travel and expense claims and other claims (e.g., Worker's Compensation) are processed
- Establishes Units within the Section to support response efforts, as needed:
  - Time Unit
  - Compensation & Claims Unit
  - Purchasing Unit
  - Cost Unit
  - Disaster Financial Assistance Unit

### 3.4 EOC Functional Responsibilities

Agencies should ensure that all personnel who may be involved in emergency activities are trained in BCERMS to their expected assignment levels or job functions. Management delegates assignments based on the availability, qualifications, and expertise of personnel. The roles and responsibilities of each function of response are described in detail below, beginning with a common set of responsibilities that must be followed by all EOC response personnel, as follows:

#### 3.4.1 Common Responsibilities of all EOC Personnel

##### **Notification of Activation/Deployment**

- Confirm job assignment and accommodation arrangements
- Request brief overview of the event
- Clarify any special travel instructions, including location to report to and arrival time
- Confirm any communications protocols
- Ensure regular job responsibilities are reassigned during absence, and where this is not possible consider declining activation
- Monitor any event related information from media, internet etc.

- Assess personal equipment readiness based on the situation, time of year etc.
- Maintain a checklist of items (e.g., medications, cash, computer) and personal Grab 'n' Go-Kit
- Leave contact information with family and friends
- Use travel time to mentally 'switch gears' (i.e., leave your day-to-day job behind)
- Check in at accommodation destination prior to arriving at the EOC

### Activation Phase

- Check in with the Personnel Unit (in Logistics) upon arrival at the EOC, obtain identification card and vest
- Complete EOC Check-in list and PEP Task Registration form
- If you are a volunteer or have no pre-assigned EOC role, register with the Liaison Officer
- Report to EOC Director, Section Chief, or other assigned supervisor
- Receive briefing from immediate supervisor
- Set-up your workstation and review your position checklist, forms and flowcharts
- Establish and maintain a position log that describes your actions/decisions during your shift
- Determine your resource needs, such as a computer, phone, fax, stationary, plan copies, and other reference documents. Acquire work materials from Logistics

### Operational Phase

- Participate in any facility/safety orientations
- Participate in any EOC meetings and briefings
- Ensure compliance with all safety practices and procedures and report unsafe conditions to the Risk Manager (or Director or Deputy Director)
- Supervisors shall maintain accountability for their assigned personnel; organize and brief subordinates
- Know your assigned communication methods and procedures for your area of responsibility
- Complete forms and reports required of your position and ensure proper disposition of event documentation as directed by the Documentation Unit
- Ensure all equipment is operational prior to each work period

- Report any signs or symptoms of extended incident stress, injury, fatigue, or illness for yourself or co-workers to your supervisor
- Brief shift replacement on ongoing operations when relieved at operational periods or rotation

### **Demobilization Phase**

- Respond to demobilization timelines and brief subordinates regarding demobilization
- Complete all required forms, reports, and other documentation and submit paperwork through your supervisor to Planning (Documentation Unit) prior to departing the EOC
- If any open actions are not complete, ensure a designate is briefed thoroughly prior to departure
- Clean up your work area before you leave. Return any communications equipment or other materials specifically issued for your use
- If required, deactivate your assigned position and close out logs when authorized by the EOC Director or designate
- Prepare personal belongings for demobilization
- Complete demobilization, including exit interview
- Follow EOC checkout procedures. Return to Logistics (Personnel Unit) to sign out
- Upon demobilization, notify EOC of your safe return home
- Leave a forwarding phone number where you can be reached
- Participate in After-Action activities, including debriefs
- Access critical incident stress debriefings

### **3.4.2 Policy Group**

#### **Summary of Responsibilities**

- Provides overall emergency policy and direction to the EOC Director
- Sets expenditure limits
- Formally requests outside support or resources (e.g., Provincial and Federal support)

- Authorizes declaration and termination of State of Local Emergency
- Provides direction for emergency public information activities
- Acts as a spokesperson for the jurisdiction

### Activation Phase

- Convene the EOC Policy Group at the EOC or designated site, as requested by the EOC Director
- Obtain current situation status and a briefing on priority actions taken and outstanding from the EOC Director
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Examine need for new or temporary policies, as required to support response operations
- Consult with EOC Director to determine appropriate expenditure limits
- Prepare for and participate in any media briefings
- Ensure adequate public information materials are being issued from the EOC
- Consult with EOC Director and/or Legal Advisors on any potential legal issues and recommended course of action
- Consult with EOC Director to determine need for extraordinary resources or outside assistance
- Consult with EOC Director to determine the need for declaration and termination of State of Local Emergency
- Keep apprised as to the status of the emergency event by reviewing EOC Situation Reports

### Demobilization Phase

- Proclaim termination of the emergency response and have EOC proceed with recovery efforts
- Ensure all paperwork has been forwarded to Planning (Documentation Unit)
- Provide input to the after action report
- Participate in formal post-operational debriefs
- Recognize EOC staff members and response personnel for their efforts
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist



### ▪ 3.4.3 EOC Director

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- The EOC Director has overall management responsibility for coordination between emergency response and supporting agencies in the EOC, and in conjunction with the Management Team and General Staff, sets priorities for response efforts in the affected area
- Provide support to the Incident Commander and response agencies and ensure that all actions are accomplished within the priorities established
- Establish the appropriate staffing level for the EOC and continuously monitor organizational effectiveness to ensure that appropriate modifications occur
- Ensure that inter-agency coordination is accomplished effectively within the EOC
- Direct, in consultation with the Information Officer, appropriate emergency public information actions using the best methods of dissemination. Approve the issuance of press releases, and other public information materials as required
- Liaise with Elected Officials
- Ensure risk management principles and procedures are applied for all activities

#### Reports to

Policy Group

#### Activation Phase

- Obtain briefing from whatever sources are available
- Obtain PEP task number
- Determine the appropriate level of activation based on situation as known. Call out appropriate personnel for the initial activation of the EOC
- Respond immediately to EOC location and determine operations status
- Determine which EOC functions are needed, assign Section Chiefs as appropriate and ensure they are staffing their functions as required:
  - Operations Security Chief
  - Logistics Section Chief
  - Planning Section Chief

- Finance/Administration Section Chief
- Determine which additional Management Team positions are required and ensure they are filled as soon as possible:
  - Information Officer
  - Risk Management Officer
  - Liaison Officer
- Ensure an EOC organization and staffing chart is posted and that arriving staff are assigned appropriate roles
- Establish initial priorities for the EOC based on current status reports
- Schedule the initial event briefing and have the Planning Section Chief prepare the agenda
- Consult with the Liaison Officer and General Staff to determine what representation is needed at the EOC from other emergency response agencies
- Assign the Liaison Officer to coordinate outside agency response to the EOC, and to assist as necessary
- Obtain personal telecommunications equipment
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Maintain a position log and any other relevant forms
- Monitor General Staff activities to ensure that all appropriate actions are being taken and initial EOC response priorities and objectives are decided and communicated to all involved parties
- Establish operational periods and management timelines
- Set and communicate priorities and objectives
- In conjunction with the Information Officer, conduct news conferences and review media releases, information bulletins, and advisories etc for final approval, in accordance with established procedures
- Ensure that the Liaison Officer is providing for and maintaining effective interagency coordination

- Consult with the Planning Section Chief to prepare priorities and objectives for the EOC Action Planning meeting
- Convene the initial EOC Action Planning meetings. Ensure that all Section Chiefs, Management Team, and other key agency representatives attend
- Ensure that appropriate planning procedures are followed
- Request that the Planning Section Chief chair the initial EOC Action Planning meeting and facilitate all future EOC Action Planning meetings
- Approve and authorize implementation of all Action Plans
- Conduct periodic briefings with the EOC Management Team to ensure response priorities and objectives are current and appropriate
- Establish and maintain contacts with other jurisdictions, the PREOC, and other BCERMS organizational levels as appropriate
- Document all decisions and approvals
- Approve resource requests not included in the Action Plan
- Conduct periodic briefings for the Policy Group
- Prepare to brief the Policy Group on the possibility for declaration of a State of Local Emergency
- Consult with the PREOC on procedures for declaring a State of Local Emergency
- Assign in writing, delegated powers, if any, under the declaration
- Assign special projects to the Deputy Director
- Brief your relief at shift change, ensuring that ongoing activities are identified and follow-up requirements are understood

### Demobilization Phase

- Authorize demobilization of sections, branches and units when they are no longer required
- Ensure that any open actions not yet completed will be handled after demobilization
- Ensure that all required forms or reports are completed prior to demobilization and forward to Planning (Documentation Unit)

- Ensure that an EOC After Action Report is prepared in consultation with the Planning Section and the EOC Management Team
- Terminate the emergency response and proceed with recovery operations as proclaimed by the Policy Group
- Demobilize the EOC when the emergency event no longer requires the EOC activated
- Ensure all other facilities and support agencies are notified of demobilization
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.4 Deputy Director

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Assume the role of EOC Director in his/her absence. See EOC Director Task checklist
- Undertake special assignments at the request of the EOC Director
- Ensure the efficient and effective flow of information within the EOC
- Ensure resource requests are prioritized and tracked
- Support the EOC Management Team by communicating policy direction and action priorities to all EOC staff
- Monitor the health and welfare of EOC staff. Mediate and resolve any personnel conflicts
- Facilitate briefings and debriefings at shift changes
- Coordinate internal functions of the EOC for effective operational capability

#### Reports to

EOC Director

#### Activation Phase

- Respond to EOC location and assist EOC Director in determining operational status
- Obtain briefing from sources that are available
- Supervise set-up of the EOC for the most effective and efficient operations

- Establish a working area on behalf of the EOC Management Team's and ensure personnel, equipment, and supplies are in place
- Obtain personal telecommunications equipment, if required
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Maintain a position log and any other relevant forms
- Support management staff activities to ensure that all appropriate actions are being taken
- Assist EOC Director in determining and communicating priorities, objectives and decisions to all EOC staff
- Assist with preparation of the EOC Action Planning meeting
- Ensure EOC Management Team follows EOC briefing format
- Ensure EOC Management Team has sufficient administrative support
- Coordinate additional staffing needs with Logistics (Personnel Unit Coordinator)
- Ensure all EOC staff complete Position Logs
- Participate in EOC action planning and management meetings
- Report significant events and any issues of concern to EOC Director and advise of your activities
- Undertake special projects and assignments as directed by the EOC Director
- Check with the General Staff on the health and welfare of all EOC staff. Authorize and coordinate additional support needs
- Mediate and resolve any personnel conflicts
- Consult with EOC Director on appointing additional staff to ensure 24-hour shift scheduling for both EOC Director and Deputy functions
- Arrange for, and facilitate operational briefings and debriefs and critical incident stress debriefs for EOC staff
- Brief your relief at shift change, ensuring that ongoing activities are identified and follow-up requirements are understood

### Demobilization Phase

- Assist EOC Director with demobilization procedures
- Ensure that any operations not yet completed are handled and assigned after demobilization
- Complete all required forms and reports prior to demobilization and forward to Planning (Documentation Unit)
- Assist with the preparation of the EOC After Action Report
- Organize and facilitate staff debriefings and critical incident stress debriefs
- Organize and coordinate staff recognition initiatives (e.g., thank you letters for the time and expertise that staff contributed towards EOC operations)
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.5 Information Officer

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Serve as the coordination point for all public information, media relations, and some internal information sources for the EOC
- Establish the EOC Information Unit/Section, supervise all staff assigned as Assistant Information Officers and coordinate their activities
- Ensure the public and media within the affected area receive complete, accurate, and consistent information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs, and other vital information
- Establish a Public Information Service (i.e., Call Centre), as necessary, and ensure notification of the service is publicized for public access to helpful information and advice
- Develop and distribute public information materials
- Provide media relations by coordinating all information to the media from the EOC, responding to media calls, developing formats for press conferences and briefings in conjunction with the EOC Director, maintaining a positive relationship with media representatives, and monitoring all broadcasts and written articles for accuracy
- Coordinate VIP and visitor tours of the EOC facility, in consultation with the EOC Director and Liaison Officer

- Maintain a web site established for EOC information
- Liaise with Information Officers established at PREOC, DOCs, MROCs, EOCs and other agencies

### Reports to

EOC Director/Deputy Director

### Activation Phase

- Determine staffing requirements and assign personnel to the EOC Information Section. If Section is bigger than a few staff, consider appointing a deputy
- Assess skills required (e.g., writing, issues management, media relations, event planning, liaison)
- Establish contact with the PREOC Information Unit and EOC, MROC, and DOC Information Units
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Establish an Information Section working with the Logistics Section to provide necessary space, materials, telephones and electrical power
- Implement and maintain the overall information release program for the EOC
- Establish a Public Information Service (Call Centre) to handle public inquiries and to provide emergency support information
- Consult with Logistics Information Technology Branch Coordinator with regard to communication equipment needs and proper set-up
- Provide information for a pre-recorded messaging line
- Establish distribution lists for recipients of all public information releases. Include the PREOC, other EOCs, DOCs, MROCs, Elected Officials, neighbouring First Nations groups, emergency social service groups, media, etc
- Dedicate a phone line for media calls, provide the number to the media, ensure there is adequate staff to respond to the media, and keep records of all media calls
- Establish a media centre/press room in an area separate from, but close to the EOC, for briefings and news conferences and media to work from

- Coordinate media briefings and press conferences and work with the EOC Director to designate media spokespeople
- Prepare all materials for briefings and press conferences, including briefing material for Elected Officials. Provide other assistance as necessary to facilitate their participation in media briefings and press conferences
- Develop and publish a media briefing schedule, to include location, format, and preparation and distribution of handout materials
- Monitor all media sources and identify issues, using information to develop follow-up news releases and rumour control materials
- Keep the EOC Director advised of all unusual requests for information and major critical or unfavourable media comments. Recommend strategies to improve media relations
- Obtain policy guidance and approval from the EOC Director prior to the release of any and all information to the media and public
- Coordinate with other EOC sections, with the approval of the EOC Director, to issue timely and consistent advisories, information bulletins and instructions for life safety, health and assistance for the public
- Ensure that announcements, emergency information and materials are translated and prepared for special populations (non-English speaking, hearing impaired, etc)
- Coordinate with the Situation Unit and identify a method for obtaining and verifying significant information as it develops
- Interact and liaise with Information Officers in area EOCs, MROCs, DOCs, emergency response agencies and the PREOC, and obtain information relative to public information operations
- Develop message statements and Q & As for EOC staff, operators of the Public Information Service and Elected Officials
- Ensure EOC staff are available at incident sites to coordinate and conduct tours of the disaster area (provided it is safe to do so), and coordinate any EOC or Elected Officials tours
- In addition to identifying sources for assistance in press releases, PSAs and bulletins, maintain a Disaster Assistance Information Directory with contact information for food, shelter, supplies and/or health services
- Attend EOC briefings and participate in PREOC Conference Calls
- Ensure that file copies are maintained of all information released



- Conduct shift change briefings in detail, ensuring that in-progress activities are identified and follow-up requirements are known

### Demobilization Phase

- Prepare final new releases and advise media representatives of points-of-contact for follow-up information
- Demobilize the Information Section
- Complete all logs and documentation and forward to the Documentation Unit
- Provide information to support the EOC After Action Report
- Ensure any open actions are assigned to appropriate staff or other EOC sections for follow-up
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.6 Risk Management Officer

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Ensure sound risk management practices are applied throughout the response and that every EOC function contributes to the management of risk
- Protect the interests of all EOC staff, agencies, organizations and others by ensuring due diligence in information collection, decision-making, and implementation
- Monitor situations for risk exposure and ascertain probabilities and potential consequences of future events
- Provide technical advice to counterparts at the site (Safety) and PREOC
- Provide advice on safety issues and correct any and all unsafe operations within or outside the scope of the EOC Action Plan. Notify the EOC Director of the situation and any actions taken. [While the Risk Management Officer is responsible for safety, a Safety Specialist who is familiar with all aspects of safety and relevant legislation should also be appointed]
- Ensure appropriate security measures have been established, including access to the EOC facility

#### Reports to

EOC Director/Deputy Director

### Activation Phase

- Perform a risk identification and analysis for the EOC site and operation
- Tour the entire facility area and determine the scope of ongoing and future operations
- Monitor set-up procedures for the EOC and ensure proper safety regulations are adhered to
- Ensure that security checkpoints have been established at all EOC entrances, including staff sign-in and identification procedures, to allow only authorized personnel access to the EOC
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Establish and maintain position log and other necessary files
- Assess damage and loss in collaboration with the Planning Situation Unit and Finance/Administration (Compensation and Claims function)
- Identify and document risk and liability issues and keep the Planning Section Chief apprised
- Gather and organize evidence that may assist all EOC organizations in legal defence that may be more difficult to obtain later
- Conduct interviews and take statements to investigate major risk management issues
- Assist the EOC Director by reviewing press releases, public alerts, warnings, and public information materials from a risk management perspective
- Evaluate situations and advise the EOC Director of any conditions and actions that might result in liability (e.g., oversights, improper response actions)
- Identify potential claimants and the scope of their issues and concerns
- Advise members of response organizations regarding options for risk control, during operational meetings and upon request
- Advise on actions to reduce loss and suffering to proactively support response and recovery
- Ensure Documentation Unit is secure and operating effectively and advise on the type of information to collect, flow of information, and issues of confidentiality
- Organize and prepare records for final audit
- Conduct regular inspections of the EOC facility and liaise with the EOC Support Branch Coordinator to identify any hazardous conditions, especially following a seismic event.

