

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND FIRST NATIONS

A Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Emergency Management Plans
for Local Authorities and First Nations in British Columbia

2nd Edition, January 2021



Emergency
Management **BC**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This *Emergency Management Planning Guide for Local Authorities and First Nations* (Planning Guide) was developed collaboratively by a working group of staff from Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC) and the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) and emergency management practitioners across British Columbia.

This Planning Guide is adapted, with permission, from the Justice Institute of BC's *Developing Emergency Management Plans* (April 2011).

FEATURES OF THIS PLANNING GUIDE

This Planning Guide includes the following features:

- ✓ **Info Boxes:** additional or clarifying information to support the main content of the Planning Guide
- ✓ **Template Tips:** Tips on how specific parts of this guide link to specific sections of the *Local Government Emergency Management Plan Template*
- ✓ **Helpful resources** are indicated by **red** (Note: in an effort to make this Planning Guide easily updatable while maintaining user-friendliness, web links are not directly hyperlinked to URLs in the body of the text, but rather listed and linked alphabetically in Appendix 1: Links and Resources at the end of this Planning Guide)



Template Tip: Keep a copy of the Template nearby while you are working through the Planning Process

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INTRODUCTION

British Columbia is a large and diverse province known for its natural beauty, yet no area within BC is immune to the threat of hazards, emergencies and potential disasters. When an emergency threatens or strikes, having an emergency management plan is a critical component in ensuring that your community is prepared to take immediate action to protect people, property and the environment.

This *Emergency Management Planning Guide* (Planning Guide) is part of the *Emergency Management Planning Toolkit for Local Authorities and First Nations* (Planning Toolkit) that has been developed by Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC) to **support Local Authorities and First Nations in the planning, development and implementation of their local emergency management plans.**

This Planning Guide offers a step-by-step approach to developing a plan that will provide a road map of actions to be taken in your community when an emergency occurs.

WHO IS THIS PLANNING GUIDE FOR?

This Planning Guide is for Local Authorities and First Nations (see Info Box 1) in British Columbia who are seeking to create or update emergency management plans. It is intended for use by Emergency Program Coordinators or other emergency management practitioners who lead emergency management planning efforts at the community level.

INFO BOX 1: EMBC, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND FIRST NATIONS

EMBC is committed to supporting **Local Authorities and First Nations** in British Columbia, acknowledging that each may have unique cultural and legislative emergency management considerations.

- *Local Authority/ies* refer to municipalities, regional districts, and Treaty First Nations who have specific legislated emergency management requirements set out in the **Emergency Program Act** (EPA).
- *First Nations* refers to on-reserve communities that are supported by Emergency Management BC through a 10-year bilateral agreement (the Agreement) signed in 2017 with the Federal Government. While the Federal Government, through the Department of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), holds the legislated responsibility for emergency management activities on First Nations Reserve Lands, the Agreement enables EMBC to provide First Nations with the full range of emergency management services that Local Authorities receive.

The Planning Guide is written for Local Authorities and First Nations who **have already completed** a Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA). The HRVA report is a foundation document for any community emergency program. If your community does not have an HRVA, consider completing one before continuing on with this Planning Guide. You can find more information on the HRVA in *Step 3: Review Hazards, Risks and Vulnerabilities*.

ABOUT THIS PLANNING GUIDE

This *Emergency Management Planning Guide* is based on recommended practices and standards for planning the development of an emergency management plan. It also reflects emergency plan requirements as set out in the **Emergency Program Act** (see Info Box 3). This piece of provincial legislation places certain responsibilities with Regional Districts, Municipalities and Treaty First Nations in British Columbia. EMBC acknowledges that First Nations on-reserve communities have diverse governance structures and are not bound to the EPA, though may choose to voluntarily follow EPA standards and may benefit from understanding the context for neighbouring Local Authorities.

This Planning Guide provides a step-by-step model for developing an **all-hazard emergency management plan**. An all-hazard emergency management plan provides an overview of your community's emergency response and recovery organization, describes the hazards that the plan intends to address, establishes the overall authority for conducting emergency management activities, and assigns roles and responsibilities for emergency planning and operations.

INFO BOX 2: OTHER TYPES OF EMERGENCY PLANS

Functional and hazard-specific annexes can complement your all-hazard emergency management plan. Other plans your community might already have or may consider creating include:

- ✓ Hazard Specific Plans to address threats identified in the HRVA (earthquake response plan, flood plan, etc.)
- ✓ Departmental Emergency Plans
- ✓ Business Continuity Plan - for maintaining essential services,
- ✓ Functional Plans (Emergency Operations Centre Plan, Evacuation plan, Emergency Social Services Plan, Communications Plan, etc.)
- ✓ Recovery Plan outlining how your community will plan recovery efforts after an emergency

This Planning Guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the **Emergency Management Plan Template** (Template). The Template can be used to create a new emergency management plan or to update existing plans. While this Planning Guide is designed to link to the Template, the planning process outlined here could also be applied to other types of emergency plans.

The Template offers the added benefit of promoting consistency across British Columbia to improve the Province's ability to support communities through interoperable emergency management processes.

