



EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES

PROGRAM GUIDE

THE HEART OF EMERGENCY AND
DISASTER RESPONSE

2023

SECOND EDITION

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EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW

Emergency Support Services (ESS) is an emergency response program delivered by Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities to meet the basic needs of British Columbians affected by disasters. ESS provides short-term support in a compassionate manner following disasters ranging from a single house fire to large evacuations caused by emergencies like wildfires and floods. These supports enable people to re-establish themselves as quickly as possible after an emergency or disaster.

Vision Statement: Emergency Support Services is a provincial program delivered by Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities to meet the basic needs of British Columbians impacted by disasters by providing short-term support in a compassionate manner.

LEGISLATION, POLICY, AND PROCEDURES

Under the Emergency Program Act (EPA) and Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation, local authorities are responsible for planning and responding to emergency events within their jurisdiction. This includes coordinating the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical services for their residents. ESS is a locally managed program under the public safety lifeline volunteer (PSLV) program.

Indigenous governing bodies are supported in fulfilling this role through a service agreement between EMCR and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). EMCR supports Indigenous governing bodies in their efforts to stand-up emergency management and evacuee care programs, including ESS.

EMCR's Evacuee Living Assistance Policy (Policy 5.03) supports local authorities in fulfilling their legislated mandate. Policy 5.03 provides definitions for key terms, sets program eligibility and defines evacuee responsibilities. The Emergency Support Services Program Guide (the program guide) supports Policy 5.03 by providing further guidance and information on the ESS program. This program guide replaces the ESS Field Guide (2010).

The updated program guide is intended to better reflect ESS practices and support ESS responders by providing access to accurate, current information. The program guide is considered a living document and will continue to be updated to reflect the evolution of ESS service delivery and wise practice.

Further operational procedures are found on the [EMCR ESS Responder Resources page](#). Together, these policies and procedures form the framework under which ESS operates. Information highlighted in this colour throughout the program guide is expanded upon in Appendix B - Resources Toolkit. There are seven appendices in all:

- Appendix A - Response to Apartment Fires
- Appendix B - Resources Toolkit
- Appendix C - Acronyms

- Appendix D - Glossary
- Appendix E - Forms
- Appendix F - Virtual Work Environments
- Appendix G - Evacuee Medication

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING CULTURAL SAFETY

On May 29, 2019, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and EMCR signed a letter of understanding and [Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility in Emergency Management Services for First Nations People in B.C.](#) This program guide affirms the Province of British Columbia's commitment to continually strive to build capacity to offer culturally safe and inclusive ESS, including information policies and practices like the Cultural Activity Location Supports and First Nation Community / Community Navigator policies found on pages 17 and 18.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Residents of B.C. are encouraged to increase their resilience and reduce their vulnerability by preparing themselves for potential emergencies. Emergency preparedness information can be found through [Prepared BC](#). When evacuated, supports provided by friends, family and insurance should be used before ESS is considered. ESS should only be used when other resources are unavailable or inaccessible.

ESS provides short-term temporary supports for individuals and families affected by emergencies or disasters so they can begin to plan their next steps and facilitate their recovery. The core categories of support include:

- Food (groceries or restaurant meals)
- Clothing
- Lodging (commercial accommodation, group lodging or billeting)
- Incidentals
- Transportation

Local ESS teams and the provincial ESS program have relationships with a broad range of emergency response organizations specializing in disaster support. Based on these relationships, ESS teams may facilitate access to a range of supports to ensure evacuee needs are met. These supports may be delivered on site, at a reception centre (RC) or group lodging (GL) facility or provided by a provincial or local support organization. These may include:

- Family reunification
- Social-emotional support
- Cultural support
- Spiritual support
- Volunteer services
- Child activity areas

- Information services (additional information is provided by [Emergency Info BC](#) during large scale emergencies)

ESS is typically provided for a period of up to 72 hours (for those who are eligible and unable to access other resources). During this period, evacuees need to plan their next steps and begin their transition to recovery by:

- Contacting their insurance providers for coverage.
- Contacting family, friends and community for support.
- Contacting their Indigenous governing body or local authority for next steps and support options.
- Accessing community service organizations such as the [BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres](#), [First Nations Health Authority](#), [Canadian Red Cross](#) or the [Salvation Army](#) for longer term support.

In some cases, the 72-hour period is not enough for an evacuee to begin their recovery process, or the emergency may be ongoing (like an evacuation order due to a wildfire). Extensions for ESS should not exceed 3 months and require significant justification after 1 month.

As the ESS program is designed to support the immediate needs of evacuees, extensions will only be granted in cases where an unmet need can be clearly identified. Evacuees should be provided with clear information on ESS expiry dates. EMCR approval is required for extensions. More information on extensions can be found on page 36.

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may provide supports beyond the scope or timespan of the ESS program as they consider appropriate. The Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities bear the costs of these additional supports.

ESS IN THE B.C. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

ESS is organized under the [British Columbia Emergency Management System \(BCEMS\)](#) and follows an incident command system (ICS) approach to response. Trained, often volunteer, responders deliver the core function of ESS. To deliver inclusive, culturally safe, and co-ordinated supports to evacuees, ESS teams are supported by several different emergency management levels, outlined below.

INDIGENOUS GOVERNING BODY AND LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

Under the EPA, local authorities in B.C. are required to plan for and manage emergency response operations within their own jurisdiction. ESS teams are a part of Indigenous governing body and local authority emergency management programs, sometimes under the direction of the local emergency program coordinator (EPC) or equivalent.

EPC will be used throughout this document for simplicity. However, it is recognized that Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may have equivalent roles and structures in place to plan for and respond to emergencies.

The EPC may appoint an ESS director (ESSD) and delegate certain responsibilities to them

EMCR has a service agreement with ISC to provide emergency management support to Indigenous communities. The agreement ensures:

- EMCR equitably supports all community emergency programs.
- Access to training opportunities and provincial support are available to all Indigenous communities.

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are encouraged to work together with neighbouring communities to integrate planning, preparedness, and response activities.

Though ESS is designed as a locally managed, volunteer model, some Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities contract the delivery of the ESS program to third-party organizations or utilize staff. It is recommended practise to contact the relevant **EMCR regional office** if a contracted ESS model is being considered.

Considerations related to contracting an ESS program to a third-party include:

- The cost of contracting an ESS program is borne by the Indigenous governing body or local authority and is not reimbursable.
- The contracted third-party ESS provider has received cultural safety and humility training or has a strong understanding of the historical contexts of Indigenous peoples in B.C.
- PSLV ESS volunteers are reimbursed at the rates prescribed under the [PSLV](#) program.
- Liability and reimbursement impacts may result if contractors exceed the scope and parameters of the provincial ESS program.
- To ensure equitable and timely service, the contractor must use only approved ESS forms or the evacuee registration and assistance (ERA) tool, procedures and local suppliers.
- The local authority retains its legislated responsibility. This cannot be delegated to the contractor.

Preparedness Phase

The EPC holds overall responsibility for the ESS program within their jurisdiction. The EPC may appoint an ESS director (ESSD) and delegate responsibilities. The ESSD is often an integral part of the emergency planning committee. EPC and ESSD responsibilities include:

- Recruit, train, and exercise ESS responders.
- Develop callout procedures and prepare potential RC and GL facilities for use.
- Create an ESS plan, which forms part of the Indigenous governing body or local authority's overall emergency plan.
- Develop and maintain relationships with support organizations, including suppliers, non-government organizations (NGOs) and community organizations.
- Prepare adequately for supports to vulnerable populations.
- Encourage public preparedness by recommending personal or family preparedness and recovery plans, including resources from the [Emergency Management in B.C.](#) site.
- Work with EMCR to develop program capacity.

Preparedness considerations for EPCs and ESSDs:

- ESS responders must be registered as PSLVs with their Indigenous governing body or local authority and EMCR to ensure they have access to coverage listed below.
- Once registered, responders may apply to receive a PSLV ID card.
- Eligibility for workers' compensation coverage, liability protection and expense reimbursement benefits require all responders be registered for the specific operational or training number in which they are involved.

The following are training course recommendations for ESS responders:

- Introduction to ESS
- Registration & Referrals
- Introduction to Reception Centres
- Introduction to Group Lodging
- Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) Tool training

A full list of courses available can be found on the [ESS Training page](#).

Updates have been made to ESS training materials to reflect cultural safety. Additional cultural safety training materials and resources can be accessed through the B.C. Government Indigenous Relations Behavioural Competencies. Additionally, webinars related to emergency management, including cultural safety in ESS, can be viewed through the Justice Institute of B.C. and EMCR's [ESS Community 2 Community webinar series recordings](#).

Response Phase

The EPC is responsible for operations during response. During larger activations, the EPC may fill the emergency operations centre (EOC) director position while the appointed ESSD generally fills the ESS branch coordinator function at the EOC. The EPC is responsible to:

- Activate the ESS plan and provide supports as appropriate.

- Co-ordinate response activities, including requesting additional support as required.
- Lead a culturally safe operation.
- Plan for a transition to recovery.
- Ensure a responsible demobilization.

Key response considerations include:

- Only engage ESS responders to perform tasks within the scope of their qualifications, training, and experience.
- Always deploy ESS responders in pairs for health and safety reasons.
- Ensure breaks and supportive health measures are in place to protect the responders and evacuees.

More detailed information regarding typical ESS operations and functions is available through the [Reception Centre Operational Guidelines](#) and the [Group Lodging Operational Guidelines](#).

EMCR REGIONAL LEVEL

EMCR maintains an office in each of the six [EMCR regions](#). Regional staff include senior regional managers (SRM), regional managers (RM), emergency management technicians (EMT) and regional office administrators (ROA).

Regional staff are responsible for providing support to a full spectrum of emergency management activities. Regional offices maintain a 24/7 duty position called a regional duty manager (RDM). The RDM is the contact point for any approvals related to overages and expenditures.

The RDM is the contact point for any approvals related to ESS overages and expenditures.

Preparedness Phase

Regional staff may support ESS by:

- Acting as a contact point for EPCs, providing expert advice on regional issues and EMCR policy, processes and resources perspective.
- Offering support and advice to communities about their emergency program planning, preparedness, and recovery activities.
- Coordinating the integration of key regional partners or stakeholders.
- Advising and supporting the development of ESS teams and plans.
- Attending or supporting conferences, working groups and ESS events.
- Hosting seasonal readiness information sessions.
- Resourcing, capacity, and capability building within Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities.
- Supporting the development of mutual aid or host community agreements.

Response Phase

Regional staff may support ESS response by:

- Providing approvals, advice, and support to EPCs and ESSDs.
- Activating a provincial regional emergency operations centre (PREOC) to support larger emergencies.
- Staffing an ESS branch in the operations section of the PREOC.

EMCR PROVINCIAL LEVEL

EMCR headquarters (HQ) provides policy, training, operations, administration, and financial support to a full spectrum of emergency management activities. EMCR HQ is responsible for the overall strategy to build ESS capacity across the province.

ESS staff in HQ provide policy advice, direction, and coordinate response in large events, including:

- EMCR finance processes all invoices generated by referrals from suppliers and response claims, including volunteer reimbursements.
- The provincial duty manager (PDM) maintains awareness of larger provincial events.
- The Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is EMCR's 24/7 duty office and the source of all task/incident numbers (1-800-663-3456).
- The ESS call centre (1-800-585-9559) can provide information to suppliers and evacuees.

The ECC is EMCR's 24/7 duty office and the source of all task numbers. Call the ECC at 1-800-663-3456.

Preparedness Phase

EMCR HQ may support ESS by:

- Developing policy and procedural direction.
- Maintaining the ESS website.
- Hosting workshops and webinars.
- Providing resources to the regional offices to support the ESS program.
- Administering the ESS training program.
- Facilitating access to funded training in coordination with contracted training and exercise partners.
- Maintaining relationships with a broad array of support organizations.
- Developing integrated provincial response plans for large scale emergencies.

