



March 24, 2006

To: ESS Directors, Co-Directors and Alternates
Mobile Support Team Members
ESSA Regional Representatives
Volunteer ESS Regional Trainers
pc: ESS Support Organizations
PEP Regional Offices
Provincial/Territorial ESS Directors

Re: Emergency Social Services (ESS) Office Update

Written/compiled by Maggie Grant

Due to an unusual number of time-sensitive announcements and reminders, we have compiled this special edition of the ESS Office Update letter, which includes the following topics:

- a) **A New Relationship with the ESS Association**
- b) **Group Lodging Operational Guidelines**
- c) **ESS Field Guide**
- d) **Referrals Unit On-line**
- e) **Preparedness Tips for People with Disabilities**
- f) **Support for Level One ESS Team Leaders**
- g) **Emergency Preparedness Week 2006**
- h) **National Volunteer Week**

a) **A New Relationship with the ESS Association**

As of April 1, 2006, the role of the Emergency Social Services Association (ESSA) in BC will be changing. As a non-profit society, ESSA is currently in the process of determining their future goals, which we anticipate will be announced in the near future.

ESSA can take pride in the work they have done over the years in supporting the ESS Program as well as the thousands of volunteers that comprise the community-based teams in the province. We would particularly like to express our gratitude to all ESSA volunteers, past and present, for their time and commitment.

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**Ministry of
Public Safety &
Solicitor General**

Provincial Emergency
Program

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ESS now has dedicated regional staff, in the form of the three new Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinators (RESSRCs), to support ESS teams around the province. PEP has taken some of the strengths of the volunteer ESSA Regional Representatives roles and incorporated them into the job expectations of the RESSRCs.

The RESSRCs will now be responsible for collecting and maintaining up-to-date contact information in the PEP database for ESS Directors and their alternates. This information is needed not only for response purposes, but also to ensure accurate mailing lists for ESS Office communications, such as this Update letter and the ESS Watch, so please be sure to advise your PEP Regional Office of any changes that occur as soon as possible.

The Provincial Emergency Program will also continue to make available to the ESS community the training, supplies and supports, such as the ESS website (www.ess.bc.ca), the toll-free line (1-800-585-9559) and ESS annual regional meetings.

We look forward to hearing ESSA's plans for their future, and will welcome their continued participation as an ESS Support Organization, should that fit with their goals.

b) Group Lodging Operational Guidelines

The Group Lodging Operational Guidelines (GLOGs) are now complete. These guidelines are intended to assist ESS teams in setting up and operating a Group Lodging facility, and include the guiding principles, organizational structure, function checklists, and function aids for a fully expanded ESS Group Lodging response.

A limited number of binders containing these guidelines are being distributed along with this Update letter, including one to each ESS team, ESS Support Organizations, PEP Regional Offices, JI trainers and ESS Mobile Support Teams. In the near future, the guidelines will also be added to the ESS website for downloading and periodic updates.

The feedback we received following the release of the Reception Centre Operational Guidelines was very positive, and we hope you will find the GLOGs to be just as useful to you in creating or updating your Group Lodging Plan.

Please direct any questions or feedback on this new resource to the ESS Office, Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) toll free at 1-800-585-9559 or by fax (250) 952-5831 mhress@gov.bc.ca.

c) ESS Field Guide

Also included in this mail-out, for those who were on the original distribution list, is the updated ESS Field Guide. This manual was first issued one year ago. At that time, the intention was that updates would be provided on-line for downloading, however with the significant changes that have taken place in the program since that time, it was felt that a total reprint was warranted on this occasion. Future updates will be announced in the ESS Update letter, and will be made available through the ESS website, as originally planned.

At the front of the manual you will find an Amendment Record listing the changes made to the original material. Please take the time to look these over and familiarize yourself with the most current information.

Of special note:

- Section 5: The Ministry of Human Resources roles and responsibilities have been removed. The replacement information is very basic, but it is expected that this section will be expanded over the next year as the transition to the new Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinator positions is completed.
- Section 6: On page 6-2 a reminder has been added regarding “Choosing Suppliers”. We would also like to point out the information regarding “Insurance” and “Identification of Evacuees”, which were new additions in the March 2005 version.
- Section 7: Includes instructions for completing the newly revised Referral form and ESS Supplier Consent, along with minor changes to some of the other instructions. This entire section should also be copied and used to replace the “Instructions for Completing and Processing ESS Forms” in each of your ESS Kits.

d) Referrals Unit On-Line

The Referrals Unit Online is now available through the Justice Institute (JI) of BC website at <http://www.jibc.ca/emergency/default.htm>. This new tool is intended for the use of ESS team members who will be assigned the role of Referrals Unit Supervisor (RUS) or Referrals Worker during an ESS response.

The material includes checklists for both functions (taken from the Reception Centre Operational Guidelines) and an On-Line Guide to expenditure policy and procedures for completing the Referral form. The On-Line Guide **does not** replace the training available through the JI’s Registration and Referrals course – it is intended only as a refresher to assist the RUS and Referrals workers in maintaining their skills, and should be particularly useful to those team members who do not work with these forms on a regular basis.

e) Preparedness for People with Disabilities

The BC Coalition for People with Disabilities has recently worked with ESS Office to develop several personal emergency preparedness tips specifically designed for people with disabilities. ESS teams may find this information useful for mall displays or when working with local disability groups, health facilities, caregivers or individuals with special needs.

