



BC Housing



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

# Housing Provider Kit

Operations • Emergency Preparedness





# Emergency Preparedness

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1 ~ Fire Safety</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Fire Safety Plans .....	3
Maintenance Requirements .....	3
Fire Safety Records .....	4
Common Causes of Fire .....	4
Fire Awareness and Training .....	5
Fire Prevention .....	6
What to Do When There's a Fire .....	6
<b>Chapter 2 ~ Earthquake Safety</b> .....	<b>8</b>
What Happens During an Earthquake .....	8
How Residents Can Prepare for an Earthquake .....	8
How Staff Can Prepare for an Earthquake .....	9
What to Do During an Earthquake .....	9
What to Do After an Earthquake .....	10
1) Preliminary Damage Assessment .....	10
2) First Aid .....	11
3) Emotional Support .....	11
4) Evacuation Procedures .....	12
5) When People Are Trapped .....	12
<b>Chapter 3 ~ Other Emergencies</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Floods .....	13
Power Failures .....	14
Tsunamis (Tidal Waves) .....	15
Forest Fires .....	15
Hazardous Materials .....	15



<b>Chapter 4 ~ Emergency Support</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Check Your Telephone Directory .....	16
Training Courses .....	16
Personal Disaster Assistance .....	16
Emergency Social Services .....	16
Disaster Restoration Services .....	17
Disaster Financial Assistance .....	17
Emergency Accommodation and Transportation .....	18
Talking to the Media .....	18
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>19</b>
References .....	19
Earthquake Cabinet Contents .....	20

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# Chapter 1

## FIRE SAFETY

### Fire Safety Plans

You are required to have a fire safety plan if there's a fire alarm system in the building. As well, many municipalities require a completed fire safety plan before issuing an occupancy permit for any new development. Even if you are not required to have a fire safety plan for your building, we recommend you develop fire safety and evacuation procedures to protect residents.

A fire safety plan has three primary objectives:

- To outline measures/procedures to control fire hazards.
- To provide direction to staff on maintaining fire protection systems.
- To give occupants direction on emergency evacuation procedures.

As part of the plan, you are required to appoint someone as Fire Safety Director and Deputy Fire Safety Director to administer the plan. Typically, the Fire Safety Director is a staff or Board member responsible for the development, but does not have to reside there. The director is responsible for ensuring staff have adequate fire prevention and evacuation training, and that fire safety and firefighting equipment are properly maintained. The Fire Safety Director or designate ensures the fire department is contacted, and acts a resource person to fire department personnel during an emergency.

The plan describes the physical components of the building, including detection, extinguishing and exit systems. The plan includes information on maintenance requirements, elevators, emergency power and lighting, electrical service, and garbage disposal at your development, as well as floor plans for each level of your building and a site plan of the full development.

The local fire department will review and approve your fire safety plan. Always keep a copy on site and available for the fire department. The plan needs to be reviewed annually, and inform the local fire department of any changes at this time. If you do not have a fire safety plan, contact your local fire department, Office of the Fire Commissioner, or a Fire Protection Consultant for assistance developing one.

### Maintenance Requirements

Proper maintenance of fire systems and equipment is vital. Your fire safety plan outlines daily, weekly, monthly, and annual requirements for inspections and tests to ensure the equipment and systems are functioning properly.



A number of these checks are to be carried out by the Fire Safety Director or designate. A professional contractor must conduct the annual fire alarm inspection. Set up a contract with a fire protection company to have your fire alarm system, extinguishers, hoses, back flow preventors, sprinklers, and heat and smoke detectors inspected.

Smoke alarms in individual units may be tested by residents each month, and by the operator once a year and whenever occupancy changes. If battery powered smoke alarms are in use, replace the batteries once a year. Smoke alarms more than ten years old must be replaced. To determine the alarm's age, you'll find a date stamp on the back of the alarm.

Fire safety equipment must function properly to pass an inspection. If any equipment doesn't work, it must be repaired or replaced immediately.

## Fire Safety Records

The following records must be regularly maintained and kept for at least two years. Copies of this information must also be available to the local fire department upon request.

- Records of all fires, drills and false alarms in the building — record the date, location, and a description of the incident.
- Monthly fire protection system tests and annual smoke alarm tests.
- Annual Fire Protection System inspections.