Response Phase

EMCR HQ may support ESS by:

- Collecting and logging information and distributing task/incident numbers through the ECC.
- Providing decision making advice, support, resources and approvals to the RDMS, PDMs and activated PREOCs.
- Activating the provincial emergency operations centre (PECC) to support larger activations.
- Staffing an ESS branch in the operations section of the PECC.
- Deploying available ESS responders upon request.
- Supporting the administration of ESS finance, including identification and follow up of discrepancies.

Figure One: Provincial and Regional EMCR/Indigenous Governing Body and Local Authority Emergency Management Structure

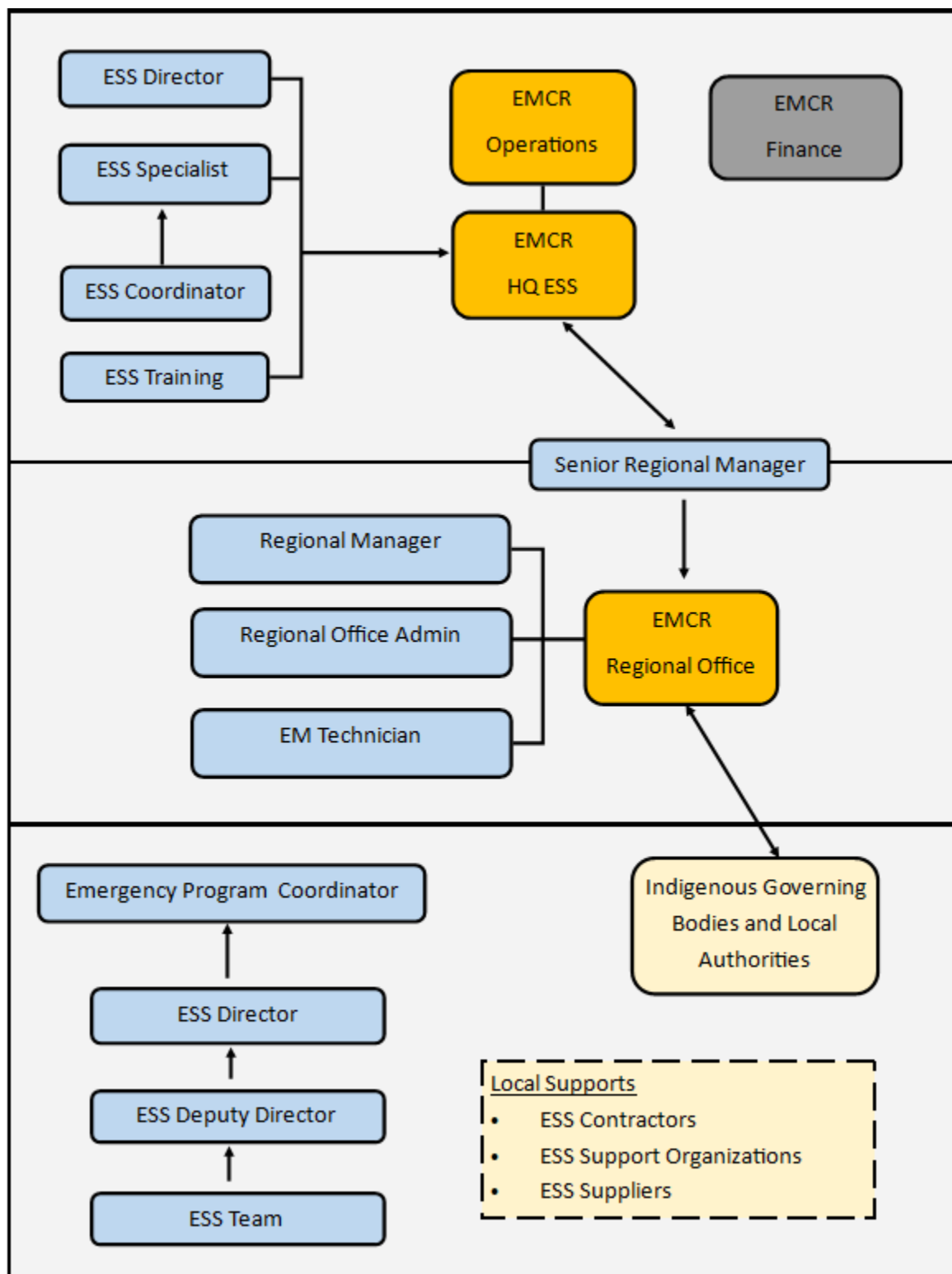
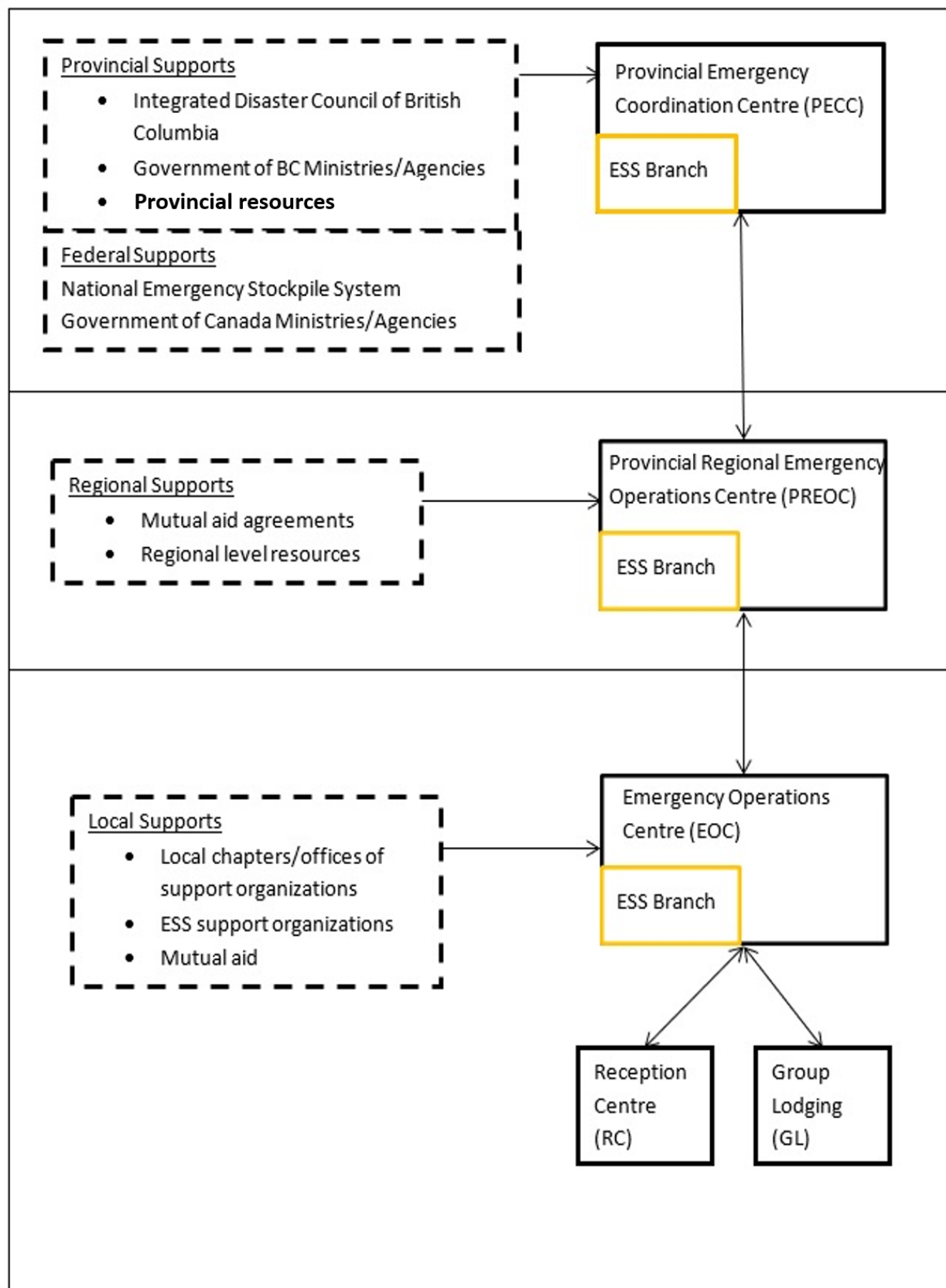


Figure Two: EMCR/Indigenous Governing Body and Local Authority Response Structure



ESS RESPONSE PROCESS

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The concept of operations section provides an overview of ESS operations to promote general understanding of program operations and role awareness. It does not apply to every situation or ESS program structure.

1. Treaty Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are responsible for planning and managing emergency response and recovery operations within their own jurisdiction. This responsibility involves the appointment of an EPC and the creation of an emergency program, including an emergency plan and ESS team. The emergency plan should contain a detailed ESS plan outlining callout procedures, key personnel, and the potential locations of RC and GL sites, as well as alternatives to meet unique circumstances.
2. When an emergency event occurs, Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities activate their ESS plan and form an appropriate response structure to manage the impacts and deliver ESS. Smaller events may be responded to at the roadside. Larger events may require the opening of an RC and GL facility as well as an EOC. Where jurisdiction overlaps, a wise practice is to provide linkage to each EOC through liaison roles.
3. When an Indigenous governing body or local authority is no longer able to effectively respond to an event due to the event size or complexity, support may be sought through mutual aid from neighbouring jurisdictions. Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities should consider integrated planning for ESS preparedness and response on a regional basis.
4. When mutual aid resources are unavailable, the EPC or EOC may request provincial ESS assistance. Requests should be directed to the RDM or the PREOC, if activated.
5. Planning for the transition to recovery should be initiated as soon as the ESS response begins. The ESS program is intended to support evacuees in their immediate needs during the initial response phase of an emergency event. The recovery process is distinct from ESS and requires appropriate resources to ensure a successful transition.

For more information on the transition to recovery see the ESS Response Guidelines Step 4 - Plan for Recovery.

ESS ACTIVATION LEVELS

ESS activation levels are distinguished by impact and the type of ESS resources needed.

Level One: A localized event that can be managed using minimal ESS resources (e.g., single house fire.)

Level Two: An event that requires the full use of an Indigenous governing body or local authority's ESS resources. A Level 2 event might include the activation of a RC and/or an EOC (e.g., fire in an apartment complex).

Level Three: An emergency that exceeds an Indigenous governing body or local authority's capacity to respond and requires assistance or mutual aid from neighbouring jurisdictions and/or the Province (e.g., wildfire that causes an entire community to evacuate).

TASK NUMBER/INCIDENT NUMBER

Task/incident numbers confirm the application of the EPA to an emergency and provides a method for tracking approved expenditures. EOCs may be provided an incident number instead of a task/incident number as a part of an incident management system project update. Incident numbers are functionally the same as task numbers and will start with the last two digits of the current year ex. 23-xxxxxx. If a local EOC does not need to activate, requests may be submitted using the task/incident number for the individual incident. Throughout this document task number and incident number are either written together or used interchangeably.

Task/incident numbers are an important financial control measure for every type of ESS support. In addition, the task/incident number provides PSLV volunteers with access to:

- PSLV liability coverage
- Replacement costs for materials both lost and damaged
- Reimbursement of expenses for volunteers
- Coverage for other costs (with EMCR approval)
- Proceed with registration and referrals in ERA

Task/incident numbers are a crucial component of any ESS response. To receive a task/incident number, contact the ECC 24/7 at 1-800-663-3456.

ESS responders attending an event need to know the task/incident number and must sign in on a task registration form before beginning work. When physical signatures are not possible (e.g., while working remotely), it is still required to sign in/out under a task/incident number. An email with the task/incident number to the ESSD/team lead is a recommended practice to document the start and end time of each shift.

ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are recommended when an emergency forces people from their homes and the Indigenous governing body or local authority activates its ESS plan. While these procedures are considered wise practice, they can be adapted as needed. It is recognized that not all teams have the same capacity or will use the terminology outlined below. Remote response may be appropriate for some events (see Appendix F - Virtual Work Environments).