There is one over-all preparedness document that provides detailed information pertaining to all disabilities, as well as several checklists that address the distinct needs associated with specific disabilities. This information is provided on the PEP website, under “Personal Safety” -- “Preparedness for People with Disabilities”:

http://www.pep.bc.ca/hazard_preparedness/Personal_Safety.html

If you are unable to access this information electronically, you may contact our office for a hard copy.

f) **Support for Level One ESS Supervisors/Team Leaders**

As ESS teams or other designated community groups take on the responsibility for Level One (L1) ESS responses in their communities, the ESS Office has received a number of queries regarding expectations and procedures for this function. Based on those questions, we offer the following tips:

- When requesting L1 ESS training packages, it is not a requirement to register the trainee with the ESS Office. Requests for the training material should be made by the organization responsible for L1 ESS in the community, to ensure that the individual has been authorized to take this training. The package can then be mailed either to the organization or to the individual.
- Contact information for L1 ESS responders is managed by the organization responsible for this function, as it is for ESS team members. PEP is not keeping a database of L1 responders, so it is important that your community plan include ready access to that contact information – possibly through your fire dispatch or through a designated L1 team leader or ESSD who can be contacted 24/7.
- If your L1 ESS team leaders are **not** the ESS Director or their alternates, who should already be listed on our database, please provide the contact information for the L1 ESS team leader(s) to your PEP Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinator. This information would be used for response purposes as a back up to your local dispatch procedures, as well as ensuring L1 ESS teams receive up-to-date information, such as this ESS Office Update letter, and the ESS Watch.
- There is no formal “tutorial” at the end of the training. Students are advised to discuss any questions that arise with the person responsible for managing L1 ESS responses in their community. If further clarification is needed, the supervisor can contact the ESS Office.
- Registration and Referrals for Food, Clothing and Lodging training provided by the JI is strongly recommended for all L1 ESS responders.
- The Action Checklist previously used by the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) is still recommended for use, however should now be retained by the community L1 ESS team for their records rather than being sent to the CRC. Your regional PEP office would also appreciate a copy, so they can be made aware of any pertinent details or issues that may arise from the response at a later date.
- A modified temporary version of the Action Checklist is available on request to the ESS Office. This form and reporting process will be reviewed more thoroughly in the next few months as we undertake a complete review and revision of the training and documentation for L1 ESS.

If you need any further clarification on the training or procedures for Level One ESS, please contact Maggie Grant at the ESS Office.

g) Emergency Preparedness Week 2006

This year's Emergency Preparedness Week will be held May 7-13. We hope that you will continue to promote this important annual event in your community.

There are 57 identified hazards in British Columbia including forest fires, landslides, floods, extreme weather, earthquakes and tsunamis. We also face dangers that are difficult to foresee such as hazardous material spills, disease outbreaks or the threat of terrorism. There are also risks when people enjoy the outdoors where they may become lost, injured or encounter dangerous wildlife or sudden storms and snow avalanches.

During Emergency Preparedness Week, communities across Canada will be organizing activities aimed at the importance of planning for emergencies so that residents can help their families and communities before, during and after a disaster.

To make Emergency Preparedness Week a success in your community, you may wish to involve key groups including first responders (fire, police and ambulance services), schools, The Salvation Army, Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, hospitals or health organizations, civic organizations and the local media. Encourage these groups to join in your activities or organize their own.

Your community activities don't need to be time or labour intensive. Using available resources-you can develop events you think will best promote Emergency Preparedness Week. It is expected that posters, guides and other information will be available for distribution again this year. Information about family emergency preparedness and personal safety is available on the Provincial Emergency Program website www.pep.bc.ca <<http://www.pep.bc.ca>>

Many municipalities use this as an opportunity to organize an emergency preparedness event in their community and invite local media to attend. You can identify the specific hazards in your area and describe the emergency plans your community has in place. Citizens will learn to be better personally prepared to deal with emergencies.

Encourage the media to discuss local risks and outline your community's preparedness strategies. Local cable and radio stations are often happy to develop a morning talk show on the subject.

Other activities that can help make your Emergency Preparedness Week a success include:

- announcements in community newspapers;
- shopping center displays;
- linking promotion to other community events already scheduled for early May;
- displaying banners reading "Emergency Preparedness Week" in public spaces throughout your community;
- encouraging local schools to promote Emergency Preparedness Week in the classroom; and
- presentations and demonstrations by emergency responders - fire, police, ambulance and public safety lifeline volunteers (Search and Rescue, Emergency Social Services, PEP Air, Amateur Radio and Road Rescue).

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility. By helping people become more aware of local hazards, and giving them practical information so that they can plan ahead, we can all help increase B.C.'s level of emergency preparedness.

h) National Volunteer Week

April 23 – 29, 2006 marks National Volunteer Week in Canada. This special tribute to Canadian volunteers offers an additional opportunity to recognize your organization's volunteers. The Volunteer Canada website at <http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/nvw/welcome.php> offers a variety of ideas for celebrating the contributions your volunteers make to BC communities, including a "Campaign in a Kit", consisting of useful tools such as templates for Public Service Announcements, Letters to the Editor, E-Cards and Recognition Certificates, to name a few.

Remember to watch the Volunteer Canada website throughout the year for other great ideas to help you find, keep and recognize your volunteers.

Please do not hesitate to contact the ESS Office if you have any questions or comments -- your feedback is always welcome.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

Jeff Cornell
Manager
Emergency Social Services