



PreparedBC

# In It Together: Neighbourhood Preparedness Guide



### Your guide to neighbourhood preparedness

Being prepared isn't just about what supplies you have. It's about the people around you and how you can work together in an emergency. Getting to know your neighbours ahead of an emergency can help you to work together and offer support when you need it the most.

This is important since the most immediate help following an emergency, like a flood or earthquake, will likely come from those around you: people you live with and your neighbours.

This guide will help increase your personal preparedness and provide conversation starters to help you connect with your neighbours about preparedness.



Get a pen and paper or your computer ready so you can take notes while working through this guide. Keep an eye out for the **notes icon**.



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### **Building Resilience Through Community Connections: Lessons learned from the Skwah Flood of 1948**

The 1948 flood was a significant and devastating event for the Skwah First Nation community. According to Elder Lester Mussell, as shared through conversations with his parents, they provided crucial support to neighbours in their community during the flood. Although the flood did not affect their own home to the same extent as the rest of the community, Elder Lester's parents opened their doors to help those who had been impacted. Elder Lester recalled how his parents consistently offered assistance and support to their community in any way they could.

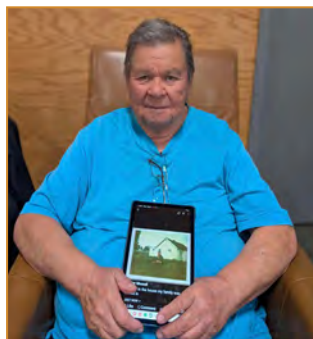
The flood taught us the importance of knowing your neighbours. With climate change affecting us now and in the future, it is crucial to reach out and build those relationships. We must share knowledge, resources, and information, and learn as much from each other as we can. To build resilience within our own communities, hosting events with supporting agencies and other Nations allows us to share training information, preparedness measures, and aid in clear communication to our members before an emergency.

As a result, these agencies also gain an understanding of our location, while better learning how to support us. Neighborhood preparedness starts with these connections, ensuring we're ready for anything that comes our way. Lets'emó:t means "one heart, one mind" in Halq'eméylem.

Contributed by Skwah Emergency Management Team



Preschoolers learning to use fire extinguishers  
with the Fire Department



Elder Lester Mussell with a photo of his  
father in the same location he lives in now

### Complete the PreparedBC Home Emergency Plan

Emergency preparedness begins at home.

Visit **[PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlan](https://PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlan)** to download a free, fill-in-the-blanks guide or complete the interactive Emergency Ready Plan.

It's important to have a plan to keep yourself, the people you live with and your home safe before responding to neighbourhood needs.



### Meet your neighbours

Use this guide as an icebreaker and reach out to your neighbours. If you already have a neighbourhood network in place, such as a Block Watch group, resident's association or strata council, start there. Or you may want to organize a barbecue or potluck as a fun way to bring your neighbours together.

Not all neighbours are going to want to be involved in everything, and that's ok! You can still share a copy of your neighbourhood plan.



### Prepare to host a meeting

Decide on a date and time for your meeting. Invite your neighbours to join. Consider discussing the topics listed below at your meeting. Remember, these are ideas to get the conversation started. You don't need to get through it all at once.

### Hazards

Learn the potential hazards in your area, such as floods or earthquakes, and how they might impact your community. Not sure? Visit **[PreparedBC.ca/hazards](https://PreparedBC.ca/hazards)** or ask your local emergency management program.



### Personal and home preparedness

To better help your neighbours during an emergency, you need to be personally prepared. Encourage your neighbours to complete the PreparedBC home emergency plan at **[PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlan](https://PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlan)**.



### Unique needs

Identify and include anyone who might need extra assistance, such as people with small children or pets, older adults, people with disabilities or people who speak English as a second language.



### Skills and resources

Discuss what skills or resources might be of use in an emergency and what you might be able to offer to others.

For example, who has a barbecue, generator or chainsaw? Who has construction, first-aid or cooking skills? Does anyone know additional languages and could interpret for other neighbours in need?



### Know where to get information

#### Contact your local emergency management program

Connect with your First Nation or local government's emergency management program and check their website for additional information.

Reach out to your emergency program's coordinator if you have any questions. Find out how they will share alerts and instructions during an emergency, whether it's by social media, mobile alerts, sirens, radio or television.

Check out **[civicinfo.bc.ca/municipalities](https://civicinfo.bc.ca/municipalities)** to find your community's contact information.



### EmergencyInfoBC

Additionally, we recommend following **@EmergencyInfoBC** on X (formerly Twitter) or at **[EmergencyInfoBC.ca](https://EmergencyInfoBC.ca)** for emergency updates.



