



Ministry of  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness

# Disaster Recovery Guide

For Indigenous governing bodies and  
local authorities

Fall 2025



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# Executive summary

Designed as a resource for recovery leaders, the Disaster Recovery Guide for Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities (the Guide) provides actionable tools and sector-based guidance to navigate post-emergency recovery.

Section 1 introduces the Guide, explaining how climate change is intensifying emergencies and highlighting the need for holistic recovery. It outlines the Guide's purpose, intended users, roles of local and provincial authorities and the legislative frameworks that support community-endorsed recovery efforts.

Sections 2 and 3 of the Guide provide foundational context for understanding the recovery phase within emergency management. Recovery is framed as an all-of-society, community-endorsed process that begins at the onset of an emergency and may continue for years.

Section 3 breaks recovery into three stages:

- **Short-term recovery** focuses on stabilizing the situation, enabling safe re-entry and initiating assessments
- **Medium-term recovery** involves development and initial implementation of a post-disaster recovery plan
- **Long-term recovery** centres on sustained efforts to rebuild and address impacts across recovery sectors, while adapting to climate change and implementing lessons learned

Section 4 of the Guide outlines several models to support recovery coordination:

- **Multijurisdictional Emergency Management Organization (MJEMO):** Enables collaborative recovery across jurisdictions
- **Recovery Unit:** Embedded in the planning section of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) during short-term recovery
- **Resilience Centre:** A public-facing hub for recovery services and support
- **Recovery Operations Centre (ROC):** A centralized structure that gradually evolves from the EOC, applying ICS principles to coordinate and manage recovery operations.
- **Community Recovery Manager (CRM):** A strategic leader who guides medium- to long-term recovery efforts through planning, engagement and coordination






Section 5 highlights the essential activities communities may undertake immediately following an emergency to stabilize conditions and begin the recovery process. These activities focus on ensuring public safety, restoring critical services, assessing damage, facilitating re-entry and supporting affected individuals.

Sections 6 through 12 organize medium- and long-term recovery activities according to key recovery sectors outlined in the [Provincial Disaster Recovery Framework](#):

- **Community operations:** restoration of local government functions and critical infrastructure
- **Economy:** business continuity, resumption and diversification for greater resilience
- **Housing:** supporting safe home repairs, provision of interim housing and long-term resilience planning
- **Environment:** restoring natural heritage, guidance on archaeological sites and managing debris
- **Health and mental health:** provision of psychosocial supports and wellness services, consideration of vulnerable populations, establishing a Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee
- **Social:** the continuation or resumption of education, childcare and community services while promoting social cohesion through community events

Section 13 outlines potential recovery funding sources. It emphasizes that insurance is the primary funding source for recovery, with provincial and federal funding mechanisms and programs available to assist with specific eligible costs.

Given the diversity of emergencies and community contexts, not all guidance will apply to every situation. Users are encouraged to adapt the material based on the scope, scale and local needs of their recovery effort. Where applicable, each section includes definitions of key terms, recommended resources and tools, case study examples, key considerations checklists and critical “need-to-know” information. This information is colour coded with symbols as follows:

	Definitions
	Resources
	Case study examples
	Key considerations
	Need to know/review

To support practical application, the Guide is accompanied by a suite of tools and resources, including the Post-Disaster Recovery Plan (Post-DRP) Template, the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Template and detailed appendices that include Resilience Centre guidance and resources for hiring Community Recovery Managers (CRMs). These tools help communities with less capacity move from response to recovery with clarity and confidence.

# Acknowledgements

We respectfully acknowledge that EMCR operates throughout British Columbia on the traditional territories of First Nations peoples. We honour and recognize the rights, interests, priorities and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—and remain committed to reconciliation and respectful collaboration in all aspects of emergency recovery.

We extend our sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the development and modernization of the Guide for Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities. This Guide reflects the thoughtful input and shared expertise of communities and partners across the province, whose insights helped shape its content and direction.

# Amendment record

Version #	Release Date	Description
1	Fall 2025	5 <sup>th</sup> Edition
2		

## Versions and revisions

This is the November 2025 publication of the Disaster Recovery Guide for Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities. This is a living document, which means that information is updated and revised as and when needed, rather than according to a specific multi-year cycle.

## Feedback

We would love to hear from you. If you have questions or suggestions for improvement, email us at [EMCR.recovery@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EMCR.recovery@gov.bc.ca).



# Section 1: Introduction

Climate change is reshaping the emergency management landscape in British Columbia as emergencies are becoming more frequent and severe. This is particularly evident during recovery from an emergency, as lives, homes, businesses and communities are rebuilt and environments are rehabilitated or restored.

The human consequences of emergencies extend beyond physical damage, encompassing emotional distress, mental health challenges and disruption to social and cultural well-being. Displacement, uncertainty and the long process of recovery can create lasting emotional strain and weaken the social cohesion of affected communities. Populations that are already vulnerable often face greater hardships and fewer supports. Responding effectively requires a holistic approach that addresses both emotional and social recovery along with physical and environmental rebuilding.

## 1.1 Purpose and audience

This Guide is designed to support Indigenous governing bodies (IGBs) and local authorities in post-emergency planning. The content is scalable, meaning it can be applied to a range of events—from smaller incidents (e.g. an apartment fire) to large-scale emergencies (e.g. regional flooding).

The Guide provides:

- An outline of what recovery is and how it relates to the other emergency management phases
- Different types of recovery management models
- Guidance for common short-term recovery activities
- Sector-based guidance for medium- and long-term recovery activities
- Information on potential recovery funding sources

This Guide is intended for emergency program coordinators, community recovery managers (CRMs) and other local practitioners responsible for planning, leading or coordinating community-level recovery activities.

## 1.2 Roles and authorities

This Guide recognizes the unique governance structures and legislative frameworks of IGBs and local authorities in B.C. Understanding these roles is essential to engaging in respectful collaboration and supporting effective recovery.



### **EMCR, IGBs, local authorities and community**

**EMCR** is the Province's lead coordinating agency for all emergency management activities. EMCR works in collaboration with First Nations and local authorities, recognizing that each may have unique cultural and emergency management considerations.

**IGBs** are entities that are authorized to act on behalf of Indigenous peoples that hold rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

**Local authorities** include municipalities, regional districts, the Nisga'a Nation and Treaty First Nations, all of which have specific emergency management requirements set out in the Act.

**Community** is used interchangeably with IGB or local authority and must have functional governance and leadership to establish and implement recovery actions.

### 1.2.1 Provincial role in recovery

Under the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (the Act), EMCR is responsible for leading and coordinating emergency response and recovery at the provincial level.

IGBs and local authorities lead their own recovery efforts wherever capacity exists. The Province works in partnership with communities, recognizing their authority and responsibility to lead recovery. When local capacity is exceeded, the Province provides coordination support and resources to support recovery planning that is endorsed, if not led, by the community.

Recovery plans are created by a CRM, or an equivalent recovery lead, reporting to a senior official within the IGB or local authority. This ensures the plan reflects community priorities and has formal leadership approval. While the Province does not directly author recovery plans, it may reimburse eligible costs incurred in their development. To receive funding from some provincial sources (e.g., Disaster Financial Assistance), recovery plans and associated progress reports must meet specific requirements set by the Province, including compliance with reporting standards and timelines. Support is provided thoughtfully and equitably, though not always equally, based on each community's specific needs.

## 1.2.2 How EMCR supports recovery

When needs exceed local capacity, EMCR may:

- Establish Recovery Units in the planning section of the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) or the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC)
- Reimburse costs incurred to develop a post-disaster recovery plan
- Deploy staff to support the local emergency operations centre (EOC)
- Establish provincial recovery structures

Before standing down, EMCR's response staff help to connect communities with recovery staff. Communities may also reach out directly by email to [PECC.Rec1@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PECC.Rec1@gov.bc.ca) for assistance during the recovery phase.

For large-scale events, EMCR's recovery staff coordinate recovery efforts in alignment with the Provincial Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF). The PDRF organizes ministries, Crown corporations and agencies into six recovery sectors. Each is responsible for adjusting their regular operations and collaborating across government to address unmet needs at the local or regional level. The six recovery sectors, discussed in Section 6.1, are: community operations, economy, housing, environment, health and mental health and social.

## 1.3 Guiding legislation and frameworks

The Guide has been developed to align with the:

- [Provincial Disaster Recovery Framework](#)
- [Emergency and Disaster Management Act \(the Act\)](#)
- [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(the Declaration Act\)](#)
- [Province's distinctions-based approach](#)
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#)
- [Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in B.C.](#)
- [British Columbia Emergency Management System](#) (chapter eight - recovery)
- [All-Hazard Plan](#)

## Section 2: Overview of recovery

Emergency management consists of four interconnected phases: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Rather than viewing these as separate, a holistic approach recognizes that actions in one phase often influence and support the others. For example, effective preparedness enhances response and recovery, while lessons learned during recovery inform future mitigation and planning.

Seeing emergency management as a continuous cycle enables communities and organizations to build resilience, better understand risks and foster ongoing improvement across all phases.

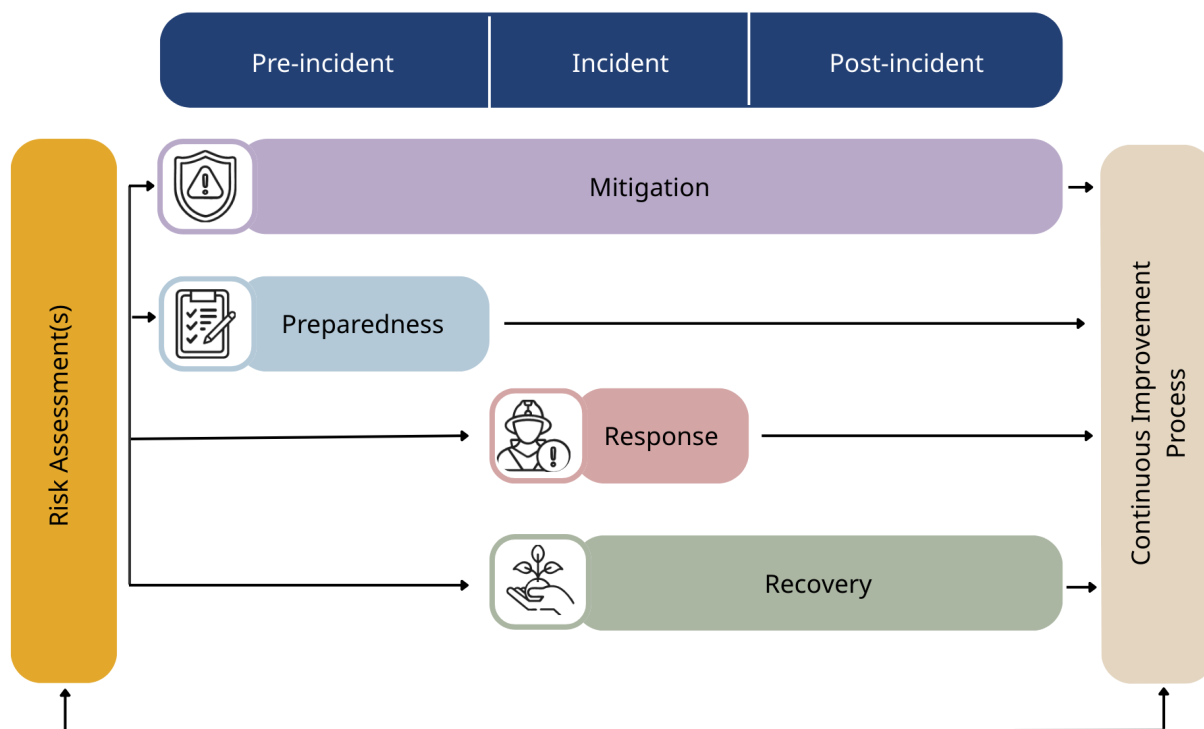


Figure 1: Overview of emergency management

### **Definition of recovery**

Section 3(1)(d) of the Act defines the **recovery** phase as the phase in which measures are taken for the purpose of recovering from an emergency. This includes measures to:

- 1) restore the health, safety and well-being of affected persons;
- 2) restore the safety of property or of objects or sites of heritage value; and
- 3) improve, to the extent reasonably practicable, assets, services and processes to reduce the risk of and increase resilience to emergencies.

A well-managed recovery can lessen short, medium and long-term impacts, reduce vulnerabilities and take advantage of opportunities for lasting improvements. Key benefits include:

- **Reduced human suffering** through coordinated efforts that address physical needs, mental health and loss of community identity; helping people stabilize and regain a sense of normalcy
- **Lower economic losses** by assisting those facing economic disruption, supporting local businesses, promoting diversification and monitoring community service impacts
- **Stronger social cohesion** by providing social, cultural and traditional supports for those most affected
- **Improved resilience** through disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and “build back better” approaches to withstand future emergencies

### **“Build back better”/ “building forward”**

“**Build back better**,” as outlined in the Sendai Framework, aligns with the idea of “**building forward**.” It emphasizes using recovery as an opportunity to strengthen social, cultural and psychological resilience, improve infrastructure through a risk-based approach and reduce future disaster risks and environmental impacts. Purposeful recovery allows communities to enhance mitigation and preparedness for future events.

## 2.1 Community-endorsed recovery

Recovery is an all-of-society process that begins when an emergency event occurs and can last for years. It is complex and non-linear, requiring collaboration among many partners to both recover from the event and build future resilience. Recovery is most effective when it has the full support and endorsement of the affected community.

This Guide defines successful recovery as the restoration of social, cultural, environmental, economic, personal and community well-being through inclusive measures that reduce vulnerability to emergencies, while enhancing sustainability and resilience.

## 2.2 Cultural safety in recovery

Effective emergency management is guided by principles that include promoting cultural safety through the integration of relevant actions into emergency management plans, policies and programs. EMCR guidance on cultural safety in emergency management is available in the [Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance](#) document.

Other regulated entities including federal partners, provincial ministries and local authorities, and organizations such First Nations Health Authority, support various aspects of recovery and may provide resources related to incorporating or promoting cultural safety. For example, Indigenous Services Canada's (ISCs) Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) provides national guidelines to ensure emergency responses are appropriate, inclusive and responsive to the unique needs of First Nations.

ISC highlights key considerations for delivering culturally appropriate emergency management services to First Nations individuals, organizations and communities. Further information about [ISC resources are available online](#).



### Key considerations: Recovery

- Refer to the community's emergency management plan, prepared pre-event
- Set priorities for recovery ([see Section 5: Common short-term recovery activities](#))
- Articulate the authorities and accountabilities within and beyond the mandate of all parties involved, including identifying a recovery lead
- Set realistic milestones for gauging how much progress has been made
- Consider how to reduce future risks while undertaking recovery activities
- Facilitate the effective transfer of knowledge, expertise, services and support
- Consider how to include cultural safety into recovery



### **Need to know – An overview of recovery**

- There are four phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation
- The phases often overlap and do not have clear boundaries from start to finish
- A well-managed recovery can reduce short-, medium- and long-term impacts by addressing human suffering, reducing economic losses, protecting community continuity and promoting sustainability through disaster risk reduction
- Community endorsement of a recovery plan is key to successful recovery
- Effective recovery should involve culturally relevant services that reflect local contexts, acknowledge the impacts of colonization and trauma, consider diverse lived experiences and require ongoing commitment to cultural understanding

## Section 3: Stages of recovery

The recovery phase of emergency management can be broken down into three stages: short-term, medium-term and long-term. The goal at each stage is to restore wellbeing while increasing individual and community resilience and reducing future vulnerability to emergencies. The recovery phase overlaps with the response phase during short-term recovery and it overlaps with the mitigation phase and disaster risk reduction throughout, but particularly so during medium- and long-term recovery.

### 3.1 Short-term recovery

Short-term recovery starts alongside response efforts and focuses on ensuring re-entry is safe for residents while gathering information about the impacts of the event to identify unmet needs and inform recovery planning. Short-term efforts rely on existing policies and procedures and aim to stabilize the situation enough to support medium- and long-term recovery planning.



#### **Key considerations: Common short-term recovery activities**

- Setting up emergency shelters and providing temporary lodging for evacuees
- Removal of hazards and hazard assessments (geotechnical and engineering assessments)
- Clean-up and debris removal begins (access and to make a home or public facility safe for use)
- Start conducting rapid damage assessments and post-disaster needs assessments
- Assess whether a CRM is required to support anticipated medium- and long-term recovery needs
- Plan for the restoration of utilities
- Critical or essential services resumed
- Plan for the re-entry of evacuees
- Opening of a Resilience Centre
- Re-entry of evacuees
- Provision of mental health and wellness supports
- Standing up a Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee

## 3.2 Medium-term recovery

The medium-term recovery stage often begins with the completion of response activities, hiring a community recovery manager, or equivalent recovery lead, and developing a post-disaster recovery plan (Post-DRP). There is greater involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), insurance companies, financial institutions and volunteer groups during the medium-term stage of recovery.