- Coordinate with the EOC Support Branch to obtain assistance for any special safety requirements
- Provide guidance to EOC staff regarding actions to protect themselves for the emergency event, such as smoke from a wildfire or aftershocks from an earthquake
- Coordinate with Finance/Administration on any EOC personnel injury claims and records preparation for proper case evaluation and closure
- Monitor security checkpoints and EOC facility access
- Address any security issues with the EOC Director and EOC Support Branch Coordinator and recommend improvements

### Demobilization Phase

- Assist the EOC Director in demobilization activities, including collection of all relevant papers, electronic records, and material necessary for post-operation reporting procedures
- Contribute risk management issues towards the After Action Report
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.7 Liaison Officer

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Function as a point of contact for, and interaction with, representatives from other agencies arriving at the EOC
- Liaise with local DOCs, MROCs, and provincial/federal organizations not represented in the EOC
- Coordinate agency representatives and ensure all necessary roles are filled, enabling the EOC to function effectively and efficiently
- Assist and serve as an advisor to the EOC Director and EOC Management Team, and provide information and guidance regarding the outside functions of the EOC
- Assist the EOC Director in ensuring proper procedures are in place for directing agency representatives, communicating with elected officials (from the area involved), and conducting VIP/visitor tours of the EOC facility
- Liaise with elected officials, other EOCs, the PREOC, provincial DOCs, MROCs, and organizations as directed by EOC Director, and communicate EOC guidelines, directives, Action Plans and situation information

### Reports to

EOC Director/Deputy Director

### Activation Phase

- Report to the EOC
- Ensure that an EOC staff check-in procedure is established immediately
- Ensure registration procedures are established for EOC volunteers
- Assist the EOC Director in determining appropriate staffing for the EOC
- Ensure that an EOC organization and staffing chart is posted and updated
- Provide assistance and information to General Staff regarding staffing EOC functions
- Obtain personal telecommunications equipment
- Ensure that agency representatives' telephone and/or radio communications are established and functioning
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Assist the EOC Director and EOC Management Team in developing overall EOC priorities, as well as priorities for the initial Action Plan
- Collect and provide external, non-represented agencies' information to the Planning Section to assist in developing, updating, and implementing EOC Action Plans
- Provide EOC information to non-represented external agencies
- Provide general advice and guidance to supporting agencies and EOC staff
- Ensure that communication with appropriate external, non-represented agencies is established and maintained
- Prepare external non-represented agency information for briefings with the EOC Management Team
- Assist the EOC Director in preparing for and conducting briefings with EOC Management Team, elected officials, the media, and the public
- Ensure that operational priorities and objectives identified in the EOC Action Plan are communicated to external non-represented agencies

- Facilitate completion of situation reports with external non-represented agencies and forward to the Planning Section
- Advise the EOC Director of any critical information and resources/support requests contained within the situation reports
- Forward approved EOC Situation Reports to non-represented agencies
- In consultation with the Information Officer, conduct tours of EOC facility
- Provide assistance with shift change activity

### Demobilization Phase

- Notify external non-represented agencies in EOC of the planned demobilization
- Assist with the demobilization of the EOC at the designated time
- Assist the EOC Director with recovery operations and preparation of the EOC After Action Report
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.8 Section Chief – Common Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed below are generic to operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration Section Chiefs:

- Upon check in receive briefing from EOC Director or designate
- Participate in meetings and briefings
- Determine current status of section activities
- Determine resource needs
- Request additional staff, if appropriate, and ensure the EOC Director's prior approval
- Assign specific duties to subordinates and supervise their activities
- Supervise demobilization of the section, including storage of supplies
- Provide Logistics with a list of supplies to be replenished
- Maintain section records including Position Log detailing actions, decisions, and events

- Carry out all assignments

### 3.4.9 Operations Section Chief

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Ensure the Operations coordination function is carried out, including coordinating all operational functions assigned to the EOC
- Ensure assignments and operational objectives identified in the EOC Action Plan are carried out effectively
- Establish the appropriate level of Branch and Unit organizations within the Operations Section, continuously monitoring effectiveness and modifying accordingly
- Coordinate any activated DOCs or MROCs in the operational area
- Maintain a communications link between field personnel, DOCs , MROCs, and the PREOC for the purpose of coordinating the overall response, resource requests and event status information
- Ensure the Planning Section is provided with Branch Status Reports and Major Incident Reports
- Conduct periodic Operations briefings for the EOC Director
- Supervise the Operations Section

#### Activation Phase

- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist
- Ensure the Operations Section is set up properly and that appropriate personnel, equipment, and supplies are in place, including telecommunications, maps, and status boards
- Meet with EOC Director and/or Planning Section Chief to obtain a preliminary situation briefing
- Based on the situation, activate appropriate Branches based on functions or geographic assignments within the Section. Designate Branch Coordinators
- Establish radio or cell phone communications with the PREOC, DOCs or MROCs operating in the community, and coordinate accordingly

- Request additional personnel for the Section from Personnel Unit as necessary to maintain 24-hour operation
- Confer with the EOC Director to ensure that the Planning and Logistics Sections are staffed at levels necessary to provide adequate information and support for operations
- Coordinate with the Liaison Officer on the need for Agency Representatives in the Section
- Obtain a current communications status briefing from Logistics (Information Technology Branch Coordinator), and ensure adequate equipment and frequencies are available for the section
- Determine activation status of other EOCs and the PREOC, and establish communication links with their Operations Sections
- Based on the situation, both known or forecasted, determine likely future needs of the Section
- Identify key issues currently affecting the Section, meet with section personnel and determine appropriate objectives for the first operational period
- Review responsibilities and develop a detailed plan for carrying out Operations objectives
- Adopt a positive attitude. Think ahead and anticipate situations and problems before they occur

### Operational Phase

- Ensure all Section personnel are maintaining their individual position logs and other paperwork
- Ensure that information on the situation and resource information is provided to the appropriate Units in the Planning Section on a regular basis
- If emergency is wide spread, and there are two or more Incident Command Posts established that require support and coordination, establish Operational Area Coordinator(s)
- Conduct periodic briefings and work to reach consensus among staff on objectives for forthcoming operational periods
- Attend and participate in the EOC's Action Planning meetings
- Work closely with each Branch Coordinator to ensure that Section objectives, as defined in the current EOC Action Plan, are being addressed
- Log and track resource requests and forward extra-ordinary and/or critical resource requests to the EOC Director for approval

- Ensure that Branches coordinate all resource needs through the Logistics Section
- Ensure that intelligence information from Branch Coordinators is made available to the Planning Section (Situation Unit) in a timely manner
- Ensure all media contacts/requests for information are referred to the EOC Information Officer
- Ensure that fiscal and administrative requirements are coordinated through the Finance/Administration Section (notify of emergency expenditures and daily time sheets)
- Ensure an expenditure authorization form is completed for every contract, hire, lease, or rental
- Brief Branch Coordinators periodically on any updated information you may have received
- Share status information with other Sections

### Demobilization Phase

- Deactivate Branches and organizational elements when no longer required. Ensure that all paperwork is complete and logs are closed and sent to the Documentation Unit
- Ensure any open actions are handled by the Section or transferred to other EOC functions
- Demobilize the Section and close out logs when authorized by the EOC Director
- Ensure that any required forms or reports are completed prior to your release and departure
- Complete all logs and documentation and forward to the Documentation Unit
- Be prepared to provide input to the After Action Report
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.10 Planning Section Chief

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Collect, analyze, and display situation information and prepare periodic Situation Reports
- Prepare and distribute the EOC Action Plan and facilitate the Action Planning process
- Conduct Advance Planning activities and reports
- Document and maintain files on all EOC activities, including tracking resources



- Provide technical support services to the various EOC Sections and Branches
- Establish the appropriate level of organization for the Planning Section
- Exercise overall responsibility for the coordination of Branch/Unit activities within the Section
- Inform the EOC Director of significant issues affecting the Planning Section
- In coordination with other Section Chiefs, ensure Status Reports are completed to inform Situation Reports and EOC Action Plans

### Activation Phase

- Ensure the Planning Section is set-up properly and that appropriate personnel, equipment, and supplies are in place, including maps and status boards
- Based on the situation, activate Units within the Section and designate Leaders for each Unit:
  - Situation Unit
  - Resources Unit
  - Demobilization Unit
  - Documentation Unit
  - Advance Planning Unit
  - Recovery Unit
  - Technical Specialists Unit
- Ensure sufficient staff are available for a 24-hour schedule
- Establish contact with PREOC Planning Section and coordinate Situation Report requirements
- Interface constantly with Operations Section Chief, obtain and review any major incident reports
- Review responsibilities of Units in the Section and develop plans to carry out all responsibilities
- Prepare a list of key issues to be addressed by Planning, and in consultation with Section staff, identify objectives to be accomplished during the initial operational period
- Keep the EOC Director informed of significant events
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Ensure Planning position logs and other necessary files are maintained
- Ensure Situation Unit is maintaining current information for the Situation Report
- Ensure Operations Section completes major incident reports and Branch status reports and they are accessible by the Section (recommend a Planning Liaison be provided to Operations Section)
- Ensure Situation Report is produced and distributed to EOC Sections and the PREOC at least once during an operational period (or more frequently as directed by the EOC Director)
- Assist Operations in ensuring that all status boards and other displays are kept current and that posted information is neat and legible
- Ensure Information Officer has immediate and unlimited access to all status reports and displays
- Conduct periodic briefings with Section staff and work to reach consensus among staff on Section objectives for forthcoming operational periods
- Chair Action Planning meetings approximately two hours prior the end of each operational period
- Ensure that objectives for each Section are completed, collected, and posted in preparation for the next Action Planning meeting
- Ensure that the EOC Action Plan is completed, approved by the EOC Director, and distributed prior to the start of the next operational period
- Work closely with each Branch/Unit within the Planning Section to ensure the Section objectives, as defined in the EOC Action Plan, are being addressed
- Ensure Advance Planning Unit develops and distributes a report that highlights forecasted events or conditions likely to occur beyond the forthcoming operational period; particularly those situations that may influence the overall priorities of the EOC
- Ensure Documentation Unit maintains files on all EOC activities and provides reproduction and archiving services for the EOC
- Provide technical services, such as environmental advisors and other technical specialists to all EOC Sections
- Ensure all fiscal and administrative requirements are coordinated through the Finance/Administration Section

- Ensure the Risk Management Officer is involved in the Action Planning process

### Demobilization Phase

- Ensure the Demobilization Plan for the EOC is complete, approved by the EOC Director and distributed to all EOC Sections
- Oversee preparation of the EOC After Action Report by the Recovery Unit
- Determine demobilization status of all Planning Units and advise the EOC Director
- Complete all logs and documentations and forward to the Documentation Unit
- Ensure any open actions are assigned to appropriate Planning staff or other EOC Sections for follow-up
- Ensure that all expenditures and financial claims have been coordinated through the Finance/Administration Section
- Review EOC After Action Report prior to submitting to the EOC Director and the Management Team for approval
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.11 Logistics Section Chief

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Ensure the Logistics function is carried out in support of the EOC including: providing telecommunication services and information technology, locating or acquiring equipment, supplies, personnel, facilities, and transportation as well as arranging for food, lodging, and other support services as required for the EOC and field requirements
- Establish the appropriate level of Branch and/or Unit staffing within the Logistics Section, continuously monitoring the effectiveness of the organization and modifying
- Ensure Section objectives, as stated in the EOC Action Plan, are accomplished within the operational period or within the estimated time frame
- Coordinate closely with the Operations Section Chief to establish priorities for resource allocation within the operational region
- Keep the EOC Director informed of all significant issues relating to the Logistics Section

- Ensure critical resources are allocated according to EOC Action Plan policy, priorities and direction
- Supervise the Logistics Section

### Activation Phase

- Ensure the Section is set-up properly and that appropriate personnel, equipment and supplies are in place, including maps, status boards, vendor references, and other resource directories
- Based on the situation, activate Branches/Units within the Section as needed and designate Branch and Unit Leaders for each element:
  - Information Technology Branch (Communications Unit, Computer Systems Unit)
  - Transportation Unit
  - EOC Support Branch (Facilities Unit, Security Unit, Clerical Unit)
  - Supply Unit
  - Personnel Unit
- Ensure sufficient staff are available for a 24-hour schedule
- Establish communication with the Logistics Section at the PREOC
- Advise Section Units to coordinate with Branches in Planning and Operations Sections to prioritize and validate resource requests from Incident Command/DOC prior to acting on a request
- Meet with EOC Director and EOC Management Team and identify immediate resource needs
- Meet with Finance/Administration Section Chief to determine purchasing authority for the Section
- Assist Unit Leaders in developing objectives for the Section, as well as plans to accomplish their objectives within the first operational period, or in accordance with the EOC Action Plan
- Adopt a proactive attitude, think ahead and anticipate situations and problems before they occur
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Ensure Logistic Section position logs and other necessary files are maintained

- Meet regularly with Section staff and work to reach consensus on Section objectives for forthcoming operational periods
- Provide Planning Section Chief with the Logistics Section objectives at least 30 minutes prior to each EOC Action Planning meeting
- Attend and participate in EOC Action Planning meetings
- Provide periodic Section Status Reports to the EOC Director and Situation Unit
- Ensure Supply Unit coordinates closely with Purchasing Unit in Finance/Administration Section, and that all required documents and procedures are completed and followed
- Ensure Supply and Personnel coordinate activities with functional Branch Coordinators
- Ensure that transportation requirements in support of response operations are met
- Ensure that all requests for facilities and facility support are addressed
- Ensure that all resources are tracked and accounted for in cooperation with the Resources Unit, as well as resources ordered through mutual aid
- Provide Section staff with information updates via Section briefings as required
- Provide your relief with a briefing at shift change, of all ongoing activities, Branch objectives for the next operational period, and any other pertinent information

### Demobilization Phase

- Identify high cost resources that could be demobilized early and advise other Section Chiefs
- Ensure coordination with Operations before commencing demobilization
- Determine demobilization status of the Logistics Section and advise the EOC Director
- Complete all logs and documentation and forward to the Documentation Unit
- Ensure any open actions are assigned to appropriate Logistics staff and other EOC Sections for follow-up
- Ensure all expenditures and financial claims are coordinated through Finance/Administration
- Contribute information towards the EOC After Action Report
- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist

### 3.4.12 Finance/Administration Section Chief

#### Summary of Responsibilities

- Ensure all financial records are maintained throughout the event
- Ensure all on-duty time is recorded and collected for all personnel
- Ensure continuity of the payroll process for all employees responding to the event
- Consult with EOC Director on purchasing authority, if any, for Logistics, Operations, and EOC Management Team
- Ensure worker's compensation claims and all travel and expense claims are processed within a reasonable time, given the nature of the situation
- Activate Units within the Finance/Administration Section as required, monitor Section activities continuously and modify the organization, as needed
- Ensure all recovery documentation is accurately maintained and submitted on appropriate forms
- Supervise the Finance/Administration Section

#### Activation Phase

- Ensure the Finance/Administration Section is set-up properly and that appropriate personnel, equipment, and supplies are in place
- Confirm purchasing authority for the EOC with the EOC Director
- Based on the situation, activate Units as needed and designate Unit Leaders for each element:
  - Time Unit
  - Compensation & Claims Unit
  - Purchasing Unit
  - Cost Unit
  - Disaster Financial Assistance Unit
- Ensure sufficient staff are available for a 24-hour schedule
- Meet Logistics and Operations Section Chiefs to review financial and administrative requirements and procedures, and confirm the delegated level of purchasing authority

- Meet with all Unit Leaders and ensure responsibilities and procedures are clearly understood
- In conjunction with Unit Leaders, determine the initial Finance/Administration Action Planning objectives for the first operational period
- Notify the EOC Director when the Finance/Administration Section is operational
- Adopt a proactive attitude, think ahead and anticipate situations and problems before they occur
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist

### Operational Phase

- Ensure Finance/Administration position logs and other necessary files are maintained
- Utilize provincial finance, cost accounting, and time sheet forms
- Ensure Section displays are current and information posted is legible and concise
- Participate in all EOC Action Planning meetings
- Provide cost estimates to the EOC Action Planning Process
- Brief all Unit Leaders and ensure they are aware of all priorities in the EOC Action Plan
- Keep the EOC Director, Management Team, and Elected Officials apprised of the current fiscal situation and other related matters, on an ongoing basis
- Ensure the Cost Unit all financial records and cost documentation is accurately maintained throughout the event, and is submitted on the appropriate forms to the Province
- Ensure the Time Unit tracks and records all agency staff time, and promptly processes time sheets and travel expense claims
- Coordinate with Logistics or Operations Sections to ensure the Purchasing Unit processes purchase orders and develops contracts in a timely manner
- Ensure the Compensation Claims Unit processes all Workers' Compensation Board claims

### Demobilization Phase

- Determine demobilization status of the Section and advise the EOC Director
- Ensure all expenditures and financial claims have been processed and documented
- Complete all logs and documentation and forward to the Documentation Unit

- Ensure any open actions are assigned to appropriate Finance/Administration staff or other EOC sections for follow-up
- Contribute information input towards the EOC After Action Report
- Follow the Generic Demobilization checklist





# Supporting People in Emergencies

## 1.0 Introduction

The loss of life and the social and economic disruption caused by emergencies and disasters can be devastating for individuals and communities. Support is required for those impacted by such events from the onset of the emergency and through to the recovery phase.

Some response efforts focus on supporting people affected by the event by providing them with information and other critical services such as food, clothing, shelter, health care including addressing the emotional consequences such as stress and feelings of grief and anger. Other response efforts must concentrate on the repair and restoration of essential services and infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and communication networks.

This module highlights the components of emergency management that are intended to support people and their families as they cope with issues arising during and immediately following an emergency. They include information management, emergency social services, community recovery, and psychosocial support.

### 2.0 Public Information Management

Public information management is an essential activity during any response. This involves the accurate and timely dissemination of information to the public about the events taking place and the ongoing efforts to address those events and their impacts.

Prior to an emergency, local authorities may provide information (e.g., preparedness brochures, posters and seminars of interest) to increase public awareness of emergency management initiatives, to encourage participation in various volunteer programs, and to ensure that the public understand what they can do to help themselves before, during and after an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, the EOC acts as a clearing house for information about local response and recovery activities. Within the EOC, the Information Management Unit disseminates information as it becomes available. Methods of conveying key public information in an emergency include:

- **Call Centre**—is often the first point of contact for individuals seeking help following an emergency or disaster. Call centres usually have multiple lines, operate for extended hours and rely on local staff, volunteers, or contractors to provide information (e.g., up-to-date health and safety instructions). They often accept phone registrations from evacuees and assist with family reunification.
- **Internet**— can be an important source for current information on alerts, notices, health matters, or progress on response activities during an emergency. It may be advantageous for the EOC to establish itself as an entity on the internet. This lets the EOC directly manage, monitor and validate information, and may alleviate the demands on the Call Centre. For many residents, this will be the definitive information source in the community. The internet is also ideal for sharing graphical information such as maps, photographs, and video. To ensure that the accuracy and quality of information on the EOC's webpage is always consistent, the EOC Director must approve information posted to the internet. Various options exist for disseminating public information through the internet:
  - webpage(s) on local authority website
  - EOC website
  - social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- **Community Meetings**—allow for the sharing of information on the status of events and give the public an opportunity to ask questions of local officials and subject matter experts such as first responders, emergency social services staff, insurance agents, and representatives from provincial ministries, utilities, non-government and community-based organizations.

- **Media**— plays an important role as an effective conduit for emergency information from official sources to large audiences. Television crews may cover action real time, documenting damage to property and identifying persons in need of assistance. Radio and newspapers can also help to publicize officials' instructions and record response efforts.

### 3.0 Emergency Social Services

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is a provincially supported and locally delivered program that provides short-term assistance to individuals and their families forced to evacuate their homes due to unsafe conditions and/or significant damage. ESS provides the essential services required to help people maintain safety and health including:

- assisting people meet their basic needs during an emergency
- assisting people to remain independent and self-sufficient
- reuniting families separated by emergency

ESS is a critical component of the local authority's emergency management program and, as per the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation*, local authorities must:

*“Coordinate the provision of **food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical services** to victims of emergencies and disasters, whether that provision is made from within or outside of the local authority.”*

Emergency Social Services teams include volunteers, municipal or regional district staff, and members of existing community service organizations led by an ESS Director who has been appointed to the position (volunteer or paid) by the local Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC).