You must maintain a list of the names and unit numbers of occupants with disabilities who need assistance evacuating in the event of a fire. Update the list whenever there's a change, and store a copy in a location accessible to the responding fire department. This list guides firefighters in rescuing those unable to leave the building on their own.

## Common Causes of Fire

Arson and cigarettes are the two most common causes of residential fires. Other causes are cooking fires in the kitchen, electrical fires from overloaded circuits, children playing with matches, and unsafe storage of flammable materials.

Almost all deadly fires occur in the early morning hours, because people are usually asleep when the fire starts and fewer people are awake to notice. As a result, the fire can escalate before it's noticed and before the fire department is alerted. Most people usually die during a fire from smoke inhalation or toxic poisoning from the gases given off by burning materials.

## Fire Awareness and Training

The fire safety plan describes steps residents should take to vacate the building when the fire alarm sounds, and what to do if a fire starts in their unit. There are several ways to ensure people are familiar with this important safety information:

- Include a section on fire safety and evacuation procedures in a resident handbook and/or hand out fire safety brochures from your local fire department.
- Invite residents to an annual meeting to explain these procedures and provide handouts. This meeting also provides a good opportunity to involve your local fire department.
- Schedule a regular time to set off the fire alarm and conduct a fire drill and evacuation. Everyone in the building should be aware of the drill time. Each fire department has regulations governing the frequency of drills, so check with your local fire department.
- Post notices in hallways and entrances informing people what to do and who to call in the event of a fire. Make sure escape routes are clearly marked.
- Encourage residents to assist one another during an alarm. Some parents with young children, senior citizens, or people with disabilities may not be able to evacuate quickly. Advise people to offer assistance only if it will not put their lives in danger.

Ensure formal fire safety training is conducted for any staff members who work onsite on a regular basis. Your fire safety plan outlines the areas of responsibility for designated staff and additional items they need to be aware of, including procedures for:

- Sounding the alarm and notifying the fire department.
- Fighting minor fires.
- Evacuating the building.
- Assisting residents with disabilities.
- Operating fire extinguishers and water standpipe hoses.

Your local fire department should be able to assist you with some of this training, or you can attend training sessions put on by a local fire extinguisher company.

In addition, familiarize residents with the location and operation of safety equipment in their units, such as smoke alarms, breaker panels, fire extinguishers, and shut off switches for the water, gas, hydro and furnace. Label all shut off switches within units and common areas.



## Fire Prevention

Provide fire safety information to residents when they sign tenancy or occupancy agreements. Include the following safety tips to protect their homes and families:

- Test your smoke alarms monthly. Do not tamper with them. Contact facility staff if there is a problem with their operation.
- Store flammable liquids such as paint thinner, solvents, or gasoline outside in a ventilated area, not in a basement or storage locker.
- Do not accumulate old newspapers, which become a fire hazard when stored.
- Be familiar with the building's fire safety floor plan and procedures.
- Know at least two ways out of the building, in case one escape route is blocked by fire.
- Encourage parents to draw a floor plan of the unit and plot at least two escape routes.
- Leave the building right away if the fire alarm sounds. Follow the fire escape plan.
- Call the fire department immediately if there is a fire anywhere in the building.
- Call the Caretaker/Building Manager if the smoke alarm in the unit goes off frequently. To help prevent setting off the alarm, keep the stove, oven, and toaster clean so they don't smoke.
- Leave firefighting to the local fire department. Use a fire extinguisher only if trained.

## What To Do When There's a Fire

### **ACTIVATE THE ALARM**

If you discover a fire at the development, the first step is to alert residents and staff by activating the nearest pull station.

### **CALL 911 OR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

As soon as the alarm has been activated, phone 911 in areas with emergency 911 service. In other areas, phone the fire department. Be prepared to give the exact address and cross street, your name, and any additional information that's requested.

### **EVACUATE THE BUILDING**

Ensure all residents know they must leave the building immediately if they hear the fire alarm. Residents should know at least two exit routes to use, in advance. These routes should already be posted and explained in previous fire drills and emergency evacuation procedures. Your staff should also be adequately trained in evacuation procedures.

Follow fire, police, and ambulance personnel instructions. Do not use the elevators. Move people quickly away from the building to the designated evacuation meeting place. Emergency response personnel will notify you if it is safe to go back in the building.