EMBC acknowledges that each Local Authority and First Nation will have unique circumstances and considerations for emergency management planning. Both the Planning Guide and the Template are flexible. Communities are invited to adjust or expand the planning process and the Template to meet unique local emergency management contexts.

If you have questions about this Planning Toolkit, please contact your [EMBC Regional Office](#).

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS CHECKLIST

This Planning Guide recommends **ten steps** for planning, developing and maintaining an emergency management plan. Below you will find a checklist for these ten steps and the various tasks within each step. There is also a printable and adaptable version of this checklist in the [Planning Toolkit](#).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING STEPS AND TASKS	Completed
1. Determine the planning context	
Align with strategic initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete an inventory of existing plans and other documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify the authorization framework for your plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify the boundaries and demographics of your community	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align your plan with regional initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify and obtain the necessary resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Identify partners and their roles	
Create a comprehensive partners list	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an engagement plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize a planning committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Review hazards, risks & vulnerabilities	
Review current HRVA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider conducting a new HRVA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider developing hazard-specific & functional annexes	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Determine purpose & scope	
Write a purpose statement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Define the plan's objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify the scope of your plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify and examine assumptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Collect data and engage partners	
Review existing plans and other documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify knowledge gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect data from partners	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Create the plan	
Review template and adapt as desired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name and date the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Obtain feedback & approval	
Obtain feedback from partners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review feedback and integrate into the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain official approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribute plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Conduct orientations & training	
Identify who will require an orientation to the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conduct plan orientation and training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop an emergency operations centre staff training database	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify additional training requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop an ongoing training strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Exercise the plan	
Develop a multi-year exercise plan to test and validate the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Evaluate & Maintain the Plan	
Identify the owner and custodian of the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a maintenance schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribute amendments	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 1: DETERMINE THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Every community's emergency planning context is unique. Among other things, the planning context includes the strategic priorities, legal authority, jurisdictional boundaries and existing relevant plans, bylaws and resolutions of your Local Authority or First Nation. **Step 1** outlines a framework for determining the context that will provide the backdrop for your planning process. This information, along with what is collected in the following steps, will ultimately help define the purpose and scope of your emergency management plan (your Plan).

ALIGN WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Your planning process will be most effective when it is linked to the strategic priorities of your community.

Consider what priorities and initiatives align with the priority to create or update your Plan:

- ✓ Is there a strategic plan or work plan that identifies creating an Emergency Management Plan as a priority?
- ✓ Is there an established emergency management program? What are its current priorities?
- ✓ Will your Plan tie into a Comprehensive Community Plan, Official Community Plan, Regional Growth Strategy or other community planning process?
- ✓ What other priority initiatives or strategies in the community might this planning process connect to? (e.g. climate change, food security, health, hazard mitigation, community resilience or other department initiatives)

COMPLETE AN INVENTORY OF EXISTING PLANS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Many communities already have hazard or department-specific emergency management plans in place. Collecting these will provide insight into your existing emergency management capacity and resources. You will take a closer look at your inventory in *Step 5: Collect Data and Engage Partners*.



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to complete **Section 2.4 Related Plans and Documents**

Collect existing plans (draft and completed) and related documents such as:

- ✓ Existing and out-of-date all-hazard emergency management plans for your Local Authority/First Nation.
- ✓ Hazard-specific and functional plans such as evacuation, pandemic, community wildfire protection, recovery plans etc.
- ✓ Departmental emergency plans for infrastructure services (e.g. water & sewer systems)
- ✓ Existing plans from neighbouring communities
- ✓ After action reports from Emergency Operation Centre activations or exercises
- ✓ Mutual aid and mutual support agreements
- ✓ Relevant Municipal and/or Band Council resolutions, policies, and by-laws
- ✓ Operational Guidelines
- ✓ Official or Comprehensive community plans
- ✓ Existing **provincial emergency management plans**

IDENTIFY THE AUTHORIZATION FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR PLAN

It is important to understand how your Plan will be authorized, according to your community's governance and leadership structure.

Consider:

- ✓ Who facilitates the authorization of your emergency management plan?
- ✓ What mechanisms (bylaw, policy, regulation, resolution, legislation, protocol) are in place to authorize the development of your Plan?
 - Review the planning responsibilities for Local Authorities under the **Emergency Program Act** (See Info Box 5: The Emergency Program Act on page 10)
- ✓ When reviewing existing emergency bylaws or resolutions, consider:
 - Is the bylaw or resolution valid?
 - Is it time for a revision?
 - EMBC's website has **sample bylaws for Municipalities and Regional Districts**
- ✓ What is the sign-off process for your emergency management plan? (You'll need this information again in *Step 7 - Obtain official approval*)
- ✓ What mechanisms are in place to authorize the activation of the Plan?
- ✓ What relevant legislation or local bylaws and resolutions provide additional legal context to the Plan?

Emergency management plan bylaws or resolutions should be reviewed following each Local Authority or First Nation election to ensure that newly elected officials are made aware of their responsibilities to support the Plan and to ensure the provisions of bylaws are up to date.