Note on delegation: These procedures refer to the EPC as responsible for activating and carrying out the ESS plan. While the EPC is ultimately responsible for these activities, it is recommended they delegate to an ESSD. The ESSD may assign further positions to members in the team. ESS responders calling in to the ECC to receive a task/incident number are representatives of the EPC and their Indigenous governing body or local authority.

Level One ESS Response

- A first responder (e.g., fire, police) notifies the EPC, ESSD or designate that an event has occurred or is ongoing.
- The EPC, ESSD or designate activates the ESS plan and contacts the ECC at 1-800-663-3456 to pass on event information and receive a task/incident number.
- Upon receipt of the task/incident number, ESS attends the site of the emergency, an alternative location or attends virtually and carries out the registration and referral process.

Level Two or Three Response

- First responder notifies the EPC or ESSD that an event has occurred.
- The EPC or ESSD activates the ESS plan and contacts the ECC at 1-800-663-3456 to pass on event information and receive a task/incident number.
- If the EOC is activated, the EPC identifies an ESS branch coordinator. This is normally the ESSD.
- The ESS team may be required to open an RC and/or GL facility. The RC/GL managers report to the ESS branch in the EOC. ESS carries out the registration and referral process.
- The ESS branch coordinator in the EOC supports the ESS site operations.
- The EOC may request support from the Province via the RDM or the PREOC if activated.

If unable to contact the community EPC

- First responder may contact the ECC directly and request activation of ESS if not already initiated by local dispatchers.
- The ECC will initiate a callout until a representative is contacted who can activate the ESS response plan. If no contact can be identified the ECC will advise the RDM.

COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS - FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS – POLICY 2.14

During emergencies and disasters, whole neighbourhoods, or communities may be evacuated to a host community. Evacuees may be unfamiliar with the host community and host communities may be unfamiliar with the needs of evacuees due to a lack of knowledge related to the evacuees' culture, protocols, and specialized services. To support evacuees, the host and/or evacuating community may utilize a Community Navigator. Community Navigators may be considered to support First Nations communities and non-First Nations communities.

It is a recommended practice that both Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities consider whether use of a [Community Navigators and First Nations Community Navigators](#) could provide additional supports to evacuees to identify and support meeting of unmet needs.

When a First Nations community is evacuated, the use of a First Nations Community Navigator may further support evacuees by connecting evacuees with supports not commonly offered in an ESS Reception Centre or lodging facility. By utilizing a First Nations Community Navigator communities can ensure service delivery is aligned with First Nations perspectives on health and wellness and support the cultural safety and humility of the First Nations people during evacuations. The First Nations Community Navigator role further supports First Nations evacuees by providing them with assurance that they will be heard, respected, and have their needs met. The First Nations Community Navigator is often known to community members, has knowledge of the community and its cultural practices and protocols. They also have established a trust-based relationship with community members. The First Nations Community Navigator may be identified by the evacuated community or may be sourced from a support agency such as the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), or community health society.

Community Navigators and First Nations Community Navigators have been used in past events and in 2021 the role was formalized through Policy 2.14. More recently, the role has evolved, and in addition to providing supports when whole communities are evacuated, the role has also been used to support evacuee's transition to recovery by providing case management supports in events ranging from wildfires to apartment fires to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and communities.

The Community Navigator and First Nations Community Navigator policy lists the following potential assistance that these roles might provide:

- Accompany individuals to cultural activity locations.
- Duties normally undertaken by the meet and greet responder at a reception centre.
- Accompany and support individuals during the registration and referrals process.
- Support evacuees to identify unmet needs, and liaise with ESS team, RC, EOC and PREOC (when activated) to address unmet needs.
- Provide services in multiple locations, such as RCs, GL facilities / accommodation, and food service locations.
- Support transition from response to recovery by connecting individuals with services beyond ESS (sometimes referred to as case management supports).

This position can be requested in a resource request (RR) or expenditure authorization form (EAF).

CULTURAL ACTIVITY LOCATION SUPPORT – POLICY 2.15

[Cultural Activity Location Support](#) (CALS) is a designated location for the purpose of cultural care services. CALS has been provided in past events at RCs and community centres. The policy was formalized in 2021 to support evacuating First Nation communities to create spaces to gather and access cultural care services. Services offered may be delivered in collaboration with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), a community health society, or other support agency. CALS can be funded as a response cost through a RR or EAF.

Large scale evacuations that impact an entire community may be stressful and traumatizing. It is important to provide trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services to lessen further impacts and to transition more effectively into recovery. These services may be offered within or close to RCs, however, some communities may prefer to have a separate designated gathering space where services can be provided.

While CALS policy was originally developed to meet the needs of First Nation communities, it is recognized that evacuations can be traumatizing for all evacuees. Please contact the EMCR regional office if there is a specific situation in which CALS may benefit non-Indigenous evacuees, communities, cultural, or language groups.

WISE PRACTICES

The following wise practices are intended to support cultural humility and cultural safety in the delivery of ESS. These practices are supported by research and after-action reports specific to the Province of British Columbia.

- Recruit and support ESS responders that reflect the diversity of the people and cultures that make up of the communities served, including Indigenous people, youth and language groups.
- Integrate cultural safety and humility training into monthly ESS team meetings. Include a write-up on the Indigenous history of the local area that can be shared with all responders, and explore ways to learn about and develop relationships with cultural communities and language groups.
- Engage Indigenous leaders in all decisions that might impact their communities.
- Facilitate Indigenous governing bodies creating host community agreements with neighbouring communities to access facilities for CALS such as longhouses, big houses, nation-owned buildings, and friendship centres.

LANGUAGE SERVICES

Support for evacuee translation is available through the VictimLinkBC program.

- Call 1-800-563-0808 (available province wide and in the Yukon 24/7).
- Text 604 836-6381 (available province wide 7 days a week from 8 am to 11 pm). Note this may incur a toll in some areas due to the 604 prefix.
- Call 211 (service limited to Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island 24/7).

Services for the deaf and hearing-impaired are also available through the VictimLinkBC program.

- Call 604 875-0858 (available province wide 24/7).
- Email VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca.

PROVINCIAL/REGIONAL ESS SUPPORT

If an Indigenous governing body or local authority finds they are unable to manage the ESS response with their own resources, mutual aid from neighbouring jurisdictions needs to be accessed as a first step. The ECC must be notified if mutual aid is requested. The Indigenous governing body or local authority providing mutual aid must obtain a task/incident number from the ECC if they are a host community.

When mutual aid resources are insufficient, assistance may be requested from the Province via the RDM or an activated PREOC. The EPC or designate (e.g., ESS branch coordinator at the EOC) is responsible to consult with RC and GL managers to determine the need for resources. Requests should be submitted in the form of an RR. The following should be considered when submitting an RR:

- RRs should describe a need.
- RRs need to be detailed, realistic, prioritized and time based.
- RRs must be approved by the EPC/EOC Director.
- RRs are sent to the RDM or activated PREOC.
- When authorization is granted, the Province will provide the coordination for the deployment of ESS materials, EMCR ESS or Indigenous/local government staff, other community ESS responders or ESS supporting organizations.

These resources may be requested to provide:

- Operational mentorship
- Just in time training
- Advice and support to ESSDs/EPCs

As a secondary function, they may also provide:

RRs should describe a need, in addition to a suggested solution. Description of the need, or the problem that needs to be solved, assists the recipient of the RR to quickly identify alternative solutions if the requested resource is unavailable. The additional information enables a more productive, supportive partnership.

- Relief shift coverage
- Surge support

When requesting human resource supports, it is important to recognize that responders who deploy sometimes do so at great personal expense, affecting their work and personal lives to help their fellow British Columbians. Every effort should be taken to ensure those deployed have a safe, enjoyable experience and are recognized for their time and energy.

HOST COMMUNITY

When it is not possible for evacuees to remain in the impacted community, it is typical to ask neighbouring communities to help by providing support to the evacuees. It is important for Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities to contact potential host communities in advance of an evacuation to pre-establish relationships and communication channels. There is no obligation for another community to be a host community. Fostering proactive, strong relationships with other communities will encourage mutual assistance in times of need.

When Indigenous governing body or local authority who is not immediately impacted by the emergency acts as a host community by providing support to evacuees, they can be reimbursed for response costs. The host community's ESS referrals must be filled out under the task/incident number assigned to the host community.

For more detail on host community considerations and guidelines, see the [Evacuation Operational Guidelines](#). For detailed information about financial eligibility for host communities see the [Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for Local Authorities and First Nations](#). Further questions can be directed to the [EMCR regional office](#).

POLICE OF JURISDICTION

If the police of jurisdiction (RCMP or local police service) wish to access an RC and/or GL facility, they should be directed to connect with the RC/GL manager to discuss the purpose of their visit. The RC/GL manager should inform or confirm the police presence with the EOC (ESSD, EPC) and if necessary, inform ESS responders.

The presence of police may lead to discomfort and a hesitation to share important information for some evacuees. A wise practice is to have the police connect with a community navigator/First Nations community navigator and have them go with the police into the facility if a member of the community they are supporting may be approached by police.

THE INTEGRATED DISASTER COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (IDCBC)

The Integrated Disaster Council of BC (IDCBC) is a provincial level organization with a mandate to increase coordination amongst participating NGOs and agencies by creating a forum for communication and information sharing to support Indigenous governing body and local authority emergency management efforts within the province. The IDCBC helps organizations in working together to enhance community resilience across the four pillars of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). The IDCBC is co-chaired by EMCR and a rotating NGO partner.

Though IDCBC organizations may have provincial mandates, or goals, local chapters may have different capabilities based on size and available resources. ESS teams can develop contacts with local chapters of response organizations to ensure coverage within their jurisdiction. This can help to build and strengthen a web of supports and connect evacuees with supports that are outside the scope of the ESS program.

ESS RESPONSE GUIDELINES

Under [Policy 5.03](#) if an evacuation has been ordered or authorities have determined that a home is uninhabitable, ESS may be provided. This section provides a five-step guide for ESS responders and EMCR staff in determining the appropriate delivery of the ESS program to people affected by emergencies.

- Step One - Register and determine eligibility
- Step Two - Conduct needs assessment
- Step Three - Support needs appropriately
- Step Four - Plan for recovery
- Step Five - Demobilize ESS

STEP ONE - REGISTERING AND DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Determining eligibility for ESS begins with registration of the evacuee and their family. All evacuees who may potentially receive ESS must be registered to ensure complete collection of information and to support informed decision making. Once a household is registered, the responder completes a needs assessment to determine if ESS is applicable.

There are two factors to consider when deciding eligibility for ESS, as outlined in the matrixes below.

1. Is ESS available for this type of emergency event?
2. Are the people affected by the emergency in need of ESS assistance?

ELIGIBILITY MATRIX

ESS Eligibility Matrix - Event Types		
Event Type	Available	Not Available
Flood. Interface wildfire. Earthquake.	When an evacuation order is in effect.	Voluntary departure from their primary residence without authorization or support from their Indigenous governing body or local authority. See Evacuation Operational Guidelines and unauthorized evacuees below.
Eviction due to property owner and tenant disputes.	Not eligible.	This is a civil court matter or a matter for the Residential Tenancy Branch.
Police actions, decisions to condemn buildings or failure of municipal infrastructure.	On a case-by-case basis services such as family reunification, psychosocial services and food may be provided if significant numbers of people are evacuated and cannot return home for an extended period. (Examples - armed standoff or hazardous materials incidents.) Only with EMCR authorization.	Evictions due to execution of search warrants or premises being declared a crime scene.
Power outages.	During prolonged outages with extreme winter weather conditions. On a case-by-case basis lodging or other supports may be authorized to ensure the safety of vulnerable populations.	Generally considered an inconvenience and not an emergency.
Motor vehicles crashing into residences.	If residence is declared uninhabitable by a designated authority and owner/tenant has no other personal resources, this may be approved on a case-by-case basis. EMCR approval is required.	If residence is damaged but still habitable or owner/tenant has insurance.