Establishing a team of people and organizations familiar with the services available in the community helps to ensure that people with ESS knowledge, skills, and resources will be there to assist the community in an emergency. ESS teams have expertise in crisis intervention, amateur radio operation, translation services, volunteer management, first aid, and food safety. In order to respond effectively to the needs of evacuees and other response workers, ESS teams plan, train, and exercise together.

Planning for ESS involves assessing the availability of community resources, establishing written agreements with suppliers (e.g., hotels, restaurants, thrift stores) for use during times of disaster and determining the location of resources (e.g., cots, bedding, and insulated food coolers). [Module 4: Emergency Planning describes the importance of developing a written ESS plan with this information clearly documented].

### 3.1 Services to Evacuees

Emergency social services are coordinated at Reception Centres, though services may be provided at Group Lodging facilities or directly to people who cannot come to these centres due to a disability or lack of transportation. ESS is usually provided for up to 72 hours to those in need of assistance. During those 72 hours, evacuees should work their insurance company, family or community organizations to ensure continued support.

Some of the services available at a Reception Centre include:

- **Referrals for Food, Clothing, and Lodging**—providing food or food preparation facilities to evacuees and emergency response workers; providing safe, temporary lodgings for those who are forced from their homes and without insurance (or unable to immediately access their insurance policies); and providing essential clothing, blankets and toiletries to evacuees who have fled their homes with no advance notice.
- **Family Reunification**—registering evacuees, inquiring about the safety, well-being and whereabouts of individuals, and assisting in the reunification of families.
- **Emotional Support**—providing emotional support to evacuees and ESS workers and referring those in need to the appropriate human services agencies.
- **Volunteer Services**—coordinating the assignments of trained volunteers, and training “walk-in” volunteers.
- **First Aid**—providing basic first aid support and making referrals to appropriate health care facilities when required.
- **Health Services**—assisting people with special needs, such as the elderly or those with physical or mental disabilities, to access necessary services (e.g., nursing care, clean water, food or sanitation).
- **Information/Communications**—providing accurate, up-to-date information to evacuees and ESS workers, and ensuring that key information flows effectively within and outside a Reception Centre.
- **Child Care**—ensuring parents are able to care for their children, arranging for qualified childcare workers to provide a supportive environment and activities for children dealing with an emergency, and overseeing children (through the ministry responsible) who arrive at a Reception Centre without a parent or guardian.
- **Transportation Services**—arranging transportation for evacuees to hotels, motels, or Group Lodging facilities.

- **Recreation Services**—organizing activities for all ages and special needs groups in a Reception Centre or Group Lodging.
- **Multicultural Services**—providing translation services and tending to the cultural needs of evacuees where appropriate.
- **Pet Services**—assisting with the care of domestic pets through the provision of food, water, exercise, and shelter.

The provision of ESS varies based on the specific requirements of a community and the scope of the event and its consequences. For example, an ESS team comprising a handful of people may be sufficient for a small community or isolated incident, whereas in a larger community where thousands of people may be affected by an emergency, numerous ESS workers may be needed. Further, a neighbouring ESS team that is unaffected by the disaster may be asked to act as a ‘host community’ and provide ESS to evacuees forced to leave their own community due to an emergency or unsafe conditions.

Experience from previous emergencies indicates that generally as few as 10—25% of the population will require ESS assistance. Even if evacuees do not require assistance, they should be encouraged to go to a Reception Centre to register and obtain current information regarding the emergency.

Facilities that are often designated as Reception Centres and Group Lodging include recreation centres, school gymnasiums, church halls, hotel conference or meeting rooms, or shopping malls. If suitable ESS facilities are not available, alternate sites such as municipal parks, campgrounds, school playing fields or parking lots may be selected and tents or trailers brought in. The location of Reception Centres depends on the facilities available in the community or the specific requirements for a facility during a response. [Module 4: Emergency Planning provides more information about Reception Centres and Group Lodging facilities].

### 3.2 ESS Support Organizations

EMBC has agreements with various ESS Support Organizations to provide additional resources to communities and local ESS teams in major emergencies. These agencies include:

- **BC Housing**—maintains a stockpile of cots and blankets throughout the province to equip Group Lodging facilities and manages transportation of these resources during emergencies. BC Housing has trained staff that can assist provincial regional emergency operations centre staff in providing for the transportation and accommodation needs of emergency response workers.
- **Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation Canada**—has trained volunteers located primarily in the lower mainland who will assist local ESS teams with in-kind donations (e.g., clothing, household articles, toys, cash cards) Mandarin translation services, and assistance to individuals in a transition to recovery.

- **Canadian Red Cross Society**—provides volunteers trained in family reunification to assist local volunteers and may establish a Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) to respond to large numbers of inquiries from outside the disaster area. The Red Cross also assists individuals and families with the transition to recovery, and provides mobility aids from a medical equipment stockpile to evacuees.
- **Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC)**—the Emergency Management Division of JIBC develops and delivers ESS basic and advanced training. JIBC is not an emergency response organization.
- **St. John Ambulance**—provides qualified volunteers and equipment at first aid stations.
- **The Salvation Army**—trains ESS volunteers to provide ‘meet and greet’ and emotional support services and provides additional ‘meet and greet’ or emotional support workers to an affected area upon request from EMBC. The Salvation Army will also deploy regionally-based Community Crisis Response Vehicles, on short notice, to any BC community where emergency feeding services are required.
- **Emergency Social Services Association (ESSA)**—ESSA is a non-profit association established to support ESS volunteers and communities in BC in the development and maintenance of their ESS teams. ESSA is not an emergency response organization.

### 3.3 ESS Activation Levels

There are three levels of activation for ESS:

**ESS Level 1-** results from a small, localized event such as a house fire, affecting one or two households and less than a total of 12 people. Services are usually provided at or near the site of the incident and may be delivered by members of the ESS team or other agencies designated by the local authority. A Level 1 ESS response is frequently activated by local fire or police dispatch and generally requires only two ESS responders without activation of a Reception Centre. This is the most common level of ESS response.

**ESS Level 2-** is caused by a significant event affecting more than 12 people, such as an apartment fire, and often results in call out of the ESS team and the activation of a Reception Centre. Depending on the complexity and scope of the incident, a local authority Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) may also be established to support ESS activities.

**ESS Level 3 –** is usually driven by a major emergency, such as large-scale flooding, interface fires, or seismic events involving a significant number of evacuees. An EOC is activated and multiple ESS facilities may be established. Often the duration of operation is prolonged.

### 3.4 Mobile Support Teams

If a community's ESS capacity is overwhelmed by an emergency and support from neighbouring communities is insufficient, the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) can assist by activating an ESS Mobile Support Team (MST). MSTs are regionally based teams comprising trained ESS volunteers that assist local communities by:

- travelling on short notice to any community requesting ESS guidance or assistance
- providing on-site training and consultation to assist in organizing ESS during an evacuation
- providing additional capacity or relief to local ESS teams

The ESS Branch Coordinator in the EOC (usually ESS Director) is responsible for assessing the overall ESS response. If the ESS Branch Coordinator determines there is a possibility that local ESS resources are exhausted, the PREOC may be requested to provide MST assistance.

EMBC funds the management, training and exercising of MSTs, and covers the costs of MST travel and accommodation during an emergency response.

### 3.5 Federal ESS Support

The Office of Emergency Services, Public Health Agency of Canada, is responsible for supporting emergency health and social services in the provinces, territories or abroad. The Office of Emergency Services manages the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS), which includes emergency equipment, medical and pharmaceutical supplies. These are available upon request from provincial and territorial governments and from other parts of the Government of Canada.

### 4.0 Community Recovery

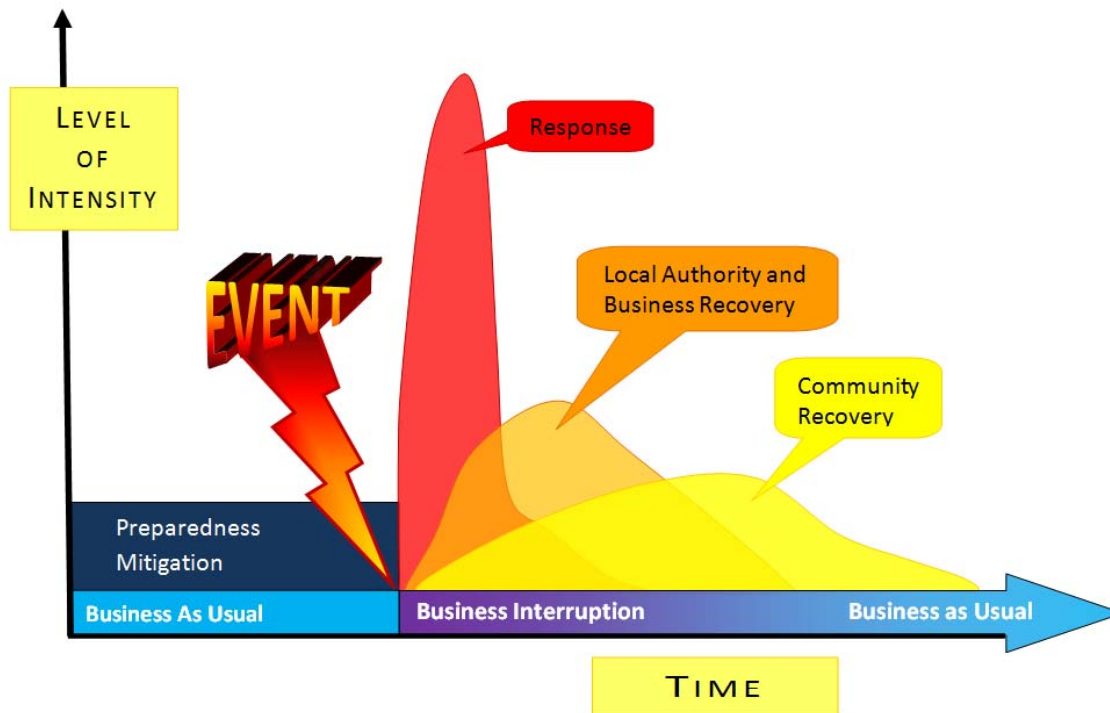
Community resilience involves the ability to recover from the infrastructure damage, economic impairment, and human suffering resulting from an emergency. Successful recovery management depends on the rapid start-up of a community recovery organization during the response phase (i.e., as soon as people are evacuated or when serious damage occurs to homes, infrastructure or businesses).

A comprehensive community recovery plan, as part of the overall emergency program, involves three distinct types of recovery efforts:

- **Individual Recovery** – is a process that empowers individuals to take practical steps that are within their ability to access the recovery resources available to them. This process should also identify gaps in impacted residents’ needs and link them to the community recovery plan and the helping agencies.
- **Local Authority Recovery**—includes the reconstruction of critical infrastructure and the re-establishment of services (e.g., utility services, roads, buildings, dams and dikes) and should commence immediately after the incident. Along with the need to respond to an emergency, a local authority faces the all-important challenge of restoring damaged infrastructure and ensuring the continuation of public services, also known as ‘business continuity’. Local authority recovery activities focus on infrastructure and should be managed separately from community recovery.
- **Community Recovery**—comprises the ability to recover from the human suffering, physical damage, injury, and economic impairment resulting from a disaster and is a critical element of any emergency program. Community recovery actions aim to limit losses, reduce suffering, and restore the psychosocial and economic viability of the community. Community recovery includes the following:
  - coordinated information for affected residents and businesses
  - advocacy for those impacted by a disaster
  - coordinated donations of funds, goods, and services
  - volunteer effort to assist with cleanup and reconstruction
  - facilitated healing



### Conceptual Time Line Showing Comprehensive Emergency Management



As the diagram shows, effective community recovery should begin simultaneously with response and local authority recovery efforts. Response is a high intensity, short duration effort, while community recovery is lower intensity, longer duration effort consuming similar levels of resources.

#### 4.1 Benefits of a Community Recovery Plan

The benefits to local authorities of a community recovery plan are:

- **Reduced human suffering**—a well-coordinated recovery effort helps residents return to normal as quickly as possible.
- **Protection of community culture**—recovery provides an opportunity for community residents to come together to support those citizens most heavily impacted. The character of a community can be influenced by how well – or how poorly – its leaders manage the recovery process. Failure in any aspect of recovery can mean the loss of jobs, taxpayers, and key community features that may have taken decades to develop. Success in recovery can mean heightened awareness of community identity and a positive future.

- **Reduced economic losses**—successful and rapid recovery not only minimizes the financial cost of an emergency but can also provide new economic opportunities for local businesses in a community with a strengthened sense of purpose and identity.
- **Enhanced community sustainability**—recovery supports the concept of sustainable and resilient communities, whereby every person, business, and organization is better able to withstand future emergencies with overall enhanced community health.

### 4.2 Community Recovery Concepts

There are common elements in every recovery effort. This section identifies the purposes of a community recovery plan and highlights some of the concepts in the community recovery process

A written recovery plan serves several purposes. The plan:

- Communicates core policies and procedures to municipal/regional district staff
- Informs and influences recovery planning with cooperating organizations
- Guides recovery actions following an emergency
- Provides a framework for training recovery personnel in their functions within the recovery organization
- Contains mechanisms to capture lessons learned in a way that advances recovery capacity

Emergencies within British Columbia and elsewhere highlight three critically important concepts for successful community recovery: leadership, organization and collaboration.

**Leadership** is essential in gathering the many organizations and individuals devoted to assisting those impacted by the emergency under one set of objectives, with a belief that thoughtful management accomplishes more than individual action.

To ensure this occurs, the local authority should delegate one person as the Recovery Director to provide the leadership needed to coordinate support from all levels of government, various service agencies, businesses and the general public. During recovery, the Recovery Director will maintain direction and control of the recovery operations and be accountable to the local authority.

**Organization** represents the need for structure, order, control and accountability among the individuals and agencies contributing to the recovery effort. Pre-event, the Recovery Director should form a dedicated organization – a Recovery Working Group – composed of representatives from contributing agencies and individuals that work together to meet the needs of residents, institutions, businesses and other community elements. Setting out principles that foster organization can be a difficult challenge during the emotion-laden days following a disaster so it is critical to develop the Recovery Working Group prior to an emergency event.

**Collaboration** means working together to achieve specific goals for mutual benefit. In community recovery, contributing organizations collaborate when they share information, resources, tasks and decision-making with the common goal of assisting those affected reach their “new normal.”

Collaboration also implies respect for the mission and diversity of the different organizations involved.

Collaboration:

- improves services to those affected
- reduces fragmentation
- duplication of effort
- enhances problem-solving
- reducing costs for all

A community may want to engage local service clubs, agencies or members of the Integrated Disaster Council of BC (IDCBC) which coordinates the efforts of the many government and non-government agencies engaged in disaster human consequence management and many IDCBC members are already engaged in community recovery planning and operations.

Without leadership, organization and collaboration, governments, non-government organizations and volunteers will react spontaneously without coordination or direction. Such ad hoc actions can (and often do) make bad situations worse, result in emotional distress for those impacted, lead to frustration for service organizations, increase unnecessary economic losses and extend recovery time and effort.

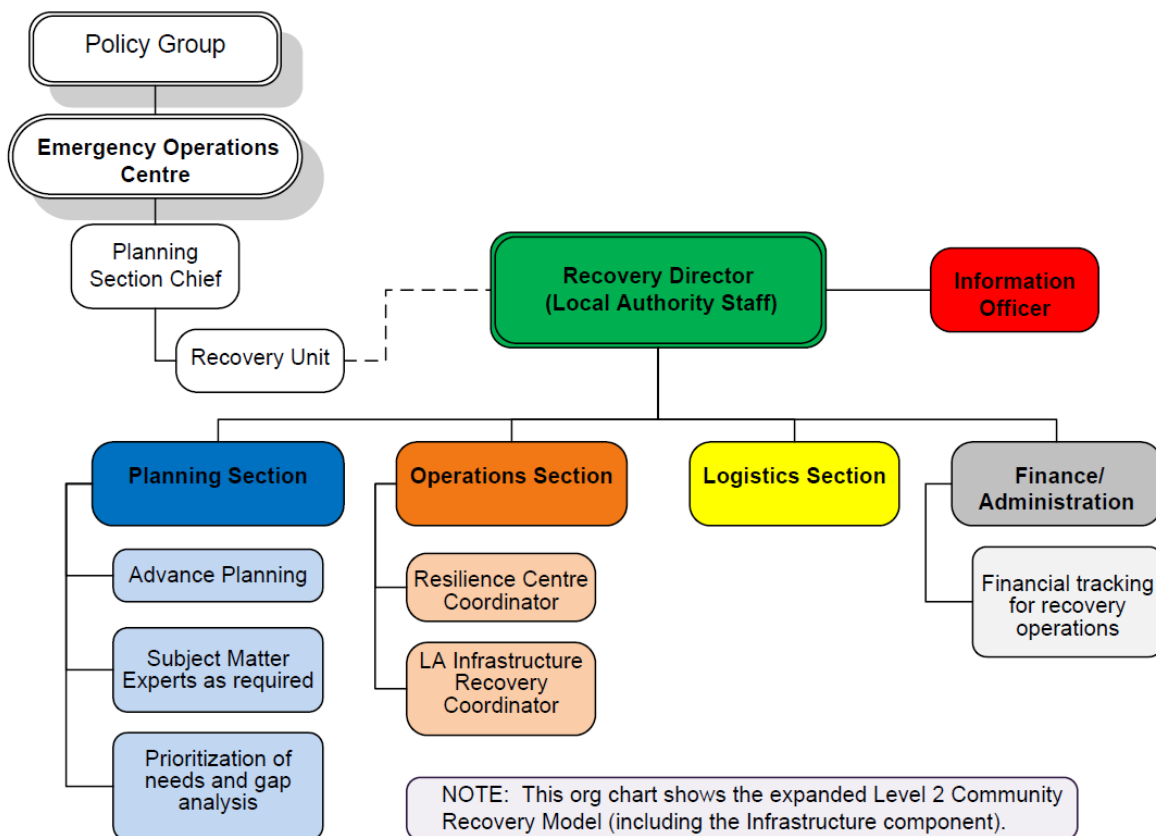
### 4.3 Integrated Recovery Advisory Deployment (iRAD) Team

As many local authorities are just starting to conduct pre-event community recovery planning, Integrated Recovery Advisory Deployment (iRAD) Teams have been developed to assist with community recovery activation. The iRAD Team is a supportive group of subject matter experts deployed to assist local authorities and offer short-term support, by providing guidance and consultation on the development of the appropriate recovery organization that fits the needs and capacity of the area. The iRAD team will augment existing community planning by filling in gaps and offering guidance. iRAD Team subject matter experts may include but is not limited to:

- Disaster Financial Assistance representative
- Rapid Damage Assessment experts
- Communications / media information officer
- Integrated Disaster Council of BC members
- Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) representative

### 4.4 Key Components of Community Recovery

**Recovery Operations Centre / Activated Recovery Cell within EOC** - Designated Recovery Director with decision-making powers and reporting directly to policy group. The following organization chart outlines the conceptual model of a Recovery Operations Centre and shows how it aligns with the Emergency Operations Centre.