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to populate **Section 2.3 Authority for the Plan** and **Section 2.5 Activation of the Plan**

INFO BOX 3: THE EMERGENCY PROGRAM ACT (EPA)

Throughout this Planning Guide and the corresponding Template, reference is made to the EPA requirements for Local Authorities. As noted in the introduction, the EPA applies to Regional Districts, Municipalities and Treaty First Nations in British Columbia. First Nations on-reserve communities are not bound to the EPA, though may voluntarily adopt EPA standards. Below is a table outlining the EPA, including the **Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation (LAEMR)**.

A local authority is required to have an emergency plan	<i>EPA 6(2)</i>
A local authority is required to establish and maintain an emergency management organization	<i>EPA 6 (3)</i>
A local authority may appoint committees and a coordinator for the emergency management organization	
A local authority may delegate any of its powers and duties under the Act to committees or a coordinator except the power to declare a state of local emergency	<i>EPA 6 (4)</i>
<p>A local authority emergency plan must reflect the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential emergencies and disasters within its jurisdiction • Their relative risk of occurrence and potential impact on people and property • Procedures for accessing resources such as personnel, equipment, facilities, and finance • Procedures for implementing the plan • Procedures to notify affected peoples of an impending disaster • Procedures to coordinate the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical services • Priorities for restoring essential services provided by the local authority and by other service providers • A training and exercise program for staff and agencies assigned responsibilities in the plan • Establish a procedure for periodic review and update of the plan. • Procedures for how guidance and direction is provided to the emergency management organization 	<i>LAEMR 2</i>
<p>Local authorities may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into mutual aid agreements with other authorities • Develop agreements with NGOs 	<i>LAEMR 3</i>

See the Act and Regulations for more detail:

- **Emergency Program Act (1996)**
- **Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation (LAEMR, 1995)**

IDENTIFY THE BOUNDARIES AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

It is important to define the geographic boundaries of your Local Authority or First Nation and identify the demographics of your community to understand the area and population you are planning for.

Identify:

- ✓ Geographic boundaries
- ✓ Municipal and Regional District administrative boundaries, Reserve land boundaries, Treaty land boundaries, boundaries of Aboriginal title areas and traditional territories.
- ✓ Electoral areas (for Regional Districts)
- ✓ First Nation communities in the area
- ✓ Park lands and protected areas and their respective authorities
- ✓ Population demographics (residents, commuters, visitors, vulnerable populations)



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to populate **Section 2.2 “Scope”**

ALIGN YOUR PLAN WITH REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Emergency Planning is most effective when it is collaborative. Collaboration can involve informal networking between neighbouring communities, more formal regional planning committees, establishing mutual aid agreements and so on. Consider connecting with neighbouring Local Authorities and First Nations to explore aligning your emergency program and plans.

See Info Box 4 for some examples of regional emergency management collaboration.

IDENTIFY AND OBTAIN THE NECESSARY RESOURCES

You will need appropriate funding and staffing to create and maintain an effective emergency plan. Be careful not to underestimate the time and resources required.

Consider:

- ✓ Staff time from your own team and other departments
- ✓ Time needed from Subject Matter Experts and partner input
- ✓ Facilities
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Financial and staff resources to continuously review, train, exercise and maintain the plan
- ✓ Sources of potential funding, including the **Community Emergency Preparedness Fund** and the **Emergency Management Assistance Program** for First Nations reserve communities.

INFO BOX 4: REGIONAL APPROACHES TO EMERGENCY PLANNING

Here are some ways that communities are collaborating on emergency management across the province:

- ✓ The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has a partnership between the regional district, municipalities and First Nations. The CVRD supports the Local Authorities and First Nations to build capacity, particularly for sharing EOC staff. They use one common Emergency Plan and training and exercise plan. The impacted jurisdiction always maintains control of emergency response and recovery with support from the other jurisdictions.
- ✓ The Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver (IPREM) is an intergovernmental partnership between the Province of British Columbia and Metro Vancouver, on behalf of the 23 local authorities.
- ✓ The Regional Emergency Management Partnership (REMP) is a partnership between the Province of British Columbia and the local authorities with the Capital Region.
- ✓ The Mid-Island Emergency Coordinators and Managers Committee (MIECM) is a group of Emergency Program Coordinators from the mid and northern sections of Vancouver Island and parts of the Sunshine Coast. They meet bi-monthly to develop and update plans, share exercise and training opportunities and best practices. They also provide support during protracted emergency responses.
- ✓ The Cariboo Regional District Emergency Program partners with municipalities on initiatives such as a regional MOU for Emergency Social Services and a mass notification system. The regional district also produces and shares public education materials, evacuation kits and information binders. The region, municipalities and other private and provincial agencies also meet regularly through stakeholder meetings and *lunch and learns*.

Step 1, *Determine the Planning Context*, was all about identifying the planning context specific to your Local Authority or First Nation and applying it to the development and/or updating of your emergency plan. The Template Tips identified places in the [Template](#) where you can populate some of the information you collected here. Remember to keep the context you have established in Step 1 in mind as you proceed through the next Steps.

Step 2: IDENTIFY PARTNERS and THEIR ROLES

Emergency management planning is most successful when it is a team effort. Emergency response requires coordination with numerous partners, so it is important to bring them into the planning process early on. Below are some suggestions for how to identify and involve others in your emergency management planning process.