Accident involving public transportation such as a ferry or bus.	To cover immediate (overnight) needs on a case-by-case basis with EMCR approval.	Usually covered by company providing transportation. Intent is to return people to their homes as soon as possible.
Burst water pipes making the home uninhabitable.	On a case-by-case basis when health and safety are at risk. Only with authorization from EMCR. Insurance policies usually cover alternative living expenses.	Generally considered a homeowner/Indigenous governing body/local authority responsibility. Costs may be covered by insurance. Strata or property management organization may assume costs.

ESS Eligibility Matrix - Affected People

Designation	Available	Not Available
Residents who have been ordered to evacuate from their primary residence or the residence has been deemed uninhabitable by a designated authority.	Primary purpose of the ESS program and Policy 5.03 . Primary residency is defined as a dwelling where an individual or family spends most of their personal time. A person can only have one primary residency at a time.	If the evacuee has their own personal supports available. This includes insurance, friends, and family.
Temporary residents and tourists.	Approved on a case-by-case basis. Tourists, if they are considered stranded travelers with no other options - limited ESS services to support health and safety (usually group lodging). EMCR pre-approval is required.	Tourists or short-term visitors are expected to use their own resources to leave the affected area and return to their primary residence.
Persons in receipt of income assistance or disability assistance from provincial programs.	May be approved until they are able to contact an Employment Assistance Worker (EAW) or for the duration of an event if an evacuation order is in effect.	Once an EAW provides appropriate supports, ESS will no longer be required.
Self-evacuees (extraordinary evacuees).	Only with a signed Extraordinary Evacuee Authorization Form from their Indigenous governing body or local authority.	The individual relies on their own resources during self-evacuation.

STEP TWO - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Once eligibility has been decided, the ESS responder conducts a needs assessment to determine what is needed to sustain an evacuee through the immediate response period. It is important to actively listen to the needs of evacuees and provide them with information regarding kinds of supports (like referrals or Interac e-transfer).

ESS responders learn how to conduct a needs assessment during their training, notably in the Registration and Referrals Course. Interviewing and collecting information on evacuees is a skill developed over time and benefits from on-going training and reflection on a regular basis.

Needs: Goods and services to support the basic needs of evacuees. Includes food, clothing, lodging, transportation, and incidentals.

Wants: Comfort or convenience goods and services not required to sustain an evacuee's basic needs. Items such as books or televisions are wants.

STEP THREE - SUPPORT NEEDS APPROPRIATELY

ESS responders provide supports to meet immediate needs in the most efficient, economical, effective and safe method possible (MEMPS). Responders use the MEMPS principle when choosing support options. This includes consideration of:

- Most Efficient (means possible) - simplest, quickest way to provide service to meet the needs of affected persons and ESS responders.
- Most Economical - exercise due diligence and consider the most cost-effective way of spending public money.
- Most Effective - best way to meet the goal of preserving the safety and wellbeing of people affected by an emergency.
- Safe - provide culturally safe and compassionate resources to all evacuees. ESS is only available to help people during emergencies when no other assistance or support is available to keep them safe by meeting their basic needs. If an evacuee has not already done so, ESS responders can encourage the evacuee to consider the following types of support:
 - Personal financial resources
 - Family and friends
 - Insurance (when people are traumatized by an event and unsure of their insurance coverage, overnight ESS may be authorized)
 - Other government agencies
 - NGOs and community groups

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may provide ESS for up to 72 hours with a task number from the Province if the provisions of [Policy 5.03](#) and this program guide are followed:

- During this time Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are accountable for the decisions they make.
- Supports offered outside the eligibility matrix, or without consideration for the MEMPS principle will result in delays or denial of supplier payments.
- ESS may be extended if there is an evacuation order in effect and evacuees are unable to return home.
- All requests for extensions or exceptional approvals of ESS must be requested by the EPC and approved through EMCR by contacting the activated PREOC or the ECC at 1-800-663-3456.

STEP FOUR - PLAN FOR RECOVERY

While ESS is not responsible for recovery, consideration must be given to next steps during the response phase to ensure a successful transition. Successful recovery means empowering those affected by a disaster in a way that preserves their dignity, embraces choice, and shows respect for their experience.

The following are recommended practices to help in the transition.

- Refer evacuees to alternative sources of assistance such as a Resilience Centre or other community support organizations including Friendship Centres.
- Provide clear information to evacuees on ESS expiry dates. EMCR approval is required for extensions. Extensions for ESS should not exceed 3 months and require significant justification after 1 month.
- Identify exceptional circumstances that may affect the transition to recovery.

Vision for Recovery: Re-established social, cultural, physical, economic, personal, spiritual and community well-being through inclusive measures that reduce vulnerability to disaster, while enhancing sustainability and resilience.

STEP FIVE - DEMOBILIZE ESS

ESS provides short-term supports that should end as soon as the evacuee can access their own resources (including insurance or connecting with friends/family), the evacuation order is rescinded, the area is deemed safe to return to, or extensions have exceeded 3 months. ESS may also end if EMCR staff and the Indigenous governing body or local authority finds a more practical way to support evacuee needs (such as an NGO or [ISC](#) funding).

The following are recommended practices to ensure a successful demobilization:

- A self-care debrief should be conducted by responders and management immediately after the event, last shift or end of day before the responder leaves the site in a confidential and culturally safe environment.
- An operational debrief is held within two weeks of the event for all ESS responders.
- The [Disaster Psychosocial Program](#) may be requested to support debriefs.

- Provide resources found on the Self Care for Disaster Workers website to responders.
- Consider a group after action review (AAR) immediately following the event.
- Complete documentation such as task reports, volunteer expense reimbursement claims and the administration of registration and referral forms.
- Follow up with suppliers and support organizations to resolve any outstanding issues and maintain good relations.
- Document any operational or policy issues identified during the response on the action checklist and ensure that copies are provided to the EPC and forwarded to the EMCR RM.
- Inventory forms, signage, and kit supplies. Reorder as necessary through either the ESS website or other suppliers.

A successful demobilization ensures that responders and suppliers feel respected and are prepared for potential future operations.

ESS FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

The term people experiencing vulnerability refers to a broad spectrum of evacuees who each have unique needs as well as strengths. The [Evacuation Operational Guidelines](#) outline the following categories of vulnerable experiences that may contribute to increased vulnerability during an emergency:

- Communication: limited ability to speak, see, and hear; read or understand English, limitations in learning and understanding.
- Medical: assistance needed with bathing or feeding, managing medications, require dialysis, oxygen, or other power-dependent equipment to sustain life.
- Independence challenges: maintaining functional independence with medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, or scooters.
- Supervision needs: persons with dementia or Alzheimer's, and unaccompanied children.
- Transportation needs: persons unable to drive due to disabilities, legal restrictions, socio-economic factors.
- The unhoused or transient people.
- Individuals who use substances and self medication.
- Individuals experiencing mental health challenges, especially those who may be triggered by institutional settings, like schools or large crowds, including people who have been impacted by trauma.

Individuals, groups, and communities may face unique barriers to accessing services. ESS responders must strive to take a solution-focused, compassionate, culturally-safe approach to meet unmet needs, which can improve the evacuee's experience during an already stressful time. ESS responders must remain sensitive to the needs of all evacuees while also recognizing that not all needs can be met through the ESS program. Solutioning may include engagement of partner organizations including NGOs and other government organizations, like health authorities. Solutioning should also include escalation of requests and unmet needs to the

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre (PREOC), or regional manager.

WARMING AND COOLING CENTRES

Extreme weather often affects people experiencing vulnerability more severely. Warming or cooling centres help to mitigate the risks to health created by extreme temperatures and ensure the safety of the most vulnerable citizens.

Warming and cooling centres are not within the scope of the ESS program. ESS training does not include warming and cooling centre operations or prepare responders to address some of the unique needs of individuals at these centres. Therefore, it is recommended that if ESS responders are deployed to support warming or cooling centres their involvement be limited, for example, to the set up and take down of the site.

If Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities wish to rely on ESS responders / PSLVs in the set up and operation of these sites, a task/incident number must be provided. If a task number is provided, ESS responders / PSLVs will be covered under the same PSLV provisions as any other authorized service (liability and workers' compensation coverage, etc.). If ESS responders are deployed, it is up to the EPC/ESSD to ensure volunteer safety remains the number one priority. PSLVs will still be required to follow routine safety procedures when activated in these services (signing in/out using task registration form, etc.).

HEALTH

Evacuees may have a range of health needs that require support. These may be pre-existing conditions or may have been caused by the emergency event itself. Though healthcare is not within the scope of ESS, it is important for ESS responders to manage health related concerns appropriately.

The ESS responder cannot collect any specific health details (such as medical condition or medication type) from an evacuee. This is due to [Freedom of Information and Privacy Act](#) and the privacy consequences of personal health information being recorded and potentially shared. ESS responders are not to conduct health assessments and can only provide general information to evacuees. For example, ESS responders may ask an evacuee, "do you have enough medication" and provide information on how to access prescription refills. The ESS responders should not ask for or record details regarding the type of medication or the condition that requires medication.

If individuals have health concerns, they should contact their health-care provider, 811, or emergency medical services. In consultation with Health Emergency Management BC (HEMBC), the ESS program provides guidance to evacuees who have evacuated without their medications. Please see Appendix G for additional information on evacuee medication.

Medical Emergencies

Any medical emergencies must be immediately reported, and actions taken to ensure the individual receives appropriate care (such as calling 911). It is recognized that until first responders arrive, or the individual is transferred to hospital, first aid may be required. It is

recommended practice to have a qualified first aid attendant on site whenever practical. For more information on liability coverage for PSLVs refer to EMCR Policy 5.08 – [Liability Coverage](#).

SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Evacuees may have current or past experience of abusive including violence. Fear of meeting an abuser at a RC or accommodations may add to the burden of worry already caused by the emergency. Further, instances of domestic abuse may increase after an emergency event has occurred. There may be a substantial risk of physical, emotional, or spiritual harm, therefore ensuring the safety and security of the evacuee is a priority.

The following are recommended practices for ESS responders supporting survivors of violence:

- Contribute to building a [trust-based relationship](#), where relationship is the foundation from which all activities happen.
- Refrain from asking prying questions or trying to learn more than is necessary about the situation, as this may cause trauma.
- Use trauma-informed practice. This can be shown by the following behaviours:
 - Acknowledging traditional territories.
 - Introducing with your name, ancestry, and your pronouns (if that feels comfortable to you).
 - Speaking with a smile, taking time for pauses to check in.
- Explain the option of having a file marked “restricted” and ask if the evacuee would like their file to be restricted. A restricted file would mean:
 - Personal details and location will not be disclosed without their consent.
 - A supervisor will take custody of the file and store it in a secure location.
- Inform the evacuee of [VictimLinkBC](#), a confidential service available 24 hours a day. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and offers immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services.
 - Dial 211.
 - Call toll-free at 1-800-563-0808.
 - Text at 604 836-6381.
 - Email at victimlinkBC@bc211.ca.

Survivors of family and sexual violence can receive information and services from VictimLinkBC by dialing 211.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

In some emergencies, children or youth (defined as anyone under 19 years of age) may appear at a RC unaccompanied by their parents or guardians. Ensuring their safety and knowing when to appropriately inform responsible authorities is a priority. These guidelines are intended to protect both children and ESS responders.

If an unattended child comes to a RC, ESS responders must register the child on a restricted file. This file should include names of parents and caregivers. ESS may then provide immediate care, as needed.

During emergency evacuations, children may be accompanied by an extended family member, a neighbour, family friend or childcare provider. These children must also be registered on a restricted file.

ESS responders have a duty to report to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) if they have reason to believe a child may need protection under the [Child Family Community Services Act](#), Section 13. A recommended practice is to have the EPC/ESSD contact a First Nations Community Navigator, Nation leader or Nation's social worker in cases which involve Indigenous children and when child protection is not needed.

If an ESS responder is unsure as to the safety of a minor (accompanied or unaccompanied) they can contact MCFD and speak to a social worker for direction. MCFD can be reached 24/7 by calling 1-800-663-9122. Additionally, [Reporting Child Abuse in BC](#) has information and resources that support decision making around reporting.