## **HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

If the fire or smoke affects tenants who are unable to go down the stairs on their own, staff or other occupants may need to assist them in moving to a safer area of the building or outside. Further information is available in your fire safety plan. Remember to never put yourself in danger when assisting another person.

If you cannot evacuate residents with disabilities to a stairwell because of the fire and smoke, advise them to remain in their units with the doors and windows closed. Call the fire department and inform them that residents are trapped.

When fire department personnel arrive, give them a current list of residents who need assistance evacuating the building to help firefighters check on people unable to evacuate on their own.

## **PEOPLE CAUGHT IN SMOKE**

During fire drills, fire safety meetings, and training sessions, advise residents and staff to:

- Drop to their hands and knees and crawl if they are caught in smoke during a fire, because the air is freshest near the floor.
- Hold their breath as much as possible.
- Breathe slowly through the nose, using a blouse, shirt, or jacket as a filter.
- Stay in the unit and call the fire department if they are unable to evacuate, and make sure the doors and windows are closed.



## Chapter 2

### EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

## What Happens During An Earthquake?

There's a lot of noise during a major earthquake. Objects such as bookcases, ceiling tiles, filing cabinets, and computers that are not anchored to the floor or walls will shake and rattle, and may fall, break, or shift. Windows may break creating shattered glass and strong drafts. The motion can be severe enough to throw people to the ground. Lights, telephones, elevators, heat, and air conditioning stop working in areas hit by a large earthquake. The shaking may last just seconds or minutes, but be prepared for aftershocks over the next few days, weeks, or months.

## How Residents Can Prepare for an Earthquake

Because earthquakes happen without warning, it's important for people to prepare ahead of time. Advise residents living in earthquake areas to check the information section of their local telephone white pages directory for detailed information on how to prepare for an earthquake. Here are some measures residents can take:

- Identify the safe places at home. People are safest against an inside wall, under a strong table, or desk. Also, be familiar with and avoid dangerous areas such as windows, mirrors, hanging pictures or plants, swinging doors, tall furniture, and overhead objects, such as light fixtures.
- Secure heavy pictures and mirrors, hanging plants, and tall heavy furniture that could topple in an earthquake. Put latches on cabinet doors so they will stay closed during the shaking, and store heavy objects and breakables on lower shelves.
- Practice earthquake drills, so adults and children learn to place themselves in safe spots.
- Keep an emergency supply kit with food, water, clothing, a first aid kit, flashlight, extra batteries, and a portable battery-operated radio. If someone is dependent on medication, store enough to last at least a week.
- Learn first aid and CPR (Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation).
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers easily accessible.



## How Staff Can Prepare for an Earthquake

Ensure staff know how to:

- Shut off gas, water, and electricity. (Gas should be turned off only if you can smell it.)
- Secure water heaters and other appliances that could shift and rupture gas or electricity lines.
- Store flammable or hazardous liquids such as paint and cleaning products in an outdoor shed.

Prepare ahead by installing an earthquake supplies cabinet, containing food, water, tools, flashlights, and hard hats. You can apply for a cabinet through your Property Portfolio Manager. A complete list of the cabinet contents is included in the appendix on [page 20](#).

Store the earthquake supplies cabinet in a secure public area or storeroom that's easily accessible. Keep the key in a break-glass box on the door, so it is always available. Some items in the cabinet have a limited shelf life. The water and food bars, for example, only last five years. Check your cabinet yearly and replace necessary items.

Also, check with your yellow pages or local agencies about how and where to learn first aid and CPR.

## What To Do During an Earthquake

During an earthquake, instruct staff and residents to take the following steps:

- Try not to panic. Go to a safe spot. Take cover under a desk or table, or against an inside wall, or hallway. Hold this position. Stay away from windows, swinging doors, tall bookcases, filing cabinets, and other furniture that could fall over.
- Watch for falling objects and debris such as light fixtures, glass, or tiles, and protect your head with a coat, handbag, or book.
- Do not use elevators.
- Get into an open area, if outside. Move away from trees, buildings, walls, and power lines. Do not enter the building.

If you are in an elevator, push all the floor buttons and get off at the first stop. If the elevator stops between floors, press the emergency button, and call for help on the intercom.

If you are in an underground parking garage, crouch against a pillar or solid wall, and cover your head with a jacket, bag, or briefcase. Do not run. If you are in a car, stay in the car and get down on the floor. Do not try to drive away.