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERS LIST

Create a list of all individuals, departments, organizations or agencies that have a direct or indirect responsibility or interest in the development and/or implementation of your Plan.

Consider:

- ✓ Internal and external partners
- ✓ Existing plans and organization charts
- ✓ Critical infrastructure providers within your community and critical goods and services that come from outside your community
- ✓ Important cultural resources in your community and the person(s) responsible for protecting them
- ✓ *Section 4: Identifying Stakeholders* of [BC Emergency Management Systems \(BCEMS\)](#) has additional information on identifying key partners and their potential roles in emergency management.
- ✓ The Roles and Responsibilities section of the [BC All Hazard Plan](#) has additional information about the roles of various partners during emergencies.

A Sample Partners List is provided in the [Planning Toolkit](#) which identifies potential important internal and external partners. You can expand and adapt this list or create your own.

This list will be used again when you collect data for the plan. Eventually, you will need to understand each partner's roles and responsibilities.

INFO BOX 5: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVENTORY

Every community has critical infrastructure (CI) that is essential during and after an emergency and it is important to complete a CI inventory *before* an emergency occurs.

EMBC website's [Critical Infrastructure \(CI\) Assessment Tool](#) section provides detailed information on identifying and assessing services and assets that are critical to provide to residents.

- There are ten nationally recognized critical infrastructure sectors: water, food, transportation, health, energy and utilities, safety, telecommunications and information technology, government, finance, and manufacturing.
- Your community may identify additional critical or significant infrastructure and services.

CREATE AN ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Partners should be consulted and included throughout the planning process. A few suggestions for engagement include:

- ✓ Form part of an executive emergency planning committee or subcommittee
- ✓ Provide subject matter expertise
- ✓ Collect data on specific functions or groups
- ✓ Provide information on existing response, recovery, and business continuity plan
- ✓ Support the writing of the plan
- ✓ Community consultation sessions
- ✓ Mainstream or social media

ORGANIZE A PLANNING COMMITTEE

It is important to bring a group of committed people together to strategize and develop your Plan. An Emergency Planning Committee may already be established and authorized in your local emergency program bylaw or resolution. If not, establish a committee or community planning team and identify its main objectives. The committee may be responsible for writing or updating the Plan or may serve a more comprehensive and longer-term role in providing guidance and strategic direction to a community's broader emergency management program.

Consider:

- ✓ Do you need to form a planning committee from scratch or is there an existing committee focused on emergency management?
- ✓ Who should be on the committee? Key members may include representatives from Local Authority or First Nations departments (health, finance, planning), local law enforcement and first responders (fire, ambulance, emergency social services), and relevant agencies and organizations (health authority, school district)
- ✓ Check relevant emergency management bylaws or resolutions for information pertaining to the planning committee
- ✓ Draft a Terms of Reference
- ✓ Establish committee communications and meeting schedule
- ✓ Keep the group manageable, subject matter experts may only be required on an as needed basis
- ✓ Remember that committee members may have other roles they fill in their communities, set realistic expectations for participating and timelines.

Partners within and external to your Local Authority or First Nation provide key information for successful emergency management planning. Once you have your planning context, planning committee, and partner group established, it is time to start identifying the elements of your Plan. Throughout the next Steps you will identify tasks that will require stakeholder and partner input. We identify more tips for engaging with partners in Step 5, *Collect Data and Engage Partners*.

Step 3: REVIEW HAZARDS, RISKS and VULNERABILITIES

A Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) is an assessment of the sources of potential harm, their likelihood of occurring, the severity of their possible impacts, and who or what is particularly exposed or vulnerable to these impacts. **An HRVA is conducted before emergency plans are developed.**



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to populate **Section 4** “Hazards, Risks and Vulnerabilities”

The results from the HRVA are the cornerstones of the planning process and will be used to develop planning priorities and help a community make risk-based choices to address vulnerabilities, mitigate hazards, and prepare for response and recovery from disasters.

For municipalities and regional districts, the **Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation** mandates that Local Authority emergency plans be based on relative risk of occurrence and potential impact on people and property of emergencies that could affect their jurisdiction.

REVIEW CURRENT HRVA

Review your community or region’s most recent Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis and consider:

- ✓ When was the last time your community conducted a comprehensive HRVA?
- ✓ Has it been updated on a regular basis?
- ✓ Are there any new hazards or vulnerabilities in the area since it was last updated? (For example: new industry, transportation routes, increased industrial traffic, changes in demographics, etc.)

CONSIDER CONDUCTING A NEW HRVA

If you find that an HRVA is out of date or has not been conducted, consider suspending further emergency planning until this key element is addressed.

- There are several tools available for conducting an HRVA: EMBC offers an **HRVA Tool** and the Justice Institute of BC has **HRVA Courses** as well as several tools available through the **Aboriginal Disaster Resilience Planning Program**.

CONSIDER DEVELOPING HAZARD-SPECIFIC & FUNCTIONAL ANNEXES

The **Emergency Management Plan Template** suggests including hazard-specific annexes or contingency plans for more common or high-risk hazards, as determined by your HRVA. Examples may include response plans for earthquake, flood, tsunami, or drought. This could also include hazard-specific mitigation plans such as the **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**.