Depending on the size and nature of the event, MCFD may play a role in an RC. They may:

- Assess and respond to child protection issues surfacing among the evacuees.
- Communicate with foster parents and group home staff about the care of children or youth who are placed with them and find accommodation.
- Request or provide information to relevant parties concerned with locations of displaced children.
- Provide information about existing supports to parents and caregivers dealing with children's reactions to the disaster.

Child Activity Area

- A separate space within an RC may be set aside for children's activities.
- At all times children within a RC should be in the care of their parent/guardian. When a child activity area is set up, it is suggested that the child be within arms reach of their parent/guardian.
- This space needs to be sufficiently open to allow space for proper supervision.
- This space should be securely located away from entrances and exits.
- If children arrive under the care of a teacher or daycare provider, these responsible persons should be asked to remain with the children at the RC.
- It is recommended that childcare not be activated as caring for children and keeping them safe, particularly in an emergency scenario, is a significant responsibility. If childcare is required there must be at minimum two responders that are qualified/certified childcare providers always supervising the children. An alternative solution is to contract out this service to a qualified/certified childcare provider.

ESS EXPENDITURE AND PAYMENT PROCESS

The successful delivery of ESS requires timely and accurate administration to ensure evacuees are supported and suppliers are reimbursed on time. This section outlines expenditure policies and procedures that are specific to the ESS program.

Suppliers are reimbursed by the Province after submitting completed invoices and original referral forms along with appropriate supporting documentation to EMCR HQ.

Reimbursement of costs incurred by ESS responders are provided under the [Volunteer Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Policy \(5.06\)](#). Usually, these costs are paid by an Indigenous governing body or local authority and reimbursed through a response claim to an [EMCR Regional Office](#).

Evacuee living assistance and reimbursement for volunteers is provided under EMCR task/incident number. Task/incident numbers are obtained by calling the ECC at 1-800-663-3456. The ECC may request a cost estimate of the ESS event. This is the Indigenous governing body or local authority's best estimate as to the ESS cost of the event and does not represent a limit on spending.

AVAILABLE SUPPORTS

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may provide ESS for up to 72 hours with a task/incident number from the Province if the provisions of Policy 5.03 and this program guide are followed.

- Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are accountable for the decisions they make.
- Supports offered outside the eligibility matrix or without consideration for the MEMPS principle may result in delays or denial of supplier payments.
- ESS may be extended if there is an evacuation order in effect and evacuees are unable to return home. Extensions for ESS should not exceed three months and require significant justification after one month.
- All requests for extensions or exceptional approvals of ESS must be approved through EMCR by contacting the ECC or activated PREOC.

Requests for ESS extensions must be approved by EMCR.

The financial limits on each category of ESS support (food, clothing, shelter, transportation, incidentals) are listed on the [ESS Rate Sheet](#), which is affixed to the referral form. If ESS supports are provided via the ERA tool, the summary page will provide the amounts for the evacuee. Requests to exceed these limits must be obtained from the RDM or activated PREOC. Details of the authorization must be noted in the comments section of the referral form.

The issuance of a task/incident number does not mean that Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities will be reimbursed for all expenditures in support of an emergency event.

Approval for expenditure outside the ESS program must always be sought from EMCR through the ECC or activated PREOC.

EVACUEE REGISTRATION AND ASSISTANCE (ERA) TOOL

Prior to 2020, all registration and referrals were administered using paper forms. In 2020 the digital ERA tool became available across B.C. The ERA tool enhances the delivery of ESS through several features including evacuee self-registration, Interac e-Transfer, online supplier submissions, secure and easy access to registration and referral information through data export.

Local ESS programs are encouraged to adopt the ERA tool. Paper forms are still a reliable contingency if connectivity or other reasons limit responder access to the ERA tool. It is recommended to keep a stock of ESS forms on hand.

The ERA tool requires mandatory training offered through the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) self guided course. This training must be completed prior to gaining access to the ERA tool.

EMCR regional offices can provide more information on the use of the tool, including how to get the ERA tool for your team. More information can also be found on the [Launch ESS page](#).

ESS Program forms can be ordered by Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities using the instructions on the [ESS Responder Resources page](#). The ERA tool can be accessed at ess.gov.bc.ca. For more information and support with community onboarding please email: essmodernization@gov.bc.ca.

IDENTIFICATION OF EVACUEES

Due to the emergency nature of the ESS program, identification (ID) is not required to receive immediate referral-based support. However, there are situations where the ESS program does require identification, including to access Interac e-Transfer through the ERA tool.

Access to e-Transfer is enabled through registration with the BC Services Card app. Additional information regarding the identification requirements for the BC Service Card app is provided at the following link:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=5F8782A92E464066885149242E050814>

ID may also be requested when ongoing extensions require eligibility confirmation. To support extensions, the ID must include a photograph of the evacuee as well as their full name and date of birth.

The list of accepted government-issued IDs include:

- Certificate of Indian Status card, issued by the Government of Canada

- Passport (an international passport is acceptable if it includes the name, date of birth, photo and signature of the applicant and is accompanied by a professionally translated version if not in French or English)
- Driver's licence
- Enhanced driver's licence
- Canadian military ID card
- Government-issued ID card
- Government-issued enhanced ID card
- Health card
- Canadian citizenship card (issued before February 1, 2012)
- Canadian permanent resident card
- U.S. permanent resident card (green card)

DENYING SERVICE

ESS responders' priority should be ensuring their own health and safety. Unfortunately, there may be situations when ESS should not be provided to evacuees due to safety concerns. The two main reasons to deny supports are as follows:

- When there is abusive language/behaviour and a concern for responder safety.
- After services have been denied by a service provider due to health or safety related concerns (e.g. hotel eviction due to property damage).

When denial of services occurs, record if it is due to health and safety concerns with the responder or denial from a service provider. ESS notes should avoid emotion-based language and use factual descriptions (e.g., client used abusive language).

Denial of ESS services may have significant negative impacts on an evacuee. Therefore, before denying services ensure that a supervisor has been informed and that the denial does not place the responder at risk. For additional support please contact the RM.

There are other situations that exclude an evacuee from ESS supports based on their needs assessment. Please consult Policy 5.03 and this ESS program guide for more information on program eligibility.

SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are responsible for establishing and maintaining relations with local business interested in supporting the program (called suppliers). Supplier consent forms must be used to ensure an understanding of the ESS program and procedures. At minimum, these relationships need to be renewed yearly.

When choosing a supplier during an incident, it is advisable to provide equal opportunities to local businesses including Indigenous businesses. This is done at the discretion of the ESS team based on availability and ability to support a given need.

Supplier consent agreements need to be renewed every year.

EMCR is not involved in the creation or maintenance of supplier relationships, and generally does not engage with corporate headquarters of larger businesses.

The [Supplier Quick Reference](#) document is available online and offers helpful process tips and reminders for suppliers.

INSURANCE

The following are considered wise practices for working with evacuees:

- Ask evacuees if they have insurance as part of their needs assessment.
- Insurance does not exclude evacuees from ESS. ESS may still be provided on a limited basis if insurance does not provide full coverage or takes time to access.
- Evacuees that have insurance should be encouraged to access their insurance as soon as possible as this is a critical step in recovering from the emergency. Some policies are time sensitive and may require immediate action.
- If evacuees have difficulties contacting their insurance company or are uncertain about their coverage, only essential ESS supports should be provided pending clarification of insurance.
- Responders should avoid discussions about insurance policies and deductibles. If there are specific concerns relating to the provision of ESS to an insured individual, it is recommended to provide ESS to cover the evacuee's immediate needs. After providing ESS supports, teams should raise the concerns with EMCR if needed.
- Indigenous persons who live on reserve lands may have their insurance provided through the Indigenous governing body. This insurance often does not cover additional living expenses and the evacuee may still require ESS supports.
- During extended events, insurance coverage may not cover evacuees for the duration they are out of home (on evacuation order). These evacuees may seek ESS supports after their coverage has ended and should not be excluded from ESS supports.
- Help in resolving insurance related concerns is available by calling the **Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC)** toll-free at 1-844-227-5422 or e-mail: askibcwest@ibc.ca.
- IBC can also be invited to attend a RC if ongoing insurance issues become a problem. This service can be sourced through an RR.
- During an emergency evacuation affected individuals may not be sure which company they hold a policy with. Insurance claim line numbers are often published on the website of the bank, credit union, or other agency that sold the policy.

The IBC can help in resolving insurance related concerns. Contact them at 1-844-227-5422.

EXTRAORDINARY EVACUEES

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities should consider evacuating vulnerable populations during an evacuation alert. There may also be times when individuals believe it is in their best interest to evacuate from their community before an evacuation alert or order is in effect. In such situations, the Indigenous governing body or local authority should consider each case and authorize extraordinary evacuees as needed.

Extraordinary evacuees require an extraordinary evacuee authorization form (EEAF) to receive ESS supports. Without authorization from the Indigenous governing body or local authority, these individuals will be an unauthorized evacuee and will not receive ESS supports. It is critical to advise the supporting ESS team / host community that there are extraordinary evacuees that have received authorization to evacuate prior to an evacuation alert or order and confirm the RC location and hours of operation.

More information including the EEAF is available in the [Evacuation Operational Guide for First Nations and Local Authorities in British Columbia](#). Individuals who have not received authorization must rely on their own resources during self-evacuation.

FOOD

Restaurant Meals

Meal rates do not cover gratuities or the purchase of alcohol, which are the responsibility of the evacuee. If a restaurant is co-located with a hotel, a referral may be written for both meals and accommodation if both are owned by the same business.

Groceries

Evacuees staying in a location with a kitchenette or with friends/family may prefer to cook their own meals. ESS responders should remind evacuees to consider whether they have adequate refrigerated storage for perishable goods. Purchases of tobacco, cannabis or alcohol are not considered eligible grocery costs.

Bulk Food Orders

The ESS referral form is not intended for bulk purchases. Requests for bulk food orders for evacuees or response workers should be sent to logistics at the EOC.

Dietary Requirements

People have diverse dietary requirements and providing flexibility in food options is important for health and cultural reasons. It is a wise practice to ensure food restrictions are accommodated and diabetic-friendly options are available.

LODGING

Commercial Accommodation

ESS may use the **provincial government rates for hotels/motels**. These rates are lower than regular rates and are therefore preferential when selecting suppliers. Government rates are based on single occupancy but are also to be used as a benchmark to determine family rates. As a guideline, add \$10.00 for each additional adult and \$5.00 for each youth 13 to 18 years. If a family's size requires use of more than one room, the regular government rate may apply to each room. If no accommodations offering the provincial government rate are available, teams must negotiate for the best rate.

Additional charges (such as room service or damages) are not covered by ESS and must be paid by the evacuee upon departure from the hotel. More information is available on page 39 - Hotel Damages.

Note: It is important to be mindful in booking hotel and motel rooms to consider the safety of people experiencing vulnerabilities, differences in accessibility, or concerns for physical safety. Evacuees or community navigators / First Nations community navigators may be able to recommend lodging options which support cultural, spiritual or physical safety (with the understanding that these spaces are not always available). These lodgings may provide unique services or be in areas which promote independence and/or provide added safety for the evacuee.

Billeting in Private Homes

Those billeting evacuees in their home may receive reimbursement through the ESS program. The billeting rate is \$30 per day. \$10 may be added for each additional adult and youth, and \$5 for each child 12 years and under. The billeting invoice for host family form must be completed by the host and affixed to the referral form to receive reimbursement from the Province. Instructions on how to submit for reimbursement can be found on the back of the Billeting Invoice or Host Family form.

Families staying in private homes may also choose to eat in restaurants or receive a referral for groceries. At the request of the evacuee, the billeting host may be named as the person purchasing goods.

Group Lodging (GL)

Referral forms are given to evacuees staying at GL facility. To recover costs, invoices for GL are sent directly to EMCR regional office on a response claim submission form. When possible, ESS must negotiate a rate for use of the building (provided it is not a community owned facility) ahead of time.