After the earth stops shaking, wait 60 seconds before moving, then check yourself, your family, and others for injuries.



## What To Do After an Earthquake

In the event of a major earthquake, you may wait up to 72 hours before professional disaster personnel are available. On site staff, with support from residents, may have to handle damage assessment, evacuate the building if necessary, and take care of injured residents. This section provides step-by-step information to guide you through an emergency earthquake response.

### 1) PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

As soon as the earthquake is over, conduct a rapid damage assessment to determine whether the building poses any significant hazards to people remaining or re-entering. Check for obvious damage and threats to the building's safety. Examine the entire outside of the building, the ground around the building and, if nothing is obviously unsafe, enter the building and do a quick floor-by-floor survey. Elevators should not be used after an earthquake. Use these six criteria to determine whether the building or a particular area is unsafe:

1. If the building has collapsed, partially collapsed, or has moved off its foundation, it is UNSAFE.
2. If the building or any storey is significantly out of plumb, it is UNSAFE.
3. If there is obvious damage to any primary structural elements, severe cracking in the walls, or other signs of severe distress, the building is UNSAFE.
4. If there is an obvious hazard where a chimney, parapet, or other hazard could fall, that AREA IS UNSAFE.
5. If the ground has large fissures, massive movement, or a slope has been displaced, the AREA IS UNSAFE.
6. If there are other serious hazards such as a toxic spill, ruptured gas line, or fallen power line, the AREA IS UNSAFE.

If you do not identify any significant hazards, conduct subsequent damage assessments following all aftershocks. If the building is unsafe, post red UNSAFE notices so they are clearly visible near the entrances. Use yellow or red *Do Not Cross* tape to cordon off access to an unsafe building and unsafe areas, including areas within striking distance of falling hazards, or within the danger zone of other hazards, such as a chemical spill or ruptured gas tank.

If the elevator system is damaged, post "UNSAFE - DO NOT USE" signs on the doors, until an elevator engineer or safety inspector can check the system.

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Call Housing Operations at BC Housing at 604-433-1711 for a copy of our *Rapid Damage Assessment Field Manual*, which contains detailed inspection procedures. The manual fits in a pocket for reference during inspections. We can also help with training.

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## 2) FIRST AID

Ask uninjured people to help, especially those with first aid training. Untrained people can also help by comforting injured people, running errands, and seeking additional aid.

The most common injuries people suffer during an earthquake are cuts, open wounds, fractures, and crush injuries. Use these guidelines to administer basic first aid until emergency personnel can assist:

- Check the area to make sure it is safe. Never enter a building that is at risk of collapse, or go into an area that could put you at risk from other hazards.
- Check to see if the injured person is responsive. If not, check to see if they are breathing. If they are not breathing, get someone trained in first aid to assess the injured person's airway, breathing and circulation, and start rescue breathing or CPR, as needed.
- Apply direct pressure to wounds to stop any bleeding. Use a sterile gauze, sanitary napkin, clean shirt, or handkerchief. Maintain steady pressure until bleeding stops.
- Only move people with serious injuries if they are in immediate danger of further injury. If you have to move someone, always support the head and move the body as a unit.
- Cover injured people with blankets, remain calm, and reassure them. If volunteers are available, assign a person to comfort and reassure each injured person.

## 3) EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

When a disaster occurs, people will be concerned about their safety, the safety of others, and the condition of their property. Some residents may initially be confused or disoriented, but most people regain their bearings quite quickly. Disaster victims generally try to put their lives back in order as quickly as possible. You can help re-establish a sense of stability and provide emotional support for people by:

- Calling regular meetings of all residents to:
  - ~ Share information about how the situation is being handled.
  - ~ Respond to questions and concerns.
  - ~ Compile damage reports from individuals.
  - ~ Determine how many people will remain in the building.
- Creating teams to:
  - ~ Clear the area of hazardous debris.
  - ~ Help seniors and people with disabilities.
  - ~ Cover broken windows and other tasks.
- Delegating tasks to capable people who want to assist, so staff can attend to priority issues.



#### **4) EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

If staff determine the building is unsafe during the preliminary or subsequent assessments, begin evacuating people immediately. You may decide to evacuate up to two or three days after the earthquake, if essential utilities such as water and electricity are inadequate, or if the damage worsens during an aftershock.