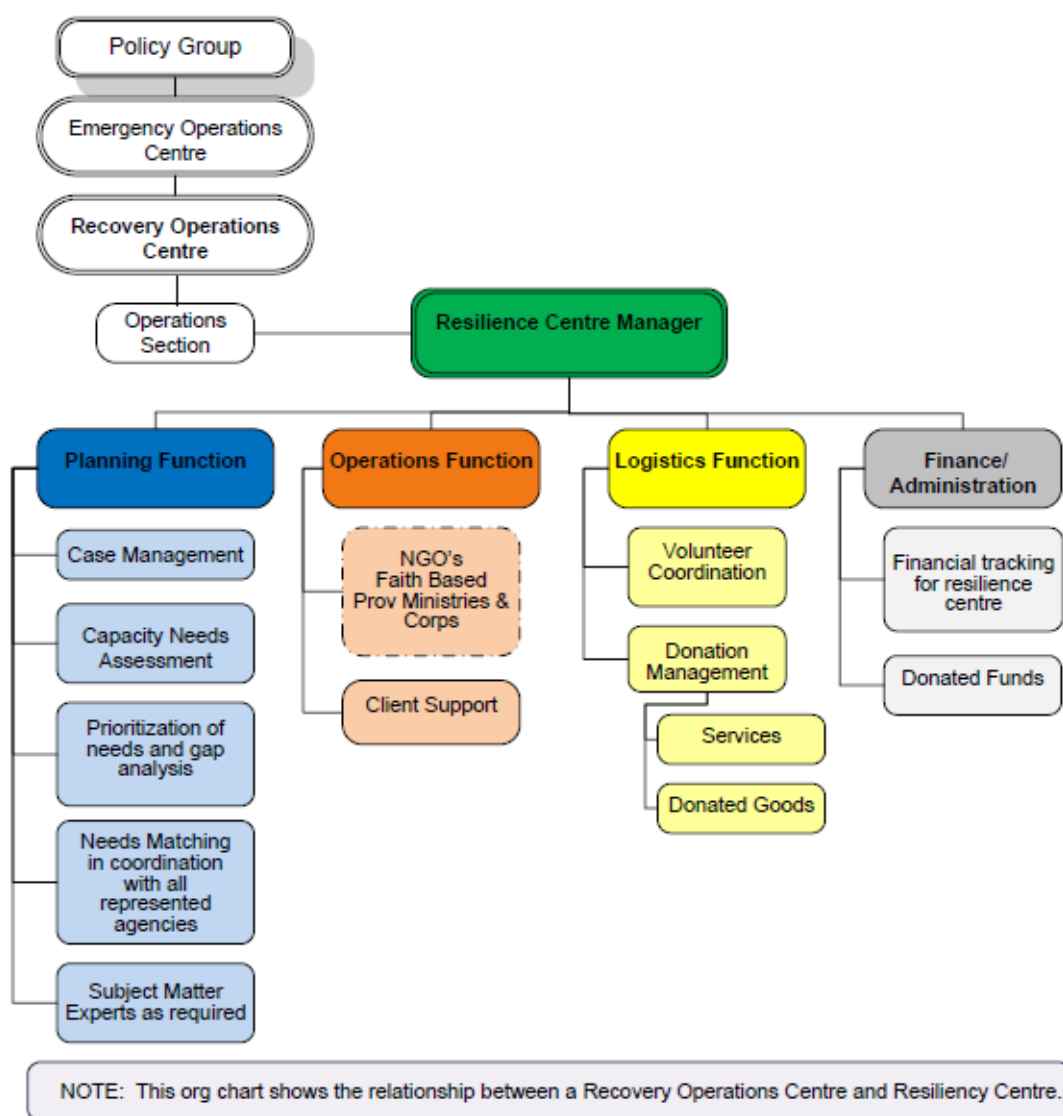
**Damage Assessment** – Damage Assessment of homes and infrastructure is critical for situational awareness and initial indication of potential human consequence and community recovery scope and scale. If requested, BC Housing may be available to assist the local authority with training and damage assessments.

**Community Meetings** –Community meetings allow for the transition from response to recovery and become the focal point for community action. Community meetings must continue into the recovery phase of an emergency to ensure impacted residents are aware of community recovery activities and supports. A communications / information officer can be deployed with the iRAD Team to assist with the initial meeting.

**Resilience Centre** - The purpose of the Resilience Centre is to assist impacted individuals through the recovery process. The Resilience Centre provides the space for, and coordination of, the various agencies and groups offering guidance, advice and assistance. The process can be broken down into four steps. Depending on the needs of the community; some of these steps may be expanded to assist those with more complex recovery requirements.

1. **Complete Capacity Needs Assessment** with those impacted.  
The Capacity Needs Assessment form ensures the Resilience Centre has a full understanding of the most urgent needs.
2. **Assist** individuals to complete their **Personal Recovery Plan**.  
This form would be retained by the impacted individuals and is designed to help them focus on practical next steps in the recovery process.
3. **Ensure those with urgent needs are connected with the agency or group** offering assistance in the particular area required  
Example: This could be anything from providing contact with public health authorities regarding water testing, assistance with cleanup of property, faith-based counselling or any other assistance needed to advance them to the next step in their recovery process.
4. **Support progress** throughout the recovery process.  
This support can be done by Non Government Organizations (NGO) and faith-based volunteer organizations and should be done in a coordinated manner with the information being brought back and shared within the collaborative environment of the local authority's resilience centre.

While all the needs of those impacted may not be met, providing a **“one-stop shop”** ensures that stakeholders have the opportunity to assist community members. This type of assistance empowers a community and helps build resilience.



**Matching Committee** – The Matching Committee helps those impacted meet their ongoing basic needs and regain pre-disaster self-sufficiency. The Matching Group assists in recovery from the impacts of an emergency by evaluating needs, identifying resources for meeting priority needs, and recommending the allocation of limited resources.

**Donations Management** – Donations management includes two areas: goods and funds management.

Goods management includes the solicitation and control of required and unwanted goods, receiving and warehousing, sorting, labelling, quality control, servicing of goods, and distribution. The Goods Group develops and manages facilities for receiving goods that are donated or purchased in bulk.

Donations management may lead a community to establish a separate account through a community service organization for the purposes of collecting and managing donations arising from an emergency. This ensures donations that are collected locally are applied locally. The Matching Committee will help identify those impacted who could benefit from financial donations.

Conclusion:

Community Recovery Organizations assist with the provision of support and specialized resources, however, those impacted are best positioned to decide how their recovery will proceed. Community recovery recognizes that both impacted individuals and communities have a range of recovery needs. As with personal emergency preparedness, this is a shared responsibility between the individual and the support offered by the Community Recovery Organization.

## 5.0 Psychosocial Support

In an emergency, there is an extreme urgency for action—lives may be in danger and life safety needs are critical. In the aftermath of an incident, the usual intervention frameworks may be overloaded and individuals or the entire community may begin to experience acute stress on a psychosocial level.

There will always be a psychological impact to those affected by an emergency, regardless of whether it is a large-scale event or limited to one or two individuals. The psychosocial component of an emergency can have long lasting and often detrimental implications if consideration is not given in the planning stage to mitigation strategies capable of addressing the greater community needs. The resources to implement these strategies are often readily available through local practitioners or Health Authorities and should form a part of any comprehensive emergency plan.

The primary objective of a psychosocial response is to provide an immediate, short-term service that will help disaster or trauma survivors to restore and increase safety, confidence, competence, and trust. Secondary objectives of a psychosocial response include helping individuals so they can help themselves, and enhancing individual and collective resilience, community recovery, and adaptation through responsibility and action.

An effective psychosocial response should consider the following components:

- psychological first aid (e.g., assessment, one-to-one support, crisis counselling, crisis-line response)
- psycho educational interventions
- group presentations
- development/distribution of materials
- assessment of community needs

- spiritual care
- worker care

### 5.1 Principles of Disaster Psychosocial Response

The principles of disaster psychosocial response are summarized as follows:

- **No one who sees a disaster is untouched by it.** One of the central principles of disaster psychosocial response is the assertion that no one who sees a disaster is untouched by it. Disaster stress, trauma, and loss are experienced at all levels and stress and grief reactions are normal responses to crisis and loss. Disaster survivors are usually among the first to respond in the wake of a disaster, often contributing to early search and rescue. They continue to be active participants and partners in later phases of the disaster response.
- **Those affected by a disaster should be seen as active partners.** People affected by disasters should be seen as active partners, not passive victims or service consumers. A consultation model should be adopted in which affected people and communities are seen as the experts in defining needs and providing insight into specific cultural norms and contexts. Development of new social support systems and maintenance of existing ones are crucial to the recovery of the individuals as well as the community. Support of disaster relief workers, including those providing psychosocial support, is also crucial to an effective, long-term response.
- **Psychological first aid is not therapy.** For psychosocial responders, psychological first aid is the provision of immediate practical support and empathy to those who are most distressed. The goal of psychological first aid is to reduce physiological arousal and to facilitate resilience through education about coping strategies and available resources.

A Psychosocial Responder reviews the range of reactions the survivor has experienced—emotional, physical, and cognitive—both at the time of the event and afterwards. The Psychosocial Responder provides education about trauma and stress as well as information about treatment resources. He or she reviews the survivor's range of support systems, including both formal and informal supports, and assess the need for sustained intervention. The goal is to assist people in taking practical steps towards resuming ordinary life. Psychological first aid should foster accurate expectations and planning about returning to and/or re-establishing normal routines. The focus is concrete and practical, aimed at meeting immediate needs.

- **Comprehensive and systematic assessments should be conducted throughout the disaster.** In order to best respond to the needs of those affected, it is essential to work with affected communities and individuals to assess both existing resources, and short-term and long-term needs. This requires comprehensive and systematic assessment throughout the inventory, recovery, and reconstruction phases. Needs and resources will often change over time.



- **Effective psychosocial support is culturally and contextually responsive.** Interventions must always be adapted to the particular needs and cultures of the communities being served and to the particular disaster . In order to be effective, psychosocial responders must be willing to work in non-traditional ways, including using active outreach, working on multidisciplinary teams, working outside the traditional office setting, and avoiding mental health labels.



# Human Resource Management

## 1.0 Introduction

One of the most critical factors in dealing with emergencies is the skill of those who hold leadership roles. Emergency managers must be able to use leadership to effectively lead the community in planning for, preventing, and responding to an emergency. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the right people are in leadership roles when an emergency strikes. This module identifies some of the key aspects of leadership that enable emergencies to be dealt with effectively.

As local governments plan for emergencies, an important component of the comprehensive emergency management plan is human resource management. This module describes some of the human resource management responsibilities, such as worker care, staffing, volunteer management, occupational health and safety and coping strategies that may arise when workers respond to an emergency. Emergency managers provide leadership and direction for promoting health in the emergency workplace.

## 2.0 Leadership

Strong leadership and a committed team are essential in an effective emergency management organization, and lack of it can result in loss of public trust, loss of property, and loss of life.

A leader is one who provides a vision, sets direction and motivates people to follow that direction. Relationships have to be in place before the emergency and need to be developed over time. Mitigation and preparedness activities such as joint training and exercising can be effective relationship builders.

The key aspects of an effective leader in dealing with an emergency situation include: the ability to build trust, communicate effectively, build a strong team, facilitate change, and apply personal influence. The emergency manager must get everyone to think not only about his or her specialty, but how to integrate their work with the overall goals of the incident. Agency representatives and technical experts tend to be leaders within their own organization and bring much strength to the table. To maximize the value of all contributors, leaders need to not only create an environment where information is shared freely and take time to understand the context of others, but also actively seek out hidden information, avoid assumptions and look for fatal flaws in strategies.

### 2.1 Building Trust

Trust is the very core of leadership and must be earned. A leader must have mutual trust to facilitate change, but it is very difficult to build trust in a changing environment. One of the most critical aspects of a leader's job is to build an environment of trust.

When we trust someone, we have a relationship based on mutual confidence that we both will:

- do what we say
- communicate honestly
- respect one another's knowledge, skills, and abilities
- maintain confidentiality

Trust must be reciprocal and is generated through actions. A leader can build people's trust through:

- predictable and consistent behavior
- clear communication
- being reliable (e.g., keep promises)
- being forthright

A leader in emergency management must build trust at multiple levels:

- with the team

- with other agencies involved in response efforts
- with municipal, regional and provincial government personnel
- with members of the media and general public

### 2.2 Communication

Effective leaders possess strong communication skills based on:

- Respect—making people feel that they and their opinions are valued and important
- Honesty—being genuine, not playing games or being pretentious
- Empathy—trying to see things from the other person's point of view

People communicate in a number of different ways: through body language, how we speak, how we write, and how we listen.

- Body Language—can communicate volumes about how we feel, sometimes more or differently than we intend. Communication through body language includes:
  - Facial expressions—our faces can unintentionally reveal our emotions or reactions, such as skepticism, fear, anger or boredom
  - Gestures—be aware of the messages you send with your gestures. Gestures can be perceived as dismissive (waving or shrugging an idea off), accusatory (pointing a finger), confrontational (putting hands on hips), etc
  - Eye contact—making eye contact lets the other person know you are paying attention, that the conversation is important to you
  - Posture—a relaxed open posture indicates that you are listening, and if not agreeing, at least willing to hear what is being said
- Verbal expression—the words we choose to use can have a big impact on how our message is received. Effective communication is clear and easy to understand:
  - express yourself as simply as possible
  - avoid jargon
  - break long thoughts into several sentences and pause between them to give your listener time to process what you are saying

Effective messages are expressed in a way that does not unnecessarily provoke a negative reaction from the listener. Effective leaders carefully choose their words and how they say

them, consider the emotional impact they may have on the listener, and how that might affect the intent of their message.

Tone of voice can be just as important in getting the message across as the words that are chosen. In stressful situations, tone of voice can become abrupt, demanding, and/or emotional.

### 2.3 Team Building

Effective leaders create a team environment in which members of the team rely on each other to achieve common goals. As people combine their energies, the cooperative action of the team creates a greater result than the individuals could accomplish working separately. A leader promotes a team environment by:

- establishing an environment of trust
- setting up systems and structures to support teamwork
- encouraging team communication
- establishing team goals and team rewards (i.e., reward team effort)
- celebrating group achievements, even those which are minor
- fostering the evolution of natural leadership abilities in group members

The 11 Commandments For An Enthusiastic Team provides useful tips for creating a strong team:

### THE 11 COMMANDMENTS FOR AN ENTHUSIASTIC TEAM

1. Help each other be right – not wrong
2. Look for ways to make new ideas work – not for reasons they won't
3. If in doubt – check it out! Don't make negative assumptions about each other
4. Help each other win and take pride in each other's victories
5. Speak positively about each other and your organization at every opportunity
6. Maintain a positive mental attitude no matter what the circumstances
7. Act with initiative and courage as if it all depends on you
8. Do everything with enthusiasm – it's contagious
9. Whatever you want – give it away
10. Don't lose faith – never give up
11. Have Fun!

Ian Percy

## 2.4 Facilitate Change

Being able to respond quickly and effectively to change is crucial for emergency response. To facilitate change in an organization successfully, an emergency manager must be able to communicate effectively the "Four Ps":

- **Purpose:** the why
- **Picture:** the vision
- **Plan:** the process
- **Part:** each person's role in the process, and how change will affect each person

### 2.5 Influence

In addition to building trust and facilitating change, an effective leader must be able to exert personal influence to achieve goals. An emergency manager must be able to exercise influence in multiple directions:

- upward (with those of higher rank)
- laterally (with peers in the same organization or the response system)
- downward (with subordinates)
- outward (with people outside the organization, including the media, the public, the business community, and others)

All of the leadership strategies just reviewed—building trust, communicating effectively, building a strong team, facilitating change and personal influence contribute to a leadership environment. In addition, a leader can encourage leadership development in others through such activities as:

- building a shared vision
- empowering others
- coaching
- delegating
- mentoring

## 3.0 Wellness/Worker Care

The environments in which emergency responders work are demanding and as such can be a challenging mix of positive and negative experiences. Most emergency responders bring high standards, energy, empathy, and a strong commitment to helping others. These qualities contribute to a responder's ability to be effective during a response, but can also make them vulnerable to stress reactions and burnout.

Past experience has shown that neglecting worker care can be a major cause of stress. Consideration for worker care needs to be built into the organizational structure from the start. Leading by example and consistency in communicating the importance of worker care is essential, as is the culture built by the entire team.

Leaders should provide training to their responders in the psychosocial impacts of emergencies to enable individuals to increase their capacity to cope with stress. Coping strategies can be discussed and

specific plans made for how to incorporate worker care into the emergency plan. The responsibility for worker care is a function of the Deputy Director unless delegated to Safety or Risk Management.

It is also important not to lose sight of worker care for the group with overall responsibility for the emergency response (i.e., EOC Director, Policy Group, and Incident Commander). Provisions should be made for peer support for emergency leaders, such as peers from another jurisdiction or consultants, to support the management team during the response and recovery.

### 3.1 Personal Needs

When workers respond to an emergency, they are often required to put their normal lives on hold. Not only will responders not be able to fulfil duties at their regular place of work, they may have to leave behind family obligations. In addition to working in a challenging EOC environment, their own families and homes may be directly at risk from the emergency. When responders are confident that their family members are being well cared for, they are better able to focus their attention on response duties.

Responders are often called out with little notice. Although designated response personnel generally have a plan for deployment, there will be occasions when they may need support to meet their responsibilities. Issues that should be addressed prior to the assignment of EOC duties include:

- compensation and liability coverage
- work schedules and breaks
- transportation to/from EOC
- child care
- elder care, care for other dependent adults
- pet care
- ability to respond to home emergencies

During and post-disaster, one of the most commonly cited problems among responders is lack of information. Responders may be working long hours, sometimes under potentially dangerous circumstances, and feel disconnected from knowledge about the health and safety of their families, how their role is contributing to the success of the overall response, and key decisions being made at the EOC. Information is one of the most important ways of demonstrating support for responders and reducing their stress levels. Leaders should take as much care in communicating to internal staff as they do to external stakeholders and the community at large.



### 3.2 Staff Orientation

A comprehensive orientation to the EOC makes the responder feel welcome and supported. The orientation is intended to provide the responder with initial information regarding the situation, establish reporting relationships and ensure personal needs have been addressed.