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to populate the “Annexes” section of your Plan

Your HRVA will also identify vulnerable populations that may require special planning. This could include people with disabilities, mental illness, people living in poverty, elders and seniors, newcomers and tourists.

The following guides can be found in the [PreparedBC Guide Library](#):

- [PreparedBC: Emergency Plan and Guide for Tourism Operators](#)
- [PreparedBC: Resources for People with Disabilities](#)
- [A Functional Needs Frameworks for Every Community: Emergency Planning and Response for People with Disabilities](#)
- [PreparedBC: Guide for Small Businesses](#)
- [PreparedBC: In it Together: Neighbourhood Preparedness Guide](#)
- [PreparedBC: Guide for Apartments, Condos and Townhomes](#)

The HRVA will identify the greatest risks and vulnerabilities within your community. Without this information it is difficult to know what you are planning for. The HRVA informs the next step of the planning process, which is to determine the purpose and scope of the plan.

Step 4: DETERMINE PURPOSE and SCOPE

Developing clear parameters for the plan will help you effectively communicate the intended outcomes of the plan to partners and will help you narrow the focus of your planning project.



Template Tip: This section links directly both [Sections 2.1 and 2.2 “Purpose and Objectives”](#) and [“Scope”](#) of your plan template. Complete those sections simultaneously.

When determining the parameters for the plan, develop statements for overall plan purpose, scope, and assumptions. Collectively, these will clearly define the overall planning parameters.

WRITE A PURPOSE STATEMENT

A purpose statement is the intended outcome of the plan. It should be brief and clear. This statement focuses the Plan without going into detail, and becomes akin to a mission statement, aim, or broad goal for the plan.

Consider the following questions:

- ✓ What is the plan being developed to do?
- ✓ Who is the plan being developed for?
- ✓ Where and when does the plan apply?
- ✓ Why is the plan being developed? (What is the expected outcome following implementation?)

Example statement could be:

“The purpose of the Emergency Management Plan is to outline the structure and organization required to effectively coordinate the response and recovery to emergencies within the [name of

community]. This plan does not provide operational guidance for emergencies which are coordinated at the site by first responding agencies.”

DEFINE THE PLAN’S OBJECTIVES

Measurable objectives should clearly define the specific outcomes that need to occur for the Plan to successfully complete its purpose. In general, an all-hazard or high-level plan should focus on knowledge-based objectives as opposed to application-based objectives.

General knowledge-based objectives examples include:

- ✓ *Summarize the potential hazards and risks present within the community*
- ✓ *Establish a procedure for a periodic review and update of the plan*
- ✓ *Outline the procedures for implementing the plan*
- ✓ *Identify internal and external communications procedures of notification of an impending disaster*
- ✓ *Identify how provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical services are provided to people affected by emergencies*
- ✓ *Identify how the needs of vulnerable population groups will be addressed during an emergency*
- ✓ *Identify the functional roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners*
- ✓ *Identify the logistical support and resource requirements necessary for implementing the plan*
- ✓ *Identify priorities for restoring essential services provided by the Local Authority or First Nation and by external service providers.*
- ✓ *Outline any mutual aid agreements*
- ✓ *Outline a training and exercise program for staff assigned responsibilities in the plan*

Application-based objectives belong in your operational guidelines (see [Emergency Operations Centre Operational Guidelines](#)) or response action plans and may include:

- ✓ Summarize Evacuate all impacted facilities within 30 minutes of notification
- ✓ Activate Emergency Operations Centre within 60 minutes of a major emergency

General knowledge-based objectives are recommended to ensure a comprehensive, overarching emergency management plan. Application-based objectives are better suited to your response guidelines and are evaluated through exercises or actual response operations.

IDENTIFY THE SCOPE OF YOUR PLAN

The scope limits your planning context. This could include the geographic area the Plan covers, the demographics of your community, the main industries and livelihoods of the community, and the hazards your Plan will be addressing.

It can be helpful to define “in-scope” and “out-of-scope” elements. For example:

In-scope:

- ✓ *Natural Disasters occurring within the jurisdiction of Sunny Mountain*
- ✓ *Incidents involving the accidental or intentional release of hazardous materials*

Out-of-scope:

- ✓ *Hazardous materials incidents that arise outside of the jurisdiction of Sunny Mountain*
- ✓ *Routine or day-to-day response to fire, police or ambulance incidents*

IDENTIFY AND EXAMINE ASSUMPTIONS

Like scope, identifying assumptions is helpful in framing the overall planning context by describing the planning considerations that are assumed to be true. The planning committee may need to validate or confirm these assumptions throughout the planning process.

In order to ensure the validity of the plan, the planning assumptions must have a reasonable expectation of being correct. For instance, a planning committee making the assumption that most evacuated residents of a community will have access to a car may be reasonable for some neighbourhoods, but may be a false assumption for the inner-city core or communities with lower household incomes. Examples of assumptions include:

- ✓ *80% of the resources and response personnel currently identified in the community will be available to respond during a major emergency*
- ✓ *Resources identified to be acquired through mutual aid agreements will be available during the emergency*
- ✓ *Non-resident population within the community will not exceed 1000 people.*
- ✓ *Only one disaster will occur at a time*
- ✓ *All people in positions expected to respond will have been trained upon activation of the plan.*

The planning committee should examine each assumption and address any that may not be considered realistic.