In multi-storey buildings, stairwells are the only way out, so you must inspect them before evacuating people. Determine which exit routes are the least hazardous, and decide where you want residents to assemble.

People may be distraught, dazed, and in shock. To help reduce anxiety, try to maintain a sense of calm and order during the evacuation.

Some residents will probably be reluctant to leave their homes. Explain patiently and firmly what's happening. Be helpful and understanding to alleviate concerns and expedite the evacuation. Assure people they can post a message at the front entrance to notify relatives and friends where they will be staying. Follow these steps when you evacuate the development:

- Notify all residents that the building must be evacuated because it is unsafe. Ensure someone assists children who are on their own, people with disabilities, dependent adults, and people on medication.
- Direct people to exit the building by the routes you have already determined to be the least hazardous.
- Direct residents to meet at the predetermined outdoor location.
- Post the correct safety notices at all entrances, elevators, unsafe stairwells, and hazardous exterior areas.
- Check the building to ensure all residents have been evacuated.
- Listen to the radio to determine which reception centres are open, then send evacuated residents to designated reception centres in the area, or other available accommodation.

#### **5) WHEN PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED**

Search and rescue efforts should be handled by trained individuals, because trying to free or move trapped people can be very dangerous. Do not put yourself or others at risk. Only attempt a search and rescue if professional rescue crews will not be available for hours, possibly days, and you believe you can implement the rescue safely.

For more information or assistance in arranging training, please contact Housing Operations at 604-433-1711.

## Chapter 3

### OTHER EMERGENCIES

While an earthquake is the worst natural disaster some areas of BC may face, we're more likely to encounter floods and power failures. Each year, thousands of residents throughout the province deal with flooding and extensive power outages. People may also face other emergencies such as tsunamis (tidal waves), forest fires, and hazardous material spills.

## Floods

Burst pipes, abnormally heavy rainfall, high temperatures that melt snow rapidly, or a dam failure can all start floods. Minor floods usually cause carpet and furniture damage. Major floods can cause more serious structural damage to buildings.

If your development is located in an area that's prone to flooding, plan an evacuation route in advance. Ensure you've made provision for evacuating people with disabilities. Advise people to keep sufficient gas in their vehicles to drive to a safe location. You may want to store a supply of food and water in watertight containers in case you do not have access to food for a while.

When pipes burst, there is often sufficient time to move peoples' belongings to a higher level. Shut off the water to the building or to the flooded unit. Assess whether the entire building, the lower floor, or just the flooded unit needs to be evacuated until repairs are complete.

However, if a flash flood warning is issued for your area due to heavy rains, dam failure, or an ice jam that causes a sudden release of water, you may have little warning for an evacuation. When flash flooding occurs:

- Evacuate the building immediately.
- Turn off the gas, electricity, and water before leaving.
- Follow instructions from local authorities.
- Climb to higher ground.
- Listen to the local radio station for flood bulletins. These updates will tell you when it's safe to return.
- Avoid flooded areas.
- Do not try to drive through water if you don't know how deep it is, or walk through water higher than knee level. Do not try to cross flooded bridges.

Have everyone advise families or friends of your plans, then contact them when you reach a safe location. Your local Emergency Social Services (ESS) team can help with emergency lodging, food, clothing, and counselling. (See [page 16](#) for more on ESS assistance.)



After a flood, do not enter the basement if the water is high enough to reach electrical equipment or motors, because they can give off a fatal current when immersed. Call the electrical company and wait until the power is shut off.

Once the water level subsides, have the local electrical and gas authorities check these services. Your local health authority will inform you if the water is contaminated and whether people need to drink bottled or boiled water.

Find out if residents have contents insurance, and have their adjusters review the property damage. If the flood was major, have your insurance adjuster assess the damage. Start repairs as soon as possible so residents' lives can return to normal. Silt will have to be cleared out and damaged wallboard and insulation removed and disposed of.

Contact your Property Portfolio Manager and insurance company, who may be able to authorize funding for emergency repairs. In serious flood conditions where your insurance won't cover the costs, compensation may be available through Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA), administered by the Provincial Emergency Program. Watch for assistance information in your local newspaper or on the radio.

## Power Failures

During high winds, snow, and freezing rainstorms, some rural areas commonly experience power outages lasting a few hours to several days. Urban areas can also experience extended power failures during extreme weather.