CLOTHING

A clothing allowance is provided to protect the health and well being of evacuees to ensure they have adequate clothing while evacuated. It is expected that if an evacuation alert is in place, evacuees will have packed their essential clothing. The established maximum is \$150 per adult or child. A referral for clothing is a one-time allotment per event unless pre-authorized by EMCR. An additional \$50 supplement may be added during periods of extreme winter weather with EMCR approval.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation costs are provided to enable evacuees to travel to receive ESS supports if they cannot do so on their own. ESS responders may provide referrals for taxis or bus passes. Routine transportation costs (i.e., to and from work or personal appointments) are not provided by ESS.

Gas cards may also be authorized for extraordinary events that require evacuees to travel longer distances (normally over 100km) to the nearest RC. As this support is event specific, speak with an RDM or PREOC to confirm availability, approval and process for distribution.

INCIDENTALS

An incidentals rate of \$50 maximum per person may be used to cover miscellaneous items such as personal hygiene products (like diapers or laundry supplies), pet food, over the counter medications, hotel charges for pets and other immediate needs. Incidentals are a one-time allotment per event unless pre-authorized by EMCR.

Additional incidentals may be authorized for extraordinary events that have exhausted support provided by NGOs. These must be pre-authorized by EMCR.

Detailed breakdowns of each of the support categories are included in the Registration and Referrals course. Maximum expenditures for each category are found on the [ESS Rate Sheet](#). ESS responders need to ensure evacuees understand their obligation to pay for anything above these limits (like room service fees).

EXCEPTIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Occasionally it is necessary to request additional supports to meet evacuee needs. This may be in the form of exceptions to maximum allowable amounts or an extension of the time period

ESS may be offered in. Exceptions and extensions are an additional financial commitment from the Province and require authorization from EMCR before approval. Supports offered beyond the prescribed maximums and the approved time period without approval may result in significant delays or denial of supplier payments.

Depending upon the situation, approval may be granted from:

- Regional manager (RM) or senior regional manager (SRM)
- Regional duty manager (RDM)
- Provincial duty manager (PDM)
- PREOC director
- PECC director
- ESS specialist

Requests for extensions must be approved by EMCR.

Procedures

1. The EPC or delegate contacts the ECC at 1-800-663-3456.
2. The ECC obtains details and contacts the EMCR representative.
3. The EMCR representative then either:
 - a. Contacts the EPC directly to discuss; or
 - b. Asks the ECC to communicate the decision to the EPC
4. The EMCR representative will advise the ECC of any extraordinary expenditure approvals to be noted in the operations log.
5. The EPC ensures the ESS team is made aware of approvals/denials of requests.

DIRECT PURCHASE

Standard ESS procedures should be adhered to whenever possible. Depending upon the situation and nature of the need, Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may also consider supporting evacuee need through:

- Community organizations
- Expenditure authorization form (EAF)
- Resource request (RR)

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may directly purchase supports by following these guidelines:

- The registration and referral process, including needs assessment, should be carried out with all evacuees.
 - Suppliers which are still operational should be used as usual.
- The Indigenous governing body or local authority must make purchases directly.
 - The Indigenous governing body or local authority is listed as the supplier on the referral form.
 - The actual service provider is listed in the comments box.
 - EMCR cannot reimburse individual ESS responders and/or individual staff for purchases.

- Purchases must adhere to the principles in the ESS program guide and maximum rates prescribed on the rate sheet. The Indigenous governing body or local authority will be responsible for expenses which do not adhere to these guidelines or exceed the rates, unless approved by EMCR.
 - Purchases should be made following the MEMPS principle.
 - Extraordinary expenditures beyond the regular rates and extensions to supports must be approved by EMCR.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities will receive reimbursements by following these guidelines:

- Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities must keep records on evacuees and supports provided through paper registration/referral forms or the ERA tool.
- Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities must track expenditures for referrals.
 - EMCR recommends using the standard Response claim submission form, and entering the referral number into column C.
 - EMCR may ask for these records for audit purposes. EMCR may withhold reimbursement if they are unable to verify that the evacuee received supports.
- Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities send a reimbursement package to ESSFinanceInquiries@gov.bc.ca, including:
 - The referral tracker, including all referral numbers and expenditures.
 - PDFs of all supporting documentation, including the referrals and all invoices/receipts.
- For protracted events, Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities may submit reimbursement packages by date period rather than for the entire event.
- Inquiries on the status of payments should be directed to ESSFinanceInquiries@gov.bc.ca.

The email subject lines should adhere to the following format:

FN/L Government Name - Task # - \$ Amount
(e.g., City of Kamloops - Task # 22-1234 - \$10,000)

SUPPLIER INVOICING PROCESS

Once a supplier receives an authorized referral form, they may provide the specified support in accordance with the supplier consent form and the supplied ESS rates sheet. Charges for goods and services must not exceed the attached ESS rates. If using the ERA tool, the ESS rates are printed on the referral form. Services must be provided only to those individuals listed on the referral form and within the specified valid only dates.

Expenditures for evacuees are provided under [Policy \(5.03\)](#). Suppliers are reimbursed by the Province and may submit for payment using one of four methods.

Option One (PREFERRED)

Submit invoices, receipts, and referrals online through the ERA tool by using the ESS supplier portal. EMCR finance will be able to reimburse ESS suppliers faster by reviewing these submissions online, processing claims and issuing payments with fewer steps.

If ESS suppliers need assistance with the navigation and submission via the ERA tool, they can contact the ERA tool support team using the contact information provided on the landing page. Following successful ERA submission, additional questions regarding their submission can be directed to EMCR finance at ESSFinanceInquiries@gov.bc.ca.

Option Two

Mail original invoices, receipts and original referral forms along with supporting documentation to EMCR HQ. EMCR's mailing address is included on ESS referral forms.

Option Three

ESS forms and ERA documents cannot be sent through personal email. Protecting responder and evacuee personal information is a priority while delivering ESS remotely. Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities email accounts can be used in all correspondence with evacuees and EMCR. Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are responsible to provide access to appropriate email accounts, including when responders use personal computers.

Suppliers can email referrals and copies of purchase receipts or invoices to ESSFinanceInquiries@gov.bc.ca. Photos of documents will not be accepted. The documents must be scanned into a PDF format. It is a wise practice for suppliers to keep original copies of referral forms and receipts as these may be requested later. Email subject lines should adhere to the following format:

Supplier's legal name - Referral # - \$ Amount
(e.g., ABC Corporation - Referral # 123456 - \$100)

Option Four

Secure file transfer: Supporting evacuees may generate many digital documents. Some email accounts may have trouble with attachment file sizes. Secure file transfers offer an alternative for submission to EMCR. Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities who wish to use the provincial government's secure file transfer service should notify their PREOC or RM. Following an Indigenous governing body or local authority's request, the Provincial ESS program will provide an invitation to send files and the required system access information. Files sent from other file transfer service providers will not be accepted.

HOTEL DAMAGES

In some cases, accommodation suppliers can be reimbursed for evacuee damage. Suppliers must first seek to reimburse costs from the evacuee and their insurance provider prior to requesting reimbursement from EMCR. If unable to recover costs from the evacuee or insurance provider, the supplier and EMCR will adhere to the following process:

1. Supplier reports damages that they have been unable to recuperate costs from the evacuee or their insurance provider.
2. Supplier documents steps taken to recuperate costs and conversations with both the evacuee and their insurance provider.
3. EMCR confirms the damage with the supplier and would reimburse the supplier after the evidence of damages and repair cost documentation has been reviewed and approved.

This process is only available to temporary lodging facilities and not private residences providing billeting. Reimbursement may be provided for damages assessed as being over \$1,000 dollars and be up to a maximum of \$10,000 dollars.

PAYMENT PROCESS

Once EMCR finance receives an invoice package from a supplier they may begin the payment process:

- Match invoices and receipts to referrals (clear organization of these documents by the supplier reduces time to payment).
- Assess invoices, referrals and receipts to ensure a match between the invoiced services and those approved on the referral, as well as ensuring services adhere to EMCR regulations.
- EMCR finance may work with the supplier, EMCR regional offices, ESS HQ, and local ESS teams to solve issues.
- Solutions involving payment in excess of the amounts noted on the referral require documented rationale and approval from the ESSD.
- Once all requirements have been satisfied EMCR finance may authorize payment.

Errors made on referral forms, missing or incomplete information, or the provision of ineligible items, or services in excess of the specified ESS Rates can cause delays or reduction to payment.

FORM RETENTION

Once completed ESS evacuee case files have been collected by the documentation unit and separated accordingly, their retention is determined in accordance with the operational records classification system. Information gathered on ESS evacuee case files contains private and confidential information that is collected under the authority of the [EPA](#) and is subject to the requirements of the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

Evacuee case files include:

- ESS registration and services record
- Referral forms
- Change of information forms

Responsibilities

Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are responsible to retain ESS evacuee case files in an easily accessible secure location (office) for the period of six months upon completion of the event. The event is considered complete when both ESS and recovery support has been concluded and the information contained is no longer required by the Indigenous governing body or local authority for operational purposes.

After this period the Indigenous governing body or local authority must transfer ESS evacuee case files to their EMCR regional office. Evacuee case files are to be arranged by EMCR task/incident number and accompanied with a list detailing all task/incident numbers included. The transfer of the evacuee case files must allow the item to be tracked through a courier service or Canada Post (registered, priority, express, expedited). The delivery costs are eligible through the submission of a response claim submission form.

The evacuee case files will be sent to a secure off-site government storage for a period of three years, after which they are destroyed.

APPENDIX A - RESPONSE TO APARTMENT FIRES

Apartment fires may occur at any time without warning and often affect populations experiencing vulnerabilities with additional needs for assistance. These circumstances can present a challenge for any ESS team.

Important factors in achieving a successful response include:

- Pre-planning for response and recovery
- Inter-agency coordination
- Developing a pro-active public information plan
- Making time for the practice of cultural safety and humility

PREPAREDNESS

Planning for apartment fires needs to be included in an Indigenous governing body or local authority's ESS plan. As governments prepare this plan, they must consider the additional pressures an apartment fire might place on their ESS team. Preparation for these larger and more complex events must consider the following:

- Number of ESS responders that may be required
- Callout procedures for larger events
- Preparing potential RCs and GL facilities for use
- Supporting ESS with an EOC
- Development and maintenance of relationships with support organizations, including suppliers, NGOs and community organizations
- Preparing adequately for supports to populations experiencing vulnerabilities

ESS teams need to identify key community partners and resource providers including:

- EMCR regional managers
- FNHA and other health authorities
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) staff
- BC Housing
- Mutual aid partner communities
- Local support organizations such as Aboriginal Friendship Centres, the **Canadian Red Cross**, **The Salvation Army**, Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team (CDART) and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). This is not an exhaustive list. All relevant support organizations should be engaged.

Apartment fire planning must include a public information plan to include media contacts and appoint a community spokesperson. A wise practice for this plan is to have it reviewed with a cultural safety and humility lens to prevent unintended harms. A plan which takes a pro-active approach by reaching out to media can avoid inaccuracies and confusion. It is important that all team members follow the public information plan to ensure consistent messaging in support of response and recovery efforts.

RESPONSE

At the direction of the EPC, open an RC and keep it open until all evacuees have been supported. After the initial rush of Registrations and Referrals there will still be a requirement for ESS assistance for late registrations, people experiencing vulnerabilities, and requests for information. Some ESS responses to apartment fires may benefit from the support of an EOC. An EOC can help with access to resources and improve inter-agency coordination.

Planning for the transition to recovery needs to begin as soon as possible. This may require collaboration with longer term support organizations in order to help evacuees throughout the transition and address unmet needs in support. Plans need to aim for the end of ESS assistance and supports within 72 hours and be aware of the process for extension. Ensure evacuees understand the expectation to have a personal plan in place before ESS support ends and ask if they need support in this development.

TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

The public information plan can also support the transition to recovery. It is wise practice for the EPC to convene a public meeting (preferably within 24 hours of the emergency) in order to share information and identify unmet needs. This meeting can help create a shared understanding of the situation and improve the coordination of agencies with evacuees and each other. Request media assistance with publicizing the meeting. Encourage all evacuees to attend, as well as ESS responders, representatives from the fire department, property owners, community service agencies, MSDPR and EMCR. Consider the accessibility needs, including mobile, visual and language, of evacuees and other people experiencing vulnerabilities in the public information plan.