### **Key considerations: Common medium-term recovery activities**

- Continued operation of a Resilience Centre
- Transition to a Recovery Operations Centre or hiring of a CRM
- Continued clean up and debris removal
- Continued updates to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
- Early considerations of disaster risk reduction and projected climate changes
- Developing a Post-DRP
- Movement of goods and services
- Infrastructure repairs
- Resumption of affected businesses, services and economic functions
- Identifying ways to include cultural safety into planning, policies and activities
- Organizing events and services that promote social health and wellness
- Environmental rehabilitation

## 3.3 Long-term recovery

Long-term recovery involves sustained efforts to adapt to changed conditions and climate, which may include replacement, rebuilding and improvements, where practicable. Impacts to government operations, critical infrastructure, social cohesion, the environment, economy, housing and health and mental health are all addressed, with dedicated efforts aimed at reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of those living in the impacted area.



### **Key considerations: Common long-term recovery activities**

- Risk assessments, planning and options analyses to inform disaster and climate risk management activities
- Implementing disaster mitigation and climate adaptation activities and projects
- Obtaining funding to support disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation
- Conducting after action reviews
- Implementing lessons learned
- Updating the community risk assessment and other foundational planning resources such as updating data, maps, or plans (e.g. flood inundation mapping)
- Ensuring ongoing integrated communication at all levels
- Demobilization or handover to local, organization-based project management including community wellness supports



### **Need to know – Stages of recovery**

- The recovery phase of emergency management has three stages: short-, medium- and long-term recovery
- The goal at each stage remains the same: to restore the well-being of the community while increasing resilience and reducing future vulnerability to disaster
- Short-term recovery starts alongside response efforts, focused on meeting basic needs and providing essential services
- Medium-term recovery involves shifting to focus on recovery-specific activities
- Long-term recovery focuses on risk reduction and adapting to the changed conditions

# Section 4: Recovery management models

Several recovery management models may be used by IGBs and local authorities to facilitate the movement from short- to medium- to long-term recovery:

- Multijurisdictional Emergency Management Organizations (any or all stages of recovery; any or all emergency management phases)
- Recovery Unit (short-term recovery)
- Resilience Centre (short- to medium-term recovery)
- Recovery Operations Centre (short- to medium-term recovery)
- Community recovery manager (medium- to long-term recovery)

## 4.1 Short- to medium-term recovery management models

Short-term recovery begins as soon as possible during or after the occurrence of the event and overlaps with the response phase. During this time, communities should review the recovery section of their EMP and begin initiating short-term recovery activities. This is most successful when a recovery unit is embedded in the planning section of the community's EOC.

As response activities subside, the recovery unit may expand, or the EOC may transition into a ROC, ensuring that all positions within the structure are dedicated to supporting recovery efforts. This may vary depending on the resources and unique characteristics of the community.



### **Need to know - Eligible costs**

During the response phase, it is essential that the community's emergency program coordinator (or equivalent) contacts their local PREOC to obtain a task number for the event. The task number enables communities to submit resource requests, expense authorization forms and claims for reimbursement of eligible response and recovery costs. Eligible recovery costs include those related to conducting surveys, assessing infrastructure and hiring a community recovery manager.

### 4.1.1 Multijurisdictional emergency management organization (MJEMO)

Under the Act, communities may choose to enter an MJEMO to support or replace their current emergency management organization structure. An MJEMO can be a way to build capacity within communities and share knowledge and resources to collectively meet operational or legislative requirements. An MJEMO can include any combination of IGBs, local

authorities and provincial ministries. MJEMOs are community-driven and aim to enable members to work collaboratively together at any phase of emergency management.

EMCR recognizes that there are existing collaborative practices across B.C. that take many forms, including agreements for service or mutual aid. The MJEMO structure is optional and IGBs and local authorities can continue using existing collaborative arrangements.

#### Resources

- [Factsheet: Multijurisdictional Emergency Management Organization](#)

### 4.1.2 Recovery Unit

During response and short-term recovery, a Recovery Unit is integrated into the EOC's planning section to begin the process of identifying impacts and needs, including prioritizing those which need to be addressed in short-term recovery. Specific responsibilities of the Recovery Unit may include:

- Supporting the completion of Rapid Damage Assessments (RDAs) and Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNAs)
- Establishing and operating a Resilience Centre
- Beginning development of a Post-DRP
- Identifying immediate steps to initiate and accelerate appropriate recovery activities within the community/organization
- Anticipating actions needed to restore local programs and services
- Liaising, sharing information and coordinating with organizations and agencies involved in recovery
- Planning for the transition from an EOC to a ROC, as needed and as desired
- Supporting the establishment of a community recovery manager or other recovery lead, as appropriate

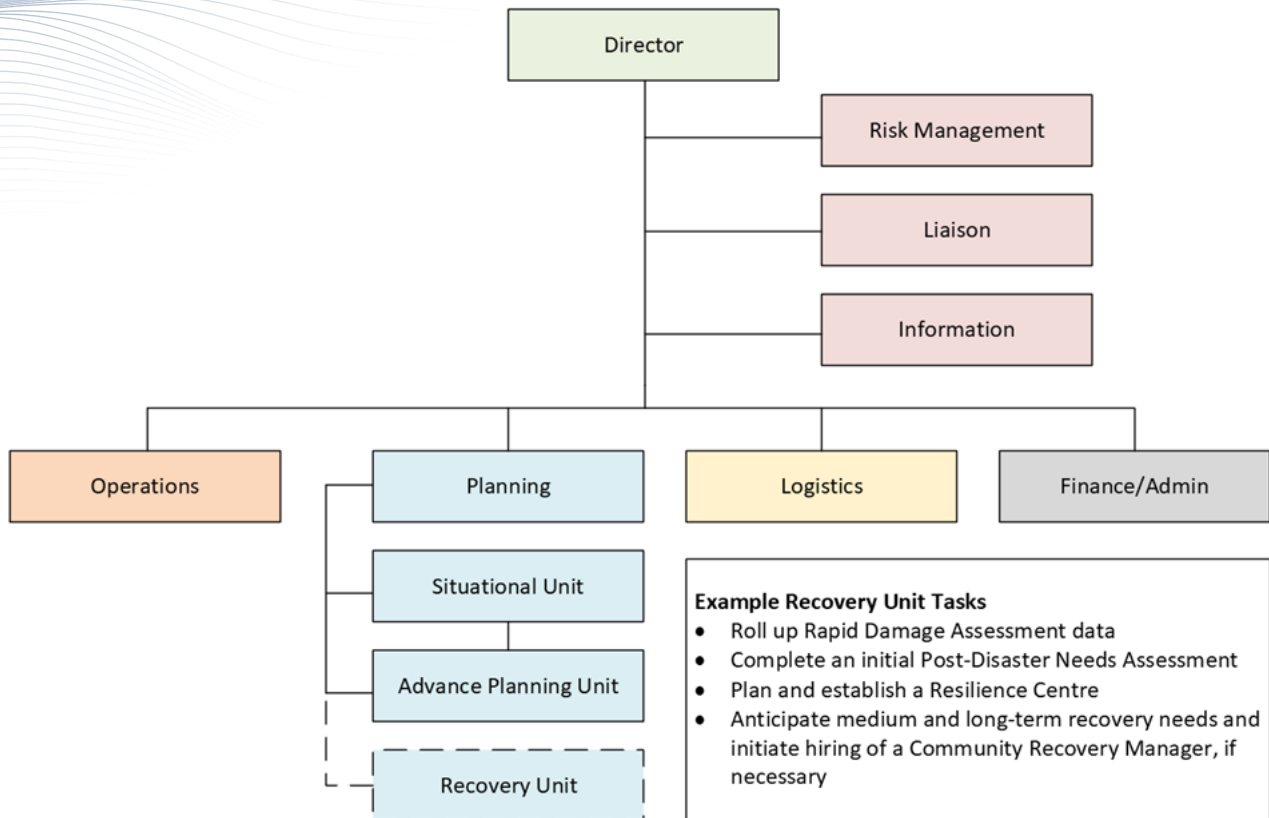


Figure 2: Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) – Sample organizational structure

### 4.1.3 Resilience Centre

A Resilience Centre supports individuals in need of recovery assistance after an emergency. It serves as a physical or virtual forum where agencies and organizations can provide guidance, advice and services to those affected ([see Appendix B for guidance](#)). Where possible, it should be established soon after the response phase to ensure timely access to supports and reduce disruptions in recovery.

By connecting people with programs, agencies and NGOs, Resilience Centres can help lessen long-term social and financial impacts on both communities and the Province. Partners may assist IGBs and local authorities by sharing recovery expertise, delivering services and facilitating access to donated funds and goods. However, the Resilience Centre should not be co-located with donations management, as the high-traffic, logistical nature of donations hubs can disrupt the calm, supportive environment needed for emotional and social recovery, compromise privacy and create operational challenges.

An IGB or local authority may choose to operate a Resilience Centre in person or virtually, taking into account cultural safety and inclusion in the chosen model. EMCR can advise whether establishing a Resilience Centre would benefit the community.



### **Key considerations: Resilience Centres**

- Set up communication channels (e.g., phone number, website, Facebook page) for the Resilience Centre to centralize information, share updates on events and provide easy access to resources
- Host a town hall with the Resilience Centre opening to share available services
- Distribute clean-up kits and information to returning residents
- Invite local agencies and partners to address resident needs
- Include insurance representatives for support and guidance
- Ensure presence of provincial and federal agency representatives
- Engage cultural and spiritual advisors for community support
- Provide on-site security for safety

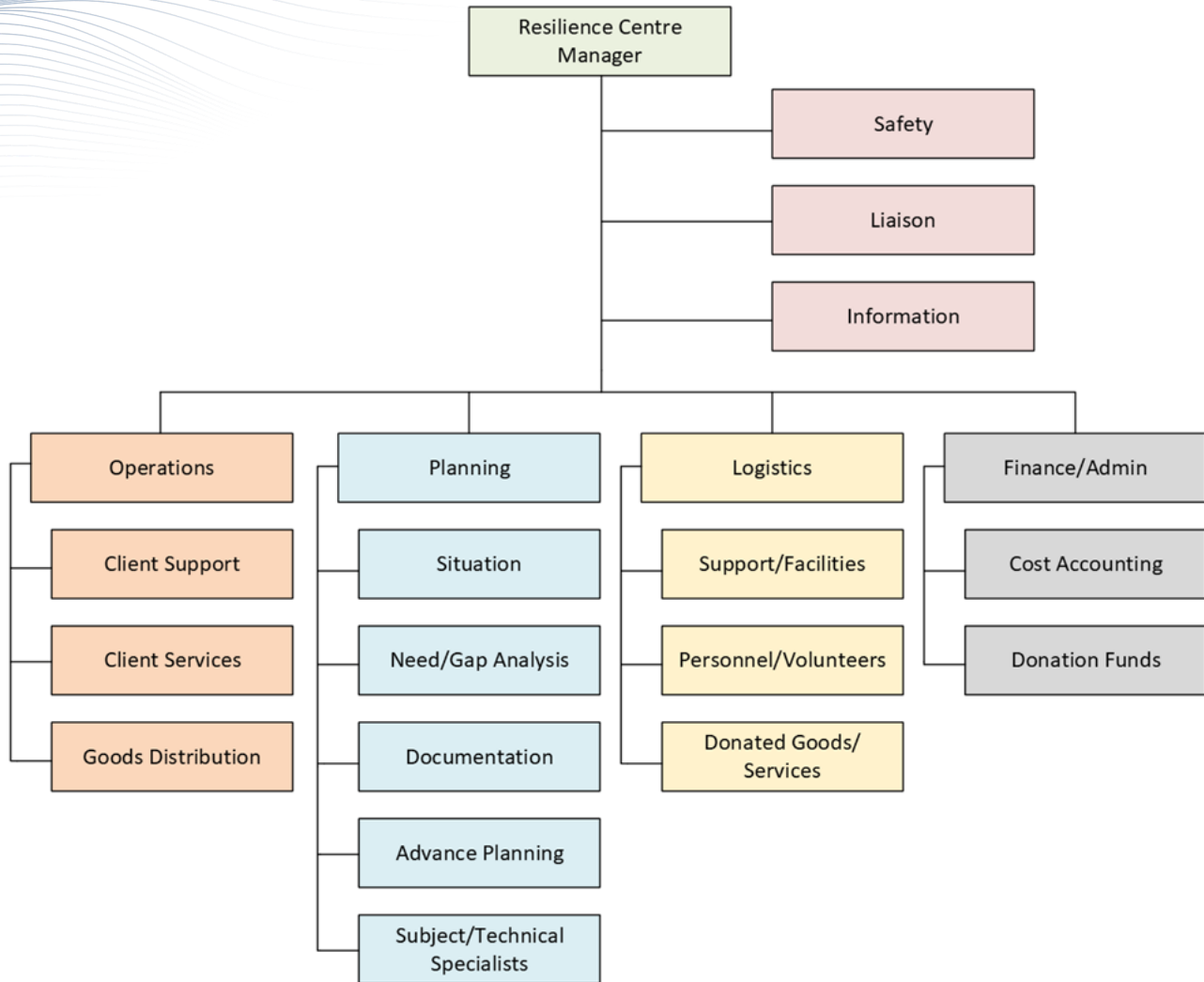


Figure 3: Resilience Centre – Sample organizational structure

#### 4.1.4 Recovery Operation Centre

As coordination of response activities gradually decreases and coordination of recovery activities gradually increases, the community may choose to transition their EOC into a recovery operation centre (ROC). Using the same Incident Command System principles as that of the EOC, the ROC consists of four sections: operations, planning, logistics and finance.

Depending on the scope and scale of circumstances surrounding a particular event, variations to how the ROC is staffed may be required to address community and organizational needs effectively. Communities with catastrophic and long-term recovery needs in particular may wish to organize their ROC by [recovery sector](#) to better coordinate with regional and provincial resources. See Figure 4 for a sample ROC organizational structure.



#### **Resilience Centre vs. a Recovery Operations Centre**

A **Resilience Centre** and a **Recovery Operations Centre** serve different but complementary roles in emergency management. A Resilience Centre provides recovery support to individuals residing in the impacted area, while a Recovery Operations Centre is a model that may be used to coordinate and manage the community's recovery. A Resilience Centre is open to the public, while a Recovery Operations Centre is not.

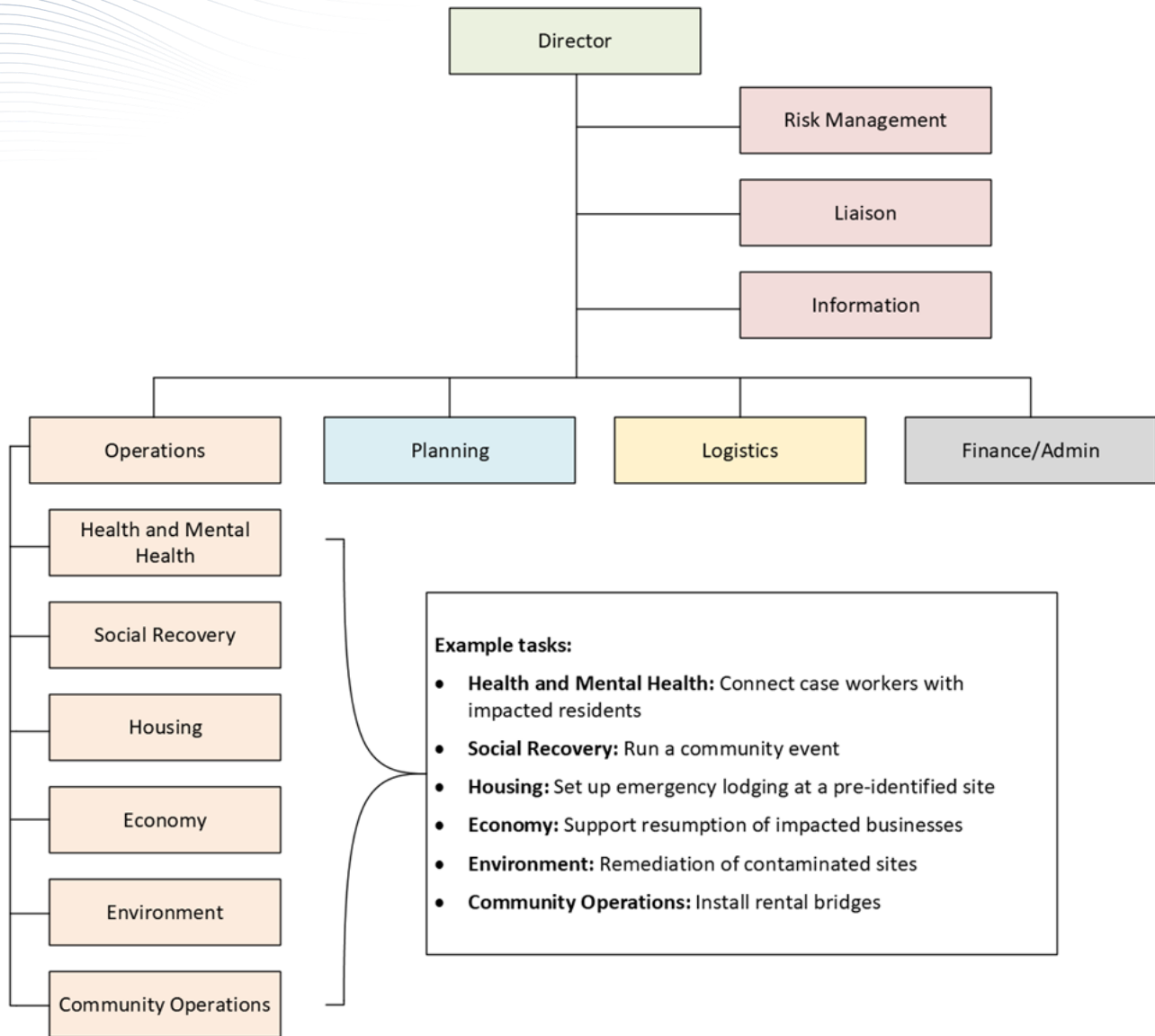


Figure 4: Recovery Operations Centre - Sample organizational structure



### Key considerations: Tips for transitioning between emergency management models

- Evaluate the situation, including assessing the status and determining the scope and scale of the recovery efforts required
- Develop a transition plan to recovery and coordinating with vested partners and individuals
- Establish roles and responsibilities
- Communicate the transition, including informing the public and notifying vested partners and individuals
- Transition operational control, including the transfer of responsibilities and continued coordination efforts
- Monitor the transition and adjust as needed
- Document and learn, including:
  - Consider identified challenges and learn from the EOC response debriefing that have considerations valuable to ongoing recovery effectiveness and efficiencies
  - Document the process and conduct a post-transition review to identify lessons learned

## 4.2 Medium- to long-term recovery management models

Medium- to long-term recovery management varies depending on the event but typically involves various operational working groups led by a project manager. The project manager is often referred to as a community recovery manager (CRM) but may be given a different title, as determined by the community. The CRM identifies, plans and executes medium- to long-term recovery activities, including obtaining funding, monitoring progress, implementing lessons learned and ensuring communication at all levels.