Staff orientation is accomplished in 3 stages:

1. Orientation to the facility—this includes a check-in/out procedure and safety procedures. Facility orientations are usually conducted by Personnel Unit, Logistics.
2. Orientation to the event—this includes conducting a briefing or situational awareness. Briefings are usually conducted by Operations.
3. Orientation to assigned function—this includes an orientation to the worksite, introductions to co-workers, review of the reporting structure. Functional orientations are usually conducted by the direct supervisor.

### 3.3 Wellness Strategies

During many activations, the EOC becomes more than just a place of work and the environment can become all-consuming and very intense. In order to maintain healthy physical and mental balance, responders must have outlets for the release of stress and fatigue. Incorporating physical and mental wellness into daily activities maximizes operational effectiveness.

- **Eat well**—in times of disaster, adequate nutrition is essential to sustain energy under stressful conditions and long hours. A well-considered menu and quality food raises the morale of response workers. Even in the first operational period, thought must be given to providing healthy meals.
- **Meal breaks**—meal breaks of between 30 minutes to 1 hour should be taken away from the work station once every 5 hours to ensure fatigue is minimized. Supervisors should encourage workers to get some fresh air and exercise during breaks, whenever possible.
- **Ergonomics**—workers may be sitting at unfamiliar workstations that are not optimized for ergonomic comfort. By taking a few minutes during the orientation to rapidly assess needs and make minor modifications, the risk of injury can be decreased.
- **Quiet Space**—whenever possible, provide an area within the EOC designated as a quiet space where no work is undertaken. This gives a place for short rest periods and quiet reflection.

- **Exercise**—strongly encourage a change in activity rather than just passive rest during breaks. A quick walk around the EOC building or a few minutes in a nearby park can be an excellent way to recharge energies and put activities into perspective. If possible, provide access to fitness facilities.
- **EOC Services**—depending on the type of incident, the community, and composition of the EOC team, other services may be available and desirable to response workers in the EOC including:
  - spiritual care
  - child and youth care support
  - consultation
  - ergonomic consultation
  - Critical Incident Stress Management
  - psychological and emotional support
  - health assessment (e.g., blood pressure, etc.)
  - massage and related services
  - nutritional consultation

### 3.4 Self-Care Strategies

The working environment and culture in the EOC should be positive and allow self-care to occur. Some strategies for maintaining a healthy physical and mental balance are:

- eat well
- take time to rest and relax
- talk about thoughts and feelings with family, friends, co-workers, spiritual advisors, or health professionals
- get physical exercise, read or do other creative activities
- balance priorities
- maintain as normal a routine as possible
- get enough to drink, but limit consumption of alcohol or drugs
- get enough sleep

Preventing cumulative stress and burnout are discussed further in the module.

### 4.0 Staffing Plans

The EOC staffing plan must support various EOC activation levels from sustained 24/7 operations to a level 1 support crew depending on the requirements of the response. The EOC Director will determine appropriate staffing for each activation level based upon an assessment of the current and projected situation. Staffing plans should include at least two complete shifts of personnel for an initial period after which reduced staffing capacity can be considered on a section-by-section basis.

Core staffing for the EOC should be drawn from staff already working for the jurisdiction. This can include employees, contractors and volunteers. Regular staff can be activated rapidly. Spending authority and decision making ability can be assigned prior to the emergency event. Regular staff are also familiar with jurisdiction-specific business processes and facilities.

While internal staff will form the key EOC team, it is desirable to have participation from external personnel. These individuals can come from responding agencies or adjacent jurisdictions. External staff bring skills and knowledge to the EOC that may not be available internally. Early integration of staff from neighbouring jurisdictions is especially important if the emergency event is likely to escalate. External staff should be pre-identified in the planning phase and be included in EOC training activities.

Contractors can provide specific skills not available within the responding agencies and should have previous emergency management training and experience.

The skill set of the individual is more important than their regular job title in assigning their EOC function. Staff should be freed from regular duties while activated in the EOC. Provisions may need to be made for backfilling their regular duties. Employment agreements need to be in place at the start of any EOC activation. Specific work conditions for the duration of the EOC activation (such as hours of work, overtime claims, travel expenses, etc.) need to be clearly defined.

#### 4.1 Scheduling

Scheduling staff requires achieving a balance between operational needs and the needs of responders. Careful attention must be paid to hours of work, duration of deployment, and rest periods in order to maintain worker care and their ability to effectively perform. For example, responders must be able to get sufficient rest to minimize fatigue, facilitate sound decision making, prevent injuries and accidents, and reduce risk of liability.

Policies regarding scheduling must be consistently enforced. The only exceptions should be if life and property is imminently threatened and/or no further resources are available. In these situations the EOC Director may approve a variation to the scheduling policy.

Cumulative fatigue occurs during periods of prolonged mental and physical exertion. It is critical for all supervisors to closely monitor staff for signs of fatigue, impairment and/or compromised performance. Co-workers should also 'buddy up' and watch for signs of fatigue. Shift length is a key factor in cumulative fatigue. The following table may be adopted for determining staffing schedules for workers:

Days 1-4	Maximum shift length 14 hours (includes travel to site)
Days 5-14	Maximum shift length 12 hours (includes travel home)

Whenever possible, the length of assignment should be limited to 7-10 days. This is considered to be optimum as it provides for consistency and sustainability of operations while supporting good worker care practices. The suggested maximum should be 14 consecutive days.

In calculating the length of assignment, time already worked in the regular job since the last rest days, travel to, and travel from should be considered. A minimum of two rest days should be provided between blocks of shifts. A minimum of 8 rest hours, more if significant travel home is involved, between shifts should be given. Workers should not be expected to take calls or be on stand-by when on scheduled time off from the EOC.

### 4.2 Volunteer Management

Volunteers need to know that their contribution is important. They are motivated when they gain in some way—a new skill, new relationships, a feeling that what they did made a difference. In recruiting and engaging volunteers, leaders and supervisors should:

- Understand and meet volunteers' needs
- Match volunteers' skills and interest
  - offer a task or role that matches interests and reasons for volunteering
  - engage volunteers in all four phases of emergency management
- Set people up for success
  - assign specific, manageable tasks with a beginning and an end
  - ensure instructions are clear, both verbally and in writing
  - provide a reasonable deadline for completing the task
  - allow freedom to complete a task when convenient for the volunteer, if possible
  - allow for the completion of tasks without interruption
  - provide adequate training
  - follow-up to ensure the task is adequately completed
- View volunteers as clients and provide opportunities to develop skills, such as:
  - communications skills
  - oral presentation skills

- team building skills
  - project management skills
  - leadership skills
- Designate a volunteer liaison/resource professional
  - provide office or meeting space
  - provide administrative support
  - make office supplies available
- Maintain a positive organizational climate
  - a safe, comfortable, and friendly working environment
  - an opportunity to provide feedback when the task is finished
  - appreciation, recognition and rewards that match the reasons for volunteering
- Welcome diversity
  - varying age ranges
  - faith-based organizations
  - students
  - special needs population
- Be flexible
  - accommodate changing availability
- Don't burn people out
  - avoid lengthy deployments
  - plan for support and mutual aid
- Recognize contributions
  - meaningful appreciation events
  - tokens of appreciation
  - letters of appreciation to regular employer
  - commendation/awards for team
  - long-service pins
  - team wear/identification
  - opportunity to travel to represent jurisdiction in other areas
  - debriefing sessions

The motivation for volunteers to join an organization can be very different from the motivation to stay. This means building a relationship so that when the motivations change, you can be proactive rather than reactive.

The more involved a volunteer already is, the more likely they are to stay involved. Encourage volunteers to get more involved with your organization by finding opportunities for them to develop their interests and to feel empowered. In emergency management, partnering with agencies that offer provincial, national, or international deployments can be valuable. Offer volunteers more challenging opportunities or multiple activities that provide a variety of volunteer assignments (perhaps mixing

popular and less popular assignments). Partner with organizations already active in your community (e.g. service clubs, faith-based organizations, senior centres, etc.) because they often maintain a stable volunteer base.

When mixing volunteers with regular staff in the EOC be aware of, and proactively resolve, concerns that can arise over issues of pay. Ensure that volunteers' regular employers are not only supportive of their volunteer activities, but are also recognized for allowing their employees to volunteer. Consult with volunteers before committing them to a lengthy deployment. If a volunteer is required to fulfill an essential EOC function outside the scope of their normal volunteer duties, consideration should be given to converting them to temporary employees.

### 4.3 Legal protection and support for volunteers

EMBC supports volunteers registered with their local emergency program by providing the following:

- WorkSafe BC Worker Compensation coverage (when engaged in an EMBC recognised activity)
- Third party liability insurance (when engaged in an EMBC recognised activity)
- Training
- Expense reimbursement (when engaged in an EMBC recognised and eligible activity)

## 5.0 Occupational Health and Safety

Even in an emergency, it is the responsibility of the agency having jurisdiction to ensure that all work sites maintain an effective health and safety system and comply with the *Worker's Compensation Act – Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*. No matter what the situation, all work must be carried out without undue risk of injury or occupational hazard to any person.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility and is tied to the first goal of BCERMS to “*provide for the safety and health of all responders*”. At the EOC and incident site, managers and supervisors must ensure that relevant regulations and safe work procedures are followed by their staff, effective training is provided to their staff, safe work procedures are implemented and followed, and safe and healthy work conditions are maintained.

It is the responsibility of the EOC Policy Group and Management staff to take all reasonable care to prevent work related accidents and disease through the recognition, evaluation, control, and wherever practical, the removal of hazards. The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* must be available at each workplace for reference. The minimum mandatory elements of a safety management system are:

- **Policy statement**—the organization's safety policy must be prominently displayed at the EOC.

- **Inspections**—inspections ensure that safe work practices are being followed and are effective. They also identify any unsafe conditions or practices at the workplace so that they can be eliminated or controlled before an accident occurs. The EOC should be inspected at the start of the activation and at regular intervals thereafter. Inspection includes the premises, equipment, work methods and work practices. Unsafe or harmful conditions found in the course of an inspection must be remedied without delay.
- **Written Instructions**—each workplace has unique hazards and requires specific work processes. Common safe work procedures that may be needed in the EOC setting include:
  - first aid
  - building evacuation/emergency procedures
  - building security
  - food handling
  - ergonomics
  - prevention of violence in the workplace
  - emergency preparedness and response instructions
  - Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS)
  - indoor air quality
  - working alone
  - personal protective equipment
  - exit interviews
- **Management meetings**—EOC procedures include regular management meetings every operational period. A review of health and safety should be a standing agenda item.
- **Investigations**—provision must be made for the prompt investigation of incidents (e.g., injuries and “near misses”) to determine actions necessary to prevent their recurrence.
- **Records**—documentation must be kept for meetings, inspections, investigations, worker orientation, and injury statistics. Records must be readily available for review by a WorkSafe BC inspector. Information should be shared with the joint health and safety committee of the agency having jurisdiction.

- **Instruction and Supervision**—both initial orientation to the workplace and continuing promotion of health and safety are required to be compliant. In addition, specific requirements for a thorough orientation to the workplace apply to new workers.

Development of safe work procedures at the EOC starts with a risk assessment. Activate the Risk Management Officer early to ensure the necessary supports are in place to promote worker health and safety. Once policies and procedures have been developed, Logistics is key in implementing specific procedures such as first aid, safe food handling, and building security.

The EOC's safety management system falls under the joint occupational health and safety committee of the agency having jurisdiction. Records should be shared and for longer EOC activations, an EOC representative should participate in the joint occupational health and safety committee.

## 6.0 Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical incidents are defined as *“any type of situation which causes personnel to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time or later.”* Examples of critical incidents include:

- a life-threatening experience
- serious injury of self or a colleague
- suicide, sudden death or homicide of a colleague
- line-of-duty injury or death (usually worst cause of CIS)
- multi casualty incident or accident
- a prolonged incident, especially when resulting in loss
- any incident involving children
- failure to successfully accomplish goals, objectives or a significant task
- emotional identification with victim
- an event that has an unusually powerful impact on personnel
- significant community impact that prevents return to “life as we knew it”

Sometimes an event is so traumatic or overwhelming that responders may experience significant stress reactions or Critical Incident Stress (CIS). CIS is defined as *“the emotional, physical, behavioural, and cognitive reactions to a critical incident”*. Those who have these normal, though uncomfortable, stress reactions to extraordinary events are often confused by the changes they notice in themselves and others. Any of the events or situations listed above can cause CIS.



Critical incidents may produce a wide range of stress symptoms, which can appear immediately at the scene, a few hours later, or within a few days of the event. The stress is a state of arousal that accompanies the crisis reaction caused by a critical incident. The more traumatic the incident, the more powerful the stress reaction will be.

Stress symptoms usually occur in any or all of four different categories:

- cognitive (thinking)
- physical (body)
- emotional (feelings)
- behavioural (actions)

People may experience some or all of these reactions. It is important to note that these are normal responses to stressful or abnormal events. In some cases, people may:

- feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with day-to-day demands
- feel numb, shocked, abandoned, and helpless
- feel guiltily, powerless, or angry
- have trouble sleeping
- stay away from work
- experience difficulty with home lives and personal relationships (some may take their feelings of guilt or anger out on their families, friends, or co-workers)
- withdraw, or turn to drugs and alcohol
- suffer from nightmares or have flashbacks to the event, often fearing the event will happen again
- feel differently about their involvement with their team or organization
- become disillusioned if they believe that their problems are not being taken seriously, or that they are not being given adequate support

If not managed and resolved appropriately, either by oneself or with assistance, stress may lead to several psychological disorders including acute stress disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, depression, abuse of alcohol and other drugs. The whole group may suffer after a critical incident—effects may include poor morale, decreased productivity, increased accidents, higher disability claims, and greater staff or volunteer turnover.

Some suggestions to cope with stress and reduce its impact include:

- exercising immediately after the critical incident

- deep breathing exercises
- refraining from stimulants (coffee, tea, alcohol, sugar, and fats)
- reading, watching TV, or taking a walk if having problems sleeping
- talking to a trusted colleague about feelings
- not criticising or ridiculing yourself or others
- keeping shared information strictly confidential

Critical incident stress management (CISM) is a comprehensive three-part program. Proper education and awareness, response and follow-up to critical incidents can help protect staff and volunteers from the negative effects of critical incident stress. A proper response will reduce the impact of the event, facilitate recovery, and allow affected members to restore an ability to cope with everyday events.

Support for staff and volunteers is not complete unless it also includes special support services for spouses and significant others who may be indirectly and negatively impacted by the same traumatic events affecting the responder. Support for the families include providing educational information, debriefings, and one-on-one interventions as needed.

There are a number of interventions to address critical incidents:

- **One-on-One Crisis Intervention**—an individual intervention provided by a peer support person after a critical incident or potential critical incident. It is used to support, stabilize, and provide stress education and to help assess the need for other more formal interventions like a debriefing in a group setting if other individuals were involved. They are best provided within 24 - 72 hours of an incident (later if circumstances require) and may be conducted by specially trained peers, in person or by telephone. They may NOT substitute for a formal intervention if one is obviously required for a group of individuals. Follow up is essential and a referral may be required.
- **Crisis Management Briefings**—are small or large group crisis interventions that are ideally suited to large-scale searches or disaster responses for up to 300 persons. Crisis Management Briefings (CMB) may be thought of as a form of “town meeting” for the expressed purpose of crisis intervention. A crisis management briefing consists of four distinct phases (assembly, information, reactions, and coping strategies/resources) and may be used to triage individuals for more intense and appropriate intervention later. An intervention team may include CISM peer support personnel, mental health professionals and operational experts from within the organization or suitable outside agencies.
- **Defusings**—are provided within a few hours of a crisis event to minimize the effect of acute CIS. The goal is to reduce intense reactions to the event, normalize the experience, provide

practical/useful information (stress education), develop expectations about recovery, and to assess the need for follow up with a critical incident stress debriefing (CISD). Generally, defusings last less than an hour and are focussed on what happened, how individuals are reacting, as well as providing some information on how to manage stress reactions. A peer team member, usually without the aid of a mental health professional, leads a defusing. The peer facilitating the defusing will explain to members the physical, emotional, and mental reactions that they are, or may soon be, experiencing. They also provide information on how responders can take care of their emotional and physical health and the resources that are available to those who require more assistance. Defusings are used primarily to assist small groups of individuals who were directly exposed to and most seriously affected by a critical event. It is less structured and less time-consuming than a debriefing and it may eliminate the need for, but may not substitute for, a formal debriefing if one is required. Follow up is essential. As with all interventions, participants are anonymous.

- **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**—early intervention and treatment is an accepted “gold standard” because it can prevent unnecessary deterioration and mitigate potentials of harm to self or others. The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is a structured group process utilized in the normalization of critical incident stress or traumatic stress and integrates crisis intervention strategies with educational techniques. CISD is best conducted in the short-term aftermath of a critical incident, approximately 48 hours post-incident, but usually within the first 72 hours (later if circumstances require). There are two main goals of a CISD:
  1. Mitigate the impact of the critical incident on the victims of the event, defined as:
    - primary victims (i.e., those directly traumatized by the event)
    - secondary victims (i.e., those who are in some way observers of the immediate traumatic effects that have been experienced by the primary victims, such as bystanders)
    - tertiary victims (i.e., those affected indirectly by the trauma via later exposure to the scene of the disaster or by a later exposure to primary or secondary victims). Typically, tertiary victims were not exposed to the immediate “first-hand” aspects of the traumatizing event, thus they were not exposed to the “shocking immediacy”; these include family members and friends of victims or rescuers.
  2. Accelerate recovery process in people who are experiencing stress reactions to abnormal traumatic events.

Every time a CISM intervention is provided (i.e., defusing, debriefing, demobilization, crisis management briefing, one-on-one) it is necessary to ensure that follow up services are provided. Follow up services include telephone calls, chaplain contacts, small group meetings, peer visits, one-on-one services, family contacts, referrals for professional contact or any other helpful outreach programs.

Interventions are not “therapy” and are not a substitute for therapy. Individuals requiring further support should be directed to a mental health professional. Defusing and debriefing sessions, led by a trained specialist, can help volunteers deal with strong emotions like guilt, sadness, and anger. There are a number of and other sources available on the internet that expands upon the subject of critical incident stress. The information presented here is only an introduction.



# Emergency Response

## 1.0 Introduction

Emergency response begins when an event is imminent or immediately after an event occurs. Response includes the activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and operational activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury and property damage.

This module examines some of the key components of an effective emergency response:

- Activation of an EOC
- EOC activities during Response
- Demobilization
- Declaration of a State of Local Emergency
- Evacuations

## 2.0 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Activation

An EOC is activated to enable local authorities to coordinate emergency response and recovery operations effectively. This is done through a number of common functions including the support of management policies and priorities, coordination of event related information and the coordination of the acquisition and assignment of resources. The decision to activate an EOC is dependent on the scope, scale, and nature of an incident.

