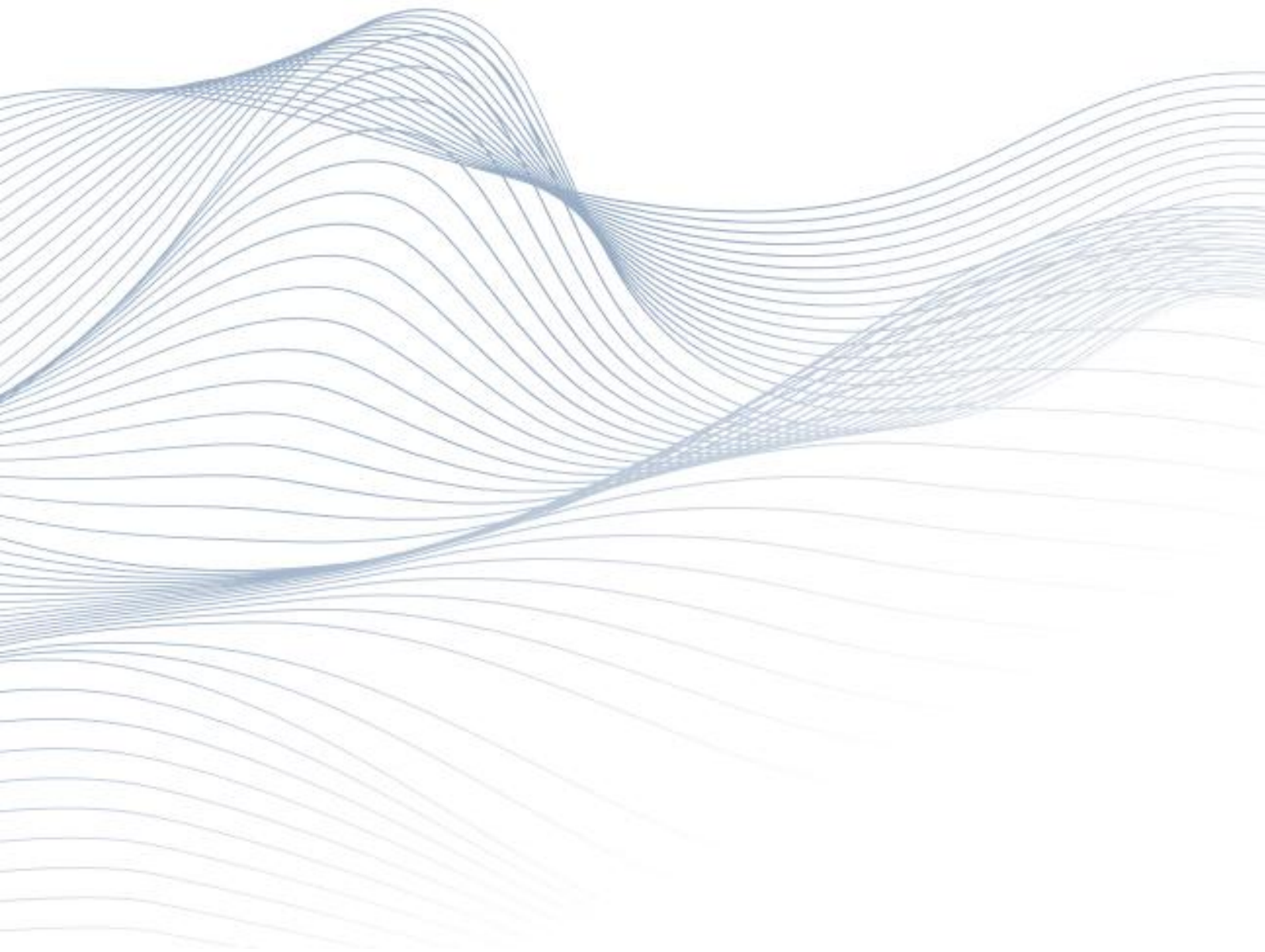


Legislative requirements for local authorities

Risk assessment and planning under the Emergency and Disaster Management Act



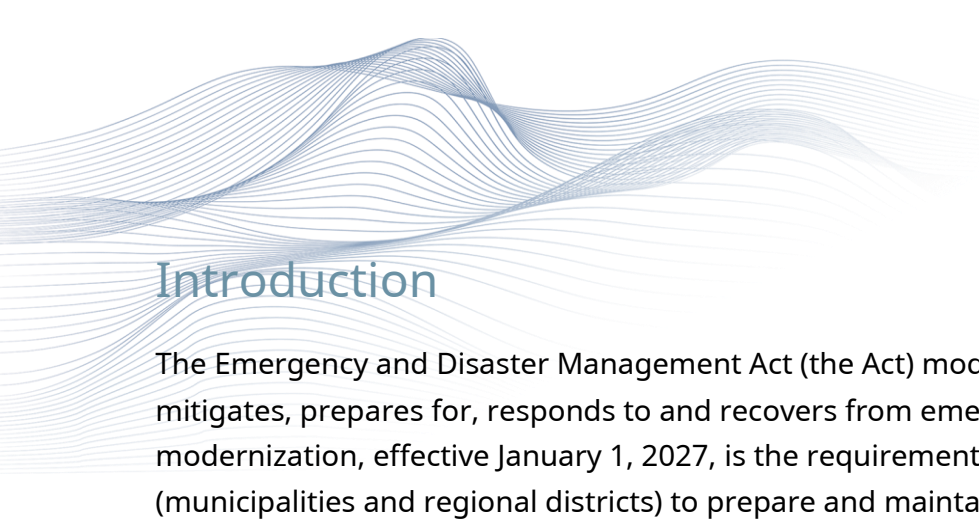
Summary of revisions

Version number	Release date	Description
Version 1	September 03, 2026	Original document

More information

Online: gov.bc.ca/emergencymanagementact

Email: emcr.policyandlegislation@gov.bc.ca



Introduction

The Emergency and Disaster Management Act (the Act) modernizes how British Columbia mitigates, prepares for, responds to and recovers from emergencies. A key part of this modernization, effective January 1, 2027, is the requirement for local authorities¹ (municipalities and regional districts) to prepare and maintain risk assessments, emergency management plans and business continuity plans.

Risk assessments, emergency management plans and business continuity plans are crucial because they support communities to identify hazards and risks, prepare for and respond to emergencies and enhance resilience to disasters.

