

SECTION 1

Introduction & Overview

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Purpose and Scope

A Group Lodging facility is the location designated by the local ESS team, in cooperation with the local authority, which provides dormitory style accommodation for people displaced from their homes as a result of an emergency or disaster. These services are usually performed in local community centres, school gymnasiums, arenas etcetera. At a Group Lodging facility individuals will be provided with a sleeping space, meals as well as information about the emergency situation.

This document is intended to assist ESS teams working at a Group Lodging facility. It includes the guiding principles, organization structure, function checklists, and function aids (e.g., forms, instructions etc.) for a fully expanded ESS Group Lodging response. These guidelines may also provide direction in the development of a Group Lodging Plan.

Please direct questions, comments, and requests for training on this organization and management framework to the ESS Office, Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) toll free at 1-800-585-9559 or by fax (250) 952-5831.

What is BCERMS?

BCERMS is a comprehensive management system that ensures a coordinated and organized response and recovery to all emergency incidents. It is based on the five primary management functions of the Incident Command System. This structure is used at the site level as well as at the three levels of support and coordination. The diagram below shows the BCERMS response levels.

BCERMS Response Levels

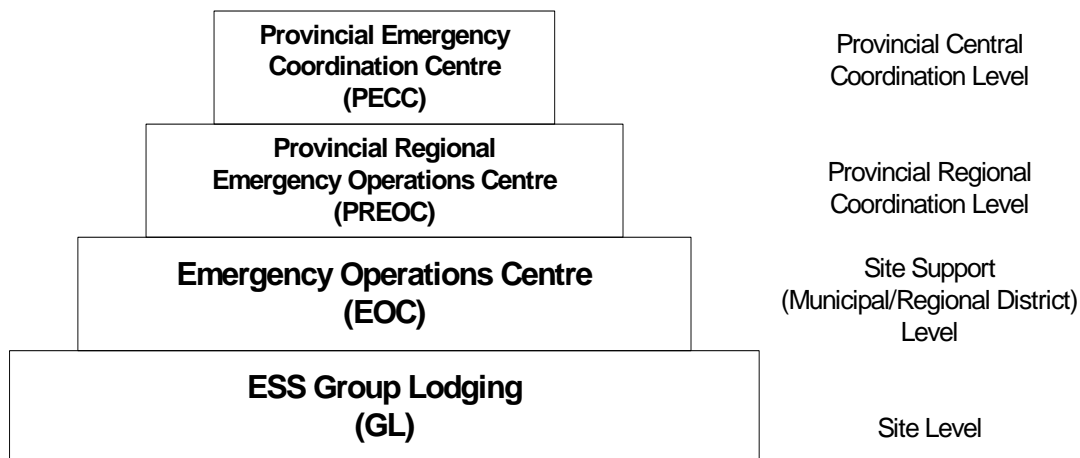


Figure 1-1: Diagram representing the levels of response in BCERMS

BCERMS Response Objectives

- provide for the safety and health of all responders,
- save lives,
- reduce suffering,
- protect public health,
- protect government infrastructure,
- protect property,
- protect the environment, and
- reduce economic and social losses.

Worker Safety

Ensuring the safety of ESS responders is always the first priority of ESS operations. Safety action items are identified throughout this document to reinforce the safety priority message and to help build safety consciousness into the culture of reception centre operations.

Guiding Principles

The following describes the ICS principles that apply to ESS Group Lodging operations.

Five Primary Management Functions

ESS in BC has adopted five essential management functions from the Incident Command System. These five primary ICS management functions are Command/Management, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance.

Management by Objectives

The management by objectives feature of ICS means that the ESS organization establishes objectives to be achieved for a given time frame, known as an “operational period.” These objectives relate to the response goals. An objective is an aim or desired end result. It is commonly stated as “what” must be done. Each objective may have one or more strategies or tactical actions (commonly referred to as tasks) needed to achieve the objective. Strategies/tasks are stated as “how” actions should be performed.