### 4.2.1 Community recovery manager (CRM)

A CRM or equivalent recovery lead plays a critical role in facilitating project management and leading community recovery activities following an emergency. This position liaises with local organizations, businesses, government officials and neighboring IGBs and local authorities to establish effective, coordinated and collaborative relationships (see [Appendix C for more information on CRM job description and services](#)).

The CRM's primary responsibility is to develop a Post-DRP and, where applicable, lead its implementation across the six recovery sectors. Depending on the scale of the emergency and the community's needs, this work may be carried out independently or with support from staff and community partners. The CRM is also expected to provide regular updates to the community on recovery progress, which can be integrated into a broader communications plan.

If the community is ineligible for a CRM or has decided not to engage a CRM, recovery efforts may be managed by the EOC Recovery Unit, Recovery Operations Centre staff, or a resilience centre manager. In communities with an emergency program coordinator, this role can take charge of developing and implementing a Post-DRP.

A community may be eligible for reimbursement by the Province for costs related to hiring a CRM when it is demonstrated that recovery will involve medium- to long-term activities and impacts from the emergency are beyond the capacity of the community to recover on their own.

Communities are encouraged to use the vendors from the Province’s Corporate Supply Arrangement (CSA) for CRM services as they have proven experience navigating communities through disaster recovery. If communities wish to hire vendors not listed on the CSA, credentials need to be shared with and evaluated by EMCR. See the [Emergency Management: Community Recovery Manager Services on the B.C. Government’s webpage](#) for more information.

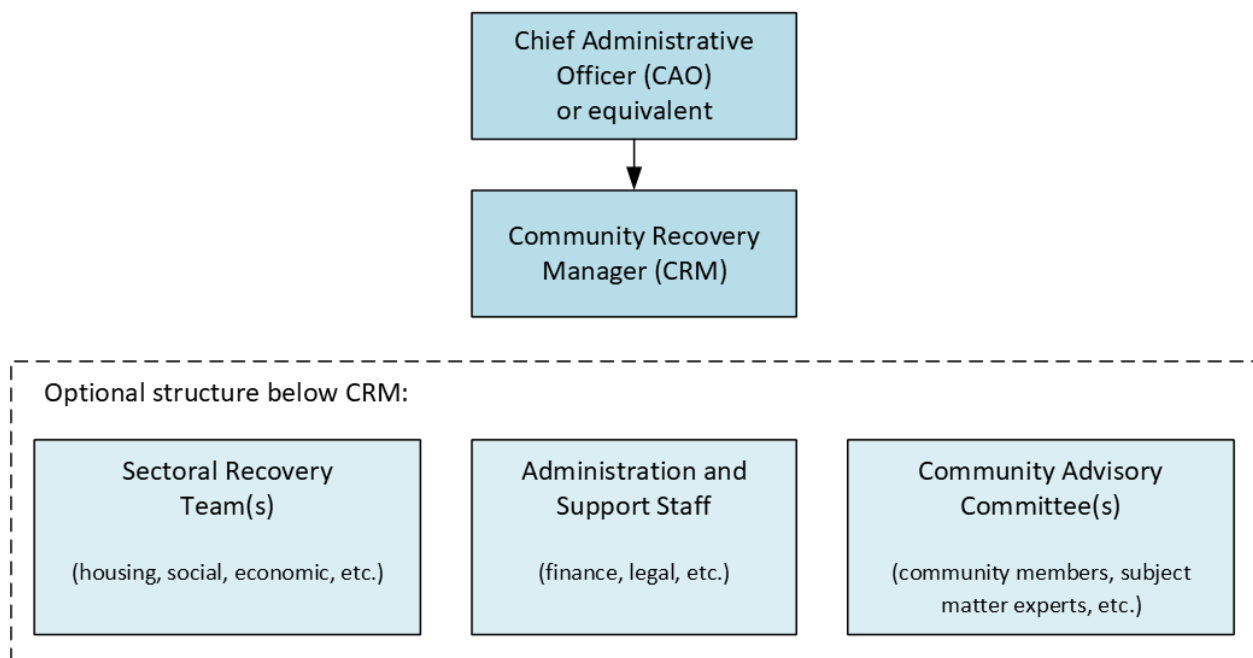


Figure 5: Community recovery manager – Sample organizational structure

The graphic above presents options that could be used in a recovery model involving a CRM or equivalent recovery lead. The community determines who the CRM or recovery lead would report to. Usually, CRMs or recovery leads will report to the chief administrative officer (CAO), but they can also report to Board or Council committees, for example. The portion of the above figure within the dotted box is optional and can be used as needed depending on the community and the scope and scale of the emergency. Within the dotted box, any number of paths and combinations may be selected to best suit the community’s needs.

## **Sectoral recovery teams**

Depending on how many sectors have been impacted by the emergency, one or more sectoral teams could be stood up (e.g. a housing sector team, a social sector team, etc.). [See Section 6.1 on recovery sectors for more information](#). These teams may be comprised of permanent or temporary staff.

Costs related to the regular salaries of permanent staff are not eligible for reimbursement from the Province; however, using permanent staff in these roles may help to build internal knowledge and capacity, which would strengthen the community's ability to recover from future emergencies. The cost of staff overtime or backfilling positions to temporarily cover full-time staff is usually eligible for reimbursement.

A team could be as big or small as a community requires, even a single individual. Sectoral teams may also be made up of representatives from private industry, other communities and those with a vested interest in the success of rebuilding plans.

## **Administrative and support staff**

This structure consists of a combination of finance, legal, or other administrative staff that would support the CRM or recovery lead. These staff could directly report through the CRM or through the sectoral recovery team(s) if they are stood up. The administrative and support staff could also consist of temporary or permanent staff.

## **Community Advisory Committee(s)**

Similar to sectoral recovery teams, community advisory committees can be established for each recovery sector affected by the emergency. These committees may include community members, staff, decision-makers and subject matter experts who provide insights and local context to inform the recovery process.

Gaining public buy-in during this stage is critical to ensure transparency, accountability and alignment with community needs. While these individuals are engaged and kept informed of recovery plans, they do not hold decision-making authority on behalf of others.

## 4.3 Levels of recovery coordination

The use of one or more recovery management models depends on the scope and scale of the damage incurred and the preferences of the community.

The table below illustrates when coordination of recovery activities may be escalated and who may coordinate those activities:

Highest level of coordination	Key incident indicators	Lead coordinators
Local coordination	Features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localized incident</li> <li>• Periods of routine emergency activity</li> <li>• Capacity of community is not exceeded or expected to exceed resources available</li> <li>• Community can address all recovery requirements without regional or provincial assistance</li> </ul>	Community recovery activities supported locally by a Recovery Unit and/or a resilience centre manager
Regional coordination	Features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident exceeds capacity of the community</li> <li>• Recovery activities will likely continue into the medium to long-term</li> <li>• Incident has crossed over one or more municipal jurisdictions</li> <li>• Resources that are not readily available at the local level are being requested from EMCR</li> </ul>	Community recovery activities supported locally by a Recovery Unit, ROC and/or a CRM
Provincial coordination	Features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident has caused significant impacts to more than one municipality or region</li> <li>• A complex current and/or emerging emergency event posing considerable risk to people, critical infrastructure and/or economic disruption</li> <li>• Impacts require significant provincial coordination, assistance and resource support</li> </ul>	Community recovery activities supported locally by a Recovery Unit, ROC and/or a CRM



## Section 5: Common short-term recovery activities

This section identifies some important short-term recovery activities that a community may consider in the response and short-term recovery stage. Depending on the scope and scale of the impacts, a community may find some activities they need to take are missing from this Guide while other activities included in this Guide may not be applicable to them. Each community is encouraged to decide for itself what is best for their own recovery.

### 5.1 Deciding whether to declare a local recovery period

Deciding whether to transition from a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) to a Local Recovery Period (LRP) is a common short-term recovery activity. An LRP is a legal tool available to local authorities under the Act that allows local authorities to access recovery powers once response powers are no longer needed.

This section outlines how LRPs apply to different types of authorities:

- **Municipalities and regional districts** require ministerial approval to declare an LRP while the SOLE is still in effect (i.e., before it expires or is cancelled) using the forms available online
- **The Nisga'a Nation and Modern Treaty Nations** do not require ministerial approval but must also declare an LRP before the SOLE ends
- **First Nations that are not Modern Treaty Nations** have the inherent authority to manage recovery under their own governance systems, so the LRP framework does not apply

An LRP should only be declared if recovery powers under the Act are still needed after the emergency response ends. If neither response nor recovery powers are required, the SOLE must be cancelled instead. An LRP will not be approved if recovery powers are not necessary.

Where appropriate, LRPs can be advantageous for communities as they have effect for up to 90 days, compared to SOLEs which only have effect for up to 14 days. This extended duration can reduce administrative workloads associated with SOLE renewals.

For guidance on when and how to declare an LRP, refer to EMCR's Guide for Transitioning to a Local Recovery Period in the resources box. Note that a SOLE may only be declared when an event meets the definition of an emergency under the Act; it cannot be used solely as a pathway to an LRP. Refer to the EDMA's Response and Recovery Powers in the resources box for more information on powers available under the Act.

Some recovery powers also require consultation and cooperation with IGBs. See the Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance in the resources box for more information.

## 5.2 Implementing an emergency management plan

Emergency management plans (EMPs) are required under Section 52 of the Act and must address all phases of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, while clearly defining the roles, powers and duties of those involved, amongst other things. Local authorities without an EMP should prioritize developing one, and those with existing plans under the Emergency Program Act must update them to fully address mitigation and preparedness. Development or updates must include consultation with IGBs whose traditional territories or treaty areas are affected and reflect culturally safe and inclusive practices. EMPs must be actively applied during emergencies to ensure a coordinated and effective recovery.



### EMPs, pre-disaster recovery plans and Post-DRPs

Some communities may know the recovery portion of their **EMP** as a **pre-disaster recovery plan**. The EMP may be applicable to all-hazards or may be hazard specific. The recovery portion of an EMP should be activated as soon as possible once an event occurs.

A **Post-DRP** is developed after an emergency has occurred. Its development may be supported, upon request, by relevant provincial ministries. Post-DRPs are based on a specific emergency event and outline key projects to be undertaken relating to the event that has occurred. It is typically developed in medium-term recovery by a CRM or an equivalent recovery lead. It is possible for more than one Post-DRP to be developed during recovery from a single large-scale event.



### Resources

- [EMCR's planning tools and guides](#)
- [EMCR's Guide for Transitioning to a Local Recovery Period](#)
- [EDMA's Response and Recovery Powers](#)
- [Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance](#)

## 5.3 Informing the public

Keeping the public informed about recovery progress, available services and support is essential. Transparency addresses the community's need to understand damage and how they can contribute to recovery. See [EMCR's Communications Guide](#) (EOC Communication Toolkit) for best practices.

First Nations and local authorities may appoint an EOC information officer to coordinate public information, media relations and internal communications during response and recovery. In large emergencies, this is typically a trained official who is already in a designated role within the response or emergency team; in smaller events, a knowledgeable community member or local leader may fill the role temporarily.

Information can be shared through town halls, social media, official websites and other local channels. Early, accurate and timely communication among organizations, officials, media and the public is critical. Local tourism groups can assist in relaying messages to visitors. Regular, consistent and transparent updates throughout recovery build trust and support effective community engagement.



### Key considerations: Informing the public

- Refer to the EMCR Communications Guide (EOC Communication Toolkit)
- Have a designated individual (Information Officer or other) to facilitate effective communication
- Communicate clearly with all affected groups by providing information in the languages used by residents and visitors. Make information accessible in a variety of ways to reach diverse impacted groups
- Utilize call centres where people can call to receive important information
- Ensure the location, hours of operation and contact information of the Resilience Centre are made available and published
- Resilience Centres are key locations for distributing information to impacted individuals, including information on resources for emotional and mental health support services, how to apply for DFA (if available), how to contact their insurance provider, safely clean their homes, avoid being scammed, etc.
- Schedule an in-person or virtual town hall or community meeting, at a time that best meets the community needs, with all relevant agencies invited

## 5.5 Conducting rapid damage assessments

A rapid damage assessment (RDA) is a process initiated by the local EOC to quickly assess the safety of structures impacted by an emergency. It supports situational awareness and informs the PDNA. RDAs provide high-level information such as the number of buildings damaged, restricted, or unsafe to enter. Where possible, assessments should utilize local maps and property data.

The EOC's post-disaster building assessment team—reporting to either the operations or planning chief—coordinates assessments of building safety. As needed, the EOC may draw on technical expertise from ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, the Ministry of Infrastructure, BC Housing, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Technical Safety BC, Engineers and Geoscientists BC, Applied Science Technologists of BC, GeoBC, local building inspectors and fire departments when conducting such assessments. While PREOCs do not coordinate RDAs, they can support EOCs by facilitating connections with these ministries and agencies.

BC Housing offers Rapid Damage Assessment and Coordination of Damage Assessment training for emergency management personnel. These online courses, typically three hours long, provide communities with skills to identify unsafe conditions and determine building habitability. If local resources are limited, BC Housing can also provide trained damage assessors to support the community. To support web-based collection of damage assessment information, BC Housing and GeoBC (Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship) has developed and maintains a GIS-based mobile app for phones and tablets.

The First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) also provides training and support to First Nations communities for RDAs. First Nations communities can reach out to their local PREOC and request to be connected with FNESS for support with RDAs.



### Key considerations: Conducting RDAs

- Will a resource request for damage assessors be required?
- Are there potential impacts to critical infrastructure?
- Are there potential impacts to residences?
- Do any culturally sensitive areas need to be assessed? If so, will a liaison or guide be required to ensure cultural sensitivity?
- Have evacuees with yellow or red placards on their homes been briefed prior to returning home?
- Has the damage assessment process been communicated to the public?

 **Resources**

- [BC Housing Post-Disaster Building Assessments](#)
- [BC Rapid Damage Assessment Portal](#)
- [Post-Disaster Building Assessments Resources](#)
- [First Nations Emergency Services Society](#)

## 5.6 Conducting a post-disaster needs assessment

The post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) is a tool for IGBs and local authorities to assess damage and recovery needs at various stages in the recovery process. It will identify impacts and needs by [sector](#) and provide the foundation for developing a Post-DRP.

Gathering data for a PDNA can be difficult, especially during evacuations. Communities should be prepared to develop and exhaust many means of data collection. Consideration should be given to resident surveys, data collection at resilience and recovery operations centres, data collection by information and communications staff, assessments and any other means.

It is recommended that a PDNA be started immediately following an emergency. A preliminary version should be completed during the short-term recovery stage to help prioritize needs, identifying those that require immediate attention and those that can be addressed in medium- and long-term recovery. PDNAs may be conducted by the Recovery Unit in the local EOC or another designated individual or agency. Communities that do not have the capacity to complete a PDNA may request support from their EMCR PREOC, which will help connect communities with available resources and provide additional guidance to ensure there is no delay in initiating recovery.