This guide explains what local authorities must do to meet the baseline legislative requirements for local authority risk assessments, emergency management plans and business continuity plans – that is, what local authorities need to do to comply with the Act. It is written for emergency program coordinators, local authority staff and elected officials who are responsible for emergency management.

Over time, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness will release companion practice guides that offer practical suggestions and examples of best practices that local authorities may wish to consider.

As the Province has its own requirements to prepare and maintain risk assessments, emergency management plans, and business continuity plans, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness will update this guide and any companion practice guides to support alignment of approaches across the different orders of government. Requirements for the Province to consult and coordinate with local authorities and consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies can also enhance this work across British Columbia.

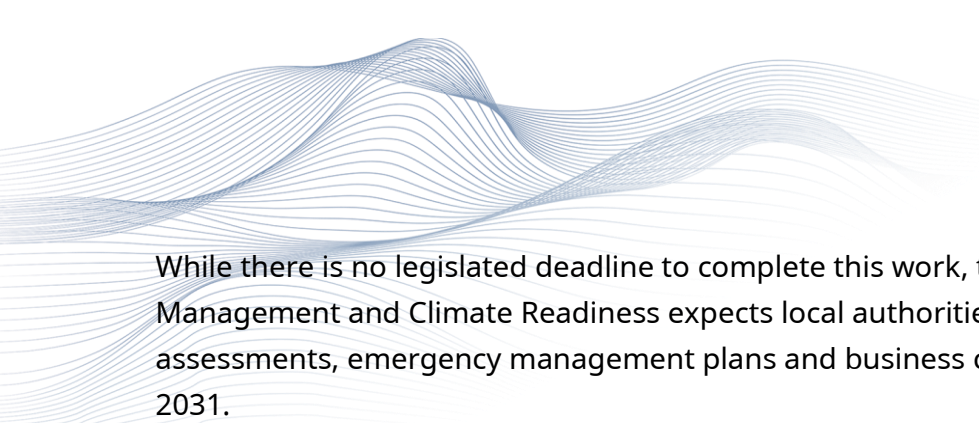
Resources for Local Authorities

To support local authorities in their risk assessment and planning work, additional practice guides are under development

These guides will provide practical suggestions for how work can be done to meet the legislative requirements described in this document.

Resources will be posted to the [Indigenous communities and local government emergency management resources webpage](#)

¹ Under the Act, the Nisga'a Nation and treaty first nations are also considered "local authorities" with similar powers to municipalities and regional districts. However, the Act generally does not assign planning or risk assessment obligations to them, and they are not subject to most local authority reporting requirements. Therefore, the legislative requirements outlined in this guide only apply to municipalities and regional districts.



While there is no legislated deadline to complete this work, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness expects local authorities to complete their risk assessments, emergency management plans and business continuity plans before January 1, 2031.

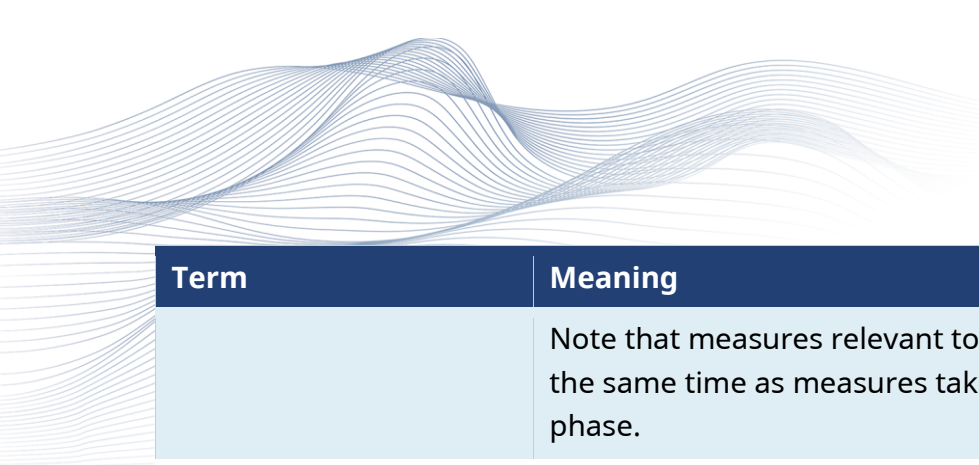
Important disclaimer

This document is intended as a practical guide only. It is not legal advice, and it does not replace the Emergency and Disaster Management Act or its regulations. If there is any inconsistency between this guide and the Act, the Act prevails. Local authorities should consult the Act itself and seek legal advice as needed.

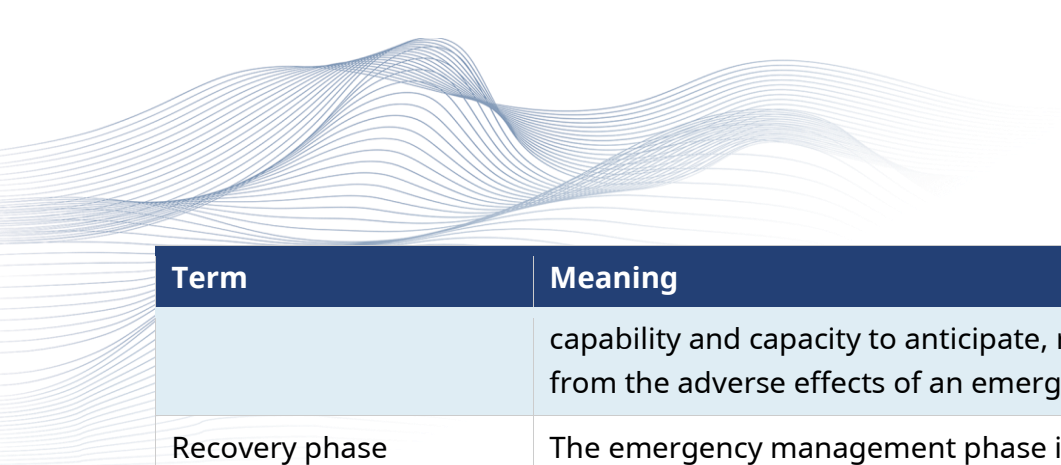
Key terms

Understanding key terms will help you work through the requirements. The terms below are defined in the Act or the Emergency and Disaster Management Regulation.