Power from back-up generators and emergency lighting is routinely maintained as part of the fire safety plan. Multi-residence buildings, such as high rises, may have built in emergency generators to provide power for public areas and elevators. Some buildings may only have emergency lighting, while others may not have a backup power system.

Store emergency lighting such as flashlights, spare batteries and bulbs, light sticks, lanterns, candles, and matches in a handy location. If you use candles, keep them in a metal container away from combustible materials. To stay informed during the outage, keep a portable battery powered radio with spare batteries. Your local radio station will broadcast updates on the weather and power supply. In addition, the supplies in your earthquake cabinet will be useful during a power failure.

If the power goes out during the day, fully open all drapes and blinds. Limit movement between floors, and always take emergency lighting supplies with you. Be prepared to evacuate should a fire break out. Keep warm if the power is out for a long period. Protect electronic equipment such as computers, televisions, and stereos from power surges by shutting off power bars or unplugging the equipment. When the power is restored, reset clocks and timers.

If your development is located in an area that experiences winter storms, advise residents to carry a shovel, blankets, warm clothes and boots, and a flashlight in their vehicles, in case they get stuck.

## Tsunamis (Tidal Waves)

A tsunami occurs when a disturbance to the ocean floor, such as an earthquake, sends waves towards the coastline at high speed, sometimes with devastating effect. Although tsunamis are uncommon, the threat is real because the Pacific coast is located in an earthquake zone. If you live in exposed coastal areas and hear of an earthquake, prepare by:

- Tuning in to your radio for tsunami bulletins.
- Preparing to move to higher ground if your building could be threatened.
- Moving furniture to upper floors.
- Taking important papers and valuables with you.
- Removing pesticides and other dangerous goods from low-lying areas.
- Turning off power, water, and gas before locking your door.

Only use your telephone in an emergency. Remember the phone system will be overloaded and emergency calls may not get through.

## Forest Fires

Forest fires are a regular occurrence throughout the province during warm, dry months. Occasionally, homes and communities are threatened by fires and are evacuated to protect residents. If an evacuation is necessary, you will usually be given enough warning to allow residents to gather valuable papers, belongings, and pets.

Securely lock the building before evacuating. Follow the authorities' instructions, and keep listening to your radio for updated bulletins on the fire. You will be advised when it's safe to return home.

## Hazardous Materials

If developments or homes are close to a railway line, a main highway, or a manufacturing plant, there's a danger of a spill causing an evacuation. If a spill occurs, you'll be instructed to follow a similar evacuation process to that used for forest fires. The authorities will advise you when you can return home.



## Chapter 4

### EMERGENCY SUPPORT

## Check Your Telephone Directory

Refer to the inside cover and information section in the front of the white pages of your telephone directory for information on:

- Emergency and non-emergency numbers for fire, police, and ambulance.
- The Poison Control Centre.
- Earthquakes — what to do before, during, and after.
- First aid — how to treat various injuries and conditions.
- Other community services and resources.

## Training Courses

Your staff need to be prepared if an emergency occurs. That's why we recommend your staff and/or directors take First Aid/CPR, Rapid Damage Assessment, Earthquake Preparedness, and other safety related training.

Our Housing Operations staff can provide a variety of safety related training, at no cost to housing societies and co-ops. Call 604-433-1711 to find out more.

## Personal Disaster Assistance

The Personal Disaster Assistance (PDA) program provides essential services for people forced from their homes by disasters, such as fire or flooding. Typically, the fire department or police call out these trained volunteers to work with small groups of evacuees. PDA volunteers will ensure people's emergency needs for food, accommodation, clothing, and emotional support are addressed.

The PDA program is funded by the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) and delivered by the Canadian Red Cross or other community partners, such as Victim Services, the ESS Team or local fire department.

## Emergency Social Services

Emergency Social Services (ESS) teams provide essential services to large groups of people forced from their homes by disasters, such as fire or flooding. Teams of trained volunteers work at the municipal level to register evacuees at reception centres, and ensure people have food, accommodation, clothing, and emotional support.

These services are usually provided by commercial facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, and local merchants. In case you do not have insurance, ESS can provide basic services for 72 hours.

Contact your municipality for the details of your community's emergency program. Find out the locations of the designated ESS reception centres where residents' immediate needs can be met if you need to evacuate due to a major emergency or disaster.