PDNAs require a consistent effort to continually inform the recovery process. They begin as soon as possible following an event and may be updated for weeks to months as recovery progresses. Below is a suggested timeline for PDNAs:

### **Initial impact assessment (24 to 48 hours after access to area)**

- Informs response-related activities and priority recovery needs
- May include RDAs

### **Short term (days or weeks)**

- Considers people and communities, health and mental health/psychosocial needs, economic and environmental impacts, infrastructure and reconstruction and community needs

### Medium term (weeks to months)

- Like short term, considers people and communities, health and mental health/ psychosocial needs, economic and environmental impacts, infrastructure and reconstruction and community needs

### Long term (months to years)

- Informs the longer-term recovery process, options for strengthening community, social and health resilience, development, and builds the knowledge base of the total cost of emergencies that informs risk management
- Should consider recovery and mitigation vulnerabilities the community could experience in future events



#### Key considerations: PDNA recommended practice

- Establish an office of responsibility to complete the PDNA process (e.g., EOC Planning Section)
- Review the template and prioritize the information that needs to be collected
- Sections that are not deemed necessary can be skipped
- Spread the responsibility for data collection across partners and other agencies
- Connect with staff in the EOC, Reception Centre, Resilience Centre and/or on the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee to ensure that impacts and needs of vulnerable populations are identified
- Review and revise the PDNA regularly



#### Resources

- [PDNA Template](#)

## 5.7 Contaminated site cleanup

In B.C., a contaminated site is one where waste materials have polluted the soil, groundwater, or sediment at concentrations that exceed environmental quality standards. Community assessments may determine that critical infrastructure and other sites need to be cleaned up before re-entry.

Identifying whether a site is contaminated usually requires hiring an environmental consultant to complete an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). Identifying and cleaning up contaminated sites helps to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment. Impacted residential homes will also need to be assessed to confirm they are safe prior to conducting cleanup activities.

It is important for the IGB or local authority to connect with the owners of any suspected contaminated sites and consider whether collaboration with qualified professionals or industry partners will be necessary for assessment and cleanup. Engaging professionals with contaminated sites expertise is essential, as they are familiar with legislative requirements and can guide both communities and site owners through the remediation process.

For a list of approved professionals in B.C., refer to the Society of Contaminated Sites Approved Professionals of B.C., listed in the resources box below.



#### Key considerations: Contaminated site cleanup

- Confirm if preliminary or rapid damage assessments have been conducted in the impacted areas and are safe to assess for contamination or cleanup
- Engage contaminated sites professionals, like those listed as Approved Professionals by the Society of Contaminated Sites Approved Professionals



#### Resources

- Email any inquiries or comments regarding contaminated site issues to: [site@gov.bc.ca](mailto:site@gov.bc.ca)
- Report spills and hazardous materials via the Emergency Coordination Centre at: 1-800-663-3456
- [B.C. Government's contaminated sites guidance and resources](#)
- [B.C. Government's professional reliance with contaminated sites](#)
- [B.C. Government's spills and environmental emergencies](#)
- [Society of contaminated sites approved professionals of B.C.](#)

## 5.8 Considerations for community re-entry

While evacuation orders are in place, IGBs or local authorities may authorize specific agencies to access affected areas to prepare for general re-entry. This supports the timely restoration of essential services, such as water, sanitation and healthcare and helps prevent strain on infrastructure when residents return.

Phased re-entry is a structured, gradual return process that prioritizes safety by managing access based on need, risk and available resources. It is recommended in areas with significant damage, as it allows time to restore critical services, support recovery and ensure the well-being of returning residents.

Decisions to lift evacuation orders are made by the IGB or local authority, guided by advice from hazard-specific experts. Refer to the [Evacuation Operational Guide](#) and [EMCR Community Re-entry Consideration Reference Guide](#) for detailed guidance.

Returning residents should be advised on what to expect. They may need to bring food, potable water, medications, pet supplies and other essentials, as local services and stores may not be fully operational. Ensuring vehicles are fueled is also recommended.

Clear and timely communication is essential. It is recommended that IGBs and local authorities use community meetings, official websites and other channels to share re-entry information. Tourism organizations can help manage messaging to visitors. Cleanup kits and information can be distributed through the Resilience Centre.



#### **Key considerations: Preparing for community re-entry**

- Have rapid damage and building assessments been completed?
- Have hazardous materials and suspected contaminated sites been identified, assessed and/or cleaned up?
- Have danger tree assessments and other hazard mitigations been conducted?
- Have utilities and critical infrastructure been restored to minimally acceptable levels?
- Has the health authority verified critical public services are available, including drinking water, sewage, air quality, food safety and hospital emergency departments?
- Is the drinking water safe to consume?
- Have essential businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies resumed operations and are they stocked with a sufficient supply of food and pharmaceuticals?
- Are essential community services available, including waste disposal services?
- Are mental health and psychosocial supports in place for children and adults, including culturally appropriate supports for First Nations communities?
- Has a Resilience Centre been established to provide information and resources to returning residents on how to safely re-enter their homes?
- Has a phased re-entry plan been enabled, especially for heavily impacted areas, to support recovery and mental wellness?
- Is the host community prepared for additional supply needs?
- Are there any remaining safety or security concerns and have necessary risk assessments and mitigation measures been completed?
- Have school districts assessed their ability to reopen schools or provide alternate programming?
- Have options for non-standard temporary housing or suitable lands been identified?

 **Resources**

- [EMCR's evacuation resources](#)
- [Canadian Red Cross wildfire information and support](#)
- [EMCR's disaster recovery information for the public](#)
- [EMCR's disaster recovery for communities – re-entry guides and templates](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority: Returning to your home after wildfires guide](#)

## 5.9 Requesting Disaster Psychosocial Support

To support mental health needs in recovery, IGBs and local authorities are encouraged to engage psychosocial support services. The Provincial Health Services Authority's (PHSAs) Health Emergency Management B.C. program includes a [Disaster Psychosocial Support \(DPS\) team](#) which provides short-term support in the form of psychosocial first aid in response to larger scale events and emergencies such as wildfires and flooding evacuations.

The DPS team consists of PHSA staff and volunteers who may deploy to Reception Centres during evacuations. Communities can request support from the DPS team directly. DPS can also provide wellness check-ins for frontline staff as well as those supporting EOCs, emergency support services, local authority and non-profit organizations.

Though the DPS team typically operates during response, there may be circumstances where they could be utilized in the concurrent short-term recovery stage. For example, the DPS team can provide supports at Resilience Centres, participate in the [Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee](#), provide Psychological First Aid training and support mental health services.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Public Health Response team provides health-related emergency management support services to Nations and communities affected by wildfires and other natural disasters. Environmental Health Officers can provide advice and support to communities to access resources, avoid wildfire smoke effects and return home safely after an evacuation order is lifted.

FNHA and their partners can help provide a wide range of [mental health and wellness supports](#) including culturally safe and trauma-informed services and crisis counselling supports to Indigenous people in B.C. These services are available year-round and are not limited to wildfires.



## Section 6: Medium- and long-term recovery

Part of medium- and long-term recovery focuses on movement of goods and services, infrastructure repairs, resuming business and economic functions, securing more permanent housing options for displaced individuals, re-establishing cultural and spiritual connections to the environment, social health and wellness and environmental rehabilitation. As such, organizing medium- and long-term recovery activities into the six recovery sectors can help to manage the required tasks and make it easier to connect in with the right support at the provincial level. Some elements, such as the Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia (IDCBC), the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee, and donations management, are applicable to multiple recovery sectors.

### 6.1 Recovery sectors

The Province's approach to recovery involves organizing recovery activities into six sectors:

- Community operations ([Section 7](#))
- Economy ([Section 8](#))
- Housing ([Section 9](#))
- Environment ([Section 10](#))
- Health and mental health ([Section 11](#))
- Social ([Section 12](#))

IGBs and local authorities are also encouraged to organize their recovery activities into these sectors. Depending on the scope and scale of the event, communities may find anywhere from one to all six sectors have been impacted. In practice, the recovery sectors naturally overlap with one another.

If recovery assistance is escalated to the provincial level, these sectors will guide how the Province organizes its recovery efforts, as recovery sectors are used to align and coordinate ministry accountability. It is also common for post-disaster recovery plans, documents, reports and funding requests to be organized by recovery sector.

The six recovery sectors and their related activities should be considered when completing post-disaster needs assessments, as well as during pre- and post-disaster recovery planning.

## 6.2 Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia (IDCBC)

The IDCBC is a provincial level organization with a mandate to increase coordination amongst participating levels of government, emergency management agencies and NGOs by creating a forum for communication and information sharing to support First Nations and local authorities' emergency management efforts. The IDCBC is co-chaired by EMCR and a rotating member. Each member retains the responsibility to deliver services according to their mandate and to raise and/or acquire funds for their own purpose. The IDCBC provides services in support of food distribution, pet care and supplies, psychosocial supports and donations management.

Following a disaster, IDCBC members support recovery efforts by collaborating with other NGOs, government agencies and private industry to assess and address individual and community needs. When communities identify unmet needs that exceed their local capacity to address, these needs should be communicated to the PREOC for potential escalation to the IDCBC.

## 6.3 Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee

Affected individuals may not be able to manage their own recovery without assistance. A Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee (the Committee) calls for a collaborative group of local and regional agencies and representatives that share the common mandate of assisting individuals impacted by a disaster. The Committee assists residents in recovering from the impacts of an emergency by evaluating unmet needs, identifying resources for meeting priority needs and recommending the allocation of limited resources (see [Appendix D](#) for a Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee template and [Appendix E](#) for identifying unmet needs post-disaster template). This may include identifying available assistance to address unmet needs, such as physical help with cleanup, psychosocial supports or financial aid. These needs can be discovered informally and formally through the Resilience Centre.

The Committee can be made up of representatives of different agencies who specialize in different forms of support as well as local representatives with local knowledge who may be invaluable to the Committee. For example, although the DPS team primarily operates in short-term recovery, it is also able to support and participate in the Committee (see [Section 5.9 for information on Disaster Psychosocial Support](#)). It is initiated by an IGB or local authority staff member and can be led by a local resident, business leader, NGO or other volunteer.

Establishing the Committee fosters a sense of involvement in the recovery process for affected residents, enhancing their resilience. Local residents are best equipped to identify their own needs and those who require the most assistance. Additionally, the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee encourages residents in the impacted area to feel connected and supported during their recovery journey.

In an emergency, unofficial volunteers may self-organize to fill real or perceived gaps. Volunteering can empower impacted communities and improve outcomes. Consider whether adding a representative of any self-organized groups to the community's Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee might be a good way of integrating an emergent volunteer group into your community's recovery model. The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee may also be used as a forum to raise and distribute funds and physical donations as needed. Donated funds are an important resource for recovery; however, those collecting donations are encouraged to take steps to maintain public confidence by adopting transparent and accountable procedures. It is important for any individual or organization collecting donated funds to adopt, in writing, accountability guidelines.

## 6.4 Donations management

In the aftermath of an emergency, donations can be a powerful way for the public to support recovery efforts across multiple sectors. People often want to help by giving clothing, materials, or money to those affected. If a First Nation or local authority chooses to be involved in managing donations, it's recommended they encourage cash donations that are not designated for a specific purpose. This flexibility allows the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee to direct support where it's most needed.

As recovery progresses and community needs become clearer, the Committee may also decide to request specific types of donations to address emerging gaps. However, physical donations, while well-intentioned, can create significant challenges.

- They often arrive unrequested
- Requires substantial people power and space
- Many items may be unsuitable or unusable, leading to increased waste disposal costs

For these reasons, financial donations are generally the most effective way to help. They allow trusted organizations to:

- Procure exactly what is needed, when and where it's needed
- Support local economies by purchasing goods and services within the affected area

To streamline giving, First Nations and local authorities can refer donors to

<https://www.canadahelps.org>, where individuals can choose from a list of vetted organizations to support.

Municipalities and regional districts may choose to accept donations directly, but they must do so carefully to ensure compliance with the Community Charter and Local Government Act. To remain compliant, donations must not benefit for-profit entities, unless those businesses are delivering services under a formal partnering agreement.

Prohibited assistance to non-profit entities includes:

- Financial support (e.g. grants)
- Below-market land sales
- Tax exemptions

Additionally, it is considered best practice to develop a donation acceptance policy, the policy should outline:

- Any limitations on the types of donations accepted
- How donations will be used to support recovery efforts

In some situations, an NGO may be appointed to manage financial donations through an event-specific appeal. This provides a coordinated and transparent way to direct funds where they are most needed, while easing the administrative burden on local officials. NGOs or other designated organizations may also help manage incoming physical donations and guide the public on how to contribute appropriately.

Steps for establishing a donations management system involve:

- Identifying the needs of the impacted population
- Determining how donors can contribute most effectively to recovery efforts
- Clearly communicating that financial donations are preferred over physical goods
- Prioritizing aid that meets basic needs, supports self-sufficiency and builds community resilience
- Engaging NGOs with expertise in donation management and disaster recovery
- Where feasible, tracking non-cash donations offers, matching with recipients and delivering goods directly to recipients to avoid warehousing



#### **Key considerations: Donations management**

- How will donation requests be communicated?
- Where will donated items be stored? How will they be distributed?
- How will cash donations be managed?

## Section 7: Community operations sector

This sector includes recovery of First Nations and local authority government operations and critical infrastructure. Recovery in this sector heavily influences the recovery of the impacted area and may be considered a priority to support recovery activities. For example, restoration of critical infrastructure often supports recovery of the economic sector by allowing for the resumption of business operations and services.



### **Key considerations: Recovery of government operations**

- Assessing whether anyone has been displaced:
  - Have local officials or staff been displaced by the emergency?
  - If local officials or staff have been displaced, have they been able to find accommodations in the community?
  - How will information get to/from the displaced local officials or staff (may already be addressed in an existing communications or business continuity plan)?
- Can board or council meetings continue as usual:
  - Are they able to establish quorum?
  - Do they have adequate facilities, electronic equipment and staffing to continue business?
- Is there another First Nation or local authority outside the impact area that can provide operational support?
- Are current processes, policies and available legal tools sufficient to support a timely, effective recovery while balancing the speed and complexity of rebuilding?
- Was there a loss of official community records? If so what kind and who is best placed to provide an assessment?
- Are there any immediate projects/events that may need to be delayed, or which provincial approvals or extensions may be needed (i.e. grants for projects, elections, assent votes)?
- What is the capacity for communications with residents (i.e. so that residents continue to understand how their government is operating)?
- Has equipment such as First Nations band or local authority vehicles been damaged (e.g. garbage trucks)?
- For critical maintenance – are spare parts readily accessible and will key staff be able to access locations needing maintenance (based on their home location and location of the infrastructure)?
  - Are maintenance records available and accessible? These may be required to support eligibility for relevant DFA public assistance

## 7.1 Infrastructure cost recovery plan

If DFA has been authorized for an event, First Nations band councils and local authorities in the impacted area must submit a notice of intent to apply within 90 days of the DFA event authorization date. See [Section 13.3 on DFA for more information](#).

After receiving a letter acknowledging DFA eligibility from EMCR, First Nations band councils and local authorities must prepare and submit an infrastructure cost recovery plan (ICRP). The plan must detail the damaged infrastructure and the projects planned for cleanup and restoration. Visit the [DFA website](#) for further information.

## 7.2 Infrastructure recovery manager

IGBs and local authorities may choose to assign an infrastructure recovery manager to oversee cleanup, restoration and rebuilding of DFA-eligible losses. Even if DFA has not been authorized for an event, appointing an infrastructure recovery manager may still be beneficial to support recovery efforts.

The ICRP is typically prepared by a First Nations administrator or local authority employee. If additional resources are needed, EMCR recommends hiring a qualified professional, such as an engineer, for those specific projects that are beyond the capacity of the First Nations band council or local authority to manage.

Under the Act and its regulations, general administrative costs and costs of inspection, appraisal, planning or design are eligible for DFA provided the event has been authorized for DFA and the costs exclude regular costs related to permanent staff. This means that the cost of hiring an infrastructure recovery manager on a temporary basis could be at least partially cost-recoverable.



### CRM vs. an infrastructure recovery manager

A **CRM** or an equivalent recovery lead is responsible for the development of a post-disaster recovery plan that considers all six recovery sectors. The CRM may also lead implementation of the plan in medium- and long-term recovery.

In contrast, an **infrastructure recovery manager** is responsible for overseeing recovery in just part of one recovery sector – the Community Operations sector. Specifically, infrastructure recovery managers oversee the restoration of damaged community-owned infrastructure (e.g., community centres, roads and bridges). This role could involve tasks such as assessing damage, coordinating repairs with contractors, or overseeing permits. The two positions, while different, collaborate on the overall progress of recovery as many infrastructure projects are tied to recovery in other sectors.

## 7.3 Building activities and permits

Building permits are required to construct, modify, repair or demolish a building or structure. The building owner is responsible for ensuring a permit is obtained prior to work commencing and that the work carried out is in full accordance with the requirements of the B.C. Building Code and other applicable legislation. For more information regarding permits involving sites of heritage value, see [Section 10.1](#) and [Section 10.1.1](#). It is important that all applicable permitting requirements are communicated early to residents, including potential barriers that could happen during the application process.



### Key considerations: Building activities and permits

- Will your usual permitting process be adequate for these recovery activities and rebuild?
- Do you have the capacity to manage the permitting process?
- Do you have a way to track permits that will meet recovery needs?
- Is an expedited process or different permits required?
- Do you need to put a timeframe or deadline on the demolition stage?



### Resources

- [Infrastructure Cost Recovery Plan \(ICRP\) information](#)
- [Technical Safety BC - Permits](#)
- [Permit Connect B.C.](#)



## Section 8: Economy sector

The economic sector considers both the direct and indirect impacts of an emergency on the local economy. It focuses on recovery activities related to small, medium and large enterprises, tourism and cultural livelihood, agriculture and the broader economy. Economic recovery considers diversification of the economy to build resilience against future events.