DEMOBILIZATION

Approval to demobilize an RC or GL facility should be obtained from the EOC ESS Branch Coordinator if activated. Instructions on demobilization are found in the Reception Centre Operational Guidelines.

Debrief both ESS responders and community partners. Host an after action review to identify lessons learned and update the community ESS plan accordingly.

After action reviews can include culturally sensitive methods such as the examples below:

- [The Circle Way](#)
- [Appreciative Inquiry](#)
- [The Virtues Project](#) student cards

Share these lessons with other ESS teams, community partners and EMCR.

APPENDIX B - RESOURCES TOOLKIT

The table below contains hyperlinks to **information highlighted in this colour** throughout the program guide. The full URLs are included to benefit the print editions of this guide. Note that these links may be updated so it is best to check the online version of the guide for the latest information.

Resource Name	Location
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	https://bcaafc.com/
British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS)	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/EMCR/bcems/bcems_guide.pdf
Canadian Red Cross	https://www.redcross.ca/
Child Family Community Services Act	http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96046_01
Disaster Psychosocial Services Program (DPS)	http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/health-emergency-management-bc/disaster-psychosocial-program
Bill C-92 (new federal leg)	https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-92/first-reading
Bill 41 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act	https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/41st-parliament/4th-session/bills/first-reading/gov41-1
Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility in Emergency Management Services for First Nations People in B.C.	https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/cultural-safety-and-humility
EMCR Policy 5.03/5.06	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-management-bc/policies
EMCR Policy 2.14/2.15 Cultural Activities Location Support and Community Navigator/First Nations Community Navigator	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-management-bc/policies
EMCR PSLV registration forms	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=C0657A196AFD4879813FDACA34B0FE4D
EMCR Regional Office	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=602AB81297A741928FA51D82CFA64CA8
EMCR Website	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=C0AA22EC22424D7080F1CAEE7E951DA6
Emergency Info BC	https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/

Emergency Program Act	http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96111_01
ESS Responder Resources page	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BBDFB635C75240B08679D532F7444277
ESS Rate Sheet	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BBDFB635C75240B08679D532F7444277
Evacuation Operational Guidelines	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=9F2AD295318E4F0386B12DBB292EBDBF
Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for Local Authorities and First Nations	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/EMCR/dfa/financial_assistance_guide.pdf
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act	https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96165_00
Group Lodging Operational Guidelines	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BBDFB635C75240B08679D532F7444277
HealthLink BC	https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/
Indigenous Services Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html
Insurance Bureau of Canada	http://www.ibc.ca/bc/
Justice Institute of British Columbia	https://www.jibc.ca/programs-courses/schools-departments/school-public-safety/emergency-management-division/government-and-corporate/emergency-support-services
Ministry of Children and Family Development	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=72456B2580484EF58351DCDBA81B9903
Prepared BC	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=0C01537370884EA886AA49A117651C94
Provincial Government Rates for Hotels/Motels	http://csa.pss.gov.bc.ca/businesstravel/
Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=0FBA8ED8117C4BD3B3C2A8D56A60A9A5
PSLV Rates	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=C0657A196AFD4879813FDACA34B0FE4D#5.06
Reception Centre Operational Guidelines	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BBDFB635C75240B08679D532F7444277
Reporting Child Abuse in B.C.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=A9E711005942446B9BA511694A2A1FEF
The Salvation Army	https://salvationarmy.ca/
VictimLinkBC	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=18AD0E75BD1C4B0AB99F9C806C734190

APPENDIX C - ACRONYMS

BCEMS – B.C. Emergency Management System

CALS - Cultural Activity Location Support

CRC - Canadian Red Cross

EAF- Expenditure Authorization Form

ECC - Emergency Coordination Centre

EEAF - Extraordinary Evacuee Authorization Form

EMCR - Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

EMCR HQ - Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness Headquarters

EOC - Emergency Operations Centre

EMT - Emergency Management Technician

EPA - Emergency Program Act

EPC - Emergency Program Coordinator

ERA - Evacuee Registration and Assistance

ESS - Emergency Support Services

ESSD - Emergency Support Services Director

FNHA - First Nations Health Authority

GL - Group Lodging

HEMBC - Health Emergency Management BC

ICS - Incident Command System

IDCBC - Integrated Disaster Council of BC

ISC - Indigenous Services Canada

JIBC - Justice Institute of British Columbia

MCFD - Ministry of Children and Family Development

MEMPS Principle - Most Efficient, Most Economical, Most Effective and Safe

MSDPR - Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

NGO - Non-Government Organization

NESS - National Emergency Strategic Supplies

PECC - Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre

PDM - Provincial Duty Manager

PREOC - Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre

PSLV - Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer

RC - Reception Centre

RDM - Regional Duty Manager

RM - Regional Manager

ROA - Regional Office Administrator

RR - Resource Request

SRM - Senior Regional Manager

TSA - The Salvation Army

APPENDIX D - GLOSSARY

Action Plan: Contains objectives and specific tasks for the operational period. The action plan may be oral or written. When written, the action plan may have several forms as attachments (e.g., traffic plan, safety plan, communications plan, map, etc.)

Activation: When a natural disaster, emergency or an event forces a community to evacuate and the Indigenous governing body or local authority initiates their ESS plan.

Allocated Resources: Resources dispatched to an incident.

Auditing: The examination of records to determine if those records are accurate and in accordance with the program's processes and regulations.

Available Resources: Incident-based resources that are ready for deployment.

Branch: The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of incident operations.

The British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS): The British Columbia Emergency Management System is a comprehensive management scheme that ensures a coordinated and organized provincial response and recovery to any and all emergency incidents. The broad spectrum of components of the BCEMS includes operations and control management, qualifications, technology, training and publications.

Chain of Command: A series of management positions in order of authority.

Child Activity Area: Unit within the operations section responsible for providing a safe environment for childcare at an RC.

Command: The act of directing and/or controlling resources by virtue of explicit legal, organizational, or delegated authority.

Community Navigator: Is an individual identified by the community to act as a liaison between the EOC, ESS, support agencies, and evacuees. Advocates for evacuees and facilitates solutions to complex and/or unique evacuee needs.

Coordination: The process of systematically analyzing a situation, developing relevant information, and informing appropriate command/management authority of viable alternatives for selection of the most effective combination of available resources to meet specific objectives. The coordination process (which can be either intra- or inter-organization) does not involve dispatch actions. However, personnel responsible for coordination may perform command or dispatch functions within the limits established by specific organization delegations, procedures, legal authority, etc.

Compassionate communication: a method that creates relationships based on empathy, compassion, co-operation and harmonious respect for self and others. Compassionate communication is also known as non-violent communication.

Critical Resource: Material, personnel and finances that are in short supply and are needed by more than one incident management team or are needed for high priority assignments.

Cultural Safety and Humility: An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in EM. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving ESS. Cultural safety includes and goes beyond cultural awareness, which refers to awareness of differences between cultures. It also goes beyond cultural sensitivity, which is about realizing the legitimacy of difference and the power of one's own life experience can have on others (Koptie, 2009).

Delegation of Authority: A statement provided to the incident commander by the organization executive delegating authority and assigning responsibility. The delegation of authority can include objectives, priorities, expectations, constraints, and other considerations or guidelines as needed. Organizations may require written delegation of authority to be given to incident commanders prior to their assuming command on larger incidents.

Deputy: A qualified individual who, could be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or perform a specific task. In some cases, a deputy could act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position. Deputies can be assigned to the Manager, general staff, and branch coordinators. Deputies can be used at the site and site support level e.g.: RC, GL, EOC, PREOC, and PECC.

Disaster: A calamity caused by accident, fire, explosion, or technical failure, or by the forces of nature that has resulted in serious harm to the health, safety or welfare of people, or in widespread damage to property (as defined in the EPA).

Dispatch: The implementation of a command decision to move a resource or resources from one place to another.

Documentation Unit: Unit within the planning section responsible for collecting, recording, and safeguarding all documents relevant to the response.

Emergency: A present or imminent event that is caused by accident, fire, explosion, or technical failure, or by the forces of nature and requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety and welfare of people, or to limit damage to property (as defined in the EPA).

Emergency Management: An organized effort to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency.

Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR): EMCRC is the Province's lead coordinating agency for all emergency management activities, including planning, training, testing and exercising, to help strengthen provincial preparedness.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC): A designated facility established by an organization or jurisdiction to co-ordinate the overall organization or jurisdictional response and support to an emergency response.

Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC): The individual within a community who has coordination responsibility for jurisdictional emergency management.

Emergency Response Plan: The plan that each jurisdiction has and maintains for responding to incidents based on a hazard and risk analysis.

Emergency Support Services (ESS): Those services provided on a short-term basis to evacuees in emergency situations.

Emotional Support Unit: Unit within the operations section responsible for counselling services to evacuees and ESS personnel.

ESS Branch Coordinator: Within all levels of the BCEMS organizational structure (EOC, PREOC and PECC) there is an ESS branch in the operations section. The coordinator is focussed on the support and requirements of the ESS program at each respective level of operations.

ESS Director (ESSD): The individual responsible for the management and coordination of a local ESS program/team. They are also responsible for ESS planning and response activities.

ESS Support Organization: The term used to designate assisting and cooperating organizations.

Evacuation Alert: Informs the affected population of a potential or current threat which may lead to an Evacuation Order.

Evacuation Order: Means that the local community elected leaders have determined that to best ensure the safety of the impacted population has issued an order to leave the specified area immediately.

Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) Tool: A digital tool that supports the delivery of the ESS program.

Finance Section: The section responsible for all incident costs and financial considerations including the time unit, procurement unit, compensation/claims unit, and cost unit.

First Aid Unit: Unit within the operations section responsible for providing emergency first aid.

First Nations Community Navigator: Is an individual identified by the community to act as a liaison between the EOC, ESS, support agencies, and evacuees. Advocates for evacuees and facilitates solutions to complex and/or unique evacuee needs. A First Nations Community Navigator also has in depth knowledge of the affected Indigenous peoples' culture, practices, and protocols. Supports, demonstrates, promotes, and facilitates the implementation of culturally safe practices within ESS program delivery.

Function: In BCEMS, function refers to the five major activities e.g., command/management, operations, planning, logistics, and finance (In some instances, sections, branches and units are loosely referred to as functions as well). The term function is also used when describing the activity involved, e.g., the planning function.

General Staff: A group of management personnel reporting to the manager. The general staff consist of:

- Operations section chief
- Planning section chief
- Logistics section chief
- Finance section chief

Group Lodging (GL): Congregate facility for the lodging and nourishment of evacuees.

Group Lodging Manager: The individual responsible for the overall management at the GL.

Incident(s): An occurrence either human caused or by natural phenomena that requires action by response personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property, environment and reduce economic and social losses.

Incident Commander/Manager: The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site. The term incident commander shall be deemed to include unified command.

Incident Command Post (ICP): The location at which the primary command functions are executed. The ICP may be co-located or shared with the incident base or other incident facilities.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

Information Officer: A member of the command/management staff responsible for interfacing with the public and media or with other organizations requiring information directly from the incident. There is only one information officer per incident. The information officer may have assistants.

Jurisdiction (Jurisdictional): The range or sphere of authority. Organizations have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority for incident mitigation.

Jurisdictional Organization: The organization that has jurisdiction and responsibility for a specific geographical area, or a mandated function and includes key ministries as defined in the EPA.

Level One ESS: A localized event that can be managed using a minimal number of ESS resources (e.g., single house fire).

Level Two ESS: A event that requires the full use of an Indigenous governing body or local authority's ESS resources. A level 2 event might include the activation of an RC and an EOC (e.g., fire in an apartment complex effecting hundreds of units).

Level Three ESS: A emergency that exceeds an Indigenous governing body or local authority's capacity to respond and requires assistance from neighboring jurisdictions or the Province (e.g., interface wildfire that causes an entire city to evacuate).