In B.C., local governments lead the initial response to emergencies and disasters in their communities. As required by law, they prepare, maintain, and implement emergency plans. Contact your local government for more information on your community's plan.



### Gather emergency supplies

Encourage everyone who is part of the neighbourhood plan to gather supplies for their emergency kit and grab-and-go bag.

### Build a home emergency kit

Following an emergency, you may need to stay at home with an emergency kit. Put supplies in one or two containers. Your emergency kit should include supplies for up to two (2) weeks.

#### Include:

- ☐ Non-perishable food with a manual can opener
- ☐ Water: four litres per person, per day for drinking and sanitation
- ☐ Phone charger, power bank or inverter
- ☐ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and flashlight
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ First-aid kit and medications
- ☐ Personal toiletries and items, such as an extra pair of glasses
- ☐ Copy of your emergency plan
- ☐ Copies of important documents, such as insurance papers and identification and cash in small bills
- ☐ Garbage bags and moist towelettes for personal sanitation
- ☐ Seasonal clothing, sturdy footwear and emergency blanket
- ☐ Dust masks
- ☐ Whistle



Talk to your neighbours about a central storage space for communal emergency items like water. Discuss how to keep track of available resources.



### Build grab-and-go bags

A grab-and-go bag is a small personalized emergency kit that's easy to take with you if you must evacuate. Everyone you live with, including pets, need their own grab-and-go bag. It's a good idea to make grab-and-go bags for your home, workplace and vehicle.

#### Include:

- ☐ Food (ready to eat) and water
- ☐ Phone charger and power bank
- ☐ Small battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- ☐ Battery-powered or hand-crank flashlight
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ Small first-aid kit and personal medications
- ☐ Personal toiletries and items, such as an extra pair of glasses
- ☐ Copy of your emergency plan
- ☐ Copies of important documents, such as insurance papers (including claims contact information) and identification
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Local map with your household meeting places identified
- ☐ Seasonal clothing and an emergency blanket
- ☐ Pen and notepad
- ☐ Whistle



Make sure everyone has a Help/OK sign in their emergency kit. Place it in your window during an emergency. This helps neighbours who volunteer to check in on others, and emergency responders know who needs help first.

### Assign roles and responsibilities

It can be difficult to think clearly during and immediately after an emergency. Ask that people volunteer for a specific role, so you can assign responsibility before an emergency. This will help create a more coordinated response.



Record each person's role on the contact information list located on the next page. Roles could include:

### Checking on others

During an emergency, visit every home involved in your plan. Give priority to those who need extra support. Bring a first aid kit and blankets in case anyone needs help or additional warmth. Simple acts of kindness go a long way.



### Checking utilities and other potential hazards

Check for fallen trees or power lines, sinkholes or other damage. Take appropriate action to keep people safe.



### Gathering information

Listen to the radio and monitor other trusted sources of information. Share relevant information with your neighbours.



### Fixing and cleaning up

Assist others in securing their properties, boarding up windows and removing debris. Do not enter residences that could be unsafe. For instance, beware of electrical wires and outlets underwater, as well as windows, gutters, walls or other unsecured items that could fall down.



## Neighbours' contact information



List contact information here and discuss how you will communicate in an emergency. Try options like the buddy system, a phone tree or a group chat.

**Name** .....

**Home Number/Address** .....

**Phone** .....

**Skills/Resources** .....

**Emergency role** .....

**Name** .....

**Home Number/Address** .....

**Phone** .....

**Skills/Resources** .....

**Emergency role** .....



Remember: neighbourhood volunteers are not official first responders. Keep yourself safe and always follow instructions from local officials and first responders.