## Disaster Restoration Services

The primary consideration in any disaster is the safety of residents. But it's also crucial to maintain a list of agencies and contractors who can make repairs and provide services following a disaster. The sooner repairs are complete, the sooner people's lives can return to normal.

In larger communities, restoration companies specialize in responding to emergencies, and have the equipment and personnel to handle the resulting damage. Generally, first responders such as fire department personnel do not assist with restoration. However, in smaller communities, the fire department may be the only organization with the necessary equipment. You may also decide to hire the companies you normally use for repairs.

Ask for an estimate for the repairs before the job begins so you can monitor the work as it progresses. BC Housing can provide emergency expense specifications and tenders. In addition, call the utility company to check whether utility services are still being provided. Do not allow unqualified trades people to check utilities.

You may also want to rent dehumidifiers, fans, and wet or dry vacuums to avoid mildew in the carpets. Other items may have to be removed and dry cleaned before reuse.

## Disaster Financial Assistance

The Disaster Financial Assistance program helps disaster victims cope with the cost of repairs by providing:

- Funds to replace or restore items essential to a home, livelihood or community service.
- Alternative accommodation for three nights during an emergency, with longer-term support based on need.

There is a \$1,000 deductible, with 80 per cent of the balance payable, up to a maximum of \$100,000 per claim. Loss or damage to items that could easily have been insured is not included.

When a disaster occurs, local announcements will be made to advise you where to register your claim, and an adjuster will contact you to review the damage and discuss the DFA program. The Provincial Emergency Program runs this program.



## Emergency Accommodation and Transportation

Following a disaster, encourage evacuees to seek accommodation with family or friends, if possible. Advise people to take enough clothes with them for the length of the expected evacuation. Collect medications for people who are dependent on them, if building access is not allowed.

Do some disaster planning research ahead of time, so you know who to contact in an emergency. Keep a list of emergency hotels and motels with phone numbers, types and number of rooms, and whether the facility provides meals. This information will be needed when you seek accommodations for residents.

There are several ways to transport evacuees to temporary accommodation. If possible, arrange for family members to pick people up. Keep a list of taxi companies and their phone numbers. Also, check local school bus and transit services in case you have to move large groups of people.

## Talking to the Media

If the development is damaged by a fire, earthquake, or other disaster, it's likely the local media will approach your organization for information on the extent of the damage, the way you have responded to the situation, and any injuries or fatalities.

You can refer media to the police and fire personnel for information on the nature and extent of the emergency and to find out about any deaths or injuries. Still, you will be asked to comment on the organization's response and responsibilities.

You may want to appoint one or two people from the Board as your spokespeople. Everyone else can refer media representatives to the directors who handle that responsibility and are familiar with your disaster response plans.

The best way to respond to media inquiries is to be direct and honest about the information you can share, while protecting residents' privacy. If you are asked to provide information you cannot reveal without exposing personal information, explain that you have to respect your residents' right to confidentiality.

For more information on handling media interviews, refer to the section on public relations in the *Governance Guide*.



## Appendix

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

#### References

- Field Manual, Post-Earthquake Safety Program, BC Housing
- City of Vancouver Employee Emergency Preparedness
- Telus White Pages Information Section
- Safety Sense in the Home, CMHC
- BC Building Code
- BC Fire Code
- Establishment of Fire Safety Plans, Fire Commissioner's Office



## Earthquake Cabinet Contents

It is recommended that you obtain a sturdy steel cabinet large enough to store the following items. We recommend a cabinet of 14-gauge steel and approximately 48" x 42" x 23". Be sure that it has a secure key-locking device. Make sure the key is readily available.

### LIST OF EMERGENCY CONTENTS

Qty	Description	Uses
1 rolls	Polyethylene Sheathing	Shelter/protection from roof leaks
250	Heavy-duty garbage bags	Storing garbage/emergency raincoats/emergency toilet
1	Extra large Tarp	Shelter/makeshift tent/ground cover
1	Polyethylene Rope, at least 1/4" x 100'	Multiple use

### Food and Water Supplies

Qty	Description	Uses
60	Food Bar Packs, minimum of 5-year shelf life	High-calorie food supply
720	Single-serving water packets, minimum 5-year shelf life	Clean drinking water