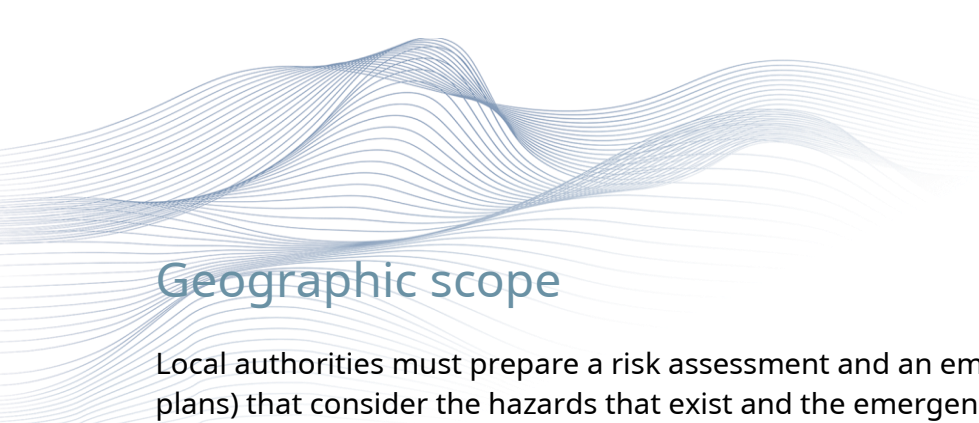
Term	Meaning
Animals	Includes: • domestic pets • animals trained to assist in law enforcement activities, whether the animals are used by a peace officer or by a person acting under the direction of a peace officer • guide dogs and service dogs within the meaning of the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act • livestock within the meaning of the Livestock Act • animals that are lawfully kept in zoos, sanctuaries, rehabilitation centres or facilities for education or research; and • live animals that are lawfully possessed under the Wildlife Act
Business continuity plan	A business continuity plan prepared in accordance with the Act.
Emergency	Has a specific meaning under the Act. For more information, see Definition of Emergency on our legislation webpage.
Emergency management phases	Emergency management consists of the following phases: mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.



Term	Meaning
	Note that measures relevant to one phase may be taken at the same time as measures taken in relation to any other phase.
Emergency management plan	An emergency management plan prepared in accordance with the Act.
Emergency resources	Any personnel, supplies, services, goods, equipment and facilities that are necessary or advisable for the purpose of taking emergency measures. Land is specifically excluded from the meaning of emergency resources.
Hazard	A circumstance, condition, process, phenomenon, activity or prescribed type of thing, whether natural or human-caused, that may give rise to an emergency.
Indigenous governing body	An entity that is authorized to act on behalf of Indigenous peoples that hold rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
Intersectional disadvantage	The intersection of social categorizations of persons or classes of persons, including Indigenous identity, race, economic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age and ability, in ways that may result in overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage or disproportionate adverse effects.
Local knowledge	The understandings and skills that people have developed over time with respect to their local environment.
Mitigation phase	The emergency management phase in which measures are taken for the purposes of identifying and removing or reducing hazards to: • prevent emergencies from occurring; or • reduce, to the extent reasonably practicable, the scale, scope and adverse effects of an emergency that may occur
Preparation phase	The emergency management phase in which measures are taken for the purpose of establishing the knowledge,



Term	Meaning
	capability and capacity to anticipate, respond to and recover from the adverse effects of an emergency.
Recovery phase	The emergency management phase in which measures are taken for the purpose of recovering from an emergency, including measures to: • restore the health, safety and well-being of affected persons • restore the safety of property or of objects or sites of heritage value; and • improve, to the extent reasonably practicable, assets, services and processes to reduce the risk of and increase resilience to emergencies
Response phase	The emergency management phase in which measures are taken for the purpose of responding to an emergency, including preventing and reducing the adverse effects of the emergency.
Risk assessment	A risk assessment prepared in accordance with the Act.
Vulnerable	An individual, animal, place or thing, or a class of individuals, animals, places or things, that is particularly susceptible, due to physical or geographic location or environmental factors, or other similar factors, to the adverse effects of an emergency.



Geographic scope

Local authorities must prepare a risk assessment and an emergency management plan (or plans) that consider the hazards that exist and the emergencies that may arise from those hazards. A local authority must consider any reasonably foreseeable hazard that could affect the area within its geographic scope, even if the hazard originates outside that area.

- **For municipalities**,² consideration must be given in relation to lands within municipal boundaries.
- **For regional districts**, subject to the choice described below, consideration must be given in relation to lands within their electoral areas.

Note: A regional district may choose to prepare its risk assessment or emergency management plan without giving consideration to Crown land or private managed forest land. If it does so, it must still identify any portions of those areas that are necessary for evacuating individuals or animals from a community — in the risk assessment or emergency management plan, as applicable.³

Municipalities and regional districts are not required to conduct an exhaustive analysis of every part of the area within scope. Rather, risk assessments and emergency management plans must meaningfully consider the area as a whole, while addressing geographic differences where they are relevant to the hazards, risks or emergency measures being considered.

You may build on existing plans

Under the former Emergency Program Act, local authorities were required to prepare local emergency plans. Those plans were required to reflect the potential emergencies that could affect any part of a local authority's jurisdictional area and to identify the local authority's assessment of the relative risk of occurrence and the potential impacts those emergencies could have on people and property.

Many of the requirements for risk assessments and emergency management plans under the Emergency and Disaster Management Act build on concepts that were part of those earlier plans. At the same time, this Act includes some different requirements,

² The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality may, like regional districts, choose to prepare its risk assessment or emergency management plan without giving consideration to Crown land or private managed forest land. If it does so, it must still identify any portions of those areas that are necessary for evacuating individuals or animals from a community — in the risk assessment or emergency management plan, as applicable.

³ If the regional district has multiple emergency management plans, the evacuation areas should be included in the emergency management plan closest to the relevant community.



such as consulting and cooperating with Indigenous governing bodies, considering climate change in risk assessments, and addressing all four phases of emergency management in emergency management plans.

If your local authority has an existing local emergency plan or related materials, review them—they may provide a useful foundation that can be updated and expanded to meet the new requirements.

Risk assessments

A risk assessment is the foundation of your emergency management plan. It gives you a clear picture of the hazards your community faces, how serious they are, and who may be most affected.

You may be required to submit risk assessment information to the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. More details regarding submission will be provided when they are available.

What you must do

Your risk assessment must do two things: identify hazards and assess risk.

Identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards

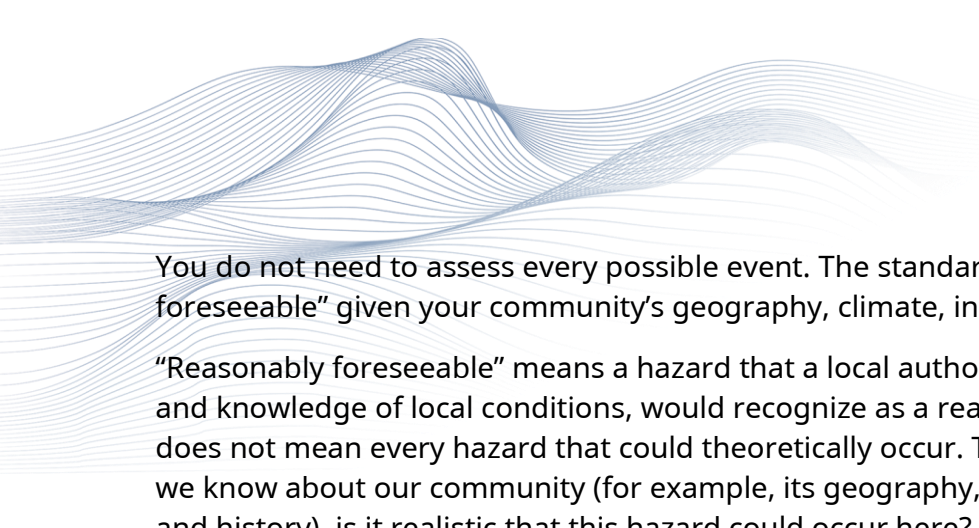
You must identify every hazard that could reasonably be expected to affect your area. Think broadly—this includes both natural and human-caused hazards.

Examples of hazards to consider

Hazards may have natural, human-caused, technological, environmental, or health-related dimensions and some hazards may involve more than one of these factors.

Examples to consider include wildfire, flooding, earthquake, tsunami, landslide, avalanche, drought, extreme temperatures, severe storms, volcanic activity, hazardous material spills, industrial accidents, infrastructure failures, dam breaches, disease outbreaks, environmental contamination or terrorism.

Note: “hazard” is defined in the Act as “a circumstance, condition, process, phenomenon, activity or prescribed type of thing, whether natural or human-caused, that may give rise to an emergency.” An “emergency” as defined in the Act must threaten the health, safety, or well-being of persons, or the safety of property or of objects or sites of heritage value. If a hazard would not give rise to an emergency, then it does not need to be considered. For example, a landslide in the wilderness may not give rise to an emergency.



You do not need to assess every possible event. The standard is what is “reasonably foreseeable” given your community’s geography, climate, infrastructure and history.

“Reasonably foreseeable” means a hazard that a local authority, using available information and knowledge of local conditions, would recognize as a realistic possibility for its area. It does not mean every hazard that could theoretically occur. The question to ask is: given what we know about our community (for example, its geography, climate, infrastructure, land use and history), is it realistic that this hazard could occur here?

A hazard can be reasonably foreseeable, even if it has never occurred locally and if there is a credible basis for expecting that it could. For example, a community may not have experienced a landslide in recent memory, but if it has steep terrain near a populated area, certain soil conditions and increasing rainfall, a landslide may still be reasonably foreseeable. By contrast, a hazard with no realistic connection to the area’s conditions does not need to be included simply because it appears on a generic list of possible hazards.

General scope of your risk assessment

Your risk assessment must meaningfully consider the hazards that could reasonably be expected to affect the area that falls within its geographic scope. This does not require a separate assessment of every individual site or sub-area where a hazard may exist that could give rise to an emergency. Rather, the assessment should take a practical approach that identifies the hazard, considers where and how it may affect people, property or objects, or sites of heritage value.

For example, if river flooding is a reasonably foreseeable hazard, a municipality does not necessarily need to assess every individual parcel within the floodplain separately. Instead, the risk assessment could identify the areas and assets most likely to be affected, such as a low-lying neighbourhood, a key access road, a wastewater pump station or a heritage building and assess the likely consequences if flooding occurs there.

Assess the risk from each hazard

For each hazard you identify, you must assess the following:

- **Likelihood:** How probable is it that this hazard will lead to an emergency?
- **Scale and scope:** If an emergency does occur, how large could it be? How many people, how much area and what infrastructure might be affected?
- **Consequences for people and property:** What could happen to people, buildings, roads, utilities and objects or sites of heritage value?
- **Disproportionate impacts:** You must give special consideration to individuals who may experience intersectional disadvantage and to vulnerable individuals, animals, places or things. Note: see the definitions of “intersectional disadvantage” and “vulnerable” in the Key Terms section.

Example: Thinking about intersectional disadvantages during an evacuation

During a wildfire evacuation, some populations may face overlapping barriers that increase the adverse effects of the emergency. The examples below are illustrative only and do not describe all the ways that people or communities may experience disproportionate impacts:

- **Indigenous communities:** Evacuation orders and alerts are issued in ways that may not reflect a community's governance structures or communication norms, leading to delayed or unclear information. Historical experiences, including past evacuations or emergency responses, may also affect whether information, transportation or supports are trusted, accessible or experienced as safe.
- **Seniors and persons with disabilities:** Some people may have mobility, accessibility, sensory, cognitive or health needs that make it harder to evacuate quickly or to access transportation, temporary accommodation, medical supports, caregivers, service animals or other supports.
- **Economic status:** Limited income may make it harder to arrange private transport or temporary accessible accommodation if public resources are full.
- **Rural or remote location:** Distance from emergency reception centres, limited services, or fewer and more complex evacuation routes can delay access to supports and essential services.

When assessing wildfire evacuation risk, a local authority does not need to identify individual residents or assess circumstances on a household-by-household basis. At a population level, intersectional disadvantage involves considering how overlapping social categorizations within the community may combine to increase the adverse effects of an emergency for some groups.