The parameters may need to be revised because of changes in the planning context or as a result of new information identified during the planning process. Revisions may occur at any point during the planning process but should be vetted by the planning committee before being implemented.

Step 5: COLLECT DATA AND ENGAGE PARTNERS

You've identified the purpose, scope and assumptions for your Plan. By comparing these against any existing plans or your plan template, you will identify what gaps need further consideration. To fill these gaps, you will need to engage and collect data from partners.

REVIEW EXISTING PLANS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Step 1 suggested making an inventory of relevant existing plans and documents. Now is the time to take a closer look at that documentation for information and ideas on how to meet the objectives outlined in Step 4.

Consider:

- ✓ Existing and out-of-date emergency plans for your jurisdiction
- ✓ Existing emergency response plans for infrastructure and services (i.e. water & sewer systems, etc.)

- ✓ Existing plans from neighbouring jurisdictions and other partners (as examples)
- ✓ After action reports from any activations or exercises
- ✓ Mutual Aid agreements
- ✓ Operational Guidelines
- ✓ Official Comprehensive Community Plan
- ✓ Bylaw or Resolutions which may establish formal agreements
- ✓ Maps
- ✓ Provincial documents such as **BCEMS** and the **BC All-Hazard Plan**

IDENTIFY KNOWLEDGE GAPS

As you review the documentation list above, review the objectives developed in Step 4 and begin to populate parts of the plan template for information you know to be true. From there you can identify areas where further information is required. List these gaps as they will help inform the questions you will want to ask partners.

COLLECT DATA FROM PARTNERS

Using the same partner list from Step 2, make a plan for what information can be gathered from whom, and the method you will use to obtain that data. A few suggestions include:

- ✓ Interviews
 - Interviews can be formal one-on-one interviews with a list of questions sent out ahead of time so the interviewee can prepare. Alternatively, more informal meetings can take place.
- ✓ Focus groups
 - Consider having larger group discussions to generate a wider variety of experiences and perspectives. This might be most appropriate for departments where a number of individuals responded to an event.
- ✓ Surveys
 - Surveys can be a less time-consuming method of data collection. They can be handed out in person, emailed, or web-based.
- ✓ Partner and Stakeholder meetings
- ✓ Assessment Tools

INFO BOX 6: COLLECTING EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Set up a meeting with a representative from each identified stakeholder. Questions to consider asking include:

- What service or resources can or do they provide to your community before, during, and after an emergency?
- What resources are my Local Authority/First Nation required to provide the stakeholder?
- What emergency management plans do they have in place?
- What business continuity plans are in place? What are our interdependencies?
- What are the expectations regarding communicating with an activated Emergency Operations Centre?
- What are the expectations for recovery efforts?
- What documents already outline these roles and responsibilities?

Step 6: CREATE THE PLAN

It's now time to focus on writing your emergency management plan.

Steps 1-5 have involved collecting much of the information you will need to populate your Plan. Step 6 provides basic tips for writing your Plan while greater detail can be found in [Emergency Management Plan Template](#) which outlines recommended elements of an All-Hazard Plan.



Template Tip: We recommend reviewing the [Emergency Management Plan Template in its entirety](#) before beginning to populate it. Remember, you can adapt the Template to your community's needs and objectives.

REVIEW TEMPLATE AND ADAPT AS DESIRED

- ✓ While reviewing the template, make note of any information you need that may not have been collected in Steps 1-5.
- ✓ Based on your identified Plan objectives, create and adapt sections and annexes of the plan template.
- ✓ Cross-reference any adaptations and additions to your Plan's table of contents

WRITE THE PLAN

Tips:

- ✓ Use plain language.
- ✓ Be concise.
- ✓ Use point form.
- ✓ Ensure the content reflects the purpose and scope identified in Step 4.
- ✓ Establish realistic expectations for partners and the public.
- ✓ Keep operational guidelines, forms, checklists, and quick reference sheets self-contained and include them as easily removable appendices and annexes.
- ✓ Include any personal contact information (including suppliers) in a separate annex rather than spread throughout numerous documents for security and easy amendment.

NAME AND DATE THE PLAN

To provide consistency throughout the province, consider “<<Local Authority or First Nation>> Emergency Management Plan <<year>>”. For example, *Community of Sunny Mountain, Emergency Management Plan 2017*.

Congratulations on your work so far! Writing or updating an emergency management plan is no small task. The next steps outline important activities that need to happen to ensure the plan is formally approved and that everyone knows and practices their role in the plan.

Step 7: OBTAIN FEEDBACK and APPROVAL

After developing or updating a plan, getting feedback and approval from your community's leadership is important. Those who gave input to the plan will also need to validate the plan and ensure that the roles and responsibilities with their organization are correctly reflected. Once finalized, feedback and revisions should be shared with all partners. A process for sharing the final plan needs to be developed including appropriate format for distribution (hardcopy, electronic, etc.). This review process has the added benefit of reminding partners what they committed to do.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM PARTNERS

Review your list of partners from Step 2. Identify anyone that needs to review and provide input before the plan is published. Those not required to give input at this stage can be involved in Step 8: Orientation and Training.