**Name** .....

**Home Number/Address** .....

**Phone** .....

**Skills/Resources** .....

**Emergency role** .....

**Name** .....

**Home Number/Address** .....

**Phone** .....

**Skills/Resources** .....

**Emergency role** .....

**Name** .....

**Home Number/Address** .....

**Phone** .....

**Skills/Resources** .....

**Emergency role** .....

### Identify emergency meeting places

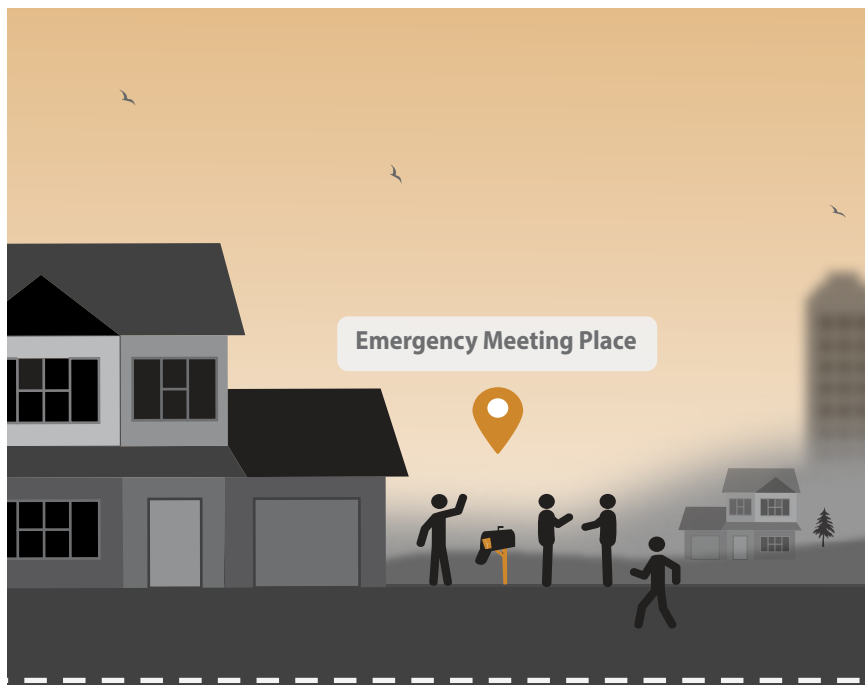
Talk to your neighbours and identify a safe place where you can meet to evaluate the situation and follow through with your assigned roles.

During an emergency, follow your home emergency plan and make sure you and your loved ones are safe.

Then, if it's safe to stay in your neighbourhood, check in at the meeting place listed in your neighbourhood plan. You don't need to wait for everyone to arrive to activate your plan.



Choose one meeting place close by, like a mailbox on your street. Choose another meeting place farther away, like a nearby park.



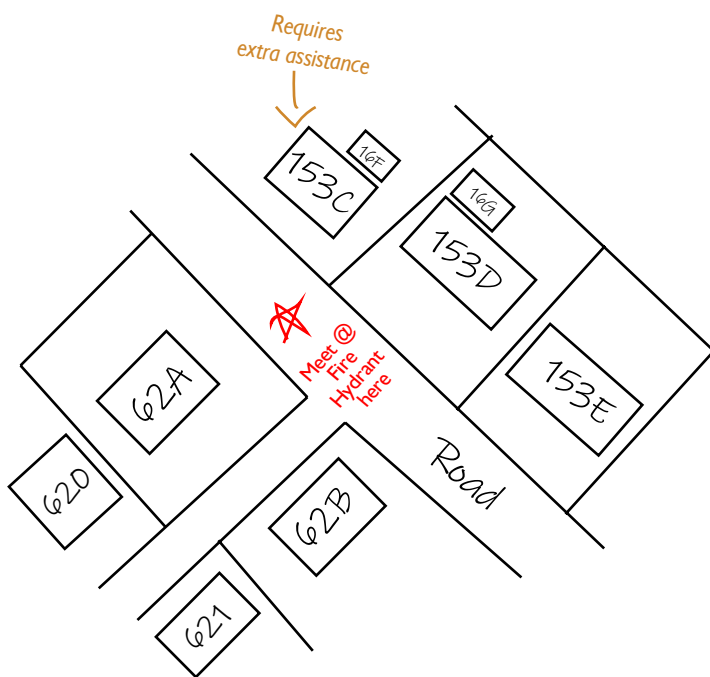
### Map your neighbourhood

Create a map of your neighbourhood. Include:

- An outline of your neighbourhood with the addresses of participating neighbours and their emergency roles
- Your emergency meeting places
- Neighbours that might require extra assistance
- Location of shared resources or other items identified in your planning



Share a copy of the map with everyone who is part of the neighbourhood plan.



### Maintain and update your neighbourhood plan

Keep your completed neighbourhood emergency plan with your emergency kit, so you know where to find it.

Make digital copies to keep with you in case the physical copy is lost. Ensure everyone in your neighbourhood has a copy of the information.



Keep contact information up to date as people move in and out of your neighbourhood.

Each year, identify someone who will be responsible for organizing a get-together to review and update the plan. Some ideas to stay connected are:



Organizing an annual street BBQ or potluck



Taking a course together, like first-aid or fire extinguisher training



Welcoming new neighbours by taking over a tray of cookies or inviting them over for a meal



If you have an idea for a project in your neighbourhood, see if Neighbourhood Small Grants can help bring it to life. Visit **[neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca](https://neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca)**



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