Example: Thinking about vulnerability in a flood-prone neighbourhood

A mobile home park situated on a floodplain beside a river is vulnerable because of factors that make it particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of a flood emergency:

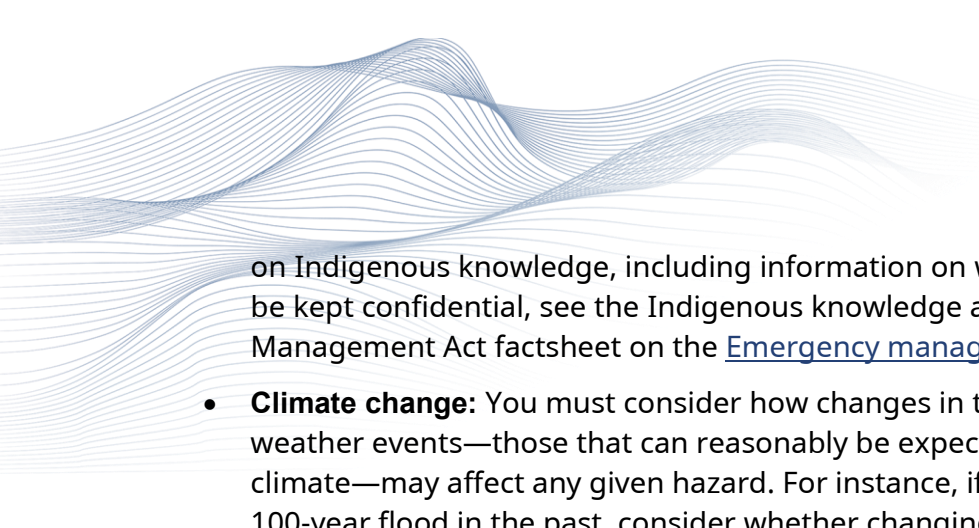
- **Physical location:** The park is in a low-lying area directly adjacent to the river and is accessed by a single road that crosses a low bridge, placing it in the path of potential floodwaters and leaving it cut off early in a flood event.
- **Geographic location:** The park is in a rural area 45 minutes from the nearest fire hall and hospital, limiting the speed of emergency response and increasing the time needed to complete an evacuation.
- **Environmental factors:** Upstream logging and loss of riparian vegetation have altered the watershed and increased the rate of runoff, making the area more flood-prone than it was historically.
- **Other similar factors:** The housing structures are mobile homes that are not anchored to permanent foundations, making them particularly susceptible to damage or destruction from floodwaters.

Distinguishing vulnerability from intersectional disadvantage: The mobile home park is vulnerable because of where and what it is: its physical exposure and susceptibility to the hazard. The residents of the park may also experience intersectional disadvantages. For example, if residents are low-income seniors with limited English proficiency, those overlapping social and economic factors may compound barriers to understanding and receiving warnings, evacuating safely and accessing recovery supports.

What your risk assessment must be based on

Your risk assessment should be based on the best available knowledge. The Act requires that it draw on several types of information:

- **Studies and surveys:** Available scientific, technical, and engineering data and reports could be used—for example, flood mapping, seismic studies, human health reports, regional climate projections or environmental impact studies. Studies and surveys may be qualitative or quantitative and could include academic studies and grey literature reports. As a starting point, you may wish to review the [ClimateReadyBC webpage](#). It includes hazard information including the B.C. Hazard Insights Tool, which can be used to explore the extent and regional patterns of specific hazards.
- **Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge:** If available, your risk assessment must incorporate Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge. Local knowledge is defined in the Act and means the understandings and skills that people have developed over time about their local environment. “Indigenous knowledge” is not defined and some communities may understand the term differently than others. For more information



on Indigenous knowledge, including information on when Indigenous knowledge must be kept confidential, see the Indigenous knowledge and the Emergency and Disaster Management Act factsheet on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#).

- **Climate change:** You must consider how changes in the local climate or extreme weather events—those that can reasonably be expected from a changing global climate—may affect any given hazard. For instance, if your area has experienced a 100-year flood in the past, consider whether changing precipitation patterns may make such events more frequent.
- **Other relevant information:** Draw on any other reasonably available information that is relevant to your assessment.
- **Results of engagement requirements:** Your risk assessment must reflect the results of your consultation and coordination with adjacent local authorities (see Consulting with neighbouring local authorities, later in the document) and your consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies (see Consulting and Cooperating with Indigenous Peoples, later in the document). For more information on consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples see the Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance document on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#).

Example: Incorporating climate change

A regional district in the interior that has historically experienced wildfires should consider how rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and shifting fire seasons may increase both the likelihood and severity of wildfire events. Similarly, a coastal municipality should consider how projected sea level rise, combined with storm surge and extreme weather events, may expand flood-prone areas.

Emergency management plans

Your emergency management plan describes what your community is already doing, or will do, across all four phases of emergency management. While your risk assessment will inform your emergency management plan, you do not need to complete your risk assessment before starting work on your plan. In practice, many local authorities will find it most efficient to develop their risk assessment and emergency management plan at the same time, since the two processes reinforce each other.



What your emergency management plan must describe

Your emergency management plan must address all four phases of emergency management—mitigation, preparation, response and recovery—and include the following elements.

Applying emergency management plan requirements across your jurisdiction

A local authority may choose to develop one emergency management plan for its entire jurisdiction or separate plans⁴ for different areas or different purposes. In either case, a plan must address all four phases and all required elements across its geographic scope, but not every element needs to be addressed at the same level of detail for every part of that area.

Some elements are inherently plan-wide, or general, in nature (for example, training and exercise programs) and do not need to be repeated or tailored for each individual area. Other elements may need to be more specific to particular areas or hazards. For example, mitigation measures may be more specific to particular hazards or areas, such as fuel management in the wildland-urban interface for wildfire risk or drainage improvements in low-lying areas for flood risk. The plan should therefore take a practical approach: it must meaningfully address the required elements across the area within its geographic scope, while providing greater geographic specificity where it is relevant to how the plan would be implemented.

