

4.02 INTERIM PROVISION OF SANDBAGS POLICY

4.02.1 GENERAL

Provision of sandbags policy describes the provision and funding of sandbags or provincially owned sandbag machines and the reimbursement of costs incurred for sand, rental of sandbag machines and other expenses directly related to the use of sandbags during flood response activities. This policy does not allow the use of sandbags for the creation of permanent flood protection works.

Sandbags are the primary option used in imminent flood threat works when deemed appropriate by local government.

For the 2017 freshet season, sandbag disposal will be considered a local government response activity, requiring submission of an Expense Authorization Form (EAF Form 530) from affected local government EOCs to their appropriate EMBC PREOC.

If Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) has been approved for an emergency event, eligible residents, small businesses, farm operations and charitable organizations may be eligible for compensation to remove sandbags as part of DFA eligible clean-up costs.

4.02.2 DEFINITIONS

See [Terms and Definitions](#)

4.02.3 POLICY STATEMENTS

- (1) The Province will maintain a provincial stockpile of sandbags to supplement the needs of provincial ministries and local governments (including local authorities, First Nation communities and their respective Band Councils).
- (2) EMBC will provide sandbags to local governments upon request to construct imminent flood threat works.
- (3) The Province will reimburse local governments for the purchase of sand, the rental of sandbag machines and incremental labour costs directly related to the use of sandbags according to the "Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs; A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations."
- (4) **For the 2017 Freshet season**, the Province will reimburse **local governments** for costs related to the removal and disposal of sandbags as a response activity.

4.02.4 CONDITIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) EMBC will provide sandbags to be held and distributed by local governments as follows:
 - a. In the readiness phase of spring freshet or fall flood season.
 - b. When the threat of flooding is imminent.
 - c. During a flood incident response for which EMBC has issued a Task Number.

- (2) Local governments are responsible for requesting, storing, distributing, filling, removing and disposing of sandbags provided by EMBC.
- (3) Sandbags are not to be returned to EMBC once they have been issued to a local government staging area.
- (4) Reimbursement of sandbagging costs when materials, equipment and labour is purchased directly by a local government, shall be calculated using the unit rate paid by EMBC for sandbags in inventory or the actual rate paid by the local government, whichever is the lesser.
- (5) Contaminated sandbags should be disposed of appropriately (and will be considered a local government response activity for the 2017 Freshet Season).
- (6) Debris disposal costs (e.g. municipal tipping fees) are a reimbursable expense, unless the cost is incurred at a facility operated by the same local government from which the debris was collected; foregone revenue (e.g. waived tipping fees) is not eligible for reimbursement, no matter where the debris was collected.

4.02.5 DISPOSAL OF SANDBAGS

- (1) Sandbags should be disposed of as directed by the local government.
- (2) Following are general guidelines to supplement local government directions for the disposal of sandbags:
 - a. Gloves and proper footwear should be worn when handling uncontaminated wet sandbags.
 - b. After handling uncontaminated wet sandbags, hands and other exposed body parts should be washed thoroughly with soap and water, and clothing should be laundered.
 - c. In accordance with the Water Sustainability Act, sand from sandbags (including uncontaminated sand) must not be placed directly into, or adjacent to, streams, lakes, ponds, rivers, creeks, springs, ravines, gulches, wetlands or glaciers (whether or not they contain water or ice).
 - i. Local governments may contact the appropriate Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) Regional Operations Office to obtain more information about interpretation of the Water Sustainability Act.
 - d. Sandbags that have been exposed to sewage should be considered as contaminated.
 - i. Sandbags exposed to sewage should also be reported by phone as a possible Dangerous Goods Incident to 1-800-663-3456.
 - ii. The local Health Authority may be contacted to obtain further information about sandbags exposed to sewage.
 - e. Sandbags that have been exposed to oils, hydrocarbons, or other hazardous substances in amounts that can be seen or otherwise easily detected should be considered as contaminated.
 - i. Sandbags exposed to oils, hydrocarbons or hazardous substances should also be reported by phone as a possible Dangerous Goods Incident to 1-800-663-3456.



- f. If doubt exists as to whether sand was contaminated before being used in sandbags, it should be considered as contaminated.
- g. Sand that was uncontaminated before being used in sandbags, and which has not been subsequently contaminated (e.g. exposed to sewage or other hazardous substances), may be considered safe for some uses:
 - i. Examples of such uses may include construction, industrial or gardening activities; as well as placement in playgrounds, sandboxes, etc.
 - ii. Any use of safe sand from sandbags should follow direction provided by the local government.
- h. Both cloth (e.g. burlap or hessian) and plastic (e.g. woven polypropylene) sandbag sacks should always be disposed of or recycled in an appropriate manner.

4.02.6 AUTHORITIES

- (1) Emergency Program Act
- (2) Water Sustainability Act

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4.02.7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- (1) Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs – A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations.
- (2) 4.03 Interim Local Government Debris Removal Guidelines