Consider:

- ✓ Keep the process manageable by sending subject matter experts and leadership only the parts of the Plan that are of interest or concern to them.
- ✓ Choose systems for collaborative review and revision that best suits the needs of those reviewing the Plan. It may be of benefit to use an electronic collaboration process to keep the project moving and allow for everyone to stay up-to-date on the current version.

REVIEW FEEDBACK AND INTEGRATE INTO THE PLAN

Review suggestions and make any necessary changes to the plan.

OBTAIN OFFICIAL APPROVAL

Ensure you understand how the plan is authorized within the governance structure of your community. Usually this requires getting approval from the Mayor or Chief as well as the Council or Board.

Consider:

- ✓ Writing into the plan that you can make annual minor amendments without having to go through Council (and include a process for notifying them of these changes).
- ✓ How you will present the information for approval: presentation, written proposal etc.

DISTRIBUTE PLAN

Identify who will receive an official copy of your Emergency Management Plan. Distribute the Plan and identify the process by which amendments to the plan will be communicated.

In Step 8, you will identify orientation and training opportunities, providing an avenue for distribution of the Plan.



Template Tip: Use the information in this step to populate [Section 1.3 Distribution List](#)

Step 8: CONDUCT ORIENTATIONS and TRAINING

It is important to ensure that everyone with assigned roles and responsibilities within the Plan understands their function and has had an opportunity to practice so when real emergencies occur everyone can react quickly and efficiently. It also provides an opportunity to identify any potential gaps and make appropriate changes as necessary.

For Local Authorities, including a training and exercise program for staff/agencies who have assigned responsibilities in the Plan is mandated by the Emergency Program Act.

IDENTIFY WHO WILL REQUIRE AN ORIENTATION TO THE PLAN

Look back at your list of partners identified in Step 2. Identify individuals, departments, and organizations that have a role to play in the Plan will require an orientation to the Plan.

CONDUCT PLAN ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Training on the Plan is designed to prepare Local Authorities, First nations and key organizations for operational activities. Orientation and training can occur through many different methods, including:

- ✓ Executive level briefings and presentations
- ✓ Functional training for groups expected to respond
- ✓ Department-specific training
- ✓ Public Education Campaigns or community meetings
- ✓ Emails

DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE STAFF TRAINING DATABASE

Identify the training that your Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff have already received and record into a database. Having a database ensures that these records outlast the knowledge of the emergency program coordinator.



Template Tip: See Appendix 5: EOC Staff Training Matrix and Volunteer Database

IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There may be specific training to the Plan that you need to develop. There are also a variety of emergency management training opportunities to provide ongoing development of emergency management program capacities.

Explore:

- ✓ EMBC sponsored emergency management training for Local Authority and First Nation staff and volunteers
- ✓ Emergency Social Services (ESS), Search and Rescue (SAR), Elected Officials Training, EOC Training, Recovery Training
- ✓ Developing specific training to the requirements and processes of your Plan

DEVELOP AN ONGOING TRAINING STRATEGY

All emergency plans should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that outdated practices are brought up-to-date and lessons learned during activations or exercises are integrated into the Plan. It is also important to conduct orientation and training after new procedures or policies are put in place. Identify a training schedule that works for your community.

After initial orientation and training are complete, and those with roles and responsibilities in the plan understand their functions, it is time to practice the Plan.



Template Tip: Describe your ongoing training strategy in Appendix 11: Training and Exercise Schedule

Step 9: EXERCISE THE PLAN

The Plan must be exercised (practiced) by everyone assigned a role in the Plan (as well as other key partners) to ensure that the Plan has the potential to succeed during an emergency. Exercises are not a test of individual performance but meant rather to strengthen the systems outlined in the plan.

For Local Authorities, the Emergency Program Act mandates that emergency management plans outline how they will be exercised.

DEVELOP A MULTI-YEAR EXERCISE PLAN TO TEST AND VALIDATE THE PLAN

By building a multi-year exercise program for your emergency plan you can ensure scenarios are used to gradually build capacity. Consider using different exercise techniques including tabletops, drills, functional and full-scale exercises.

- See [Webinar #6 Delivering Effective Discussion-based Exercises](#) available on the [EMBC Emergency Management Webinar Page](#)

Exercising Plan will confirm the usability of your Plan, help identify gaps and inform how the Plan can be improved. Exercises go hand-in hand with an After Action Review Process which is discussed in Step 10.

Step 10: EVALUATE and MAINTAIN THE PLAN

The final step in this Planning Guide is to establish a continuous review and maintenance cycle for your emergency management plan.

Emergency planning isn't a one-time process. It should include a continuous cycle of planning, training, exercising, evaluating and corrective action. This cycle must be regularly repeated to keep the emergency management plan current. Exercises and feedback mechanisms built into the plan enable users to identify elements of the plan that are unclear or do not work. This information should be captured and used to modify your Plan.

A periodic review and update is mandated for Local Authorities by the [Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation](#).

IDENTIFY THE OWNER AND CUSTODIAN OF THE PLAN

Lack of clarity around the owner of the plan may result in out-of-date and forgotten plans. Identify the position or function responsible for plan maintenance and include this responsibility in a job description or work plan.