Liaison Officer: A member of the command/management staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from external cooperating and assisting organizations.

Logistics Section: The section responsible for providing resources (material and human) and support to the response.

Management Staff: The ESS management staff consists of the manager, information officer, safety officer, and liaison officer. They may have an assistant or assistants as needed.

Management Team: The management team consists of the manager, officers (information, safety, liaison) and general staff (section chiefs).

Meet & Greet Unit: Unit within the operation section of an RC responsible for initial triage and welcoming of evacuees to the centre.

Modernization: The process of improving the provincial ESS program through updating and transforming the program to increase efficiencies.

Mutual Aid Agreement: Written agreement between organizations and/or jurisdictions in which they agree to help one another upon request by furnishing resources.

Officer: The title for the personnel responsible for the command/management staff positions of safety, liaison, and information.

Operational Guidelines: An organizations' written procedure(s) that establishes a commonly accepted course of action and specifies the functional limitations of personnel in performing emergency operations.

Operational Period: The period scheduled for execution of a given set of operational actions as specified in the action plan. Operational periods can be of various lengths, although usually not over 24 hrs.

Operations Section: The section responsible for all tactical operations (services direct to evacuees) at the RC or GL facility.

Organization Representative(s): An individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating organization who has been delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting that organization's participation at the incident. Organization representatives report to the liaison officer.

Pet Care Unit: Unit within the operations section of an RC, responsible for a safe and secure location to temporarily house domestic pets while evacuees are at the RC.

Planning Section: The section responsible for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information related to the incident, and for the preparation and documentation of action plans.

Primary Services Branch: Branch within the operations section responsible for meet & greet, registration, referrals for food, clothing lodging, inquiry and on-site goods distribution in an RC. Also check in/check out, sleeping area and meals distribution units in a GL facility.

Provincial Central Coordination Level: A coordination level within the B.C. Emergency Management System, which is activated to co-ordinate all provincial resources. This level interacts with the provincial regional coordination level.

Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC): The PECC will be established to manage activities at the provincial central coordination level. The five functions provided by PECC are management, operations coordination, planning, logistics, and finance/administration. The PECC level follows the same basic organizational support levels in BCEMS.

Provincial Regional Coordination Level: A coordination level within the B.C. Emergency Management System which is activated to co-ordinate provincial resources on a regional basis. This level interacts with local authorities and ministry EOCs.

Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC): A PREOC manages activities at the provincial regional coordination level and co-ordinates the joint efforts of government and NGOs.

Reception Centres (RC): A safe gathering place where evacuees can register, are interviewed to determine their immediate emergency needs, and receive supports and assistance.

Reception Centre Manager: The individual responsible for the overall management at the RC.

Referral: The second step in the registration and referral process. The providing of services to evacuees. A form that provides ESS from a specific supplier.

Referrals (for Food, Clothing and Lodging) Unit: Unit in operations section of an RC that refers evacuees to community suppliers to meet their immediate needs.

Referrals Unit Supervisor (RUS): The RUS helps and supports referral responders in completing ESS referral forms for evacuees and seeks approval for expenditures beyond ESS rates.

Registration: The first step of the registration and referral process. Process through which the details of an evacuee and their family are collected.

Registration Unit: Unit within the operations section of an RC that records the whereabouts of evacuees for the purpose of family reunification.

Resources: Personnel and equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incident(s).

Section: That organization level with responsibility for a major functional area of the RC or GL facility, e.g., operations, planning, logistics, finance.

Site Support Level: A coordination level within the B.C. Emergency Management System that is activated to provide policy direction and resources support to an incident commander.

Supervisor: Individuals within organizational units that are assigned specific managerial responsibilities, e.g., check in/check out unit or meals distribution unit.

Supplier: An entity that provides ESS to an evacuee through a referral.

Task(s): Specific actions taken to achieve operational objectives for an operational period.

Task/Incident Number: A control number assigned by EMCR to each response or training event for the purpose of tracking an approved response and providing support for ESS responders with workers' compensation and liability coverage.

Unit(s): The organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific function within the sections of operations, planning, logistics, or finance.

Volunteer/Staff Management Branch: Branch within logistics section that is responsible for the management of personnel at the RC or GL facility. This includes the recruitment, screening, orientation, assignment, training, evaluation and recognition of personnel.

APPENDIX E - FORMS

ESS Level One Response Action Checklist

ESS LEVEL ONE RESPONSE ACTION CHECKLIST

The most common ESS activations are Level 1 events affecting a single family or a small number of individuals at one location. The checklist below is included in the Level 1 ESS Training Package and should be used by ESS responding to a Level 1 event.

ESS TEAM MEMBER:

Name of Responder: _____

Community: _____

CALL-OUT INFO:

☐ Date & Time: _____ ☐ Called out by: _____

☐ EMBC Task Number: _____ ☐ Number of affected homes: _____

EMBC Emergency Coordination Centre Ph. 1-800-663-3456.

☐ Name of evacuee/ family representative: _____

☐ Evacuee's current location (i.e. address of incident or alternate location): _____

☐ Cause of evacuation (i.e. fire, flood, etc.): _____

☐ Other Level One ESS Response volunteer(s) attending the incident: _____

All volunteers participating in this response must sign in on an EMBC Task Registration Form.

☐ Response Kit, which includes the following:

Response Kit		
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral Forms	<input type="checkbox"/> ESS Rates Sheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplier Consent Forms
<input type="checkbox"/> EMBC or Agency ID	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Resource List	<input type="checkbox"/> ESS Fact Sheets

Suggested additional supplies, if available: blankets, comfort kits, teddy bears, socks, dog leashes, pet carriers, etc.

ON SITE OF INCIDENT:

☐ Check in with the Incident Commander (usually a firefighter or police officer) as soon as you arrive.

☐ Advise supervisor immediately if the incident involves a death or other traumatic event.

☐ Do ground yourself and establish a personal connection with evacuees before proceeding with delivery.

Determine Eligibility		
(1) Is the home uninhabitable because of an emergency (i.e. fire, flood, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
(2) Does the evacuee indicate they require assistance to meet their immediate short-term needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<i>If No to either (1) or (2), the evacuee is not eligible for an ESS Referral.</i>		
<i>If Yes to both (1) and (2), proceed with the following questions below.</i>		
(3) Does the evacuated person or family have insurance to cover their loss?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No – ESS assistance may be provided up to 72 hours.		

ESS LEVEL ONE RESPONSE ACTION CHECKLIST

☐ Yes, or Uncertain – Insurance coverage unknown or evacuee needs interim assistance until insurance coverage can be accessed. Take steps to assist evacuee in connecting with their insurance provider.

4. What are the services required?

☐ Food ☐ Lodging ☐ Transport *If unavailable to pack before evacuation:* ☐ Clothing ☐ Incidentals

PROVIDING EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES:

Referral Forms Issued for:

☐ Restaurant or ☐ Groceries

☐ Commercial Lodging or ☐ Billet

☐ Clothing ☐ Incidental ☐ Transportation

☐ Attach ESS Rates sheet to white (supplier) copy of each Referral form and issue to evacuee to deliver to the suppliers.

Remind suppliers and evacuees that the evacuee is responsible for any extra costs (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, movies, phone calls, etc.)

☐ Give yellow copies of Referral forms and a copy of the ESS Rates sheet to evacuee for their reference.

☐ Attach green copies of all Referrals issued to the Action Checklist.

☐ Confirm details of the response and the stand down of activation with EMBC Emergency

Coordination Centre: 1-800-663-3456

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO EVACUEE:

☐ Community Resources List ☐ Local ESS Contact Phone Number

☐ Other: _____

NEWS MEDIA:

If you are approached by the media, follow the protocol provided by your team's Local or First Nation Government. For event-specific information, they should be referred to the Incident Commander.

DO NOT:

- Give out the family's name or location – you must always protect their privacy.
- Give details on the assistance you have provided to the family.
- Speculate on the incident – such as causes, damage, future development, etc.
- Comment on questions of controversial nature.

FOLLOW UP – WITHIN 3 DAYS OF EVACUATION

Date & Time: _____

☐ Contact the evacuee to see if they need referral to other community resources for support or material assistance. List Referrals, if any: _____

☐ Submit a completed EMBC Task Report to the local Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC), highlighting any unusual aspects or challenges. The EPC will then submit to the EMBC Regional Office.

☐ Send pink copies of all ESS Referral forms to EMBC HQ.

APPENDIX F - VIRTUAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Many ESS functions can be performed remotely by utilizing telephones and/or the ERA tool. Responders can contribute to remote operations over the phone or via email using Indigenous governing body or local authority email accounts.

EMCR supports the delivery of ESS forms to suppliers and evacuees by digital methods in support of virtual work environments. This includes emailing ERA generated PDFs or scans of paper forms to evacuees and EMCR Finance as required. Files which are too large to email can be sent to EMCR using the Provincial Government's secure file transfer service. All electronic files must be sent in PDF format (see the ESS Expenditure and Payment Process section for details).

ESS functions which may be performed virtually include:

- Conducting evacuee registration
- Providing referrals and e-transfers to evacuees (through the use of ERA)
- Performing needs assessments
- Coordinating supplier supports
- Providing information
- Facilitating access to partner agencies for provision of emotional support

The following suggestions may help facilitate the use of virtual work environments:

- Ensure responders are aware of the team's policy or direction on supporting virtual work environments (including use of personal phones).
- Maintain regular communication to keep members engaged, provide supports and develop awareness of the current situation.
- Assess whether your team has enough dedicated phone lines.
- Ensure internet access is available from remote work locations.
- Ensure responders have access to ESS forms.
- Develop documentation methods to support responders.
- Ensure responders have the tools and knowledge to send PDF referral forms electronically.
- Assess what other tools might be required to offer virtual service.
- Ensure responders have access to Indigenous governing body or local authority email accounts for correspondence with suppliers and evacuees. Responders may use their personal computers if they have access to these email accounts.
- Consider initiating a call centre model during larger responses.
- As virtual environments present a communication barrier to many, ESS responders should ensure they are mindful of cultural safety and humility practices.

ESS forms and ERA documents cannot be sent through personal email. Protecting responder and evacuee personal information remains a priority while delivering ESS remotely. Indigenous governing body or local authority email accounts should be used in all correspondence with evacuees and EMCR. Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities are responsible to provide access to appropriate email accounts, including the use of personal computers.

APPENDIX G - EVACUEE MEDICATION

During an evacuation an evacuee may lose access to important prescribed medication. If individuals have health concerns, they must contact their health-care provider or emergency medical services.

In consultation with HEMBC, the ESS program can provide the following guidance to responders assisting evacuees who have not retrieved their medications. ESS responders must not ask about or record medical details (such as medical condition or medication type) in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act and to avoid any consequences resulting from this information being shared within the ESS system. **ESS Referrals cannot be approved for prescription medication.**

To support medication needs the ESS responder on site or at an RC in the function of Registration may follow the steps below.

Ask the following questions:

- “Do you or any others registering with you take medications?”
- If “yes” then, “Do you have sufficient supply for the next 72 hours?”
- If “no” refer the evacuee to the RC health services branch for assistance (if activated).
- No notation is printed on their ESS file about their medical condition.
- ESS responders do not ask any further questions regarding the household’s medical situation which is private and personal information.
- If a member of the household has not retrieved their medication; the health services branch or ESS responder advises the evacuee to present themselves at a pharmacy and ask for an emergency prescription refill.

The College of Pharmacists of B.C. Professional Practice Policy 31 provides guidance to pharmacists when providing patients with an emergency supply of prescription drugs for continuity of care in exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act Bylaws section 19(7)(d).

A pharmacist may exercise professional judgment to provide a patient with an emergency supply of prescription drugs for continuity of care following guidance principles. If financially difficult and a BC PharmaCare beneficiary who has met their deductible, BC PharmaCare coverage will function as normal and reasonable supplies under the circumstance may be dispensed, subject to deductibles or co-pays as usual. Additional information can be obtained from HealthLink BC at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/pharmacist-services>.