Economic impacts are identified through completion of a PDNA and addressed through implementation of the Post-DRP. Economic recovery efforts should begin as soon as possible, as the long-term recovery of a community depends significantly on how quickly a local economy can rebound.

Recovery planning should include the assessment and identification of critical economic assets and infrastructure within the community such as essential businesses, transportation systems, mills, transmission lines, ports and terminals. Identifying these elements in a PDNA or as part of recovery planning helps prioritize their restoration following a disaster. Plans should emphasize support for businesses essential to long-term recovery and community resettlement, including pharmacies, grocery stores, childcare, accommodations, restaurants and fuel stations. Proactively planning for the protection and resumption of these assets can significantly reduce recovery costs and accelerate the overall recovery process.

The following are some activities that may support economic recovery. Every community will have unique needs and this is not a comprehensive list.

### 8.1 Economic impact assessment

Conducting an economic impact assessment as part of a PDNA helps to collect data that can then be used to plan and develop activities and strategies to address the identified impacts and reduce the economic consequences of the emergency. These efforts would be documented in the Post-DRP and implemented according to short- medium- and long-term recovery timelines. A local or regional economic development organization, the nearest Community Futures BC office, or the local Chamber of Commerce may be able to support a community when answering the below questions.

**Key considerations: Economic impact assessment**

- How many businesses were/are under evacuation order?
- How many businesses have experienced significant impacts and what are the associated lost revenues?
- How long can businesses endure major disruptions before adverse impacts occur?
- Did the businesses have business interruption insurance and were able to make claims?
- Do business owners have the support they need to make an effective recovery?
- Which key economic assets or infrastructure, or economic sectors are likely to be impacted for a significant period (e.g. transportation networks, communications, tourism, retail, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, etc.)?
- Have key supply chains or economic infrastructure (e.g. energy supplies, ports, terminals, railways) been disrupted locally, nationally, or internationally?
- Has the community workforce been disrupted by the event?
- How many businesses were damaged or destroyed by the event? Are the businesses insured? Were any of these on your list of critical economic assets?
- Are business owners eligible to submit claims under DFA (has the event been declared DFA-eligible)?

## 8.2 Small businesses

It is the responsibility of small business owners to be aware of the potential risks they are exposed to and be adequately insured as emergencies can result in substantial material losses. Business owners are encouraged to assess their insurance coverage and work with their broker to ensure they have sufficient coverage for the risks identified in their region. There are programs that can protect businesses against the financial impact of an emergency. See the resources provided below.

Economic recovery activities should consider the needs of small businesses (fewer than 50 employees). Small businesses can be more exposed to significant losses from emergencies and may have less financial ability to recover. Planning efforts should include the interest of the small business sector. Promptly notify your small business sector of any assistance available to eligible small businesses, such as Disaster Financial Assistance, tax deferral programs, interest-free loans, or grants.

[Community Futures British Columbia \(CFBC\)](#) is a federally mandated not-for-profit program to deliver business development services in rural and remote non-metropolitan communities. CFBC also offers the Rural Resiliency Initiative (RRI) which provides specialized supports for businesses and government before, during and after and economic disruptions, like those caused by emergencies. Activities are carried out by the Economic Quick Response and Recovery Team, a CFBC leadership team focusing on the unique needs of rural businesses.

Local Chambers of Commerce or Business Improvement Associations can be contacted to determine whether they are able to offer supports to impacted small businesses, and if they offer support they should be invited to participate at the local Resilience Centre.

Consider engaging with insurance companies immediately after an event to coordinate or facilitate outreach to the small business sector. Hosting a community meeting specifically for small business owners and insurance companies can help expedite and simplify the claims process and facilitate timely communication of information to both parties.



#### **Need to know – Business interruption insurance**

Business interruption insurance can help reduce economic losses by covering lost income during emergencies. However, coverage is generally only triggered by direct property damage. Businesses, including tourism operators, may not qualify if their property is undamaged but access is blocked, such as by road closures that prevent clients from reaching them. Individuals and organizations can contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada for advocacy, education and support.

IGBs and local authorities should consider how their recovery operations could enhance or accelerate small business recovery and rebuild the local economy. Give preference to sourcing goods and services from local businesses and suppliers. Local and regional destination management organizations can play a key role in tourism and small business recovery by coordinating with businesses to attract visitors back to the community when it is safe to do so. Additionally, develop and deliver a communication strategy that promotes supporting local business during recovery.

If an event has been declared DFA eligible, businesses may apply for financial assistance for sudden, unexpected and uninsurable losses. Small businesses may find it helpful to consult [the DFA website](#) for program information. Small business owners will have 90 days from the date the event was declared DFA eligible to submit an application.



## Resources

- [Economic Recovery Guide for Businesses](#)
- [BC Economic Development Association](#)
- [Local Economic Recovery and Restart Toolkit](#)
- [Emergency Management: Community Recovery Manager Services](#)
- [Community Futures BC](#)
- [Rural Resiliency Initiative](#)
- [BC Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Disaster Financial Assistance for small businesses and farms](#)

### 8.2.1 Business incubators

It may become necessary to provide temporary space for impacted small businesses to resume operations after an event. Using the business incubator model, an IGB or local authority could create a temporary shared supportive space for critical businesses to restart operations while recovery activities are underway. Utilizing unused commercial or retail space, community centres or towns, communities could create a business “incubator” that will help critical businesses restart and recover meet the urgent needs of the community and prevent further job loss. See the case study below as an example.



#### Case study: Whale Cove’s local business recovery

In August 2024, a fire in Whale Cove, Nunavut, destroyed the Issatik Co-op—the community’s only grocery store, which also housed the local post office. The loss prompted officials to declare a local state of emergency due to immediate concerns about access to food. Within six days, a temporary store was established in the Whale Cove’s community centre due to the coordinate efforts of Arctic Co-operative Ltd., local volunteers and Canadian Rangers. The temporary store operated daily (except Sundays), initially displaying goods on pallets until shelving and refrigeration units were installed. The community centre also began serving as a temporary post office. In addition, donations across Nunavut were flown in and free food hampers were delivered to the residents.

## 8.3 Agriculture recovery

Agriculture producers are a key contributor to the economy and it is important to ensure they have the tools and resources needed during recovery. There are agriculture-specific guides which provide educational materials on various natural and human-caused threats to farms, including preparedness strategies, mitigation tactics and emergency procedures (see resource box below).

Farm owners/producers are responsible for being aware of the risks they are exposed to, as emergencies can result in substantial material and financial losses. There are programs that can protect agricultural producers against the financial impact of an emergency (see the resources provided below).



### Resources

- [Agriculture Insurance and Income Protection](#)
- [Emergency preparedness for producers](#)
- [Indigenous Food Security and Sovereignty Grant](#)
- [Indigenous Food Pathways Program](#)

### 8.3.1 Livestock

It is important to recognize that impacts of emergencies on agriculture extend beyond financial losses. When the safety of livestock is threatened or animals are lost, it can have significant emotional and mental health impacts on farmers, ranchers and rural communities. Animal losses are not just economic losses; they can affect an individual's well-being, particularly in rural areas where animals are not only a livelihood but part of daily life and identity. [AgSafe BC](#) and [AgLife](#) provide a range of mental health services that are tailored to support farmers and agricultural workers in B.C.

There are animal services that can help with the recovery of livestock such as the Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team (CDART) and the Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) ([see Section 11.3 for more information on animal services](#)).

## 8.4 Tourism

Tourism is critical to the socio-economic and cultural health of B.C. As one of B.C.'s largest small business sectors, tourism is extremely sensitive to disruptions by emergency events, both through direct impact and longer-lasting reputational damage.

To assist the sector and support the needs of residents and visitors, a partnership of industry and government created the Tourism Emergency Management Committee (TEMC) and developed a comprehensive BC Emergency Management Framework covering mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The Framework recognizes the shared responsibility of all tourism organizations in supporting the safety of visitors, the viability of tourism businesses and the province's reputation as a safe and welcoming destination.

The TEMC is co-chaired by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport and the Tourism Industry Association of BC, and includes Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism BC, BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, BC Destination Management Organization Association and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. Tourism partners support emergency management efforts, liaising between agencies from local to international levels within the tourism sector to facilitate cooperation for unified actions and messaging. Tourism operators are affected like other local businesses during an emergency while often making available critical assets and services for local response such as providing commercial accommodation and food services for evacuees and first responders.



### Resources

- [British Columbia's Tourism Emergency Management Framework](#)
- [Destination BC: Emergency Resources for BC's Tourism Industry](#)
- [Destination BC: Know Before You Go \(Visitor messaging and resources\)](#)
- [Tourism Industry Association of BC: Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [PreparedBC: Guide and Emergency Management Plan for Tourism Operators](#)



## Section 9: Housing sector

The housing sector addresses impacts to housing during medium- and long-term recovery, while considering future resilience in the face of climate change. Providing housing supports and services for affected individuals is a key element of successful recovery, as housing is central to any community.

While housing supports and services are primarily delivered through [ESS](#) in short-term recovery, evacuees are typically only able to access these supports for a maximum of 72 hours, though extensions can be requested in exceptional circumstances. The limited duration of these supports underscores the importance of assisting residents with timely housing repairs where they are needed.

During the medium-term recovery stage, it is important IGBs and local authorities inform residents of potential risks, such as unlicensed or predatory contractors, which can complicate recovery efforts and delay the safe reoccupation of homes. In extreme cases, IGBs and local authorities may consider initiating and coordinating efforts to provide interim housing to displaced and uninsured residents.

Where applicable, it may be helpful to communicate to residents that insurance policies, particularly those that include coverage for additional living expenses (ALE), can sometimes support longer interim housing needs. Encouraging residents to review their coverage and consult with their insurers can help bridge gaps in support and reduce pressure on ESS and any interim housing initiatives.

In long-term recovery, the housing sector is primarily concerned with incorporating lessons learned into the community's vision and plans to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience.

### 9.1 Supporting safe and efficient home repairs after an emergency

Following an emergency, residents may be faced with the urgent need to clean up and repair their homes. Supporting community members to do so safely and efficiently is a key component of medium-term recovery. While many reputable contractors will offer services for cleanup, repairs and reconstruction, there is also an increased risk of encountering fraudulent or unlicensed operators who may lack proper licensing, liability insurance, or the qualifications to deliver work to an acceptable standard.

To help residents avoid scams and poor-quality work, communities can provide guidance on hiring qualified service providers, encouraging residents to:

- Verify contractor credentials, including licensing and insurance

- Insist on a written contract outlining scope of work, payment terms and timelines
- Avoid making a full payment upfront
- Get multiple quotes to ensure fair pricing
- Reach out to local building officials, consumer protection agencies, or trusted legal/financial advisors for help if unsure or feeling pressured.

### **Home repairs for the uninsured and underinsured**

For uninsured or underinsured individuals, housing repairs may be supported through partnerships with NGOs that specialize in emergency response and recovery. The Integrated Disaster Council of BC (IDCBC) may be able to help connect communities with volunteer-based organizations that provide home cleanup and basic repairs, particularly for vulnerable or low-income households. Communities should consider engaging IDCBC early in the recovery process to facilitate connections with appropriate support services.

### **Landlord responsibilities**

Landlords in B.C. have responsibilities to ensure tenant safety and uphold housing standards during and after an emergency. Before tenants return, landlords must confirm that the rental unit is safe and meets all health, safety and housing requirements. If a unit is deemed uninhabitable or damaged beyond repair, the landlord and tenant should formally agree in writing to end the tenancy due to the emergency. Landlords are responsible for completing repairs promptly and tenants must continue paying rent during this time unless alternative arrangements are made. Tenants are also responsible for securing and paying for their own temporary accommodation while repairs are underway.

By helping residents navigate the repair process safely and efficiently, communities can reduce displacement, prevent further hardship and accelerate the return to stable housing conditions.



#### **Key considerations: Safe and efficient housing repairs**

- Are residents aware of how they can protect themselves against unqualified contractors?
- Can uninsured residents be connected with NGOs that will assist with housing cleanup and repairs?
- Is there adequate temporary accommodation to support the skilled trade workers that are required to rebuild and repair damaged homes, buildings and infrastructure?

## 9.2 Identify and plan for interim housing

Although interim housing is not currently recognized as an eligible recovery cost in B.C., IGBs and local authorities may nevertheless choose to assume a facilitative role in identifying and enabling interim housing solutions for residents displaced by an emergency. The provision of safe, secure and culturally appropriate interim housing is a critical component of holistic recovery, addressing not only the physical needs of displaced individuals but also their mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. To maximize resilience and support social cohesion, interim housing is ideally located in proximity to essential services such as employment, education, healthcare and sites of cultural importance.

To advance interim housing initiatives, communities will likely need to engage in coordinated planning efforts with the Province and other key partners, including non-governmental organizations, federal agencies and private sector entities, to identify and secure needed funding.

An effective strategy includes a range of housing types and delivery models, tailored to the:

- Community's unique needs and capacities
- Scale and nature of the emergency
- Number of people needing accommodation

One of the first steps will be to scan the community or surrounding area for existing interim housing options, such as:

- Hotels and motels
- Vacant apartments
- Tourist rentals and billeting opportunities
- Industrial camps or campgrounds
- Recreational vehicles (short-term use only, ideally in mild weather)

Local real estate boards or firms as well as accommodation associations or destination management organizations may assist in conducting this scan.

Where existing stock does not exist or is insufficient, the following options may be considered:

- Modular homes
  - Provide prefabricated units that offer private, stable living environments
  - Can be placed in designated safe zones or distributed throughout the community
  - May be offered at subsidized rates to ensure accessibility
  - Require planning for site services and proximity to essential services
- Tiny homes
  - Offer a compact and flexible housing option, ideal for space-constrained areas

- Benefits include quick construction, affordability and mobility
- Must comply with the B.C. Building Code and Canadian Standards Association standards

Both modular and tiny homes have potential as permanent housing solutions. Communities may consider offering residents the first right of purchase for these units before they are made available on the open market. This dual-purpose approach not only meets immediate housing needs but also facilitates long-term stability and community continuity.

### **Bylaw support for interim housing initiatives**

In support of interim and alternative housing deployment, communities may wish to review and amend zoning bylaws to enable a wider range of temporary and non-traditional housing options within affected areas. Furthermore, communities could consider waiving or streamlining building permit processes for temporary dwellings. These administrative adjustments can expedite recovery and improve access to appropriate housing for displaced residents.



#### **Key considerations: Interim housing**

- For individuals who cannot return to their homes, are there local commercial accommodation options available such as hotels, motels, or RV parks? If so, how long could these be used for?
- Are agreements in place for interim housing solutions (e.g., with neighboring jurisdictions, colleges, hotels)?
- Is there a central listing for vacant rentals that can be made available to displaced individuals?
- How will underserved or vulnerable populations be supported in identifying suitable and accessible interim housing?
- What were the rental vacancy rates in the area before the emergency? Low vacancy rates may result in fewer turn-key interim housing options and increased rental costs in an already expensive rental market.
- Could rising construction costs, disruptions to supply chains and manufacturing, or labour shortages prevent the local building industry from meeting the high demand for housing repairs or construction of interim housing?
- How long would it take to get new interim housing units constructed?
- What are some potential interim housing funding sources?

## 9.3 Planning for resilience and risk reduction

Communities can contribute positively to long-term recovery and climate resilience by updating land use tools like Official Community Plans, Comprehensive Community Plans and zoning bylaws to reduce exposure to risks such as flooding and wildfires.

Plans should be amended to include climate-informed risk assessments with updated hazard maps and projections. Zoning should steer development away from high-risk areas unless resilient infrastructure is in place. This prevents locking in future risk and guides growth to safer areas.

Bylaws can be modernized to require structural or non-structural risk-reduction measures as a condition of development approval in high-risk areas (i.e., elevation requirements or nature-based solutions). At the same time, incentive structures like development cost charges and amenity cost charges can also be used to guide growth to safer areas.

In some cases, managed retreat may be necessary. When guided by inclusive planning and supported by assessment tools like cost-benefit analysis or multi-criteria decision analysis, retreat can reduce risk and support equity and ecosystem restoration.

As emergency funding policies evolve, it is increasingly important for communities to align local planning with future climate and funding realities.



### Resources

- [Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia](#)
- [Natural disasters and tenancy](#)
- [BC Housing Emergency Lodging and Resources](#)
- [BC Housing Local Government Tool Kit to Plan and Develop Emergency Lodging \(PDF\)](#)
- [Merritt Transitional Evacuee Manufacture Home Program \(TEMHP\) – CBC News](#)
- [Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions’ “The cost of cost-benefit analysis in flood adaptation”](#)
- [Canadian Climate Institute’s report “Close to Home - How to build more housing in a changing climate”](#)



## Section 10: Environment sector

The environment sector addresses impacts to the environment and the actions needed to restore ecosystem health while reducing long-term consequences. This includes land degradation, contamination, biodiversity loss, damage to cultural land use and harm to natural resources. These impacts go beyond aesthetics. For example, debris can destroy fish habitat, block water flow and pollute ecosystems, affecting food sources, cultural practices and local economies.