DEVELOP A MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

In addition to after-action reviews of the plan, it should be annually reviewed.

Consider:

- ✓ An annual review by the Local Authority or First Nation council or board to keep high level leadership alert to the Plan
- ✓ A statement in the Plan that allows minor amendments (such as name changes, contact info, basic content updates) to be made without council approval
- ✓ A more comprehensive review, revision and approval process for significant changes requiring subject matter expertise

REVIEW AND AMEND PLAN

Following any training, exercises, or operations, an after-action review should be conducted to:



Template Tip: Section 1.2 of the Plan Template provides a suggested table to log amendments.

- ✓ Determine operational effectiveness of the plan (does it meet the intended need?)
- ✓ Identify planning strengths, weaknesses and gaps
- ✓ Identify resource gaps
- ✓ Evaluate interoperability, response coordination and communication capability.

Amend your Plan based on the results of reviews. Extensive amendments may require you to revisit the previous steps in the planning process, especially if a new hazard has been identified.

DISTRIBUTE AMENDMENTS

- ✓ Ensure copies of the amendments are distributed to all Plan holders and partners that you identified in Step 7, Distribute Plan.
- ✓ A distribution list should be maintained and identify where hardcopies and electronic versions are kept.



Template Tip: Section 1.3 Distribution list of the Plan Template provides a table to record who the plan is distributed to.

CONCLUSION

In British Columbia, Local Authorities and First Nations lead emergency management efforts in their communities. An emergency management plan is an essential element of a community's emergency management program, allowing the community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies in a coordinated and informed manner.

Upon completing the steps outlined in this Planning Guide, along with any additional or tailored steps you incorporated to meet the needs and circumstances of your community, you should have an All-Hazard Emergency Management Plan that is:

- ✓ a clear road map of steps your community will take to protect people, property and the environment during an emergency
- ✓ based on an analysis of hazards, risks and vulnerabilities in your community
- ✓ aligned with your community's jurisdictional responsibilities and strategic priorities; and is authorized by the appropriate legal authority
- ✓ familiar and ready to be used in an emergency by those who have roles and responsibilities in the Plan
- ✓ informed by key partners who are oriented to the plan as necessary
- ✓ supported by an ongoing maintenance, training and continuous improvement cycle

Emergency Management BC is committed to supporting Local Authorities and First Nations in all phases of emergency management (prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recover). Please consider sharing your emergency plan with your [EMBC Regional Office](#). This will facilitate a better understanding amongst EMBC Staff of each Local Authority and First Nations' unique qualities and complexities leading to a more comprehensive support for the community.

Your comments and feedback on this Planning Guide and other EMBC tools for local emergency planning are greatly appreciated. You can contact your local [EMBC Regional Office](#) to submit comments.

APPENDIX 1: LINKS & RESOURCES

Resource	URL
A Functional Needs Frameworks for Every Community: Emergency Planning and Response for People with Disabilities, Disability Alliance BC	http://disabilityalliancebc.org/category/publications/emergency-prep/
Aboriginal Disaster Resilience Planning Program, JIBC	https://adrp.jibc.ca/
BC All Hazard Plan	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=2475EC4F056D42698495DDDAA222ABCE
BC Emergency Management Systems Guide (BCEMS)	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=13AFC8932A444A18ADA1728D9E60B6B8
Community Wildfire Protection Plan, UBCM	https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/community-resiliency-investment.html
Community Emergency Preparedness Fund	https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/community-emergency-preparedness-fund.html
Critical Infrastructure (CI) Assessment Tool, EMBC	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=9DB5C953029E4847A0F447C05C22D4B3
Emergency Operations Centre Operational Guidelines, EMBC & JIBC	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BE283ED A5FEF48EB95CD240738450DA0
EMBC Regional Office	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=602AB81297A741928FA51D82CFA64CA8
EMBC Emergency Management Webinar Page	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=291BF051740B41A8B030C326596D83CA
Emergency Management Plan Template	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=6DE330F3A3494A319E4688C45CD5EFA7
Emergency Management Planning Toolkit	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=6DE330F3A3494A319E4688C45CD5EFA7
Emergency Management Assistance Program for First Nations reserve communities	https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1534954090122/1535120506707
Emergency Program Act	http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96111_01
Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) Courses, JIBC	https://catalogue.jibc.ca/Lists/Courses/CustomDispForm.aspx?ID=900&InitialTabId= Ribbon.Read
Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) Tool, EMBC	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=127DCE186F9F4858A80F195C4F349014
Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation (LAEMR)	http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/lc/statreg/380_95
PreparedBC Guide Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PreparedBC: Guide for Apartments, Condos and Townhomes • PreparedBC: Guide for Small Businesses • PreparedBC: Guide for Tourism Operators • PreparedBC: In It Together: Neighbourhood Preparedness Guide • PreparedBC: Resources for People with Disabilities 	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=BFB47D5C530544E49C46168E53D57837
Provincial Emergency Management Plans	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=2475EC4F056D42698495DDDAA222ABCE
Sample bylaws for Municipalities and Regional Districts (EMBC Website)	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=7DE0789C37974A52A6EAA05351B4A924