Suggested criteria or “trigger points” for activating an EOC include:

- significant number of people at risk (e.g., evacuations are required)
- potential threat to people, property and/or environment
- site support is required (lengthy activations, limited resources, policy direction needed)
- response coordination is required due to a large or widespread event (e.g., multiple incidents, multiple responding agencies)
- resource coordination required due to limited local resources (or a significant need for outside resources or mutual aid)
- uncertain conditions (e.g., possibility of escalation of the event, unknown extent of damage)
- heightened media or public concern (e.g., significant information needs)
- advanced planning required for an anticipated event

### 2.1 Authority to Activate

An EOC may be activated by any one of the following:

- an Incident Commander within the EOC’s jurisdiction
- persons named in the jurisdictions’ emergency plan and/or EOC plan (e.g., EOC Director, EPC, Chief Administrative Officer, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Mayor or elected officials)
- director of EMBC following a Provincial Declaration of State of Emergency

### 2.2 Activation Levels

There are three designated activation levels for the EOC during response. Activation Level 1 is typically a ‘monitoring’ phase with very limited staffing, Level 2 is ‘partial’ activation, and Level 3 is ‘full-scale’, round the clock activation where all primary and support agencies under the Emergency Plan are notified. The activation levels are based on the magnitude, scope and stage of the event and the staffing levels required to support response activities.

Only those EOC functions and positions that are required to meet current response objectives need to be activated. Non-activated functions and positions will be the responsibility of the next highest level in the EOC organization. Each EOC function must have a person in charge. The EOC organizational structure should be flexible enough to expand and contract as needed. EOC staff may be required to take on more than one position (role), as determined by the nature of the emergency event, availability of resources and/or as assigned by a supervisor. The EOC may be activated with or without a Declaration of a State of Local Emergency or Provincial Emergency; however, it must be activated once a Declaration has been made.

The table below provides further detail about the EOC activation levels and corresponding staffing requirements:

EOC ACTIVATION LEVEL	EVENT/SITUATION	MINIMUM STAFFING REQUIREMENTS (EXAMPLE)
<b>1</b>	Potential threat/monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ flood</li><li>▪ severe storm</li><li>▪ interface fire</li></ul> Small event/one site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 2-3 agencies involved</li><li>▪ small-scale Evacuation Alert</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ EOC Director</li><li>▪ Information Officer</li><li>▪ Liaison Officer</li><li>▪ Operations Section Chief</li></ul> Provincial Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ PEP notified</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	Moderate event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ two or more sites</li><li>▪ several agencies involved</li><li>▪ major scheduled event (e.g., conference or sporting event)</li><li>▪ limited evacuations</li><li>▪ some resources/support required</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ EOC Director</li><li>▪ Information Officer</li><li>▪ Liaison Officer</li><li>▪ Risk Management Officer</li><li>▪ Section Chiefs (as required)</li></ul> Provincial Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ PREOC limited activation</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	Major event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ multiple sites</li><li>▪ multiple jurisdictions</li><li>▪ multiple agencies</li><li>▪ extensive evacuations</li><li>▪ resources/support required</li><li>▪ 24/7 operation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ All EOC functions and positions (as required)</li><li>▪ Policy Group</li></ul> Provincial Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ PREOC activation</li></ul>

### 2.3 Provincial Notification/Consultation

The Emergency Plan must clearly define the agency and/or individual(s) who are to be notified based on the nature of the emergency, level of risk or threat assessment identified for the community, and the legislative requirement to notify.

In the event of an emergency, local governments must request a “task number” from EMBC (through the Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456) if they require:

- assistance with eligible response/recovery costs [see Module 9]
- Workers Compensation and Liability Coverage for registered volunteers
- Evacuee Living Assistance

EMBC may also be contacted to initiate discussion with a Duty Regional Manager (DRM).

## 3.0 EOC Activities

### 3.1 Decision-Making

All decisions made in the EOC require accurate and timely information as well as input and consultation from relevant staff members and agencies. The EOC Director is ultimately responsible for making key decisions on behalf of the EOC. This is done in consultation with the EOC Management Team, Incident Commander(s), and the EOC Policy Group.

#### **EOC Director Decisions**

Issues that require a decision or approval from the EOC Director include:

- Establishing EOC priorities and objectives
- EOC Action Plans
- Extraordinary resources requests
- Press releases
- Media interviews
- Public information bulletins
- Situation reports
- Evacuation orders
- Request mutual aid



- Request for Provincial / Federal Support

The EOC Director must carefully assess, evaluate, and prioritize each issue requiring a decision / approval. Briefings are commonly used to facilitate the decision-making process. Once the decision is made, it must be assigned to applicable functions / positions for implementation and communicated to all appropriate EOC staff and BCERMS levels.

### 3.2 Risk Management Strategies

The EOC shall apply risk management principles based upon the following strategies:

- Assess damage and loss. Identify and analyze loss exposures in the categories of:
  - Personnel
  - Property
  - Liability
- Examine feasible alternative risk management techniques in the following general categories:
  - Exposure avoidance
  - Loss prevention
  - Loss reduction
  - Segregation of exposures:
    - Separation
    - Duplication
    - Contractual risk transfer
    - Risk financing
- Select the best apparent techniques
- Implement the chosen techniques
- Monitor and adjust as necessary
- Provide for the overall safety and health of personnel
- Advise on action to reduce loss and suffering
- Advise EOC staff and response personnel

### 3.3 Operational Period

An operational period is the time scheduled for the execution of a given set of tasks specified in the Action Plan. Operational Periods can be of various lengths depending on the nature and scope of the incident/event. The length of the operational period for the EOC is determined by first establishing a set of objectives and priority actions that need to be performed and then establishing a reasonable period for accomplishing those actions. Generally, the actions requiring the longest time will define the length of the operational period.

Typically, operational periods at the beginning of an emergency are short, sometimes only a few hours. As the emergency progresses, the operational periods may be longer, but should not exceed twenty-four hours. Action Plans are required for each operational period. Operational periods should not be confused with staffing patterns or shift change periods.

### 3.4 Operational Planning Cycle

The Operational Planning Cycle process can be used for smaller short-term incidents and events, as well as longer, more complex incident planning. The planning process may begin with the scheduling of a planned event, the identification of a credible threat, or the initial response to an actual or impending event. The process continues with the implementation of the formalized steps and staff required to develop a written Action Plan.

During the initial stages of incident/event management, planners must develop a simple plan that can be communicated through concise verbal briefings. Frequently, this plan must be developed very quickly and with incomplete situation information. As the incident/event management effort evolves over time, additional lead-time, staff, information systems, and technologies enable more detailed planning and cataloguing of events. The primary phases of the planning process are the same for the initial plan, for the revision of the initial plan for extended operations, and for the incident/event management team developing a formal Action Plan.

Planning involves:

- Evaluating the situation
- Developing incident/event objectives
- Selecting a strategy
- Deciding which resources should be used to achieve the objectives in the safest, most efficient and cost-effective manner

### **Functional Responsibilities in the planning cycle**

#### **Management**

Develops the overall incident objectives and strategy, approves resource orders and demobilization, and approves the Action Plan by signature.

#### **Operations**

Assists with developing strategy, and identifies, assigns, and supervises the resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives.

#### **Planning**

Provides situation reports, manages the planning process, and produces the Action Plan.

#### **Logistics**

Orders resources and develops the Transportation, Communications, and Medical Plans.

#### **Finance & Administration**

Develops cost analyses, ensures that the Action Plan is within the financial limits established by the Director, develops contracts, and pays for the resources.



## The Planning “P”

### 3.5 The Operational Planning “P”

The Planning “P” is a guide to the meeting of deliverables that occur during an operational period. The leg of the “P” describes the initial response phase and only occurs once during an event. The round “belly” of the “P” represents the cyclical operational periods that take place until the event is over. Planning begins with a thorough size-up that provides information needed to make initial management decisions. Each operational period includes the following support pieces.

- **Objectives Meeting**

- The EOC Director establishes objectives that cover the entire course of the event. For complex events, it may take more than one operational period to accomplish the objectives.
- The cyclical planning process is designed to take the overall incident objectives and break them down into assignments for each operational period. It is important that this initial overall approach to establishing objectives establish the course of the incident, rather than having objectives only address a single operational period.

- **Management and General Staff Meeting**

- The EOC Director may meet with Management and General Staff to gather input or to provide immediate direction that cannot wait until the planning process is completed. This meeting occurs as and when needed and should be as brief as possible.

- **Regional Conference Call**

- In a multi-jurisdictional event, the PREOC will hold a Regional Conference Call to provide event participants with current/relevant event information, including an overview of the status of activated local authority, First Nation, agency and ministry EOCs. This conference call is an excellent source of regional information and provides access to provincial regional level subject matter experts. The call may or may not occur in the order presented in this diagram.

- **Preparation for the Planning Meeting**

- The Planning Section coordinates the following actions:
  - Review Information developed/updated in the Objectives Meeting
  - Review information gathered in the Regional Conference Call
  - Assess current operations effectiveness and resource efficiency
  - Gather information to support management decisions

- **Planning Meeting**

- The Planning Meeting provides the opportunity for the Management and General Staff to review and validate the operational plan as proposed by the Operations Section Chief. Attendance is required for all Management and General Staff. Additional personnel may attend at the request of the Planning Section Chief or the EOC Director. The Planning Section Chief conducts the Planning Meeting following a fixed agenda.

- The Operations Section Chief determines the amount and type of resources needed to accomplish the plan. The Planning Section's "Resources Unit" will have to work with the Logistics Section to accommodate.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, the Planning Section Staff will indicate when all elements of the plan and support documents are required to be submitted so the plan can be collated, duplicated, and made ready for the Operational Period Briefing.
- **Action Plan Preparation and Approval**
  - The next step in the Incident Action Planning Process is plan preparation and approval. The written plan is comprised of a series of standard forms and supporting documents that convey the intent and direction for the plan for the next operational period.
- **EOC Briefing**
  - The EOC Briefing may be referred to as the Operational Briefing or the Shift Briefing. This briefing is conducted at the beginning of each Operational Period and presents the Action Plan. Following the Operations Period Briefing supervisors will meet with their staff for a detailed briefing on their respective assignments.
- **Execute Plan and Assess Progress**
  - The Operations Section directs the implementation of the plan. The supervisory personnel within the Operations Section are responsible for implementation of the plan for the specific operational period. The plan is evaluated at various stages in its development and implementation. The Operations Section Chief may make the appropriate adjustments during the operational period to ensure that the objectives are met and effectiveness is assured.

### Situation Reports

The Situation Unit, Planning Section, prepares the Situation Report. It may be scheduled for presentation to the Planning Section Chief and other General Staff members prior to each Planning Meeting. The EOC Director or Planning Section Chief may require more frequent review/update to the Situation Report.

The purpose of the Situation Report is to provide staff information for planning for the next operational period, to provide information to the Information Officer for preparing news media releases, and to summarize incident/event information for local and off-site coordination/operations centers. When completed, copies are distributed to the EOC Director and Management staff and Section Chiefs. It is posted on a status board located at the EOC, and a copy is provided to the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre. All completed original forms MUST be given to the Documentation Unit.

### Documentation

All EOC activities require some form of documentation and record keeping. There should be prepared forms for each EOC function responsibility. Defining which forms require completion are dependent on the agencies involved and the scope and impact of the emergency.

It is extremely important to accurately document actions taken during emergencies. There must be a documented record of all policy and EOC decisions and direction. Resource requests must also be logged and tracked to ensure the response provided is recorded. BCERMS requires all positions to keep a personal and functional position log during events. This will assist in tracking and monitoring the effectiveness of the response and of EOC Action Plans. Documentation is also important for tracking expenditures for cost accounting and for requesting provincial and federal assistance.

### Transfer of Responsibilities (Shift Changes)

When a staff member transfers their responsibilities to another, a simple but formal transfer briefing will be required. Shifts, therefore, should be no longer than 8-12 hours and should overlap to prevent inadequate relief of any function. A transfer briefing should summarize the activities of the past shift, identify, open incidents or activities, and if time permits, be accompanied by a short written summary of the same information for later use during the operation or at a post-operation debriefing.

## 3.6 Resource Management

At all BCERMS levels, there will be some functional activity related to managing resources. This will vary from level to level in terms of directing, coordinating, or inventorying resources. Resources managed by the EOC will usually be in a transit mode, to an affected area, or at a marshalling area awaiting disbursement to a staging area closer to the scene of the incident(s). Resources assigned to an emergency event at any level may be managed in three ways:

- Single resource
- Task force
- Strike team

### Resource Requests

When jurisdictional resources are exhausted and/or unable to fill the need, each responding agency will first go through their Department Operations Centre (DOC) (if one is activated) to try to obtain the necessary resource. If the DOC is unsuccessful in filling the resource request it is then forwarded to the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will assess and prioritize the request before forwarding it to the EOC Operations Section.

If the EOC Operations Section is unable to coordinate filling the resource request with the EOC Logistics and Planning Sections, then the request is forwarded to the EOC Director. The EOC

Director then authorizes forwarding the request to the PREOC. Similarly, if the PREOC is unable to fill the resource request, the PREOC Director can forward the request to the PECC.

### Resource Priority Levels

All resource requests should be assigned one of the following priority levels:

- **Emergency** – Having life and death urgency
- **Priority** – Important to support operations within a specific time limit
- **Routine** – Supports regular operations

### Resource Status

Resources will always be in one of three status conditions:

- Available
- Assigned
- Out of service

### Critical Resource Designation

When a specific resource is in demand by multiple agencies and / or jurisdictions and there are a limited number of the resources available, it can be designated as a “Critical Resource” by the EOC Director, PREOC Director, or PECC Director. The EOC Director, PREOC Director, or PECC Director must approve all requests for “Critical Resources.”

### Resource Tracking

Resource requests frequently require coordination amongst a variety of functions and agency representatives. Multiple requests will be received by the EOC by a wide variety of means and without tracking there is a danger that a critical request could be lost.

Requests must be vetted, prioritized, assigned, tracked, and signed off by EOC Management when closed. The EOC Management Team must be able to determine the current status of all resource requests, the sections assigned responsibility for action, and the details of any action taken or planned. This information is critical during the briefing and shift change process.

It is the responsibility of Planning’s Resource Unit to track resources.



### 3.7 Emergency Communications

#### Telecommunication Systems

The EOC communications systems should provide reserve capacity for unusually complex situations where effective communications could become critical. An integrated communications plan should be developed as part of each Action Plan.

An EOC Communications Centre (radio room) needs to be functional to provide back-up modes of communications services should the main telecommunications means be impacted by the event. This Centre, while established and operated by the Communication Unit in Logistics, is often physically located near Operations and receives operational direction from the Operations Section Chief.

#### Information Flow / Directions

##### Types of Information

Information coming into and out of the EOC must be managed carefully. Standard protocols and Plain English language needs to be used for all levels of emergency telecommunications in order to reduce the confusion that can be created when radio codes are used. Standard terminology shall be established and used to transmit information, including strategic operations, situation reports, logistics, tactical operations, and emergency notifications of imminent safety concerns. BCERMS identifies four types of information transactions common to emergencies:

- Management direction
- Situation reporting
- Resource requests
- General information

##### Management Direction

Management directions must follow the lines of authority established for the response organization. These lines are represented in the function and organization charts for each BCERMS level. Among the different levels, command decisions and priorities are communicated between the Incident Commander and Directors of each level.

##### Situation Reporting

Situation reports are a product most commonly managed through the Planning Section. All personnel must forward incident situation information to the Situation Unit in the Planning Section. Collecting situation data may involve a number of sources, including the Operations Section, Logistics Section, and the Information Officer at a given level. Situation information is also received from lower and higher levels. Following analysis, the Planning function supports

operational decisions and summarizes situation information for the EOC Directors approval. Once approved the Situation Report is distributed by the Information Officer to EOC Section Chiefs and other levels in the BCERMS structure.

The EOC should compile, within a reasonable time from receipt of the periodic Incident Commander Situation Reports, an amalgamated EOC Situation Report for any PREOC that may be established in the operational area.

Section Chiefs are responsible for providing the EOC Director with periodic verbal or written updates to the Situation Report. The EOC Director should then take steps to brief all the staff on the collective situation. A short briefing may be most appropriate.

### **Resource Requests**

Resource requests normally flow from site responders to the Operations Section Chief at the Site Level, who reviews and passes in on to the Logistics Section for the resolution. If the Site's Logistics Section cannot fill the need with available resources, through purchasing, or through agency agreements, the Logistics and Operation Section Chiefs forward requests to the Incident Commander for approval. Once approved, the Incident Commander may pass the request to the Operations Section of the EOC (if activated) or directly to the EOC Director.

### **General Information**

General information may be exchanged among members of a response organization at any given level. BCERMS encourages lateral information flow between functions. In addition, a representative of a function at one level may wish to exchange information with a similar function one level above or below them. Verifying general information is an important step before taking action.

EOCs should consider using standard three-part "round-trip" memorandum forms for all internal communications. These communications must be clearly marked with an originator's message number, originating date and time, and identify the originator's name and functional position. The same information is required when replying to an internal memorandum.

## **4.0 EOC Demobilization**

As site response activities decrease, the level of EOC support required is reduced. The Director will transition the EOC into the Demobilization Phase. This involves a structured shut down of the EOC, including:

- Documentation

- Reduction of staffing levels
- Facility closure and readiness
- Debriefing

### 4.1 Documentation

It is critical to ensure that all EOC documentation is compiled, properly stored, and readily available after the event. Documentation provides the basis for investigations and public inquiries, debriefs and After Action Reviews and support for financial claims and budgets. Documentation may come in various forms including email, electronic files, on-line log entries, faxes, and hard copy including position logs. Confidential information needs to be stored securely. All documents should be formatted to ensure future accessibility.

### 4.2 Reduction of Staffing Levels

The Demobilization Unit within the Planning Section is responsible for working with the Logistics Personnel Unit to create a staffing schedule to reflect the reduced level of services being offered by the EOC and to identify a target date when the EOC will close operations. Although the EOC Director must authorize any demobilization measures to be undertaken, each Section Chief, with support from the Demobilization Unit and the Logistics Section, is responsible for developing a demobilization plan that recognizes and meets the operational needs of the section.

As individual functions are no longer required at the EOC, their responsibilities are passed “upwards” within the organizational chart. For any functions that must continue after the EOC has been deactivated, the demobilization plan should address the transfer of responsibility to the appropriate departments/ agencies.

Worker care is a primary consideration during all operational activation phases including demobilization. This includes ensuring travel arrangements for staff leaving the EOC. Travel arrangements for staff that are leaving must take into consideration hours worked and method of travel. Check-in procedures must be established for staff on travel status. Staff should be encouraged to take adequate rest prior to returning to their daily duties.