Environmental damage often poses risks to public safety and infrastructure, such as blocked waterways increasing flood risk or contaminated sites threatening water supplies. Because of this, recovery efforts typically focus on environmental impacts that affect public safety and welfare, which also shape funding decisions. Addressing these issues often begins during short-term recovery efforts ([see Section 5.7 on Contaminated site cleanup](#)) though they may extend into the medium and long-term recovery.

A PDNA can support this process by helping quantify environmental impacts, including those that may not be immediately visible, to guide recovery priorities and inform resource allocation.

Environmental recovery is also closely connected to mental health and social well-being, especially for Indigenous Peoples whose cultural and spiritual traditions are deeply tied to the land. Understanding the scale of these impacts is essential for informed recovery planning by both First Nation and local authorities.

### 10.1 Protection and recovery of natural heritage

Sites of heritage value include natural places or features such as forests, rivers, wetlands and wildlife habitats (including fish habitat). These natural sites of heritage value are vital to ecological integrity, cultural continuity and economic sustainability. They contribute significantly to long-term community resilience by supporting biodiversity, regulating climate, and providing essential ecosystem services. Moreover, these sites often hold deep cultural significance and may be closely tied to traditional practices, Indigenous rights and local food security.

Indigenous Peoples have long protected natural sites of heritage value through their deep-rooted knowledge systems and sustainable land stewardship that also supports adaptation to environmental change. Effective protection and recovery efforts require coordinated planning, timely response and meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities and environmental experts.

Below are key activities that a community could consider when recovering natural heritage assets:

- Use traditional use studies to identify culturally and ecologically significant natural heritage sites, species, and landscapes, ensuring recovery efforts protect both environmental integrity and cultural continuity
- Conduct environmental impact assessments to identify affected areas and prioritize interventions
- Monitor for secondary impacts such as erosion, invasive species, and water contamination
- Restore damaged ecosystems through reforestation, wetland rehabilitation, and habitat reconstruction
- Manage invasive species and re-establish native biodiversity
- Incorporate natural heritage recovery into overall recovery plans and policies and establish monitoring programs to track ecosystem health over time

### 10.1.1 Archaeological sites

During the recovery phase, as communities focus on debris removal and rebuilding, it is essential to recognize the significance of archaeological sites. All archaeological sites are protected under the [Heritage Conservation Act](#) (HCA) in B.C., whether newly discovered or previously recorded, intact or disturbed. Altering an archaeological site without a permit is prohibited under the HCA. This applies to sites on public and private land, regardless of whether the site has been recorded or disturbed.

First Nations have governed and stewarded the land since time immemorial and have an ongoing connection to many of these sites. Although the HCA does not apply on federal lands (including First Nations reserves), it is recommended that the same considerations for archaeological sites used on Crown and private lands also be applied on federal lands, in consultation with the affected First Nation.

To confirm whether a site is designated as an archaeology site and listed in the Provincial Registry, submit an online data request using the [Archaeology Information Request Form](#). Alternatively, access can be provided to the provincial system [Remote Access to Archaeological Data](#).

While this process can identify known sites, it's important to recognize that relatively few are documented compared to the province's broader archaeological potential. As such, any excavation or ground disturbance could uncover previously unknown materials and IGBs and local authorities should be prepared to manage such chance finds appropriately.

Rebuilding on an archaeological site following an emergency requires an HCA permit. To fast-track the permitting process and support people getting back into their homes once recovery

is underway, the Province has developed HCA permits which multiple residents can be included on rather than requiring all residents to apply for individual permits. It is encouraged that the IGB or local authority apply for the permits to allow for their residents to proceed.

This process may also involve Cultural Heritage Monitors, often from Indigenous governing bodies, whose role is to identify and protect cultural and archaeological heritage during activities that could impact natural sites.

Before starting any excavation, contact the Province's Archaeology Branch to ensure all necessary permits are in place. If you are not already connected with recovery staff, you can email the [PECC.rec1@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PECC.rec1@gov.bc.ca) inbox for support in reaching the appropriate contacts.



### Key considerations: Archaeological

- Could debris removal trigger permitting requirements or lead to unexpected costs?
- Are there culturally significant sites that are not recorded in the provincial registry?
- Can a site still hold archaeological value even if it has been disturbed?
- Have First Nations been meaningfully engaged early in the process? Is there a plan in place to report chance archaeological finds during recover work?
- Is there a plan in place to cover the cost of archaeological work, given it is not currently insurable in B.C.?
- Is there a plan in place to determine which type of archaeological permit may be required based on potential or confirmed finds?
- Are delays expected for demolition or building permits due to archaeological concerns?
- Could the site contain ancestral remains or hold sacred or spiritual value to First Nations?



### Resources

- [Archaeology in B.C.](#)
- [Archaeology for local governments](#)
- [Archaeology in B.C.: A Guide for Property Owners and Developers](#)
- [Archaeology overview assessments](#)
- [Rebuilding After a Natural Disaster: Ways to Mitigate Archaeological Risk for Property Owners and Developers \(PDF\)](#)
- [Archaeology permits](#)

## 10.2 Developing a debris management plan

IGBs and local authorities are responsible for developing and maintaining a debris management plan as part of their emergency management duties. Emergency events can generate large volumes of debris, which may overwhelm regular waste services if not properly managed. A comprehensive, up-to-date plan ensures that both debris and regular waste can be handled efficiently and in compliance with regulations. A five-stage approach is recommended to guide debris management from initial collection through to final disposal.

### 10.2.1 Debris management

Debris that poses a public safety risk must be removed prior to re-entry. The initial collection of debris that impacts routes such as community lifelines (e.g. evacuation routes) and critical infrastructure typically takes place during the response and short-term recovery stage to ensure public safety. Costs associated with this initial collection are likely to be eligible response costs. Any debris not addressed during the initial debris management efforts will be the responsibility of either the IGB or the local authority. Any remaining debris not under the responsibility of the IGB or local authority will be the responsibility of the homeowner.

While each IGBs or local authority's debris management plan may differ according to local needs and circumstances, all debris management plans should consider forecasting, debris collection, transfer to debris management sites, debris reduction and recycling and final disposal.

#### **Phase 1 – Debris forecasting and assessment**

Debris forecasting estimates the volume and types of debris generated during an event to guide safe and effective management. Debris should be categorized by material and hazard type to inform appropriate handling and protect community health.

Where possible, the estimates should be calculated across priority waste categories, including but not limited to:

- Reactive, explosive and/or flammable waste
- Infectious and/or toxic waste
- Other types of hazardous waste (e.g., household hazardous waste)
- Mold, asbestos and/or lead contaminated materials waste
- Livestock waste (mass carcass disposal)
- Non-hazardous waste, segregated as appropriate and applicable (e.g., construction and demolition waste, scrap metal, wood waste).

Waste should be segregated wherever feasible. At minimum, hazardous and non-hazardous materials must be separated into distinct streams. Non-hazardous waste can be further sorted by recyclability (e.g., scrap metal), salvageability (e.g., wood) and non-recyclables. Where possible, segregated non-hazardous waste can be integrated into regular solid waste management services.

Debris estimates should be updated regularly throughout the process to help maintain accurate budgets and ensure resources are allocated appropriately.

Before debris collection begins, site assessments are required to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including the Water Sustainability Act, Environmental Management Act, Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and Workers Compensation Act. Qualified specialists should be consulted to support regulatory compliance.



#### **Need to know - Support for contaminated site management**

The Ministry of Environment and Parks maintains a [roster of Contaminated Sites Approved Professionals](#) that have expertise and knowledge in contaminated site management. The roster includes qualified scientists (e.g. R.P.Bio) and engineers (i.e., P.Eng) that have demonstrated a high level of technical and regulatory knowledge in contaminated site management. Appropriate contaminated site management is necessary for compliance with the Environmental Management Act, Water Sustainability Act and Hazardous Waste Regulation, which govern the introduction of pollutant waste into the environment and the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste.

The operational order of site assessment and debris collection should follow a priority order, with consideration given accordingly:

- Community lifelines such as evacuation routes, ingress/egress points, debris transportation corridors
- Critical infrastructure such as hospitals, power transmission sites, police stations, EOCs, sites of cultural importance, etc.
- Major highways and arterial routes
- Areas necessary for movement of goods and services within community
- Minor arterial routes

Initial debris collection may necessitate the establishment of temporary debris management sites prior to final disposal at a management facility. Depending on the scope and scale of the event, there may be a significant amount of time required to appropriately identify and segregate hazardous waste materials. Temporary debris management sites can be used to stage debris in a manner that preserves community health and safety.

Where possible, temporary debris management sites and equipment staging areas should be located along or near priority transportation corridors. Examples of possible temporary debris management sites may include:

- Transfer stations and landfills
- Recycling facilities
- Public works yards
- Vacant lots, parking lots, other open spaces

### **Phase 2 – Debris collection**

Debris collection may require specific permits to ensure compliance with provincial regulations and local bylaws, often the same as those used for demolition or development permits. For example, work conducted near a watercourse that triggers the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation will require an assessment by a qualified environmental professional to obtain necessary permits.

Permit requirements should be identified during site assessments by professionals with regulatory expertise. All debris collection activities must comply with applicable legislation.

Debris should be collected based on site priorities to protect community and environmental health. For events affecting multiple regions, a coordinated, cross-regional strategy is recommended to improve efficiency and reduce costs through shared services.

### **Phase 3 – Debris waste management sites**

Operational requirements identified during forecasting and site assessment will determine the type of debris management sites required to meet management goals. If areas are repurposed as temporary (or permanent) debris waste management sites, special attention should be given to potential archaeological impacts as protected by the HCA, in addition to all other relevant regulatory requirements, approvals and/or permits ([see Section 10.1.1 on archaeological sites](#)).

The volume and composition of debris waste staged at a management site should inform the activities taking place there; if both hazardous and non-hazardous waste are present, it is recommended to segregate the streams according to category before transport to disposal facilities. Where possible, further categorization of non-hazardous waste into recyclable and salvageable streams will help reduce the quantity of debris requiring transport and disposal.

### **Phase 4 – Reduction and recycling**

Sorting and processing non-hazardous debris for recycling or salvage can reduce costs and provide environmental benefits throughout the debris management process. Identifying recoverable materials, such as fire-impacted wood being salvageable or breaking down concrete, can streamline logistics and reduce disposal volumes. It is recommended to identify

opportunities for debris waste reduction and recycling throughout the process whenever non-hazardous materials are present.

### Phase 5 – Final disposal

Final disposal of all debris waste at authorized facilities in accordance with the Environmental Management Act will depend on the quantity and urgency of disposal. In complex situations, such as the absence of local facilities for specific waste categories, it is recommended to contact the local PREOC for guidance and coordination between partners in the provincial government and the IGB or local authority. In exceptional cases, regulatory exceptions or expedited permit approvals may be necessary.



#### Key considerations: Debris management and removal

- What type and amount of debris will need to be removed and how will that determine where it can be taken?
- What is the capacity of the various sites and can they handle the potential volume and requirements of contaminated waste?
- Are there contaminants that will require special handling procedures?
- Who is managing the debris removal and who can the IGB or local authority reach out to for assistance and guidance?



#### Resources

- [Flood Waste and Debris Management Plan](#)
- [Debris Waste Management Guideline \(PDF\)](#)
- [Hazardous waste legislation and regulations](#)
- [Contaminated Sites Approved Professionals](#)

## 10.3 Removing flood protection assets

Flood protection assets may need to be removed and/or disposed of following freshet or flood events. The IGB or local authority needs to demobilize and arrange shipping with the PREOC to return gabions, tiger dams and temporary berms or dikes to provincial stock. In some cases, sandbags and gabion fill material may need to be tested for contamination before removal and disposal. Sandbags and gabion fill that have been exposed to sewage, oils, hydrocarbons or other hazardous substances in amounts that can be seen or otherwise easily detected should be considered contaminated and reported as a possible Dangerous Goods Incident to 1-800-663-3456.



### Key considerations: Flood protection assets

- Is there a reason to believe that the sandbags or gabion fill material may be contaminated?
- Do you know the source of the sand and/or fill material?
- Where will the sand and fill material be disposed of?
- Who is managing removal of flood protection assets?
- How many assets were placed?
- Have assets been buried by debris or migrated into a water course?
- What types of sandbags were used (burlap, hessian or plastic)?
- When will assets need to be removed?
- What types of sandbags were used (burlap, hessian or plastic)
- When will assets need to be removed?
- Has any damage been assessed?



# Section 11: Health and mental health sector

The health and mental health sector considers impacts on the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the population with the goal of mitigating long-term negative impacts. It is essential to recognize that individual and collective health and mental health are interconnected with the availability and continuity of social programs, often leading to significant overlap between those two sectors. The health and mental health sector focus on recovery activities that may include but are not limited to supporting:

- Health and safety
- Mental health and psychological wellness
- Community psychosocial supports
- Emotional, cultural and spiritual well-being
- Vulnerable populations

## 11.1 Mental health and psychosocial support

The Disaster Psychosocial Support team's [Disaster Recovery Toolkit](#), offers an approach to recovery that ensures the mental health and psychosocial needs of those impacted are prioritized. The toolkit underscores that wellness and mental health services are not limited to specialized clinical interventions. Rather, wellness and mental health services include a broad spectrum of supports, including

- Basic services (i.e., services that meet physical needs)
- Community and family supports (e.g. social networks and child-friendly spaces)
- Non-specialized supports (e.g. psychological first aid for frontline workers)
- Specialized services (e.g. care provided by a psychologist or psychiatrist)

IGBs and local authorities have the most influence over basic services and community and family supports. At the same time, they play a role in identifying when impacted residents may require more non-specialized or specialized care typically delivered by provincial authorities.

IGBs and local authorities can help to create a calm and secure environment through the provision of access to basic services that meet the immediate needs of residents, such as:

- Information on recovery services
- Coping and wellness information
- Psychological first aid

Once basic needs are met, the focus should shift to assessing needs and planning inclusive activities with the intention of re-establishing a sense of normalcy and safety among groups identified as having a need (e.g., vulnerable populations and front-line workers). Examples of activities and services that can be offered or enabled by the community include:

- Social events ([See Section 12.3 for more information on social cohesion](#))
- Well-being workshops and information fairs
- Online wellness resources
- Indigenous healing and cultural wellbeing activities
- Memorials and commemorative gatherings



#### Resources

- [PHSA Emergency Management Education and Resources](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association: Coping with Disaster Stress](#)
- [Canadian Red Cross – Coping with Crisis](#)
- [Ministry of Health Pathway to Hope Strategy](#)
- [FNHA - First Nations health information for evacuees](#)
- [FNHA – Mental health supports](#)

## 11.2 Vulnerable populations

As defined in the Act, vulnerable populations are particularly susceptible, due to physical or geographic location or environmental or other similar factors, to the adverse effects of an emergency. During emergencies, communities should prioritize equitable access to support for vulnerable populations who may face greater barriers to recovery.

Vulnerable populations may include residents of remote communities, children, pregnant women, seniors, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA individuals and those experiencing homelessness. These groups are often at an intersectional disadvantage which can limit access to emergency services and recovery resources. An intersectional approach helps ensure all individuals, especially those with overlapping vulnerabilities, are included in the recovery process.



### Intersectional disadvantage

The Act defines **intersectional disadvantage** as 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.

Recovery efforts must consider accessibility legislation ensuring that services and resources are available in a way that meets the specific needs of these populations. Communities are also encouraged to collaborate with local organizations, advocacy groups and local leaders who understand the needs of vulnerable populations and consider utilizing any services they may be able to provide.

Communities are encouraged to build strong relationships with these organizations and consider organizing joint training exercises before an emergency occurs. This collaboration can help identify barriers and ensure that recovery plans are inclusive and tailored to meet the needs of those likely to be the most at risk.



### Case study: Collaborative emergency response and recovery for vulnerable populations

In 2023, a major motel fire in a Penticton B.C., which was being rented out as a single room occupancy housing, displaced residents, including vulnerable populations such as seniors, low-income individuals and those with disabilities, mental health issues and substance use. The City's Social Development Specialist and Emergency Program Coordinator collaborated to identify and support vulnerable residents. ESS activated for the first 72 hours ensuring residents received immediate assistance like temporary housing, food and mental health support. The Social Development Specialist was able to connect displaced residents with longer term recovery supports, including permanent housing, financial assistance and community reintegration. This case highlights the importance of interagency collaboration and the outcomes of integrating social development service expertise into emergency management.

Health and mental health needs are interconnected with the social sector, making it crucial that vulnerable populations are considered in both recovery sectors and actively included in relevant conversations. Supporting vulnerable populations requires a comprehensive approach that considers their social circumstances and identify ways to address those needs.



### Key considerations: Vulnerable populations

- Identify vulnerable populations within the impacted area and include them in recovery decision-making.
- Can you conduct an individual needs assessment for vulnerable populations?
- Are communication efforts accessible to all (including non-English speakers, individuals with hearing or vision impairments and those with limited access to technology)?
- Are the re-entry procedures tailored to prioritize and accommodate the diverse needs of vulnerable populations (including assistance with re-entry logistics, accessibility and availability of nearby supports)?
- Are Resilience Centres and town halls accessible and equipped to accommodate diverse needs?
- Are Resilience Centre staff trained in trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches?
- If the community is managing an interim housing program, is it accessible, culturally appropriate and equipped to accommodate diverse needs?