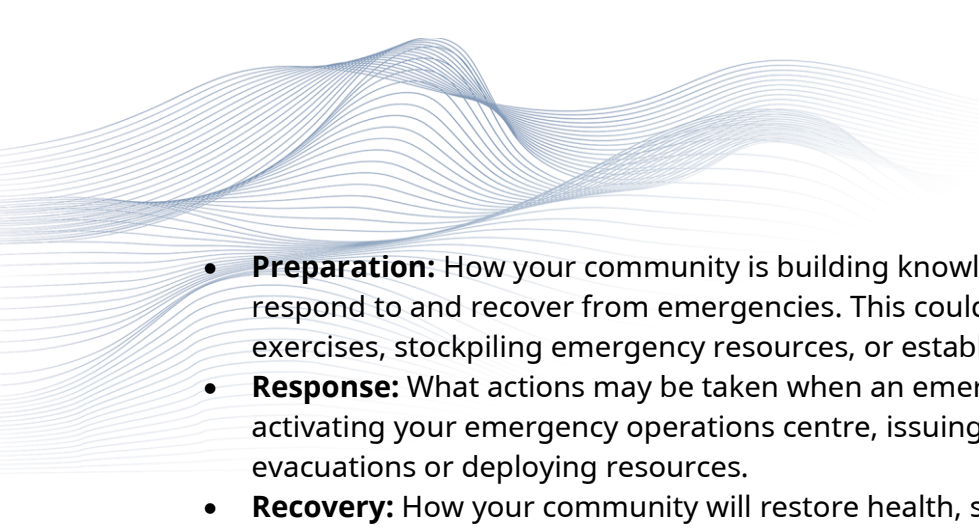
In short, the plan should demonstrate that the local authority has considered the required elements across its jurisdiction in a meaningful way, not that every element has been applied to every area.

Measures for each phase of emergency management

For each of the four phases, describe the measures that are necessary or advisable. This means your plan should explain:

- **Mitigation:** What your community is doing or plans to do to reduce hazards or their potential impacts. This could include work to better understand hazards, such as hazard mapping and studies; steps to reduce or manage risk, such as land use planning or monitoring equipment; and physical projects, such as relocating or strengthening critical infrastructure, or restoring natural systems like wetlands to help absorb impacts.

⁴ For simplicity, this document refers to the requirement to have an emergency management plan in the singular. If your local authority chooses to develop more than one emergency management plan, references should be read in the plural.

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- **Preparation:** How your community is building knowledge and capacity to anticipate, respond to and recover from emergencies. This could include training programs, exercises, stockpiling emergency resources, or establishing mutual aid agreements.
 - **Response:** What actions may be taken when an emergency occurs. This could include activating your emergency operations centre, issuing public alerts, ordering evacuations or deploying resources.
 - **Recovery:** How your community will restore health, safety, and well-being after an emergency. This could include debris removal, damage assessments, or long-term rebuilding plans.

Roles, powers and duties

Identify the key people involved in emergency management by name, title, or position and describe their roles, powers and duties. This ensures everyone knows who is responsible for what when an emergency occurs.

Example

Your plan might specify that the mayor (or designate) is responsible for declaring a state of local emergency, that the Emergency Program Coordinator leads the emergency operations centre, and that the Director of Public Works coordinates debris removal during recovery.

Emergency resources

Describe the emergency resources that will be needed, including personnel such as emergency operations center staff or public works crews; supplies such as sandbags, food, water, or cots; services such as transportation, security, or emergency social services; equipment such as generators, pumps, radios, or heavy machinery; and facilities such as reception centres, group lodging sites, staging areas or emergency operations centres. Consider what you have on hand, what you may need to acquire and what you might access through mutual aid or provincial support.

Procedures for engaging emergency alerting systems

Describe the procedures for activating your emergency alerting systems. This may be a high-level description, particularly where more detailed operational procedures are maintained separately and are not intended for public release. Emergency alerting systems include any system designed to warn the public of an emergency (such as geographically targeted alerts delivered by television, radio, telephone, internet-connected devices, sirens or digital highway displays).



Training and exercise programs

Describe the training and exercise programs that will be conducted. Regular training ensures your team is ready and exercises (such as tabletop drills or full-scale simulations) test whether your plan works in practice.

Addressing disproportionate impacts

Your plan must describe measures to mitigate the adverse effects of emergencies on individuals who may experience intersectional disadvantage and on vulnerable individuals, animals, places or things. (Note: see the definitions of “intersectional disadvantage” and “vulnerable” in the Key Terms section.) This can flow directly from what you identified in your risk assessment.

Examples of measures that address intersectional disadvantage during an evacuation

A local authority's risk assessment identifies that there are various factors that may complicate individuals' abilities to evacuate—including economic barriers to transportation, mobility challenges, and the prevalence of English in information concerning evacuations. To mitigate these effects, the emergency management plan describes measures aimed at identifying third-party transportation options, including accessible transportation that can accommodate individuals requiring mobility aids, and considers mechanisms to reduce financial barriers. It also includes procedures for issuing evacuation information, including information about what to do if third-party transportation is needed in other languages.

Examples of measures that address vulnerability in a flood-prone neighbourhood

The emergency management plan identifies a mobile home park on a riverside as vulnerable due to its location on a floodplain, single-road access that becomes impassable early in a flood and distance from emergency services. To mitigate these effects, the emergency management plan provides for monitoring of river levels to trigger early evacuation of the park before road access is lost.



Cultural safety

Your emergency management plan must describe measures to promote cultural safety. Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in emergency management. Culturally safe environments are free of racism and discrimination.⁵ Engaging with members of your community—particularly Indigenous peoples and other equity-deserving groups—will help you identify what culturally safe emergency management looks like in your context. For more information, see the Cultural safety and EDMA factsheet on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#).

Evacuation and care of individuals and animals

In addition to the general requirements above, local authority emergency management plans must specifically include a plan for the evacuation and care of individuals and animals within the local authority's area. This includes domestic pets, livestock, service animals and animals in facilities such as zoos or rehabilitation centres.

Note: As described in the Geographic scope section, a regional district may choose to prepare an emergency management plan without considering Crown land or private managed forest land. If it does so, its emergency management plan must still identify any portions of those areas that are necessary for evacuating individuals or animals from a community.

What your emergency management plan must be based on

Your emergency management plan must be grounded in:

- **Your risk assessments:** All available and applicable risk assessments should inform your plan. Note that if you have not yet completed your risk assessment, you can still begin work on your plan.
- **Results of engagement requirements:** Your plan must reflect the results of your consultation and coordination with adjacent local authorities and your consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies (see Consulting and Cooperating with Indigenous Peoples, below). For more information on consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, see the Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance document on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#).

⁵ This definition is adapted from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) definition of cultural safety in health care. See the [FNHA Cultural Safety and Humility webpage](#).



Describing areas for Indigenous consultation and cooperation

Local authorities are required to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies before taking certain actions related to land or property during a declared state of local emergency or declared local recovery period. This consultation and cooperation is tied to geographic areas that must be identified through agreement with Indigenous governing bodies. Your emergency management plan must include a description of agreed-upon areas and specify the Indigenous governing body associated with each area described.