### 4.3 Facility Closure

Demobilization of facilities dedicated to EOC use, involves returning the facility, equipment, and supplies back to a state of readiness. For temporary EOC facilities, the demobilization plan must address the return of all furniture, equipment, and supplies to pre-incident state.

### 4.4 Exit Interviews/Debriefings/After Action Review

It is important all staff departing the EOC complete an exit interview. These interviews provide feedback on what went well, areas requiring improvement and any additional support requirements the individual may have (e.g. emotional stress debriefing).

For significant events, a more formal group debriefing may be required. Debriefing sessions often occur after the event has concluded. Staff that participated at the EOC are invited to a meeting to discuss the event and EOC operations. These meetings are facilitated and a formal debrief report is created based on the recommendations and lessons learned that result from the discussion.

Larger events should involve the creation of an After Action Review. This is a report based on response documentation, exit interviews and debriefing sessions. The after action review summarizes response decisions and activities as well as lessons learned. It provides guidance to the Emergency Planning Committee on future preparedness priorities (training, equipment, etc.).

### 4.5 Recognition

Many volunteers, businesses, and community organizations will have contributed to the emergency response. It is imperative that accurate records are maintained so their contributions can be formally and/or informally recognized. Staff recognition also forms an important part of any response, as it reinforces and rewards the most important outcomes for the organization. An effective staff recognition system is simple, immediate, and powerfully reinforcing.

#### Informal

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to provide deserved and spontaneous acknowledgement of workers on the job. Let workers know how valuable their work is to the whole operation by:

- Calling them by name
- Communicating with respect using "please," "thank you," "good job"
- Recommending to executive for potential media coverage of contributions by individuals or businesses

#### Formal

This form of recognition comes after the emergency and becomes a permanent token of appreciation. Possibilities include:

- Certificates of Appreciation
- Community Service Awards to businesses

- Letters of commendation from the director of the operation, mayor, or elected officials
- Letters of thanks from the community involved
- Keepsake pins
- Letters to employers who lent employees as volunteers, commending the volunteers' work and the employers' contribution
- Community recognition event like an outdoor barbecue or evening dinner

## 5.0 Declaration of a State of Local Emergency

The declaration of a state of local emergency enables local authorities to exercise emergency powers such as ordering the evacuation of residents from their homes, or prohibiting travel and accessing private property when an emergency threatens lives, property or the environment within their jurisdiction. Emergency plans must outline the process for declaring the state of local emergency as well as managing the application of the emergency powers. The use of a declaration order is directly linked to the immediacy (short term) of an emergency situation and intended to be used by the local government to effectively respond to the emergency. This section answers some of the most frequently asked questions and provides a step by step outline of how to utilize a declaration of a state of local emergency.

Section 12 of the Emergency Program Act allows the local authority (municipal council or board of a regional district) to declare a state of local emergency if emergency powers are required to respond effectively to an emergency or disaster. The Mayor (or delegate in the Mayor's absence) or Chair (or delegate in the Mayor's absence) may, by order, declare a state of local emergency if the consent of council or board members cannot be obtained in a reasonable time.

### 5.1 Process to Declare a State of Local Emergency

The process to declare a state of local emergency follows four steps:

**Step 1**—the Mayor, Chair of the Board or alternate drafts the order for a declaration of state of local emergency as well as delegation document outlining the emergency powers they wish to access.

**Step 2**—the local authority should send a draft of the declaration order, accompanying maps (if the order is only for a portion of the jurisdiction), and delegation matrix to the appropriate PREOC for review to ensure the order is complete and consistent with legislation. Verbal confirmation should be made to ensure receipt of the draft and to discuss any revisions.

**Step 3**—the local authority must send a copy of the signed declaration order, accompanying maps and delegation matrix to the appropriate PREOC, who will ensure that the Solicitor General is informed as required by legislation. Verbal contact should be made to ensure receipt of documents.

**Step 4**—the local authority must immediately communicate details of the declaration order to the affected residents using any method that it considers most likely to reach them.

### 5.2 Limitations of a State of Local Emergency

A local declaration is limited geographically to the jurisdictional boundaries of the declaring local authority or to any specifically described area within the boundaries. Where the application of emergency powers is required outside of the jurisdiction of the local authority there are two options:

- The neighbouring jurisdiction may declare a state of local emergency
- In the case of a major impact across jurisdictions, a provincial state of emergency may be considered for the whole geographic area.

Declaration orders are intended for finite periods of time and expire 7 days from the date and time of issue. The local authority may, with the approval of the Minister or Lieutenant Governor in Council, extend the duration of a declaration of a state of local emergency for periods of not more than 7 days each.

### 5.3 Powers of a Local Authority

During a declared state of local emergency, the local authority is empowered to take course of action deemed necessary to prevent, respond to, or alleviate the effects of an emergency, including any or all of the following:

- acquire or use any land or personal property considered necessary to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster
- authorize or require any person to render assistance of a type that the person is qualified to provide or that otherwise is or may be required to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster
- control or prohibit travel to or from any area
- provide for the restoration of essential facilities and the distribution of essential supplies and provide, maintain and coordinate emergency medical, welfare and other essential services
- cause the evacuation of persons and the removal of livestock, animals and personal property from any area that is, or may be, affected by an emergency or a disaster and

make arrangements for the adequate care and protection of those persons, livestock, animals and personal property

- authorize the entry into any building or on any land, without warrant, by any person in the course of implementing an emergency plan or program or if otherwise considered by the minister to be necessary to prevent, respond to, or alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster
- cause the demolition or removal of any trees, structures or crops if the demolition or removal is considered by the minister to be necessary or appropriate in order to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster
- construct works considered by the minister to be necessary or appropriate to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster
- procure, fix prices for, or ration food, clothing, fuel, equipment, medical supplies or other essential supplies and the use of any property, services, resources or equipment for the duration of the state of emergency

If a state of local emergency has been declared, the Minister may order a local authority to refrain or desist from exercising any one or more of the powers. A provincial declaration of a state of emergency supersedes any local declarations within the boundaries of the provincial declaration.

The local authority may, within 60 days after declaring a state of local emergency, by bylaw ratified by the minister responsible for the administration of the *Community Charter*, but without obtaining the approval of the electors or the assent of the electors, borrow any money necessary to pay expenses caused by the emergency.

It is important to remember that a declaration is not required for the following:

- To implement part or all of the emergency plan (excluding access to the emergency powers)
- To gain liability protection under the Emergency Program Act
- To access recovery of response costs as described in the Financial Assistance Guide
- To qualify for disaster financial assistance under the Emergency Program Act

Detailed guidelines for Declaring a State of Local Emergency are available on the PEP website.

## 6.0 Evacuations

Ordering an evacuation of all or part of an emergency area is a very serious step and requires detailed planning. In BC, the *Emergency Program Act*, Section 12, permits the head of a local authority to declare

a state of local emergency, and that allows the local authority to order an evacuation should it be absolutely necessary. Under section 9(1) of the *Emergency Program Act*, the Solicitor General is authorized to declare a provincial state of emergency. Under a provincial declaration, the Solicitor General has the authority to order evacuations as deemed necessary.

There are several agencies and jurisdictions that have legal authority to close areas and order evacuations under various statutes: *Fire Services Act*, *Wildfire Act*, *Health Act*, *Environment Emergency Act*, and the *Mines Act*. Currently, there is no federal legislation that addresses evacuations of people living on First Nation reserves. Provincial legislation does not apply to reserve land. Treaty First Nations, however, may be considered a local authority under provincial legislation depending on the treaty agreement.

There are two *types* of evacuations: a tactical evacuation and an evacuation under a state of local emergency. A tactical evacuation allows for imminent action where the threat presents with little or no warning, such as those carried out by the Office of the Fire Commissioner or the Wildfire Management Branch. With an evacuation under a declaration of state of local emergency, the population is required to evacuate the area immediately in accordance with the provisions of a formal written document. Examples of this type of event may include forecasted flood, storm surge or approaching wildfires.

### 6.1 Evacuation Stages

When it is determined that an evacuation is required, the warning must be timely and accurate. While the main concern is the preservation of life, those displaced from their homes or businesses may be experiencing inconvenience, anxiety, and fear. Several agencies and jurisdictions have the legal authority to close areas and order evacuation. Regardless of who orders an evacuation, these Operational Guidelines follow the provincial standard of a three-staged evacuation process.

The evacuation procedure normally follows these three stages:

**STAGE 1 – Evacuation Alert.** Authorities will alert the population at risk of the potential need for evacuation and highlight the nature of the threat. Because of the danger of possible loss of life, they should be prepared to evacuate the area. The Evacuation Alert may allow for the population at risk to begin an orderly preparation to leave the affected area voluntarily, within a specified period; however, the reality of the situation may require immediate action with very short notice. An evacuation alert does not require a declaration of a state of local emergency.

**STAGE 2 – Evacuation Order.** The population at risk is ordered to immediately evacuate the area specified in a formal written order. A statement must be included in all bulletins, pamphlets, warnings and orders that makes it very clear to all that, while the evacuation order is in effect, the area in question will have controlled access and that a pass may be required to regain access.



**STAGE 3 – Evacuation Rescind.** An evacuation order or alert is rescinded when it is determined to be safe for residents to return home. An evacuation order may be reinstated if the threat returns.

### 6.2 Evacuation Plan

Evacuation plans are complex and vary according to the type of incident and geographic area involved. Areas of high risk or vulnerability that are identified through the HRVA process should have detailed plans that are validated through regular reviews and exercises involving staff with responsibility for planning and conducting evacuations. The Operational Guidelines for Evacuations manual is available to assist local government planners in creating their evacuation plan.

The responsibilities of a local authority in the event of an evacuation include:

- activating the evacuation plan
- declaring a state of local emergency
- developing event-specific evacuation strategies
- preparing and authorizing Evacuation Alerts and Orders
- activating Emergency Social Services
- providing concise, consistent and accurate information to the public and the media
- ensuring senior officials have been alerted and are briefed
- developing a strategy to manage convergent volunteers
- tracking and recording information on the evacuation (e.g., numbers evacuated)
- tracking costs and resources
- closing roads
- providing security for evacuated areas
- securing or relocating essential supplies and equipment needed to sustain operations and meet evacuee needs. Consideration should include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - food, water, clothing, beds and bedding
  - medical equipment and supplies
  - portable generators and lighting devices
  - telecommunication capacity for family reunification and public information
  - gas and diesel fuel
  - sanitation services
  - public works vehicles and equipment
  - police and fire fighting services



# Emergency Financial Assistance

## 1.0 Introduction

As many local governments know first-hand, emergencies can be expensive. The cost of responding to events can quickly reach tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Safeguarding the public, protecting property, and implementing other response objectives can require substantial short-term expenditures that may present financial challenges.

Under the *BC Emergency Program Act* and the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance (C & DFA) Regulation*, local authorities can receive financial assistance for eligible emergency response costs incurred during an event, and assistance for some post-disaster recovery costs expended to repair or restore public works and facilities that are essential to their operation as well as costs associated with community recovery activities such as those associated with a resilience centre. Under this legislation, EMBC is authorized to assist local authorities with eligible costs for response and recovery, providing there is sufficient documentation.

The Nisga'a Government and other First Nations are also eligible under federal legislation to receive financial assistance for eligible response and recovery costs. Through an agreement with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, EMBC administers DFA for First Nations in the same manner as for local authorities. The same eligibility and documentation requirements for DFA that apply to local authorities also apply to First Nations.

### 2.0 Overview of Eligible Costs

EMBC has developed the “*Financial Assistance for Emergency Response Costs - A Guide for Local Authorities and First Nations*” (also referred to as the Financial Assistance Guide). This guide provides local authorities and First Nations with information on the procedures required to maximize claims for financial assistance with the costs of both response and recovery.

Eligible expenses paid are designed to cover only extraordinary, incremental expenses directly attributable to the emergency event. They do not encompass normal operating expenses, business continuity activities or expenditures required by other legislation.

The chart below summarizes the ratios of provincial financial assistance available for eligible local authority response and recovery costs:

Expense Type	% of Eligible Costs
Local Authority Response	100 %
Local Authority Infrastructure Recovery (if DFA authorized)	80 %
Business Interruption	No eligible costs

- **Local Authority Response Costs**—local authority response may begin before impact if early information warns of an imminent event, and may continue as long as the event is in progress or the imminent threat exists.
  - Under the *EP Act*, the Minister is permitted to assist a local authority with 100 percent of eligible response costs. The Financial Assistance Guide includes a matrix of common eligible response expenditures including:
    - sandbagging and evacuation activities
    - overtime costs of local authority staff
    - ESS costs following an evacuation order
    - costs associated with feeding EOC staff
    - security costs
    - rented equipment needed during response

A local authority will not receive assistance for ineligible costs, such as base salaries or wages for regular staff, or expenditure claims that are not supported by documentation. The matrix includes more information about ineligible expenditures.

Only costs actually incurred are eligible. Foregone revenue such as waived dumping fees or time taken in lieu of paid overtime is not eligible. For expenditures that are not described or are ambiguous, local governments must contact EMBC for prior authorization if they have an expectation of reimbursement.

- **Community Recovery Costs** - community recovery recognizes that communities and individuals have a range of recovery needs and is most successful when conducted in a coordinated manner. Community disaster recovery is a relatively new concept for local authorities and mechanisms to support the quick and efficient activation of community recovery planning is required.

Community recovery activities take place during both the response and recovery phases of an emergency and the amounts reimbursable to a local authority falls between 80% and 100%. One example of a community recovery expense reimbursed at 100% is a Resilience Centre where activities, conducted during the transitional period between response and recovery, contribute to the effective coordination of assistance to impacted residents. Resilience Centres can decrease long-term social and fiscal impacts to the province by coordinating non-government agencies to fill gaps and disburse donated funds and goods.

Many community recovery expenditures may not be described in the Financial Assistance Guidelines; therefore, local governments must contact EMBC for prior authorization if they have an expectation of reimbursement.

- **Local Authority Recovery Costs**— local authority recovery involves efforts to return infrastructure to its pre-disaster condition. Local authority recovery applies to the repair or replacement of structures, equipment and materials that are essential to the local authority's functions and operations.

Under the *C & DFA Regulation*, the Minister may assist local authorities with 80 percent of eligible costs required to repair or restore public facilities and replace materials on the amount of accepted claim that exceeds \$1,000 per event. To qualify for such payments, the local authority must follow a defined set of steps in planning and documentation, outlined in the Financial Assistance Guide.

Local authorities may claim recovery costs incurred to repair and/or restore to pre-disaster condition any public facilities or materials that are essential to local authority functions and operations. A local authority will not receive assistance for recovery costs that are not eligible under the Regulation. For example, the Province will not assist a local authority with stockpiling supplies or with replacing equipment that may have been damaged by incidents other than the event.

General administrative costs associated with individual recovery projects may qualify for financial assistance for amounts up to 10 percent of eligible costs incurred, as deemed appropriate by EMBC.

- **Business Interruption Losses**—do not qualify for financial assistance under BC legislation. This includes local authority costs and interrupted revenues that may not be immediately obvious, including lost income from public facilities and lost tax base. These loss types may arise from other impacts, such as public works and facilities damage.

### 3.0 Local Authority Response Costs

Response measures are the wide array of efforts needed to save lives, reduce suffering, safeguard public health, protect property and environment, and reduce economic and social impacts.

When preparing a successful request for assistance with response expenditures, Local Authorities should keep in mind the following:

- **Eligibility**—response costs must be eligible. The province applies specific principles in determining eligibility.
- **Evidence**—assistance will only be approved if the Local Authority provides proper documentation.

Local governments must demonstrate with clear evidence that they incurred response expenditures that are eligible for financial assistance. The onus of proof is on the Local Authority. There is another reason for municipalities and regional districts to carefully track their costs in emergency response. Local Authorities are permitted under Section 17 of the *Emergency Program Act* to seek recovery of response costs from persons that cause emergencies. To make such a claim, the Local Authority would need a detailed accounting of its response expenditures.

#### 3.1 Eligibility of Response Costs

Eligibility is a critical factor in successful claims for local government response expenditures. Eligibility of response costs is based on the following factors:

- **Type of Event**—most disasters caused by natural hazards may be considered for financial assistance under BC legislation, including floods, severe winter storms, landslides and mudslides, and some wildfire situations. However, not all emergencies will qualify for financial assistance.

- **Event Size or Magnitude**—most emergency events that a local authority may face will be small in size and require relatively little response effort. The province reserves the right to refuse claims from local authorities. Minor floods or snow storms, for example, would not automatically trigger provincial assistance for response costs.
- **Nature of Expenditure**—only response expenses and staff time over and above normal day-to-day costs are eligible for assistance. Eligibility pertains to response costs for efforts needed to preserve public safety related to a specific event. This means that other non-event objectives, such as promoting tourism to protect the local economy, are not eligible.

In general, a local authority will be able to claim most of the costs involved with emergency response, including:

- site costs
- EOC costs
- ESS costs
- any costs that were approved by a provincial Expense Authorization Form
- any costs incurred on behalf of the Province and authorized by the Minister

There are exceptions, however, and it is important that each local authority understand the rules of eligibility that apply to the nature of response expenditures.

Response activities may include a wide range of actions, depending on the type of event and need for protective action. Examples of eligible costs for response actions at the site of an emergency are:

- purchasing sandbags and sand, and renting bag-filling machines during a flood
- hiring tree experts to remove dangerous trees following a wildfire or wind storm
- hiring contract security crews to patrol evacuated neighbourhoods
- purchasing food and fuel for ESS volunteers
- renting private property as a staging area for heavy equipment
- immediate and temporary repairs to potable water lines following an earthquake

In addition to site-related costs, response costs could also include site-support actions that take place at the EOC or other facility, including these examples:

- renting rooms and furniture for EOC facilities
- purchasing paper, folders, labels, and other office supplies for the EOC
- renting computers, printers, fax machines and other office equipment for the EOC
- service charges for connecting telephones and data lines

- purchasing food and water for EOC personnel
  - contract charges for paid EOC personnel
  - overtime costs for local authority staff supporting emergency response
  - travel and accommodation charges for EOC personnel
  - contracted janitorial and security services for the EOC and other response facilities
- **Contract and Equipment Rates**—there are no provincial limits on what a local authority may pay for service contracts and equipment rentals during response. However, there are limits on the rates eligible for financial assistance from the province.

Contractors come with a wide range of fees, depending on the uniqueness of their skills. Most contractors will charge their standard hourly or daily rates for work during emergencies. The province will only assist a local authority with equipment rental costs up to the rates accepted by the province. These rates are readily available in the “Blue Book – Equipment Rental Rate Guide,” including values for a wide range of heavy equipment.