Operational Periods

An operational period is the length of time set by Command/Management to achieve a given set of objectives. The operational period may vary in length and will be determined largely by the dynamics of the emergency situation.

Action Plans

There are two general types of Action Plans. At the Group Lodging facility, verbal or written Action Plans contain objectives and tasks for one operational period. For small incidents of short duration at the site level, an Action Plan might not be written. However, in a larger response when several ESS operations (Reception Centres and/or Group Lodging facilities) are involved, resources from multiple agencies are required, or the incident requires changes in shifts of personnel over another operational period, the Action Plan should be written. The Planning Section Chief facilitates the preparation and completion of the Action Plans. The Group Lodging Manager signs them off.

Modular Organization

The ESS Group Lodging organization expands and contracts to meet the needs of various ESS responses.

The organization chart provided in this document is for a fully expanded Group Lodging response. Only those functional Branches/Units that are required to meet current objectives need to be activated. In addition, Branches/Units within a Section may be arranged in a number of ways.

The functions of any non-activated element will be the responsibility of the next highest element in the organization. Each activated Branch/Unit must have a person in charge. However, one supervisor may take charge of more than one functional Branch/Unit.

Chain of Command

There is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate and connected to higher levels.

Unity of Command

Each person reports to and receives direction from one supervisor only.

Span of Control

Maintaining a reasonable span of control is the responsibility of every ESS supervisor. The command/management structure shall maintain an effective supervisory span of control at each level of the organization.

An effective span of control is determined by the ability of each supervisor to monitor the activities of assigned subordinates and to communicate effectively with them. Span of control should not exceed seven (7) subordinates for each supervisor. The optimum span of control ranges between one (1) and five (5) subordinates per supervisor. A larger span of control may be acceptable when the supervised positions or resources are performing similar activities.

Common Terminology

Where possible the Group Lodging organization uses the same terms as those used at other operational sites (i.e. Reception Centres, the EOC, the PREOC and the PECC).

Colour Coded Identification

The following chart outlines the colour scheme that for ESS identification purposes has been adopted:

Group Lodging Manager – Green vest			
Information Safety Liaison		Red vest	
Operations Section – Orange vests	Planning Section - Blue vests	Logistics Section – Yellow vests	Finance Section – Platinum/Grey vests

Group Lodging Organization Charts

The fully expanded organization for a Group Lodging response is shown in **Figure 1-2**.

It is important to note that not every function will be filled or addressed in every emergency. The situation at hand will dictate the functions required. As a minimum, an active Group Lodging facility requires only a Manager. Other functions will be activated as needed.

Figure 1-3 shows the fully expanded Group Lodging organization chart with appropriate position titles.

The smallest elements in these organization charts are referred to as *Units*. If more than one individual works within a unit, a *Supervisor* may be appointed to the unit. When the number of units in any particular section exceeds seven (maximum span of control), functional *Branches* should be established. Each Branch will have a *Branch Coordinator*.

Each major function (Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance) is referred to as a *Section*. The title for each head of a Section is a *Chief*. The head of the Group Lodging is referred to as a Group Lodging *Manager*, and this position may appoint *Officers* to address the management responsibilities of Information, Safety and Liaison.

The ESS Director is not shown on these organization charts as during a response he/she will likely be located at the local authority Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as the *ESS Branch Coordinator* within the Operations Section (see EOC Operational Guidelines for more information).