### Search and Rescue Supplies

Qty	Description	Uses
30	Light Sticks, yellow, 12-hour endurance	Emergency lighting
4	Hard Hats with chin straps	Protection from falling material in earthquake
2	Large, 6V lantern-type flashlights and 4 extra 6V batteries	Illumination in the event of power outage
4	High visibility vests	Reflectors while wearing or placing in strategic positions
2	Flashlights (D-size batteries)	Convenient portable lights
8	Batteries (D-size)	Replacements for flashlight
4	Safety goggles or glasses	Eye protection in hazardous conditions
4	Whistles	Signaling for help/identifying location
20	Dust Masks	Protects mouth and nose from dust/helps in smoke conditions
4 pairs	Leather work gloves	Protects hands when handling debris
2 rolls	"Caution Do Not Enter" Tape – yellow	Advises of danger areas and defines areas to avoid
20 pairs	Latex gloves – Medium/Large	Protects hands from infection



**Tool kit** – Large enough to hold the following:

<b>Qty</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Uses</b>
1	20 oz claw hammer, steel shaft and claws	Pulling nails/building temporary shelters
1	4 lb Sledge Hammer, double-faced, 16" handle	Knocking down unsafe sheds/breaking unsafe concrete
1	10" Crescent Wrench	Adjustable tool for loosening bolts
1	8" Crescent Wrench	" " " " "
2	Pipe Wrenches (14")	For use when smaller crescent wrenches are ineffective
1	Water Pump Pliers	Useful for misshapen or awkward bolts or flanges
1	Unidriver Screwdriver (12 insertable bits)	Portable, convenient set of screwdrivers in one tool
1	Hatchet Axe	Cutting firewood/trimming tent pegs/replacement hammer
1	Utility Knife, retractable	Emergency can opener/multiple uses
2	Wrecking Bars (24")	Heavy duty lifting and prying
2 rolls	Duct Tape	Heavy duty taping and securing objects



## First Aid Kit

Qty	Description	Uses
1	First Aid Booklet	Basic instructions for administering first aid
4	* Large Disposable Blankets	Wrapping injured people
100	Antiseptic Disposable Towlettes (Benzalkonium Chloride)	Cleaning wounds and other body parts
100	Hand-cleansing Towlettes (WetNap)	Cleans hands before dealing with injuries or eating
100	Fabric Strips (2cm x 7.5cm)	Wrapping injured areas/securing bandages
1 pair	Universal Scissors (Heavy duty)	Cutting material not appropriate for smaller scissors
1 pair	Bandage Scissors, Stainless Steel (14cm)	Cutting bandage material
12	Triangular bandages, Cotton	Useful as slings, large bandage wraps
12	Pressure Dressings, Sterile (10cm x 16.5cm)	Stops bleeding when properly applied
6	Crepe Roller Bandages (7.5 x 4.5cm)	Self-adhesive wrap
12	ABD Dressings, Sterile	For cuts and other wounds
8	* Emergency Foil Blankets	Protects against cold/easily portable
2	* Flashlights (2 D battery-size), with extra bulbs	Portable emergency light
8	* D-size batteries for flashlight	Spares
2 rolls	Adhesive Tape (5cm x 4.5cm)	Securing dressings and bandages
2 rolls	Adhesive Tape (2.5cm x 4.5cm)	" " " "
4	Pens and Pencils (2 of each)	Writing instructions or messages
1	Savlon Soap (500ml)	Anti-bacterial soap
10	Patient Assessment Forms from WCB	Assists medical and emergency personnel
4	Gauze Dressings, Sterile (4-ply, 43cm x 43cm)	For dressing wounds
50	Gauze Pads, Sterile (10cm x 10cm)	For dressing wounds
100	Gauze Sponges, Non-Sterile (10cm x 10cm)	For cleaning wounds
1 pair	Sliver forceps, Stainless (11.5cm)	Removing slivers
50 pairs	Latex Gloves, Large and Medium	Avoids infection when treating injuries
1	* Survival Booklet	Basic information on survival techniques
6 rolls	* Toilet Tissue (full size)	
1	* Portable AM/FM Radio with batteries	Receiving important information about disaster situations
4 sets	* Batteries for AM/FM Radio	Spares

**NOTE** – If you decide to purchase a WCB Level 1 Occupational First Aid Kit, the items preceded by \* are not included. Please make sure that your First Aid Kit contains all of the above items.