- **Compensation through Other Means**—if the local authority has access to funds for response expenditures through other means, the province may reduce or forego payment to the Local Authority. For example, if the Local Authority seeks legal compensation from a person who caused an emergency under the *Emergency Program Act*, the province will account for such claims in calculating the amount of provincial assistance to the Local Authority.

### 3.2 Response Claim Procedures

During the response phase, the Local Authority should take specific steps to seek assistance from the province for response expenditures. Attention to detail is important to ensure accuracy of the Local Authority claim. The Local Authority will want to maximize their claim amount by including all eligible expenses, and to avoid the inclusion of ineligible items that may substantially delay the approval process.

The steps Local Authorities should follow in seeking financial assistance for response costs are:

**Step 1 – Document Rationale for Response Expenditures** - A successful request for financial assistance must include evidence that supports the claim. The Local Authority must provide documentation that verifies several aspects of each cost item:

- cost amount of the item
- date the materials or service was used
- evidence of the purpose of the goods or services

- proof that the Local Authority paid the supplier or contractor

Most of these requirements can be met by providing clear receipts and invoices, and referencing the supporting documentation. The Local Authority should have recorded the purpose and rationale for each response expenditure identified in a claim at the time of commitment.

**Step 2 – Pay Invoices.** Prior to claiming response expenditures, the Local Authority must ensure that all contractors, personnel, and other suppliers have been paid. Some tips to keep in mind when paying invoices include:

- require suppliers to identify the name of the event and nature of goods or services supplied on their invoice
- stamp each invoice with “Goods and Services Received” and obtain a signature from a Local Authority representative who can verify receipt
- ensure the incident Task number and associated Expenditure Authorization Form number, if applicable, are included at the top of each invoice
- verify sums calculated on the invoice and identify any HST charges
- contact the supplier to obtain any missing information or signatures

**Step 3 – Collect and Organize Documentation** - Assemble all documents related to response expenditures and organize them for presentation to EMBC. This includes making photocopies of all paid invoices and receipts, as well as documenting evidence that the local authority paid for the goods or services used in response.

Organizing these important documents helps EMBC quickly find and verify claims. Local authorities may want to consider organizing expense items by date incurred, by response objective, or by type of goods or services. Some tips include:

- ensure there are no missing receipts, or explain in a brief statement why a receipt is not available.
- obtain evidence of payment, such as a photocopy of a charge against the local authority’s general ledger.
- avoid jargon, spell out acronyms and explain technical terms

**Step 4 – Prepare a Response Claim** - With the evidence gathered in Step 3, the local authority prepares a response claim for submittal to EMBC. Using the *Response Claim Submission Spreadsheet* in the Financial Assistance Guide, identify each expense item for which there is documentation, and calculate the summary information indicated. EMBC recommends that local authorities use spreadsheet application software (such as MS Excel) with the headings noted in the sample provided under “Forms for Response.”



Each Local Authority is responsible for submitting its own claim. First Nations that have incurred response expenses should submit their individual claims to EMBC, even if they participate with a Local Authority in response. Local Authorities are not responsible for claiming costs incurred by First Nations, even if they share emergency operations.

Where Local Authorities have chosen to jointly operate a single EOC through a unified management structure or integrated emergency program, one Local Authority may submit a single claim for reimbursement of emergency costs to EMBC on behalf of all the Local Authority participants. EMBC will reimburse the local authority that submitted the claim in a single sum, and Local Authorities participating in a joint claim must make their own arrangements for the distribution of the proceeds.

**Step 5 – Submit Completed Response Claim** - In the final step of claiming response costs, the Local Authority sends the completed forms and documentation to EMBC for processing. Response claims must include:

- **Summary Sheet**—include a summary sheet for costs claimed on each submission. A sample template is provided under “Forms for Response” in the Guide
- **Invoices**—submit invoices for all goods and services being claimed, with justification for why the purchase was essential to the incident response and the Task Number
- **Proof of Payment**—include financial reports (i.e., general ledger detail or list of expenses claimed complete with copies of paid cheques [front and back]) that verify all invoice and payroll costs
- **HST Calculations**—claim only the portion not recoverable by HST rebate
- **Accounts**—separate accounts must be maintained for each Task Number assigned

Mail and courier packages can be lost. Retain a copy of the claim and all back-up documents. Be sure to provide the name, telephone number, and email address of the person in the finance department who can answer questions about the claim.

### 3.3 Financing the Emergency Program

The goal of developing an Emergency Program that meets operational requirements can be financially challenging. The organization will need to determine the Emergency Program’s requirements and the resources needed to meet them.

Training, exercising, program growth and facility improvements are ongoing costs associated with a well run Emergency Program. Funding must be stable from year-to-year but also needs to be flexible enough

to accommodate periodic adjustments. In addition to an operating budget, a capital improvement budget should be developed.

Considerations for funding an Emergency Program include:

### **Taxation**

Most jurisdictions allow for the costs of maintaining emergency management organizations through direct taxation of its citizens. Such a secured source of funding allows for the operation and maintenance of an emergency program's capacity, which may include daily operating expenses, salaries, equipment, training, exercises, and volunteer recognition.

### **Budgets**

While each organization will have its own budget process, all programs will need to develop capital and operating budgets for the development and on-going management of the Emergency Program.

The capital budget addresses the financing and expenditures required to acquire, construct, or improve fixed assets such as land, buildings, and equipment. The operating budget addresses the total revenues and expenditures required to maintain and develop the Emergency Program on an annual basis.

#### **Operating Budget:**

- Staff time and benefits
- Contractor costs
- Facility maintenance costs
- Training costs
- Conference/workshop attendance
- Travel costs
- Supplies
- Insurance
- Telephone lines
- Internet and cable TV costs

#### **Capital Budget:**

- Facility acquisition, renovation, expansion
- Furniture
- Major office equipment and computers
- Back-up generator

Reserve funds:

- Costs not eligible for reimbursement by EMBC
- Emergency repairs to facilities
- Matching funds available for grant opportunities

### **In-kind and Industry support**

Partnerships can be an effective means of reducing costs and promoting integrated emergency management. Identify and approach potential partners who may have an interest in an effective emergency program to increase community resiliency.

## **3.4 Joint Emergency Preparedness Program**

The Government of Canada established the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) as a cost-sharing arrangement with the provinces and territories to enhance the national capacity to respond to all types of emergencies. In BC, EMBC administers JEPP on behalf of Public Safety Canada.

JEPP is available to local governments and First Nations through an application process and in order to be eligible, municipalities, regional districts and First Nations must have both an emergency by-law in place and an operational emergency plan. Jurisdictions that have an emergency by-law in place, but do not have an emergency plan, are eligible to submit a JEPP application to develop an emergency plan. JEPP funds may not be used to finance activities considered the normal responsibility of a local government or First Nation's authority.

To be eligible for JEPP funding, each project application must include:

- Clear objectives aimed at community preparedness or critical infrastructure protection
- Measurable outcomes and a project plan
- A statement about how the federal financial contribution to the project will be recognized
- A statement regarding provincial or territorial financial commitment to the project
- A description of how the project will build on existing emergency preparedness programs

The federal contribution for accepted applications will normally not exceed 50 per cent of total project costs. This contribution becomes payable only after the project has been completed and the invoices for costs incurred have been paid and submitted for reimbursement by the provincial and territorial governments.

### 4.0 Local Authority Recovery Costs

Disaster Financial Assistance Program (DFA) is administered by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, through EMBC, under the authority of the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation. DFA is a funding program that provides financial assistance to assist individuals and communities in their **recovery** from natural disasters, which have resulted in uninsurable property and infrastructure damage. Typically these disasters involve overland flooding, but other forms of natural disasters such as landslides may be included.

Financial assistance is available to those impacted by disaster as follows:

- Homeowners and residential tenants
- Small businesses
- Farm operations
- Charitable volunteer and non-profit organizations
- Local government

DFA is intended to ease financial hardships when the cost of damage exceeds what individuals and communities might reasonably be expected to bear on their own. DFA is not an insurance program, rather it is intended to provide a 'helping hand' to individuals who are trying to return their lives to a pre-event condition. The program does not provide full compensation for all damages and losses, but addresses the loss of essential items.

Eligibility for financial assistance with recovery costs does not depend on a declaration of a state of emergency either by the province or by the local authority. It does, however, require the authorization of the Minister.

Depending on the nature of the threat, an emergency may directly impact local authority buildings, improvements, structures, dams, pipelines, equipment, materials and other public works or facilities that are critical to local authority operations. Efforts to repair or replace such items are included in the recovery effort.

Local governments are eligible for financial assistance with costs to replace essential materials and rebuild or replace essential public infrastructures to the condition they were in before the disaster as follows:

- Eligible local authority materials—equipment and materials essential to the functions and operation of the local authority including, without limitation, essential office and institutional furnishings.

- Eligible local authority structure—a structure that is essential to the functions and operations of the local authority including, without limitation, government and public buildings, police stations, fire stations, and structures essential to the operation of public recreational facilities such as parks.
- Eligible public works—streets, roads, bridges, dams, breakwaters, wharves, dikes, levees, drainage facilities, flood control and irrigation systems and publicly owned sewer and water utilities.
- Public facility—an eligible local authority structure or any one of the eligible public works.

Actions taken to repair or replace damaged facilities can be costly and time-consuming, and may require major projects over several phases of effort. Some of the more expensive tasks required in facility repair include hiring experts to:

- assess damage
- clean-up and remove debris
- prepare project plans and engineering drawings
- repair damaged facilities
- replace essential components
- test facilities prior to operation

There may also be significant administrative costs associated with an emergency event, including managerial and staff time to develop projects to repair public facilities and works, to prepare recovery plans, and to alert the province to the need for financial assistance. A local authority that is eligible for assistance must submit a recovery plan to EMBC detailing the various projects it intends to undertake for cleanup and restoration. A local authority should acknowledge the time required for these important administrative efforts and dedicate the appropriate personnel.

These and other related recovery expenditures may be eligible for financial assistance under the regulation. Applications for DFA must be submitted to EMBC within 90 days of the date that DFA was authorized.

### 4.1 Eligibility of Recovery Costs

When an event is declared eligible for DFA, EMBC is authorized to help local authorities rebuild and restore communities after an emergency or disaster. Local authorities may only claim recovery costs that are eligible. Eligibility of recovery costs are determined based on three factors:

- **Ownership.** A local authority may only receive assistance for recovery costs related to public facilities and materials that it owns and for which it can demonstrate ownership. In summary, there are two categories to consider:
  - Eligible—reconstruction or replacement of structures, equipment, and materials for which there is proof of local authority ownership, including any titles, rights, or privileges assigned by way of a lease or permit.
  - Not Eligible—facilities and materials that are not owned directly by the local authority, or where the local authority can provide no proof of ownership, title, right, or privilege assigned by way of lease or permit.
- **Type of Item.** Eligible recovery costs pertain to rebuilding or restoring public facilities, structures and public works or replacing materials that are essential to the functions and operation of the local authority. Examples include:
  - Eligible Structures
    - fire stations
    - government and public buildings
    - police stations
    - recreational facilities (e.g., parks)
  - Eligible Public Works
    - breakwaters and wharves
    - bridges
    - drainage facilities
    - sewer utilities
    - streets and roads
    - water utilities
  - Eligible Materials
    - construction or other materials needed to repair damage when not used for normal operations/work (proof of inventory/replenishment/ consumption)
    - equipment damaged while undertaking eligible response efforts may be considered as a recovery cost

- office furnishings
- replacement of local authority materials or stores that have been damaged or destroyed in responding to emergency or in repairing public facilities
- supplies or inventories from local government stores
- Not Eligible
  - recovery costs for repairing, rebuilding or replacing public works that cannot be considered essential to the public welfare including, without limitation, non-public roads and bridges or landscaping.
- **Type of Action.** The C & DFA Regulation describes the types of recovery actions for which financial assistance is available. Even for structures that would otherwise be eligible, the province can only assist with these actions:
  - Restoration to Pre-Disaster Condition—recovery costs are eligible when repairing or replacing facilities to conditions that existed before the disaster. There is no allowance for betterment unless it is required to meet a new building code or law. However, the local authority may choose to claim for amounts that would return a facility to pre-disaster conditions and pay the difference required to upgrade certain qualities of the replacement facility. The local authority should coordinate with EMBC prior to taking such action.
  - Pre-Emptive Protection—efforts to protect local authority assets from damage during an event are eligible. In other words, protective actions are eligible if they are taken immediately before, during, or after an event to reduce losses from a single, current threat.
  - Not eligible—loss prevention measures designed to protect local authority assets from a potential future emergency. Also, the local authority cannot link several disastrous events in a given year or in other years for the purposes of their recovery claim.

### 4.2 Recovery Claim Procedures

Authority for the province to assist local authorities with recovery costs comes from the *C & DFA*. The province is permitted to assist local authorities with recovery costs under two conditions: 1) costs must be eligible under the legislation; and 2) documentation must accompany claims.

For eligible recovery costs, the province may assist the local authority by providing 80 percent of the total accepted claim that exceeds \$1,000 in total recovery costs per event. Under this regulation, the

local authority must obtain approval from EMBC before submitting a claim, and provide specific documents with a claim for reimbursement of recovery costs.

Claiming recovery costs requires five steps:

**Step 1 – Request DFA.** A local authority should contact their Regional Manager as soon as possible after a disaster to request DFA and to confirm details of the process of claiming recovery costs. Following submittal of the local authority request, the Regional Manager will complete a *DFA Situation, Recommendation and Authorization* form, and forward a copy to the EMBC Recovery Office. The EMBC Recovery Office will then seek DFA authorization and, upon approval, notify the local authority that it is authorized to prepare and submit a recovery claim.

**Step 2 – Complete and Submit “Local Government Application for DFA” Form.** A local authority completes a “Local Government Application for DFA” form and submits it to the EMBC Recovery Office. After reviewing the *Local Government Application for DFA* form and verifying the information provided, the Recovery Office will prepare and forward to the local authority a notification letter, requesting a Recovery Plan and providing the recommended format.

**Step 3 – Complete and Submit “Recovery Plan” and Documentation.** A local authority prepares the Recovery Plan that addresses repair or replacement of essential materials, structures and public works. The intent of the Recovery Plan is to provide EMBC with enough detailed information to assess the eligible DFA costs. EMBC will then:

- Review the Recovery Plan
- Contact the local authority if additional information is required
- Recommend the eligibility of projects
- Update the plan indicating which projects are eligible or ineligible
- Notify local authority of funding levels

**Step 4 – Complete and Submit “Recovery Claim Submission” and Documentation.** Following the completion of recovery work, the local authority prepares and submits a *Recovery Claim Submission* to account for each cost item. EMBC recommends that local authorities use spreadsheet application software with the headings noted in the sample form from the Financial Assistance Guide.

A local authority provides copies of all support documentation that demonstrates the costs involved, confirms local authority payments to suppliers, and provides other information required to justify the claim. Include copies of all paid invoices and receipts, with proof of payment. Ensure there are no missing receipts, or explain in a brief statement why a receipt is not available.



- Timelines—all claims and invoices must be submitted, at the latest, within 18 months of the date EMBC provides the recovery plan approval notice. If projects cannot be completed on time, a letter outlining the reasons for the delay must be submitted to EMBC for approval to extend the project completion date.
- HST—is reimbursed for the portion not recoverable by the HST rebate. Upon receiving the *Recovery Claim Submission* and all supporting documentation, EMBC will review invoices for eligibility and confirm proof of payment, notify the local authority of payment approval, and arrange for payment.

**Step 5 – Receive Financial Assistance on Eligible Costs.** In most cases, the local authority should receive payment within 60 days of receipt by EMBC of a completed Recovery Claim Submission and all supporting documentation.

## 5.0 EOC Finance and Administration

Some local authorities may work through an EOC in managing their financial requirements, rather than relying on busy personnel at the site of an emergency or on support personnel at headquarters that may be distant from the required information sources.

To be most effective, the Finance & Administration (F&A) Section of an EOC should be operating as soon as possible in an emergency that generates local authority response costs. The F&A Section is responsible for tracking cost information, and ensuring accurate data make their way into daily summaries and event totals, and into subsequent local authority requests for financial assistance.

Financial tracking means more than simply being accountable to the local authority taxpayers. It may mean significant dollars in response expenditures are returned to the local government. If multiple local authorities are working together in a coordinated response, each requires separate financial tracking systems for response claims.

Even if the local authority requires resources for which the province will not provide assistance, the local authority is usually expected to keep their Policy Group (elected officials or senior administrators) informed as to costs that the organization may be required to absorb.

From the perspective of an EOC, the local authority should undertake four activities to assist with later claims for response costs. All four activities involve direct communication with the PREOC serving the local authority:

- **Obtain Task Number**—all local governments engaged in an emergency should request a Task Number for tracking purposes from EMBC, either through the EOC or their Regional Manager. Every supplier and contractor, all staff members working overtime, and all volunteers should record and reference the Task Number in tracking their hours and costs.
- **Submit Expenditure Authorization Forms to PREOC**—there is room for interpretation of the provincial financial assistance guidelines under the legislation. This provides the flexibility needed to allow the legislation to work as intended – that is, to help those most in need. It is in the interest of every local authority to check assumptions about the response costs the province will consider eligible, especially when dealing with large cost items.

To confirm if the province will assist with ambiguous, extraordinary, or other eligible response expenses, the EOC must submit an Expenditure Authorization Form (EAF) to the PREOC prior to an expense being incurred. Finance Section personnel in an EOC are encouraged to contact their counterparts in the PREOC to discuss eligibility and the requirements of the EAF.

Once an EAF has been authorized by the PREOC, the local government is assured the province will provide assistance to the amount specified, as long as the local government provides the proper documentation with the claim. If circumstances require an increase in the estimate, the local government should prepare an addendum to the EAF and seek authorization through the PREOC.

- **Prepare Daily Expense Report**—local authority decision-makers will want to make response decisions with full knowledge of the cumulative costs to date. Likewise, the PREOC will monitor local authority costs for which the province may be expected to provide financial assistance. To accomplish such monitoring, the local authority prepares a daily expense report and submits it to the PREOC.

The local authority should also maintain a daily overtime spreadsheet to estimate overtime payments for local authority staff.

- **Submit Resource Requests to PREOC**—under BCERMS, the local authority is responsible for using local resources to fill immediate needs to the greatest extent possible. Resources mean material goods, equipment, or personnel required to assist response objectives.
- If locally available resources are insufficient for operational needs, the Local Authority may request assistance through another Local Authority or through the PREOC. Some Resource Requests will require the Local Authority to initially pay the supplier, although the PREOC may arrange for the resources. For such Resource Requests with financial impacts, the Local Authority should ensure the proper codes are noted on the Resource Request Form and on all invoices to support a claim for financial assistance. These codes include:

- Task Number
- The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that each Resource Request Form includes the justification for the request, as well as all other pertinent information, including a signature by the EOC Director.