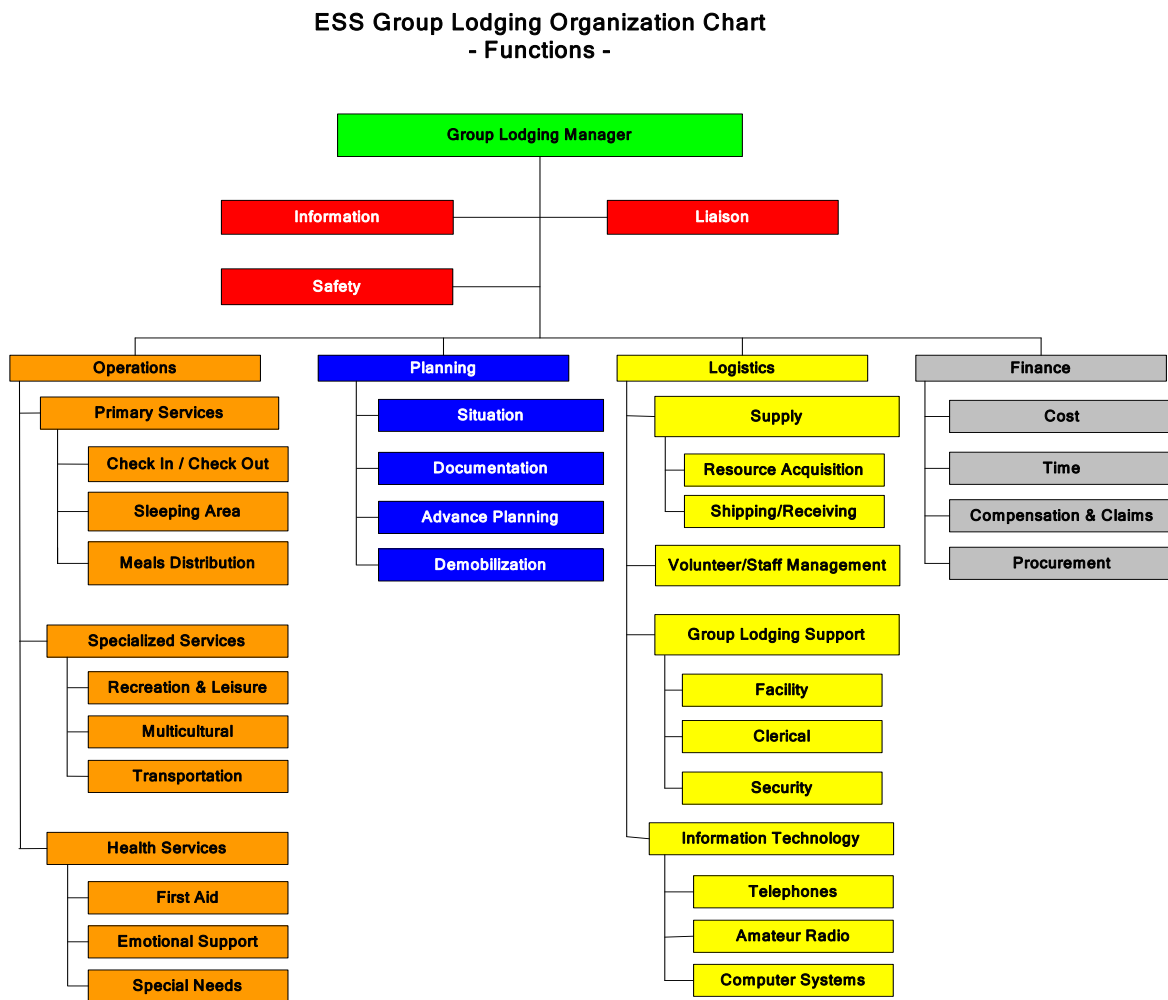


Figure 1 -2: Organization Chart in a Fully Expanded Group Lodging Facility

ESS Group Lodging Organization Chart - Position Titles -

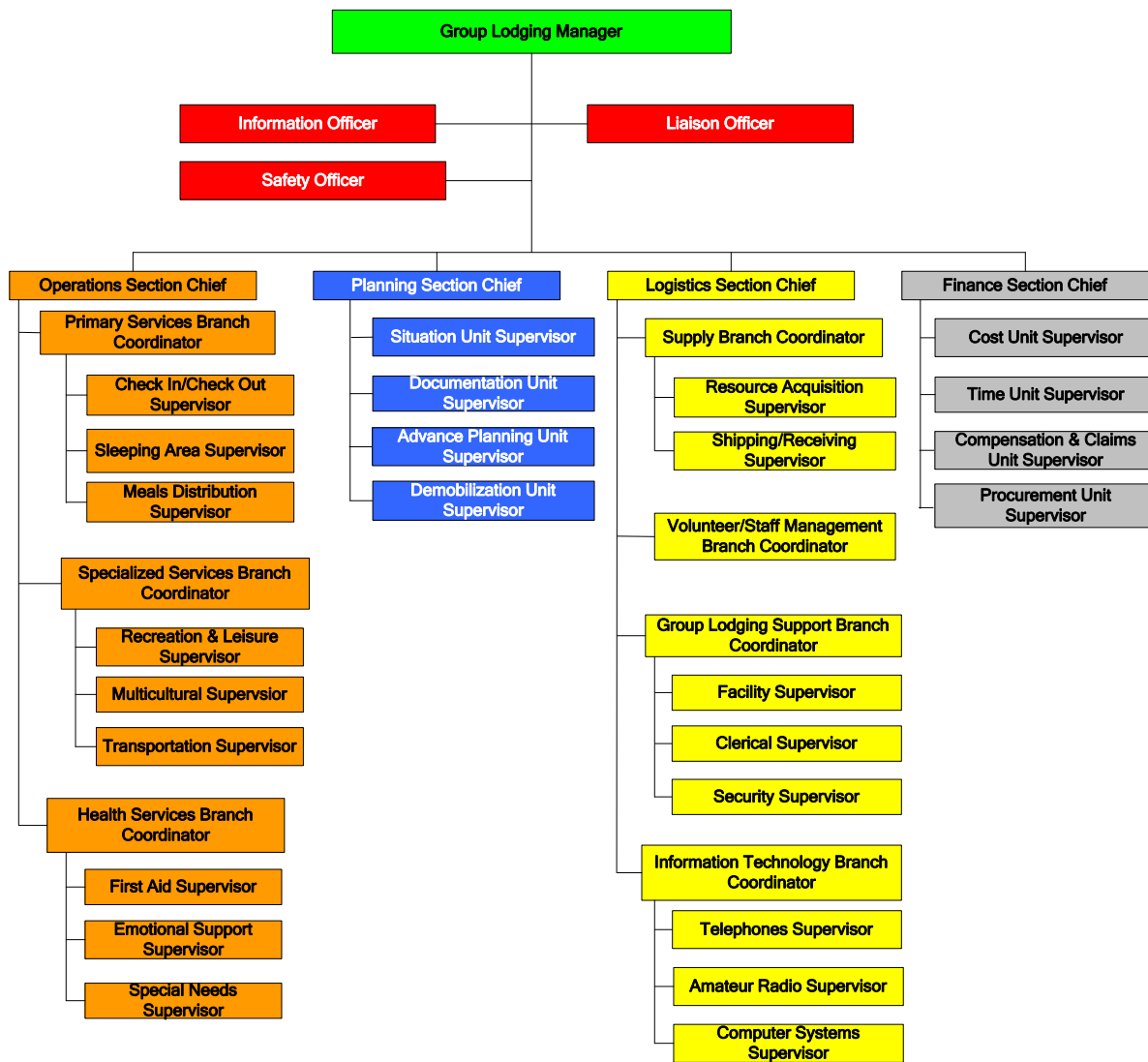


Figure 1 -3: Organization Chart with Position Titles for a Fully Expanded Group Lodging facility

Group Lodging Management Team

In the fully expanded Group Lodging organization shown on the previous page, the Group Lodging Management Team consists of the following:

Group Lodging Manager

A Group Lodging Manager is responsible for the overall management of a Group Lodging facility and ensuring that all required functions are activated and carried out.

Management Staff

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all personnel. This includes worker care.

Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is the primary contact for personnel from ESS Support Organizations and other external agencies arriving at the Group Lodging facility to work.

Information Officer

The Information Officer serves as a coordination point for media releases (approved by EOC), public meetings, and information gathering and delivery.

General Staff

The Chiefs for Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance constitute the General Staff. They are responsible for overseeing the internal functioning of their Section and interacting with others to ensure an effective ESS response.

When span-of-control is exceeded in the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance Sections, functional *Branches* may be established in order to oversee the effective operation of each Unit.

Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the direct service delivery to evacuees at the Group Lodging facility.

Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief oversees the gathering and analysis of all data regarding Group Lodging activities, conducting planning meetings and preparing the Group Lodging Action Plan for each operational period.

Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief is responsible for providing all support needs and resources to the Group Lodging facility. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: supplies, equipment, personnel, refreshments, facility maintenance, and communications.

Finance Section Chief

The Finance Section Chief monitors Group Lodging costs, administers any EOC approved procurement contracts in conjunction with Logistics, and ensures that all financial records at the Group Lodging facility are maintained throughout the event.

ESS Activation Levels

There are three levels of ESS activation.

Level 1:

A small localized event such as a fire affecting one or two households; usually less than 12 people. A Reception Centre is not normally established.

Level 2:

A significant event affecting more than 12 people, such as an apartment fire.

A reception centre is established – usually for a short duration. An EOC may be established.

Level 3:

A major emergency, such as large scale flooding or interface wild fires, involving a large scale evacuation. More than one ESS facility may be established. Duration of operation may last days or weeks. An EOC is established.

Group Lodging Facilities and Reception Centres: What is the Link?

Many people use the terms Reception Centre and Group Lodging interchangeably. They believe that Group Lodging facilities will address all of evacuees' needs, or that dormitory sleeping accommodations are located in Reception Centres. While both of these scenarios are possible, generally this is not the case. Reception Centres and Group Lodging facilities are separate entities with separate functional organizations.

A Group Lodging facility provides emergency dormitory style accommodations, usually in community centres, school gymnasiums, arenas, etc.

A Reception Centre is a location where evacuees are received, registered, and referred elsewhere depending on their needs.

Ideally, Reception Centre personnel refer evacuees to the Group Lodging facility for accommodation needs. Evacuees give the white copy of the Referral form to the worker at the Check In/Check Out desk at the Group Lodging facility. This copy authorizes the evacuee to stay at the Group Lodging facility.

Can Reception Centres and Group Lodging facilities be co-located?

The answer, of course, is yes; however, the decision to separate or co-locate the Reception Centre and the Group Lodging facility will depend on a number of factors:

- available space
- geography
- impact of incident
- resources
- suitability

A careful assessment of all of these factors will assist the ESS Management Team to decide what is possible and feasible for an effective community response. Refer to Group Lodging training course and materials for more details and information.

Application of Operational Guidelines to ESS Activation Levels

These notes are intended to illustrate the applicability and versatility of the ESS organizational structure to any given emergency event. The capacity of the organization to grow and/or compress is a key feature of the system; only those functions that need to be activated for a particular ESS response should be activated. Each response is unique. Furthermore, not every function required at the Group Lodging facility needs to be staffed by a separate person. For example, the same person may effectively assume the security and facility functions within the Logistics Section.

Level 1

Assistance for those impacted by single dwelling fire (commonly referred to as Level 1 ESS) is an example of an activation at this stage. Use of Group Lodging is not generally an appropriate accommodation option at this level of activation.

Levels 2 and 3

While commercial accommodations is generally the preferred choice for meeting evacuees' lodging needs, the impact of the disaster, the resources within the community, and/or other considerations may necessitate the activation of Group Lodging facilities. Figure 1-2 shows a fully expanded Group Lodging organization. The Group Lodging Operational Guidelines includes all the basic checklists and aids for each function that may be required for a Level 2 or 3 response.

Not all function checklists and aids, however, will be used in every Group Lodging activation. One must first determine what functions are required for a particular response and to activate only those functions that are needed. For example, if evacuees arrive at the Group Lodging with no special needs then the *Special Needs Unit* in the *Health Branch* does not need to be activated. As the situation changes, the organization should also change. Additional functions (Units, Branches etc.) should be activated as needed and deactivated when no longer required.

Moreover, each function at a Group Lodging may not require a separate staff person. One individual may be able to fulfil the duties of more than one function.