### Resources

- [Accessible British Columbia Act](#)
- [Accessible British Columbia Regulation](#)
- [EMCR's Master of Disaster: Youth Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Ministry of Health: Child and youth mental health resources](#)
- [Indigenous Child and Youth Mental Health Services](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority – Mental health and wellness supports](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority – Recognizing and addressing trauma and anxiety during disasters](#)

## 11.3 Animal services

Under the Act, it is a requirement that local authorities and critical infrastructure owners include consideration of vulnerable animals in their emergency management plans. A proactive strategy of establishing partnership agreements, mutual aid agreements and animal services plans prior to an emergency safeguards the health and safety of animals and helps mitigate the stress and trauma faced by guardians during response and recovery.

Communities can request assistance with unmet needs for animals through EMCR which can support the coordination of local and regional partners, ministries and NGOs. If required, the PECC may establish NGO calls with the IDCBC to mobilize further support.

In B.C., there are four key organizations dedicated to animals affected by disasters and emergencies:

- Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team (CDART) which offers mobile support throughout B.C.
- Pet Safe Coalition Society which offers mobile support in Quesnel and the Cariboo Regional District
- Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) which primarily serves the Regional District of Central Okanagan and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
- The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA) which offers support throughout B.C.

These organizations are mobilized at the request of First Nations and local authorities and are dedicated to safeguarding the welfare of animals during emergencies. Their services include:

- Establishing temporary animal shelters and foster arrangements
- Providing food, supplies and veterinary care
- Delivering psychological first aid and emotional support

In support of long-term resilience, these organizations also play an important role in emergency preparedness and planning. Their expertise includes:

- Assisting communities in integrating animal considerations into emergency management plans
- Supporting the development of memoranda of understanding with local businesses and partner agencies to secure critical resources during response and recovery
- Offering public education to enhance awareness and preparedness
- Providing training to help communities establish and maintain Emergency Animal Services (EAS) teams

Together, these organizations contribute to a humane approach to emergency management. The approach reflects a recognition that supporting animal welfare not only safeguards animals, but also promotes human health, mental well-being and overall community resilience during recovery.

#### Resources

- [Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team \(CDART\)](#)
- [Pet Safe Coalition Society](#)
- [Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team \(ALERT\)](#)
- [BC Pet Registry \(pet ID\)](#)
- [BCSPCA Emergency Response Services](#)



## Section 12: Social sector

The social sector plays a vital role in mitigating the impacts of emergencies on essential public services that support children, families and vulnerable populations. This includes education, childcare and broader social services. The overarching objective is to ensure continuity and accessibility for affected populations. IGBs and local authorities serve an important supporting role in these efforts by collaborating with provincial ministries, facilitating local access and coordinating community-level resources to complement and enhance provincial recovery actions.

A key principle of the social sector is equity. The sector aims to restore dignity, autonomy and independence through inclusive, culturally safe and trauma-informed services—particularly for vulnerable populations and those experiencing intersectional disadvantage. While many of these services may be provincial jurisdiction, IGBs and local authorities can contribute by identifying unmet needs in their communities, advocating for inclusive service delivery and helping to ensure that supports reach those most at risk of marginalization.

During the recovery phase, key activities include the reopening of schools and childcare centres, the reactivation of social service delivery and the resumption or initiation of programs that facilitate social connection. IGBs and local authorities can support these initiatives by sharing timely information about post-disaster needs, enabling access to facilities and maintaining local networks that help connect displaced individuals with critical services.

One practical tool to support this effort is the [Three Step Social Sector Activation Guide For Host Communities](#), created by the Kamloops Food Policy Council, may be a useful tool for communities to utilize. It is a structured framework to help communities mobilize and organize their social sector resources during and after the ESS phase. It is particularly valuable for communities hosting displaced populations, as it outlines actionable steps for integrating local social services into emergency management and fostering long-term resilience.

### 12.1 Education

The resumption of education services, including schools, libraries, early learning centres and English Language Learning programs, is a critical component of community healing. While the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the local School District may lead the reopening and continuity of many of these services, IGBs and local authorities can support by assessing damage to local facilities, identifying interim spaces for learning and working with school districts to facilitate communication with families and caregivers.

In instances where standard education services cannot resume immediately, temporary solutions such as alternate school placements, distance learning or paper-based assignment drop-off and pick-up may be coordinated. Community leaders can play a pivotal role in facilitating local logistics and advocating for timely provincial support.

## 12.2 Childcare

Childcare, including before- and after-school programming which may be offered by IGBs and local authorities as a recreation program, is an essential service that supports economic and social recovery. While the provincial government is responsible for childcare licensing, funding and service standards, IGBs and local authorities may support recovery by working with existing licensed providers and exploring options for interim childcare delivery. This could include:

- Offering temporary space in community centres, schools or Resilience Centres
- Coordinating with unaffected providers to expand capacity
- Supporting outreach efforts to ensure displaced families are aware of available childcare options
- Advocating for or facilitating the deployment of mobile childcare units (trailers and vans equipped with educational and childcare resources)
- Collaborating with the Province or NGOs to deliver targeted financial supports to help families manage post-emergency childcare costs

## 12.3 Social cohesion

Social cohesion is a cornerstone of community recovery and resilience. While the Province provides leadership in delivering clinical mental health and wellness supports, local efforts to foster community connection are critical to reducing isolation and promoting well-being. IGBs and local authorities can facilitate this by encouraging the formation of peer support networks, providing space for meetings and supporting the re-establishment of community programming.

Where possible, communities are encouraged to continue or reinstate regularly scheduled events—such as cultural celebrations, community meals, or recreational programming—that promote social interaction and foster a sense of normalcy. These efforts can be particularly impactful for displaced populations who benefit from opportunities to re-establish relationships and community belonging.



### Case study: Community lunches in Scotch Creek

In 2023, the Bush Creek East wildfire swept through British Columbia's Shuswap region, burning from mid-July to end of September. It surrounded several Shuswap communities—including Scotch Creek, Celistia and Sorrento—causing extensive destruction and forcing widespread evacuations. The United Way BC funded a series of community lunches designed to provide residents with an opportunity to connect, share experiences and foster mutual support. By bringing people together in a supportive environment, the lunches contributed to strengthening social cohesion and promoting collective recovery efforts and well-being. The last lunch was held in January 2025. Altogether, around 670 lunches were served to residents of the North Shuswap. Here is what residents had to say about the lunches in their own words:

"These lunches are like therapy. They give us a chance to talk, laugh and sometimes cry together."

"I'm so grateful for these lunches. It's not just about the food-it's the kindness and care behind them!"

When planning social activities during recovery, it is important to prioritize accessible, inclusive locations such as schools, hotels, Resilience Centres, or community halls. These community hubs help reduce isolation and foster meaningful connections among residents.

Involving residents in both the planning and delivery of activities ensures their needs and preferences are reflected. This collaborative approach encourages engagement and helps create a sense of belonging. Offering refreshments like snacks, tea, or coffee can further support well-being and create a warm, welcoming environment.

Some activities to consider include:

- Land-based healing and reconnection (medicine walks, drum making, fishing)
- Movie or games nights
- Beading or carving activities
- Virtual book clubs or coffee chats
- Mindfulness and relaxation sessions

These types of gatherings provide residents with opportunities to reconnect, find comfort and rebuild a sense of belonging, all of which are essential components to the overall recovery process.

**Key considerations: Social**

- How can equitable access to social services be enabled for all impacted individuals?
- What temporary solutions can be implemented if educational or childcare facilities cannot reopen in the short term?
- Are there accessible social, communal, traditional and wellness supports and activities available for displaced people of all ages?
- What strategies can be used to provide space for peer support networks to meet, especially if they no longer have access to their usual meeting spaces?
- Are there plans to acknowledge the one-year anniversary of the emergency as a meaningful milestone for reflection, healing, celebration and collective grieving in the recovery journey?

## 12.4 Protecting cultural heritage in recovery

Objects or sites of heritage value include tangible elements, such as artifacts, monuments, museums, buildings and intangible elements, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, celebrations and traditional knowledge. These objects or sites of cultural heritage hold symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological, anthropological, scientific and social value.

The Act includes provisions for restoring the safety of properties, objects and sites of heritage value during the recovery phase. The importance of protecting cultural heritage is also recognized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

IGBs and local authorities should prioritize the protection and restoration of cultural heritage before, during and after emergencies. Preserving heritage strengthens cultural continuity and resilience.

Key recovery activities may include:

- Conducting on-site damage and risk assessments to estimate costs for salvage, stabilization and restoration
- Documenting damage with photographs, notes and maps for future restoration work
- Determining whether assets require urgent stabilization or relocation to prevent further deterioration
- Developing restoration plans that respect cultural, historical and architectural integrity, ensure sustainable resource use and prioritize the long-term recovery of damaged ecosystems

The BC Heritage Emergency Response Network (BC HERN) is a collaborative group of art, culture and heritage professionals in B.C. that helps cultural institutions prepare for and respond to emergencies threatening their collections. The network was established in response to the lack of coordinated emergency response and collections salvage plan in the province in light of the growing risk to collections due to climate change. BC HERN aims to help cultural institutions gain the confidence and resources needed to effectively recover heritage collections.



#### **Key considerations: Cultural heritage**

- How is cultural heritage being incorporated into recovery plans?
- What are the most culturally significant items or sites that need immediate attention?
- Are there existing records or digital documentation of tangible or intangible cultural heritage items?
- If cultural heritage items have been removed from the community, how will they be returned?



#### **Resources**

- [Three-Step Social Sector Activation Guide for Host Communities](#)
- [United Way BC Hi Neighbour Initiative](#)
- [211 BC](#)

# Section 13: Funding

## 13.1 Insurance

Insurance is the first and primary source of recovery funding following a disaster. It is the responsibility of all IGBs, local authorities, individuals and organizations, including homeowners, tenants, small businesses, farms and charitable organizations, to obtain and maintain adequate insurance coverage to protect against potential losses from emergencies. DFA is not a substitute for insurance and will not be available for damages that were, or could have been, covered by an insurance policy. Individuals and organizations who choose not to purchase insurance, although insurance coverage is available to them, may find they are determined to be ineligible for DFA. Understanding the terms and limitations of an insurance policy and contacting the insurance provider after an event are essential steps in the recovery process.



### Key considerations: Insurance

- Insurance is the primary source of recovery funding and should be the first option considered after a disaster.
- Where DFA has been made available, the DFA program only provides support for uninsurable losses.
- It is important that individuals understand what is included in their insurance policy, such as coverage for fire, earthquake and flood damage, especially in high-risk areas.

## 13.2 EDMA funding for eligible costs

The Financial Assistance Guide for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs (the Financial Assistance Guide) provides a non-exhaustive list of response and recovery costs that are eligible for reimbursement under the Act. In instances where eligibility of a cost is uncertain, communities may submit an expenditure authorization form (EAF) to seek clarity regarding the eligibility for reimbursement from the Province. Common recovery costs eligible for provincial reimbursement include expenses required for:

- damage assessments to public infrastructure
- geo-technical, engineering, or other specialized technical reports required to assess impacts and inform development of a recovery plan

- Additional personnel required to provide surge capacity for urgent activities, such as surveys and canvassing
- Hiring additional staff, like a CRM, to support community recovery activities for up to an initial six-month term (not including permanent staff in a recovery role)

For more information regarding eligible recovery activities refer to the [Financial Assistance Guide](#) and/or talk to your regional office/PREOC.

## 13.3 Disaster Financial Assistance

The DFA program is designed to support recovery in the aftermath of large-scale, unforeseen disasters that affect a wide spread of individuals, businesses, farms, and non-profits and/or which impose a significant financial burden on First Nations or local authorities. The DFA program only provides financial assistance for uninsurable losses from disasters.

Under the Act, its regulations, and an agreement with ISC, First Nations band councils and local authorities can apply for financial assistance for damages associated with the repair or restoration of essential materials, structures and public works. First Nations band councils and local authorities may qualify for up to 95 percent of eligible costs.

First Nations band councils and local authorities are essential partners in the process of authorizing [DFA](#) following an emergency. To support these authorizations for both public and private sector damages, communities are encouraged to report their damage assessments to their local PREOC during an event. Submitting these damage assessments is the responsibility of the First Nation or local authority, as this step is crucial in determining whether DFA should be made available.

## 13.4 Emergency Management Assistance Program for First Nations on reserve

In partnership with First Nations, provincial and territorial governments and NGOs, Indigenous Services Canada's [Emergency Management Assistance Program \(EMAP\)](#) helps communities on reserve access emergency assistance services. EMAP can assist when emergency recovery needs go beyond the capacity of individuals and First Nations or tribal councils.

Communities seeking reimbursement after an emergency are encouraged to submit estimates or invoices as quickly as possible to help facilitate a timely community recovery.

## 13.5 Disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation funding programs

There are several programs to support communities to prepare for and reduce the risk from emergencies. Communities are encouraged to visit EMCR's [ClimateReadyBC webpage](#) to find further information regarding a variety of funding.

The Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program provides funding to Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities in B.C. to enhance their capacity to withstand and adapt to natural and climate-driven hazards. To apply, eligible proponents can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI). The EOIs are assessed by the program criteria and successful EOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal with more technical and financial details.

Wildfire-related projects (e.g. FireSmart Community Funding and Supports) continue to be funded through the Community Resilience Investment program, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities.

Funding streams are announced by the federal and provincial governments periodically. It is recommended that communities review the emergency management financial supports webpage frequently to determine available programs, eligibility and application deadlines, or contact your EMCR Regional Office for assistance. If you have any questions about disaster mitigation funding programs, contact [EMCR.DisasterMitigation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EMCR.DisasterMitigation@gov.bc.ca).

## 13.6 Non-governmental funding sources

Recovery efforts may benefit from a broad funding approach that includes partners beyond government. Communities are encouraged to explore diverse sources such as NGOs, financial institutions and philanthropic trusts.

### **Potential non-governmental funding sources**

- **NGOs:** May offer grants and in-kind support for housing, health, environmental and community-endorsed recovery initiatives.
- **Financial Institutions:** May provide low-interest loans, emergency financing and community investment programs aligned with their environmental, social and governance goals.
- **Trusts and Foundations:** Often serve as strategic partners in recovery, offering grants that support long-term resilience, equity-focused initiatives and community-endorsed solutions.
- **Private Sector:** Businesses may contribute through donations, sponsorships or public-private partnerships.

## Recommended funding finder tool

Use the [CleanBC Community Climate Funding Finder Tool](#) to:

- Search funding by organization type and project category
- Filter by eligibility, funding amount, and deadlines
- Discover new opportunities through regular updates

### Resources

- Insurance Bureau of Canada: [www.ibc.ca](http://www.ibc.ca) or 1-844-2ASK-IBC (1-844-227-5422)
- [Financial Assistance Guide for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs](#)
- [Disaster Financial Assistance for Communities](#)
- [Emergency Management Assistance Program](#)
- [Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding program](#)
- [Community Resiliency Investment program](#)
- [CleanBC Funding Finder Tool](#)

# Appendices

## Appendix A: List of acronyms

Acronym	Description
ALERT	Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team
BC HERN	British Columbia Heritage Emergency Response Network
BCSPCA	British Columbia Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CDART	Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team
CFBC	Community Futures British Columbia
CRM	Community Recovery Manager
CSA	Corporate Supply Arrangement
DFA	Disaster Financial Assistance
DPS	Disaster Psychosocial Support
DRIF	Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding
EAF	Expenditure Authorization Form
EAS	Emergency Animal Services
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
EMAP	Emergency Management Assistance Program
EMCR	Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
EOI	Expression of Interest
EOC	Emergency Operation Centre
ESS	Emergency Support Services

FNESS	First Nations Emergency Services Society
FNHA	First Nations Health Authority
HCA	Heritage Conservation Act
ICRP	Infrastructure Cost Recovery Plan
IDCBC	Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia
IGB	Indigenous governing body
ISC	Indigenous Services Canada
LRP	Local Recovery Period
MJEMO	Multi-jurisdictional emergency management organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDRF	Provincial Disaster Recovery Framework
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PECC	Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre
PHSA	Provincial Health Services Authority
Post-DRP	Post-Disaster Recovery Plan
PREOC	Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre
RDA	Rapid Damage Assessment
ROC	Recovery Operations Centre
SOLE	State of Local Emergency
TEMC	Tourism Emergency Management Committee
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## Appendix B: Resilience Centre guidance

The following information is provided to Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities (collectively communities) to support the standing up of a Resilience Centre prior to re-entry from an emergency event. It includes several considerations for a community needing to establish this type of centre.

A Resilience Centre may be established by communities to serve as a central location for residents affected by an emergency to access resources and services that will enable them and their community to recover.

### **Transition to a Resilience Centre**

A Resilience Centre can be established and operate alongside a Reception Centre during the response and short-term recovery stage of an emergency event. Alternatively, a Reception Centre may transition into a Community Resilience Centre when response activities move to recovery focused activities. The Resilience Centre is not intended to replace Reception Centres or congregational lodging. When operating concurrently, it is recommended that the Resilience Centre be situated in close proximity to these facilities to ensure accessibility and continuity of support.