Separate guidance on consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies is available on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#). Local authorities should refer to that guidance for detailed information on reaching agreements with Indigenous governing bodies and fulfilling consultation and cooperation obligations.

Consulting and coordinating with neighbouring local authorities

Emergency management is most effective when neighbouring communities coordinate their emergency management planning and development of risk assessments. Hazards do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries and your response may depend on resources or actions in an adjacent area.

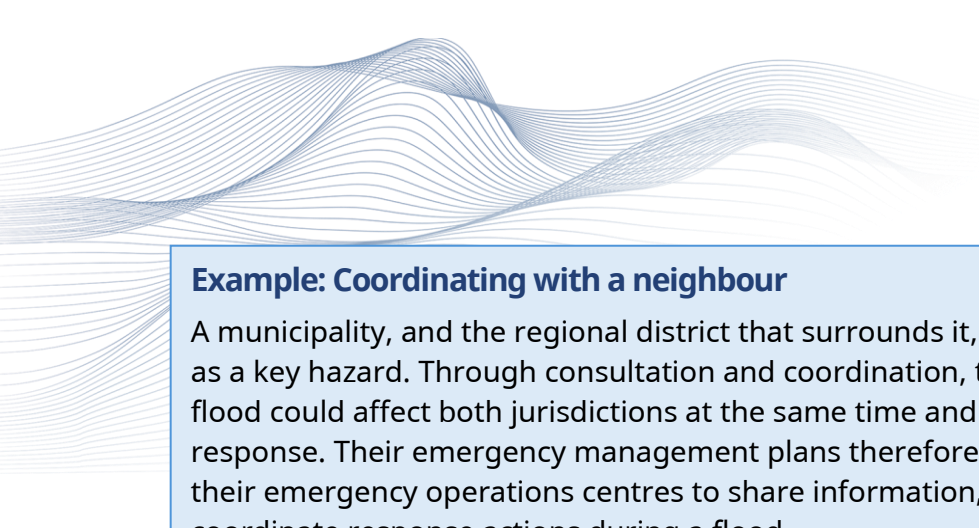
Who you must consult and coordinate with

When preparing or revising your risk assessment or emergency management plan, you must make reasonable efforts to consult and coordinate with each adjacent municipality or regional district.

What consultation and coordination involves

Consulting and coordinating with neighbouring local authorities involves three things:

1. Reaching out and sharing: Make reasonable efforts to engage your neighbours as you prepare or revise your risk assessment or emergency management plan.
2. Considering their input: Take into account any comments or information you receive from them.
3. Coordinating your plans: When it comes to emergency management plans, you must coordinate your plan with the plans of the local authorities you consulted so that all plans can be implemented—and emergency measures taken under them—in an integrated manner.



Example: Coordinating with a neighbour

A municipality, and the regional district that surrounds it, both identify river flooding as a key hazard. Through consultation and coordination, they determine that a major flood could affect both jurisdictions at the same time and require a coordinated response. Their emergency management plans therefore include arrangements for their emergency operations centres to share information, align public messaging and coordinate response actions during a flood.

Consulting and cooperating with Indigenous governing bodies

The Act establishes obligations for local authorities to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies when preparing or revising risk assessments and emergency management plans. These obligations reflect the rights of Indigenous peoples and the importance of working towards harmonization and coordination of emergency management across B.C.

Detailed guidance on consulting and cooperating with Indigenous governing bodies is provided in separate materials on the [Emergency management legislation webpage](#). Local authorities should refer to those materials for information on identifying Indigenous governing bodies, reaching agreements on areas for consultation and cooperation during the response and recovery phases, incorporating Indigenous knowledge and meeting response- and recovery-phase obligations.

Note: Local authorities are encouraged to begin reaching out to Indigenous governing bodies early in their planning process. Building relationships and establishing agreements takes time and early engagement will position all parties for more effective emergency management.

Summary of consultation and cooperation

Your emergency management plan must include a summary of the consultation and cooperation undertaken with an Indigenous governing body in relation to the plan and the risk assessment that supports it.

In practical terms, this means your emergency management plan should briefly describe any consultation and cooperation you carried out, who was involved, when it took place and whether it related to the risk assessment, the emergency management plan, or both. The summary does not need to reproduce detailed records of meetings or correspondence and does not need to describe the consultation and cooperation results in detail.

Requirement to publish your emergency management plan

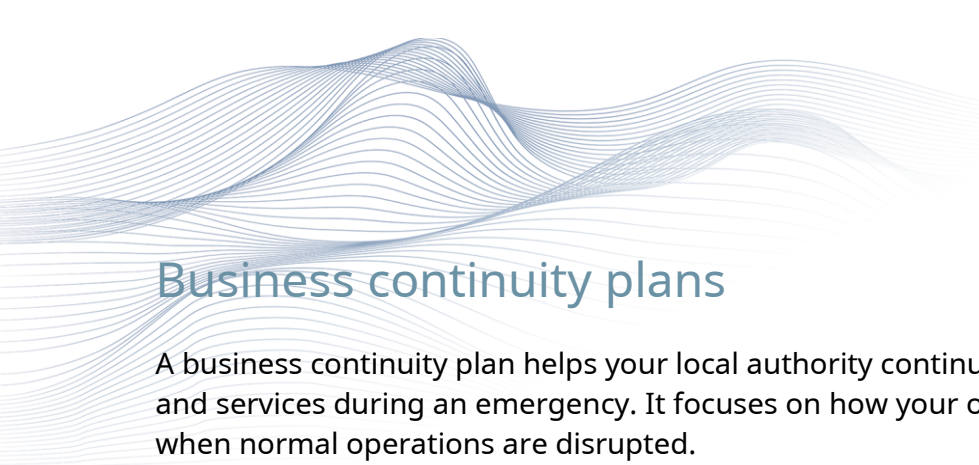
A local authority is required to publish its emergency management plan; however, it may exclude the following information from publication:

- Any information that the local authority believes could reasonably be expected to increase the risk of an emergency occurring.
- Information that may or must not be disclosed under the following provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:
 - section 12 (3) [local public body confidences];
 - section 13 (1) [policy advice or recommendations];
 - section 14 [legal advice];
 - section 15 (1) or (2) [disclosure harmful to law enforcement];
 - section 16 (1) [disclosure harmful to intergovernmental relations or negotiations];
 - section 17 (1) [disclosure harmful to the financial or economic interests of a public body];
 - section 18 [disclosure harmful to the conservation of heritage sites, etc.];
 - section 18.1 (1) [disclosure harmful to interests of an Indigenous people];
 - section 19 (1) or (2) [disclosure harmful to individual or public safety];
 - section 21 (1) or (2) [disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party];
 - section 22 [disclosure harmful to personal privacy]; and,
 - section 22.1 (2) [disclosure of information relating to abortion services].

