



July 16, 2010

To: Local Authority Emergency Program Coordinators
ESS Directors, Co-Directors and Alternates
Mobile Support Team Members
pc: ESS Support Organizations
PEP Regional Offices
Provincial/Territorial ESS Directors

Re: Emergency Social Services Update

Written/compiled by Bob Kennedy

This issue of the ESS Update includes the following topics:

- a) **EMBC Reorganization**
- b) **ESS Training**
- c) **ESS Training Prerequisites**
- d) **ESS Director Course**
- e) **Hosting ESS Courses**
- f) **Mobile Support Teams**
- g) **Suppliers**
- h) **Pets**

a) EMBC Reorganization

Full implementation of Emergency Management British Columbia will occur in the fall, 2010. EMBC will be divided into Business Units that include Planning, Corporate Services, Emergency Coordination, Mitigation and Coroner. ESS falls within the Mitigation Business Unit. The functional responsibilities associated with the ESS Specialist and ESS Training Specialist positions will remain largely unchanged.

As more information becomes available, the full organizational structure of EMBC will be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders

b) ESS Training

EMBC has received funding to continue to support ESS training throughout the province in 2010/11.

In December, 2009, communities were asked to submit training requests in anticipation of the possibility that some funding would be received. Based on these submissions a calendar was developed and training for the first quarter has been completed with the second and third quarters scheduled but awaiting confirmation of instructor availability.

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Training delivery priorities are primarily based on the results of the ESS Review which highlighted the need for more community based training facilitated by local individuals and enhanced accessibility to on-line training applications. EMBC will work collaboratively with JIBC on a number of training initiatives including the creation of a Reception Centre DVD to replace the video that became obsolete when BCERMS was adopted by the Province

Also in development are modules on various functions as they appear in the Fully Expanded ESS Reception Centre Organization Chart. The first, Referrals Unit is being worked on now and will act as a template for further modules. These will be valuable as guides to the functions, making use of existing resources such as RC Operational Guidelines and ESS Field Guide, or for use, like the DVD, by individuals or teams.

Another initiative is to make the existing JIBC courses participant manuals available on line. This will allow the training offered by JIBC to be followed up on by individuals or teams as review or practice sessions.

There is, however, a trade off in that some course delivery will have to be adjusted to ensure that curriculum development moves forward. Following the completion of the first quarter, we will have a better awareness of costs overall and can then issue a schedule for subsequent quarters. No decisions have been made yet on the number of courses to be offered but it is anticipated that most of the requested courses will be able to go ahead.

None of these initiatives are intended to replace the existing face to face training which continues to be the preferred method for most ESS teams.

c) ESS Training Prerequisites

We have identified that several communities find it challenging to ensure participants have the prerequisites for ESS courses. As such, we will waive prerequisites for most courses.

Some of the common feedback received has included questioning the feasibility of taking Reception Centre prior to Registration and Referrals when R&R is required for a Level One response. The need to complete Reception Centre prior to Group Lodging has also been questioned when they have different focuses. As well, many communities have been working with organizations willing to commit to a group lodging role but nothing else.

There will be some exceptions to the no-prerequisite decision. Introduction to ESS (ESS100) is still mandatory prior to taking any ESS courses.

As only a limited number of hard copies of Introduction to ESS are available from JIBC, the manual is available on-line at:

http://www.jibc.ca/emergency/Programs_Courses/Online_Learning.htm#

Or a downloadable copy of the manual is available at:

http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/training/Intro_to_ESS_Manual.pdf

	Prerequisites	
Reception Centre	Introduction to ESS	7 hours
Group Lodging	Intro to ESS	7 hours
Registration and Referrals	Intro to ESS	7 hours
Resource Acquisition	Intro to ESS	7 hours
Managing Walk In Volunteers	Intro to ESS	7 hours
Documentation Unit	Intro to ESS + Reception Centre + Registration & Referrals	3 hours
ESS Site Management	Intro to ESS + Reception Centre (Group Lodging Recommended)	7 hours

Completion of Introduction to ESS, Reception Centre, Registration and Referrals and Introduction to Emergency Management (EM110) are currently prerequisites for the ESS Director course. These prerequisites are under review.

d) ESS Director Course

One of the more difficult decisions that had to be taken was the postponement of the ESS Director course. While this course would normally have been offered in the fall of 2010 it is being postponed until Spring, 2011.

As an alternative, the JIBC has offered to hold a tuition based ESS Directors course in the fall of 2010 at the campus in New Westminster.

e) Hosting ESS Courses

In order to maximize the efficiency of delivering JIBC courses, some requirements were put into place last year. While this has helped in ensuring cost effective delivery these reminders are offered to those who have requested courses for the remainder of this fiscal year.

- Requested courses must be confirmed as either going ahead as scheduled or cancelled 30 days prior to the scheduled date.
- A list of attendees must be received 14 days prior to the scheduled date. This ensures that an adequate number of participant manuals are delivered prior to the course. Only the material required for the submitted number of participants at that time will be provided.
- JIBC requires the e-mail addresses for all participants 14 days prior to the course. This allows sufficient time for the Key Survey to be delivered to participants so that they can complete it immediately following the course.

f) Mobile Support Teams

The five Mobile Support Teams (MST) in BC continue to be the major ESS resource administered by EMBC/PEP in the province. Multiple MST deployments during Fire Season 2009 provided a wealth of lessons learned including:

- Need to better educate host communities on the role of MST
- Pre identifying skill sets required and ESS response roles MST members will play in host communities
- Need for clear communications and procedures to integrate arriving MST into local ESS team.
- Need for flexibility of MST – sometimes provide leadership in management positions and other times to shoulder the load doing front line jobs to help an exhausted local team cross the finish line.

Over the years, MST members have been deployed to communities throughout BC in a variety of roles. In keeping with the need to learn from past experiences and stay up to date with changes, EMBC will continue to support seasonal MST Training to prepare for emergencies including the possibility of an active wildfire season.

g) Suppliers

Occasionally there are some suppliers that are unable to accept referrals for various reasons. This has, in the past, created considerable hardship on evacuees and ESS responders alike, particularly when the shopping has been completed only to learn at check out that the referral cannot be honoured. In cases where EMBC/PEP becomes aware of such instances, a suggestion to access a different supplier will be offered when a call is received by the ECC for a task number. Regrettably, some communities find themselves in the position of having a limited selection of suppliers so it may be helpful to try to identify contingencies should such a situation occur. EMBC/PEP takes these matters very seriously and will work toward a resolution with the supplier at every occasion.

h) Pets

With the many organizations and agencies involved in disaster pet care there is a need for a coordinated approach to the delivery of that much needed service. Recently, a working group was formed to determine ways for the individual groups cooperate effectively. The group, still in the formative stages, will include representatives from Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team (CDART), CritterAid, SPCA and Noah's Wish. Consultation with the BC Veterinary Medical association has been initiated.

NOTE:

The first four response objectives of BCERMS address human needs:

- Provide for the health and safety of all responders
- Save lives
- Reduce suffering
- Protect public health

ESS addresses all of these priorities.

EMBC would like to thank all ESS practitioners who give so generously of their time and talent to make BC a safer place to live. Your contribution is critical to ensuring ESS, You are the true Heart of Disaster response

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Dave Scott
ESS Specialist