

## 2.15 Cultural Activity Locations Support (CALS)

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### 2.15.1 General

The Cultural Activity Locations Support (CALS) originated out of the recognition that First Nations Peoples' cultures, languages, and spiritual beliefs play a vital role in their well-being. Culturally sensitive evacuee care is a crucial component of meeting the needs of First Nations experiencing displacement through culturally appropriate, trauma-informed services. The application of CALS and associated supports are now available to all impacted communities, ensuring equitable access to health, wellness and cultural services during emergencies, as defined by the [Emergency and Disaster Management Act \(EDMA\)](#).

Cultural activities and services may be offered and/or practiced within, or close to Emergency Support Services reception centres, group lodging facilities, or commercial lodging. Some communities may prefer to have a separate designated gathering space(s) where cultural activities and supports can be provided.

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### 2.15.2 Distinctions Based Approach

Land-based ceremonies and/or traditions have been centered in wellness and healing for Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. The types of services that are accessible through CALS are commonly referred to as "ceremonial and/or land-based wellness and healing." Connections to ceremonial land-based teachings are foundational to Indigenous identity; however, generations of colonization attempted to disconnect and dispossess Indigenous Peoples from traditional territories and practices. When compounded by the legacy of colonization, the displacement experienced during an evacuation is one example of the disproportionate adverse impact emergencies can have on Indigenous people.

The application of the right to self-determination is a core function of CALS as it applies to Indigenous Peoples. CALS provides appropriate self-resiliency mechanisms that are accessible with low-barrier approaches. Common guiding principles of ceremonial land-based wellness are that they:

- Recognize the right to self-determination, and foster opportunities for collaboration.

- Integrate the First Nations Wellness Model<sup>1</sup> with a focus on culturally safe models of care.
- Target multiple aspects of support, e.g., language, cultural values, traditional food processes, life skills, human-nature relations, ethics and social cohesion.
- Improve the quality of life of individuals, families and communities during displacement.

Indigenous Peoples have a distinct relationship to the land; there may be circumstances where the application of CALS at a particular site is appropriate for an evacuated Indigenous community, and not appropriate for others. CALS promotes and facilitates the implementation of culturally safe practices within the delivery of Emergency Support Services in accordance with the principles of emergency management set out in EDMA Section 2 (2).

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### **2.15.3 Ministry Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility**

As a direct result of historical and ongoing colonization, Indigenous people can be disproportionately impacted by emergencies. Existing disadvantages rooted in historical and ongoing systemic discrimination, oppression and displacement are intensified by emergencies, including during an evacuation. These disadvantages can create significant barriers to accessing Emergency Support Services. Recognizing, supporting and respecting the needs and the diverse languages, values, traditions, protocols and experiences of Indigenous Peoples cultivates cultural safety and reduces barriers to accessing services.

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) have a signed Declaration of Commitment that highlights a shared intention to embed cultural safety and cultural humility across all four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This shared intention recognizes that the manner in which emergency management is conducted can have a lasting impact on First Nations health and wellness.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-for-first-nations/first-nations-perspective-on-health-and-wellness>

The Declaration of Commitment is based on the following guiding principles of cultural safety and humility:

- Cultural humility builds relationships founded in mutual trust and respect and enables cultural safety.
- Cultural safety and humility must be understood, embraced, and practiced at all levels of the emergency services system including governance, organizational and within individual practice.
- We have achieved cultural safety when First Nations and Indigenous People tell us we have.

### Related Policies and Guidelines

- 2.14 First Nations Community Liaison for Emergency Support Services
- 2.02 Task Authorization
- 5.02 Expense Reimbursement
- 5.11 Provincial support for deploying 'Out of Jurisdiction' First Nations and local authority staff to an emergency operations centre
- [Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations \(revised January 2008\)](#)

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## 2.15.4 Definitions

- **Community:** A group of people connected by one or more shared characteristics, including geographical location, setting, culture, heritage, social ties, experiences, or needs.
- **Cultural Activity Location Support (CALS):** A designated location for the purpose of providing cultural / spiritual supports.
- **Cultural Continuity:** Recognizing and respecting that the practice of culture and social and cultural connectedness to self and community are critical to an individual's and the First Nation's health. Recognizing the importance of culture, including differences in cultural and spiritual needs, is crucial to providing culturally competent evacuee care.
- **Emergency:** means a state that
  - (a) is the result of any of the following:
    - (i) an event that
      - (A) has occurred, is ongoing or appears imminent, and

- (B) is caused by one or more incidents, whether or not those incidents occur in the same location or at the same time, of accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, rioting, security threat, terrorist activity within the meaning of section 83.01 of the [Criminal Code](#), force of nature or a prescribed type of incident;
- (ii) the presence, suspected presence or imminent spread of a transmissible disease or an environmental toxin;
- (iii) a prescribed type of event or the presence or suspected presence of prescribed circumstances, and
- (b) requires the prompt coordination of action, or the special regulation of persons or property, to protect
- (i) the health, safety or well-being of persons, or
- (ii) the safety of property or of objects or sites of heritage value.
- **Evacuee:** A resident whose primary residence is directly impacted or in the defined geographic area of an evacuation order within the issuing authority's jurisdiction.
  - **Intersectional Disadvantage:** The intersection of social categorizations of persons or classes of persons, including Indigenous identity, race, economic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age and ability, in ways that may result in overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage or disproportionate adverse effects.
  - **Support and Partner agencies:** An agency that provides support and/or resources to another agency (e.g., First Nations Health Authority, Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations' Emergency Services Society and Non-Governmental Organizations).

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### 2.15.5 Policy Statement

- (1) This policy is intended to be adaptive to the evolving needs of evacuated communities and should be interpreted in a manner which centres community wellbeing.
- (2) The need for CALS is identified by, and at the discretion of, the impacted community
- (3) To receive reimbursement, the community incurring the costs must submit an [Expenditure Authorization Form](#).

- (4) CALS may be identified by the impacted community or may be sourced from available resources within the host community. Community owned buildings are eligible in the event they do not generate a profit.
- (5) Impacted communities may choose to develop CALS in collaboration with available agencies and resources to address specific cultural needs while upholding the principles of cultural safety and inclusivity.
- (6) Services offered within the CALS are community-driven and may vary depending on the impacted community's needs and culture.
- (7) Cultural Activity Locations Support expenses are eligible for reimbursement, including but not limited to:
  - a. Space rental
  - b. Transportation costs for travel to and from CALS and the evacuees' accommodation
  - c. Traditional foods
- (8) Funding provided for food at CALS is not a replacement for funds provided directly to evacuees for food through Emergency Support Services or any other resource. Funding provided for food at CALS is intended to support access to traditional foods that cannot routinely be accessed in restaurants or grocery stores and promote cultural continuity.

While the provision of traditional food must be prioritized, funds may be used to provide alternative food in addition to, or when traditional food is not available.

- (9) The Ministry is responsible for ensuring that communities are informed of:
  - a. The availability of CALS
  - b. the process of accessing CALS
  - c. which expenses are eligible for reimbursement
  - d. the process for reimbursement



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### 2.15.6 References

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) BC Canada Bilateral Agreement (2017)  
FNLC/BC/Canada Tripartite Agreement MOU (2018) FNHA/EMBC LOU (renewed 2021)  
[First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness](#)

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachael Pollard".

ADM Rachael Pollard  
Response Division  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness

Date: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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