A local authority must not include in its published emergency management plan any Indigenous knowledge shared during its consultation and cooperation with an Indigenous governing body for its risk assessment and emergency management plan, unless that Indigenous governing body consents in writing to its inclusion in the published plan, or the knowledge is publicly available.

A local authority must publish its emergency management plan using a method that will make it widely accessible to the population within its jurisdiction. This could include, but is not limited to, publication on its website.

Local authorities are not required to publish their risk assessments or business continuity plans.



Business continuity plans

A business continuity plan helps your local authority continue delivering critical leadership and services during an emergency. It focuses on how your organization will keep functioning when normal operations are disrupted.

What your business continuity plan must describe

The Act sets out that a local authority business continuity plan must describe the measures to be taken to ensure the continued delivery, during an emergency, of leadership and services necessary for the effective functioning of the local authority. This duty is high-level and gives local authorities flexibility to develop a business continuity plan that reflects their size, structure, services and local context.

While the requirement in the Act is focused on ensuring local authorities have a business continuity plan that supports the continued delivery of leadership and services during emergencies, business continuity planning is also a practice that is broader than emergency management and local authorities may wish to explore how their business continuity plans can help them maintain continuity through a wide range of adverse events.

Unlike risk assessments and emergency management plans, the Act does not require a local authority, when preparing or revising a business continuity plan, to consult and coordinate with adjacent local authorities or to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies.

Reviewing and revising your risk assessment, emergency management plan and business continuity plan

Emergency management plans and business continuity plans are not one-time documents and there are requirements for local authorities to specify and follow review cycles in these plans. While there is no requirement to establish and follow a review cycle for risk assessments, it is good practice to consider if updates are needed while reviewing your emergency management plan.

At a minimum, a review must be initiated within seven years (emergency management plan) or five years (business continuity plan) from the preparation of the initial plan or the completion of the preceding review and revision. The review period chosen by your local authority must be identified in your plan.

It is also good practice, but not a requirement, to review your risk assessment and plans after any significant emergency in your area, when new hazard information becomes available, or when there are significant changes to your community (such as major development, population growth, or new infrastructure).



Guiding principles

The Act sets out principles that should inform your approach to emergency management. While these principles apply broadly, they are worth keeping in mind as you prepare your risk assessment, emergency management plan and business continuity plan:

- Disaster risk reduction: Work proactively to prevent new risks, reduce existing risks and build resilience to current and future hazards
- Investment in resilience: Invest in measures that reduce the likelihood and impact of emergencies and that strengthen your community's economic, social, health, cultural and environmental resilience
- Climate awareness: Recognize that a changing climate contributes to more frequent, severe, and unpredictable hazards and emergencies, and that climate impacts can also increase the complexity and effects of other emergencies now and into the future
- Cultural safety: Promote cultural safety in emergency management, including by incorporating relevant actions in emergency management plans, policies and programs
- Recognizing the inherent right of self-government of Indigenous peoples: As Indigenous peoples with land-based rights, First Nations are decision-makers in emergency management, and this right includes authority to make laws in relation to emergency management
- Importance of Indigenous advice, input and stewardship: Indigenous knowledge is internationally recognized as complementing other sources of knowledge in emergency management
- Acknowledging and respecting the authority of others: Emergency management is a practice that includes multiple decision-makers and overlapping spheres of jurisdiction
- Harmonization and coordination: Work towards aligned and coordinated planning with other decision-makers and governments
- Collaboration: Foster collaborative approaches with all parties engaged in emergency management. This includes recognizing the importance of Indigenous advice, input and stewardship activities in emergency management

Multijurisdictional emergency management organizations

Some local authorities may choose to meet risk assessment and planning requirements by forming or joining a multijurisdictional emergency management organization (MJEMO). An MJEMO may be established by two or more local authorities, Indigenous governing bodies, and/or the provincial government. For more information, see [Multijurisdictional emergency management organizations on the Create and maintain emergency management plans webpage](#).

Getting started: High-level checklist for local authority risk assessments and plans

The following is a high-level summary of what local authorities need to do. Use it as a starting point, not as a substitute for the detailed guidance above or the legislation itself.

Risk assessment

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| ☐ | Identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards in your area. |
| ☐ | For each hazard, assess likelihood, scale, scope and consequences. |
| ☐ | Give special consideration to people who may experience intersectional disadvantage and to vulnerable individuals, animals, places or things. |
| ☐ | Base your assessment on studies, Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge, climate change information and results of engagement. |
| ☐ | Consult and coordinate with adjacent local authorities. |
| ☐ | Consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies. |

Business continuity plan

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| ☐ | Describe the measures to be taken to ensure the continued delivery, during an emergency, of leadership and services necessary for the effective functioning of the local authority. |
| ☐ | Include and follow a review period in the business continuity plan. A review must be initiated within five years of the initial plan's preparation or the completion of the preceding review and revision. |

Emergency management plan

- ☐ Ensure plan coverage for your entire jurisdiction, with the exception for regional districts of areas they have excluded as permitted under the legislation.
- ☐ Address all four phases: mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.
- ☐ Describe roles, powers and duties of key people.
- ☐ Identify emergency resource requirements.
- ☐ Set out procedures for engaging emergency alerting systems.
- ☐ Plan training and exercise programs.
- ☐ Include measures to address disproportionate impacts and measures that promote cultural safety.
- ☐ Include a plan for evacuation and care of individuals and animals.
- ☐ Describe areas agreed upon with Indigenous governing bodies for consultation and cooperation during the response and recovery phases.
- ☐ Base your plan on available risk assessments and consultation and cooperation results.
- ☐ Include a summary of the consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies on your risk assessment or emergency management plan.
- ☐ Coordinate your plan with adjacent local authorities' plans.
- ☐ Include and follow a review period in the emergency management plan. A review must be initiated within seven years of the initial plan's preparation or the completion of the preceding review and revision.
- ☐ Publish your emergency management plan.