Depending on the needs at the time, a Resilience Centre may include:

- A drop-in facility where clients can:
  - Ask questions
  - Pick up information materials from supporting agencies and organizations
- A point of contact for mental health and psychosocial support
- An integrated call centre to provide information by telephone
- A dedicated website to share recovery-related information

Communities should identify organizations or groups that could assist with opening and operating a Resilience Centre during the response and short-term recovery stage. The cost to establish a Resilience Centre may be an eligible response cost (100% reimbursement by the Province) depending on the scope and scale of the emergency. EMCR regional staff can provide consultation on whether the emergency warrants a Resilience Centre. The cost to hire a Resilience Centre Manager to mobilize and support the Resilience Centre may also be an eligible response cost.

A Resilience Centre may also be considered when communities are establishing Reception Centres and congregational lodging to support other evacuated regions. In this case, the Resilience Centre is best located in a central location with convenient access.

## Regional coordination

When determining if your community will need to stand up a Resilience Centre, it is important to coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions. The correct location of a Resilience Centre will enable the efficient use of limited resources. Critically, access to Resilience Centres for residents with special considerations and/or for vulnerable populations should be considered prior to opening. For example, consider not only location, but overall accessibility and layout for individuals with mobility issues.

## Operations

Resilience Centre operations can be broken down into four primary steps:

1. **Complete capacity and needs assessment with the impacted person:** Completing a capacity and needs assessment form ensures that Resilience Centre staff have a full understanding of the most urgent individual needs and community capacity and helps inform the post-disaster needs assessment
2. **Assist individuals and businesses to complete their personal recovery plan:** The plan is designed to help the person focus on practical next steps in his or her recovery process. It is retained by those affected by the event
3. **Ensure individuals with urgent needs are connected with the agency or group offering assistance in the particular area required.** Examples include:
  - Pursuing family reunification efforts
  - Linking elderly homeowners who need assistance in removing debris with residents who are able to do so
  - Providing psychosocial support services, including trauma counselling
  - Engaging public health agencies to provide water testing
  - Linking home-based business owners with members of the local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club
4. **Monitor individual progress throughout the recovery process:** Follow-ups can be undertaken by not-for-profit organizations and other community-based volunteer organizations. However, this must be carried out in a coordinated manner with the information being provided to the appropriate Resilience Centre. The follow-up should include a review of the individual's personal action plan so that progress can be monitored and the plan revised to reflect any unforeseen steps necessary for recovery.

### Typical Resilience Centre activities include:

- Identifying a resilience centre manager (backfill or contractor).

- Activities related to the coordination of information for affected residents and businesses (community information forums/meetings)
- Activities supporting the coordination of donations of funds, goods and services
- Support for the coordination of post-disaster needs assessment process
- Provision of psychosocial and wellness support
- Establishment and operation of a Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee
- Identifying and securing a facility that can serve as a centralized location for supports

Depending on the needs of the impacted individuals, some of these steps may be expanded to assist those with more complex recovery requirements.

### **Resilience centre manager**

The resilience centre manager plays an important role in the community recovery process and is a major champion of recovery activities. The manager helps facilitate coordination and communication with all vested partners and individuals involved in the recovery process. The other function of the manager is to manage the organizations that are prepared to offer assistance to people as they go through the various steps to put their lives in order.

The resilience centre manager has many roles to fulfill, such as volunteer management, needs prioritization and coordination with existing services and financial tracking of Resilience Centre operations. This position is multi-functional and it is important that the person fulfilling this role should have a special skill set that includes strong relationship and team building, project management and problem-solving skills.

## Appendix C: Community recovery manager job description

### Scope of service

A community recovery manager (CRM) is needed to lead and coordinate the transition from response and short-term recovery to medium- and long-term recovery. The CRM will create and implement a workable plan to guide the [insert community here] recovery strategies to assist individuals, groups and businesses in rebuilding their community.

### Length of contract

The CRM will be signed to a contract, with a competitive salary and appropriate expenses included. It is intended that the CRM work out of an office in [insert location here] to understand the local impacts and be available for inquiries and face to face meetings as required.

### Responsibilities

- As soon as possible, begin recovery planning within the planning section of the EOC for the specific event. This includes preparing to implement the transition plan and managing the shift from a response-focused EOC to a management model focused on recovery.
- Collect and document the social, cultural, environmental, economic and infrastructure impacts of the event (refer infrastructure queries to the provincial government Disaster Financial Assistance Program or infrastructure recovery manager, if applicable).
- Be the main point of contact for all inquiries relating to both the EOC transition and to the recovery activities.
- Lead the recovery program while coordinating with other agencies, including but not limited to the provincial government, NGOs and other service providers related to the six sectors of recovery: community operations, economy, housing, environment, health and mental health and social.
- Develop programs and strategies for recovery with input from the affected communities.

### Expected outcomes

- Create a post-disaster recovery plan to guide community recovery activities in the region. This plan would include specific priorities and objectives for implementation.
- Implement the recovery plan with the assistance of [insert community here] staff and other local authority staff or First Nations members and vested partners and individuals supporting the communities.

- Undertake public and business outreach activities in the process of writing and implementing the recovery plan.
- Reports directly to the chief administrative officer of [insert community here].
- Keeps accurate account of expenses incurred and time spent on planning and implementing recovery activities.

### **Position overview**

The CRM plays a major role in leading the socio-economic recovery activities for individuals and the community following a disaster. As a local authority or First Nations representative and/or community leader, the position may guide community support services through the establishment and operation of Resilience Centre(s) and/or development of an incident-specific recovery plan.

The position may work closely with community organizations/agencies, small and medium-sized businesses, other local authority officials and neighbouring First Nations to establish effective, coordinated and collaborative relationships to deliver services to affected individuals and communities throughout the recovery process.

### **Accountabilities**

- Develops a post-disaster recovery plan and ensures there are clear processes in place to support citizens throughout their personal recovery process
- Has training in and understanding of support needs for individuals who have been through traumatic situations, including those directly and indirectly affected by a community disaster and emergency responders at all levels
- Has training or understanding of how the current mental health system works in regard to expediting any available assistance, short or long term, for those affected by a disaster
- Provides oversight and management of all aspects of a Resilience Centre to support staff, volunteers and agencies
- Ensures there is guidance and information for community members on the necessary steps to return safely to their homes
- Collects information from clients, provincial ministries, businesses and community organizations, other local government staff and/or subject matter experts to ensure disaster recovery specific information is coordinated and validated
- Communicates plans and decisions amongst local government staff, senior management and others to update community and social recovery priorities
- Works collaboratively with the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program representatives and has a good understanding of DFA in order to recognize potential opportunities for those who may be eligible and provide clarity for those who may be ineligible (i.e. due to insurable losses such as fire) (if applicable)
- Builds relationships internally and with key external partners and community services to establish a common operation picture and collaborative recovery process

- Shares information to mitigate any concerns or challenges arising from recovery operations and shares with local government, community organizations, not-for-profit organizations and individual citizens
- Experience working with, or on, boards of community non-profit organizations in order to better understand how they fit into the larger community support scenario;
- Supports or manages an “Unmet needs committee”, providing direction and coordination for the ongoing management of activities and addresses issues as they arise
- Works with Emergency Support Services (ESS) teams, building inspectors, health, insurance, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and non-government organizations
- Identifies the unique needs of each community
- Provides regular and timely operational reports to appropriate EMCR PREOC and others as required (suggest biweekly or monthly report submissions to align with payroll submission), inclusive of daily situation report, operational data and relevant statistics, as appropriate
- Contributes to a healthy and safe working environment
- Manages facilities such as the Recovery Operations Centre and/or Resilience Centre
- Determines and plans for the standing down of recovery operations, including Resilience Centres in conjunction with other relevant partners

### **Knowledge, skills and abilities**

- Knowledge of emergency management, collection and analysis of disaster recovery information, community engagement and restoration and protection of community services
- Being a lateral thinker as required, in finding solutions to help the community with unique needs
- Experience in personnel scheduling and staffing requirements
- Knowledge of and practical experience in ESS
- Experience in building, developing and maintaining successful relationships with public/private organizations and partnerships
- Knowledge of local government operations, geography and community services
- Knowledge and understanding of each provincial government ministry to easily and expediently access information and support as appropriate for the community
- Experience in building relationships with multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder groups
- Experience in grant writing
- Experience in recognizing and finding the potential partnering opportunities between groups, individuals and businesses in a community to successfully create and complete projects of benefit

### **Special requirements**

- Available 24/7 during response to emergencies and disasters and willing to perform a variety of duties within the scope of the position's responsibilities
- Ability to travel to disaster areas of the province on short notice and visit remote locations by vehicle, boat, air or on foot for overnight or extended hours in all-weather considerations due to emergencies
- Ability to speak formally and informally to various audiences including community meetings, Indigenous governing bodies, local authority officials, businesses and industry experts (e.g. insurance, construction)

## Appendix D: Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee guidelines – template

### **Mission**

The mission of the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee is to help those affected by an emergency meet their ongoing needs and regain pre-emergency levels of self-sufficiency. The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee assists residents in recovering from the impacts of an emergency by evaluating unmet needs, identifying resources for meeting priority needs and recommending the allocation of limited resources.

“Wellness and Unmet needs” refers to those needs of individuals that are not met, or cannot be met, through a variety of service organizations or federal, provincial, local authority or Indigenous governing body programs. These unmet needs often emerge after basic necessities—such as food, water, shelter and safety—are secured and may include support essential for restoring independence and resilience, such as financial assistance, housing, transportation, furnishings, debris removal, or access to mental health and psychosocial services.

The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee reports to the community recovery manager, if one is in place, or alternately to the local authority or Indigenous governing body staff member who has been tasked with supporting the Committee.

If the Committee decides to form a permanent society for long-term community recovery support, the structure would include a Board of Directors and should include representatives from the Indigenous governing body or local authority impacted by the emergency.

### **Principles**

The following guiding principles influence and guide the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee:

1. Individuals and communities play a role in their own recovery; however equitable support is critical to addressing systemic barriers and differing capacities. Recovery efforts should be inclusive, recognizing and responding to diverse needs and circumstances.
2. Recovery assistance programs focus on addressing emergency-related losses. At the same time, recovery planning should identify opportunities to enhance long-term resilience and reduce pre-existing risks, in alignment with the Build Back Better approach.
3. The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee will act in ways that further equity among individuals impacted by a disaster, accounting for individual capabilities and situations.

4. Disaster aid has the potential for both positive and negative impact. The objective of the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee is to minimize the negative consequences of any offered resource by taking into consideration the unique circumstances of those in need.
5. Needs assessment and resource allocation must consider the policies, standards and actions of First Nations and local authorities and resources already provided by other agencies.
6. As part of the support of the community recovery process, the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee will make every reasonable attempt to support the local economy and business community by sourcing resources from local suppliers.

### **Assistance based on need and preference**

Disaster assistance allocated through the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee should not be designed to replace what each individual or business has lost in an emergency. Rather, assistance attempts to provide what each individual or business needs because of an emergency. It should also consider the importance of traditional practices and preferences, especially for Indigenous people.

Some individuals or businesses will suffer losses for which compensation may not be available through the Disaster Financial Assistance program, other aid agencies, or insurance companies.

The amount and type of disaster assistance an individual or business receives may vary according to verified needs, based on:

- An individual's or business' level of vulnerability, and
- Immediate basic needs, rather than material losses

### **Guidelines for allocation**

The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee will consider the following in setting priorities for allocation:

- Each household or business should be assessed for needs and available response capacity on a case-by-case basis
- Assistance should be targeted first to the most vulnerable individuals
- Where resources are limited and could assist both individuals and businesses, priorities will be assigned to individuals
- Resources should be allocated in ways that support and build the local economy, where possible, such as in purchasing material resources and services through community businesses

### **Public accountability**

The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee will operate in a transparent manner by making the following information available to the public:

- The mission and principles of the Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee
- Needs assessment guidelines and principles
- Regular general reports on the disbursement of resources

### **Client privacy**

The Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee will respect the privacy of clients and safeguard confidentiality of client information.

## Appendix E: Identifying unmet needs post disaster – template

Dear community members,

Many of you may already be aware of the formation of a Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee (the Committee), comprised of local residents, NGOs, faith-based organizations and service/program providers. The Committee is responsible for identifying persons who require assistance to recover from the recent [insert emergency event here]. This committee is responsible for evaluating needs, identifying resources for meeting priority needs and recommending the allocation of limited resources to support affected individuals in returning, as much as possible, to pre-emergency levels.

“Unmet needs” refers to those needs of individuals that are not met, or cannot be met, through a variety of service organizations, or federal, provincial, local authority or First Nations programs. Unmet needs do not always reflect typical needs. They are those needs still unmet after priorities of food, clothing and shelter have already been provided. They may represent key resources which are not considered essential to life safety but that prove critical in returning independence to and increasing resilience of, an individual, group, or community. Some examples include potable water, power, financial assistance, housing, transportation, home furnishings and clean-up/debris removal. It may also include counselling and other wellness supports for both children and adults.

To aid in the identification of unmet needs, we are requesting that you take the time to answer the following questions and return this survey to the “Wellness and Unmet Needs Committee” as soon as possible. Your committee can be contacted at:

[insert location, email address, phone number, contact name, if applicable]

1. Understanding that your confidentiality will be respected, do you give the committee members permission to advocate/investigate for available assistance on your behalf?

Yes No

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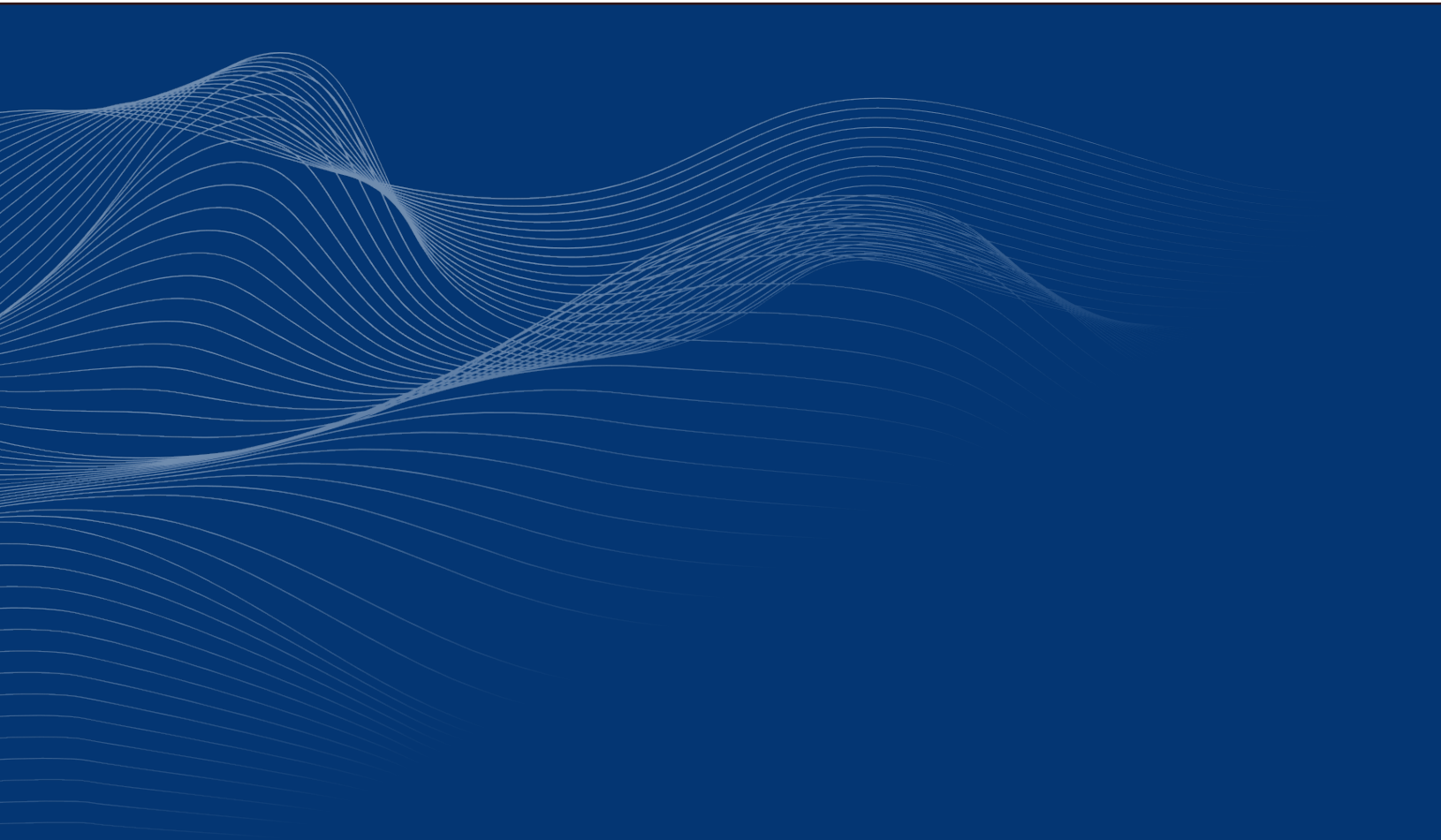
Name (Please print)

Signature

Date

2. What are your current unmet needs in regard to the [emergency event]? You do not need to limit your response to the examples provided above.

Unmet need	Priority (high, medium, low)	Estimated cost



Ministry of  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness