



April 6, 2005

To: ESS Directors, Co-Directors and Alternates
Mobile Support Team Members
ESSA Regional Representatives
Volunteer ESS Regional Trainers
Cc: MHR Regional ESS Coordinators
ESS Support Organizations
MHR Regional Executive Directors
PEP Regional Managers
Inter-Provincial ESS Directors

Re: Emergency Social Services (ESS) Program Office Update

Written/compiled by Maggie Grant

This edition of the ESS Program Office Update includes the following topics:

- a) **ESS Program Field Guide**
- b) **ESS Training Program Update**
- c) **ESS Support Organizations Framework for Cooperation and Coordination**
- d) **New ESS Rates Sheets**
- e) **Emergency Preparedness Week**
- f) **Updating Contact and Capacity Information**
- g) **Emergency Preparedness Conference 2005**

a) **ESS Program Field Guide**

This Update letter is being distributed along with a copy of the new Emergency Social Services Program Field Guide, which replaces the former ESS Policy and Procedures Manual issued March 1999.

The purpose of the Field Guide is to provide information regarding the provincial structure for the provision of Emergency Social Services and clarification on the various roles of Ministry of Human resources staff in providing support to community ESS teams.

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**Ministry of
Human Resources**

Emergency Social
Services Program

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One copy of the Field Guide is being mailed out to each ESS Director (ESSD) on the ESS Program Office database as of March 31, 2005, along with other individuals and organizations on our distribution list. To ensure that only the most current information is being accessed, the entire contents of the previous Policy and Procedures binder should be removed and destroyed, and replaced with the new Field Guide. Amendments to the Field Guide will be posted on the ESS website and will also be announced periodically through the quarterly ESS Program Office Update letter. Directors are requested to maintain their manual with the most current revisions, and to pass their Field Guide on to the next ESSD for their community, when their term is ended.

Please also share this information with other team members who may have previously been given copies of the outdated manual. Additional copies of the Field Guide may be downloaded and printed from our website.

We hope this Field Guide will prove to be a useful tool as you become more familiar with it as a reference for ESS procedures and guidelines.

b) ESS Training Program Update

Beginning April 1, 2005, ESS courses delivered by the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) will be offered a specified number of times per year within each of the PEP regions in BC. Locations and dates will be pre-determined based on interest expressed by ESS teams and historical data available to indicate locations and frequency of previous training sessions.

CRC staff has identified a number of communities in which they intend to offer their training courses this year. However, only a few ESS teams have so far expressed their interest in courses for the coming year. CRC wants to ensure the selected locations and dates are convenient to those wishing to access the training so that attendance can be maximized. We ask that ESS Directors or training coordinators contact their regional CRC office as early as possible to let them know the courses your team would like to obtain in the next twelve months.

▪ *Inquiry, Search and Reply*

The former “Search and Reply” course will soon have “Inquiry” added to the training. If you have recently taken “Search and Reply” and the former “Registration and Inquiry” courses, there is no need for you to repeat this course.

ESS teams are encouraged to train interested members in this essential family reunification function. Team members who wish to become a Registration Supervisor, Inquiry Supervisor or Search and Reply Supervisor must have this training as a pre-requisite to the supervisor-level training in family reunification.

▪ *Family Reunification: Supervisors Operations*

This course is required training for ESS or Red Cross team members who are expected to take on a supervisory role in the Registration, Inquiry or Search and Reply Unit in a Reception Centre. Prerequisite courses include Introduction to ESS, Registration and Referrals, Inquiry, Search and Reply and Reception Centre Operations.

For more information about the courses or to request training, please contact your regional CRC office:

Lower Mainland: 604-709-6600
Vancouver Island: 1-800-661-9055
Southern Interior: 250-573-1204
North: 1-800-278-7177

c) **“What’s New” on the Website**

Please take note of these recent additions to our website (www.ess.bc.ca) :

➤ *ESS Support Organizations – A Provincial Framework for Cooperation and Coordination*

The ESS Program Office and ESS Support Organizations have developed a new document that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each ESS Support Organization within the emergency management framework in BC. It is intended to provide ESS volunteers, staff and other emergency management stakeholders with a clear understanding of the relationship of these organizations to ESS in BC.

➤ *Worker Care Materials and Tools*

i) *Self-Assessment: Prior to Disaster Assignment Brochure*

This tool is intended to help volunteers or staff assess their personal readiness to respond at the time of an emergency call-out.

ii) *Manual for Maximizing Stress Resilience*

This screening interview is intended for use by any organization, agency, or business, that is recruiting volunteers or staff for disaster assignments. The manual is designed to assist in determining the ability of new recruits to cope during an emergency or disaster.

➤ *ESS Program Field Guide*

By the time you receive this new manual in the mail, it should also be on the website – watch for it under “What’s New”.

d) ESS Rates Sheets – April 2005

The new ESS Rates Sheets take effect April 1, 2005 and will be mailed out to all ESS Directors as soon as our office takes delivery from Queen's Printer. In the meantime, the new rates can be found on our website at <http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/ess/forms/HR2395R.pdf>.

e) Emergency Preparedness Week -- May 1 – 7, 2005

Included with this Update letter is the Emergency Preparedness Week poster for this year. The focus this year is on personal and family preparedness. For more information you can visit the PEP website at http://www.pep.bc.ca/epweek2005/EP_Week_2005.html or the Government of Canada Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada at <http://www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca/>.

f) Updating Contact and Capacity Information

Under an agreement with the ESS Program Office, ESS Association (ESSA) Regional Representatives are required, on our behalf, to contact the ESS Directors in their region on a regular basis in order to update contact information and confirm team capacity. For our purposes, only contact information for the ESS Director and their alternates is necessary, and once gathered it is maintained on the Program Office database for response purposes, and also to ensure that all ESSDs receive the information and tools necessary to stay up-to-date.

In the past two years, we have also asked the ESSA Reps to inquire as to the approximate number of active and inactive members on your team. This information is very useful to us for planning purposes, and provides confirmation of the total number of ESS volunteers in the province. During response, it may also be used to help us determine which communities might be approached for mutual aid, as well as those that are likely to need assistance should they experience a disaster. Your cooperation in providing this information is very much appreciated by the Program Office staff. If you have any questions or concerns about the collection of this information, please don't hesitate to call us.

**g) Emergency Preparedness Conference 2005
October 4 – 6, 2005**

Just a reminder that the 18th Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference will take place earlier than usual this year. The conference will run from October 4-6, 2005, at the Sheraton Wall Centre in Vancouver, and will also offer a pre-conference workshop October 3, 2005. Our next Update letter in June will announce the annual draw to send ESS volunteers or staff to the conference this year.

British Columbia is expecting another very dry, and potentially challenging, summer. From the training and exercise activities that we have seen happening around the province, we are confident that ESS teams in BC are ready to meet whatever situations confront them. As always, the ESS Program Office staff will be available 24/7 to offer response support and resources as needed, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Cornell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jeff Cornell
Director
Emergency Social Services

Attachments (2)

pc: Rob Fraser, Executive Director