



November 16, 2006

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

Re: Emergency Social Services Update

Written/compiled by Maggie Grant

Emergency Social Services (ESS) Update letters are provided by the Provincial Emergency Program ESS Office as a support to local authorities and their ESS Directors who manage the more than 5,000 community ESS volunteers around the province. The topics are intended to keep ESS Directors up-to-date regarding provincial policies and training issues, as well as to share new tools, best practices and other valuable information that may help them in the development and maintenance of their teams.

Several Local Authority Emergency Program Coordinators have recently expressed interest in being included on this distribution list, so beginning with this issue, the Regional PEP Offices will also be forwarding the Update letter to EPCs within their region. More information regarding Emergency Social Services can be found on the ESS website www.ess.bc.ca.

This issue of the ESS Update includes the following topics:

- a) **New Accommodation Policy and ESS Rates Sheets**
- b) **Interim Volunteer Reimbursement Policy**
- c) **Regional Training Coordination Update**
- d) **Worker Care "Be a Leader" Poster**
- e) **Registration and Referrals Statistics Record – training update**
- f) **Policy clarification regarding Insurance**
- g) **Best Practices for Unattended Children**
- h) **BC ESS Council**
- i) **Municipal Toolkit for Volunteer Involvement**
- j) **Emergency Preparedness Week 2007**
- k) **Volunteer Management Software Survey**

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**Ministry of
Public Safety &
Solicitor General**

Provincial Emergency
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a) **New Accommodation Policy and ESS Rates Sheets**

The last Update letter in August included a message about changes to the provincial government accommodation guidelines impacting the policy and rates for ESS lodging suppliers. As accommodation rates are no longer prescribed by government, rates will vary by property with each property that participates in the program having its own government discounted rate.

As a result, review of ESS lodging rates and procedures has been conducted and the ESS Rate Sheets have been updated to reflect the new provincial government hotel/motel accommodation guidelines.

The model presently used by local authority ESS teams will require only one additional question when making initial contact with a potential lodging supplier, or when conducting an annual update with existing suppliers. The steps in this process are as follows:

1. The ESS team member responsible for resource acquisition approaches any accommodation supplier within their community.
2. Two options outlining the rates applicable to accommodation suppliers during an emergency are presented to the hotel or motel manager:
 - a) If the supplier is on the provincial government's List of Properties, the province will honour this rate when reimbursing them for evacuee lodging **or**
 - b) If the supplier is not on the List of Properties they are offered reimbursement according to accommodation rates as listed on the new ESS Rates sheet revised Oct/2006.

[Note: Properties offering a discounted rate for provincial government can be viewed at <http://www.pc.gov.bc.ca/travel/Hotels/AccommodationListing/INDEX.html> and ESS Rates sheets can be viewed at <http://www.ess.bc.ca/forms.htm>]

3. If the hotel or motel agrees to be a supplier to the local ESS team they would then complete the Supplier Consent form and be added to the list of local ESS resources.
4. During a response, ESS personnel may choose the most appropriate supplier from their list of ESS resources, based on the evacuee's needs (i.e. proximity to work, school, etc.). Responders are not expected to know how much each commercial lodging charges – only that they are a confirmed supplier under one of the two options in step #2 above.
5. As is the practice now, if during a response the ESS team cannot identify any commercial lodging suppliers who will accept either of the rate options, and accommodation capacity is a concern, then the ESS team contacts PEP to request approval for extraordinary needs or discuss other options.

This change does not require ESS volunteers or staff to be retrained. The provincial ESS training program will reflect this change, and the ESS website, Field Guide and Reception Centre Operational Guidelines will also be updated to show the revised ESS Rate sheet.

Additional clarification on the ESS rates will continue to be addressed by contacting the duty Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinator through the PEP Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) at 1-800-663-3456. However, there is **no requirement** for preauthorization from PEP for accommodation costs **except** as noted in step #5 above.

ESS Directors receiving this Update letter will find one pad of the new ESS Rates sheets for October 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 included in their package. Additional Rates sheets may be ordered by contacting our office by phone, e-mail or fax.

b) Interim Volunteer Reimbursement Policy

The August 2006 ESS Office Update letter included an overview of the Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Reimbursement Policy. Since then, you should have received an e-mail notice advising you of a new Interim Volunteer Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Package which took effect Oct 15th. If you have not already done so, please review the new policy and procedures at http://www.pep.bc.ca/policy/Policy_06/Rate%20Package%20Index.htm.

Any questions regarding this policy can be referred to the Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinator (RESSRC) at your Regional PEP Office.

c) Regional Training Coordination Update

ESS Directors should have recently received an e-mail from their Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinator (RESSRC) describing the new procedures for requesting ESS training. The purpose of this new model is to streamline the process through regional coordination of training requests.

The first step in this process for ESS Directors is to forward your "wish list" of ESS courses that you would like your team to access in the upcoming fiscal year (April 1/07 to March 31/08) to your RESSRC. This would include ESS courses provided by the JI, Canadian Red Cross, The Salvation Army and Canadian Disaster Child Care Society, which are described in the the ESS Course Catalogue at <http://www.ess.bc.ca/training.htm>. We don't need any dates at this point -- we just need to know how many and what type of courses we need to plan for as we enter into contract negotiations with the training organizations.

This information will be compiled and training allotments confirmed early in the new year, at which point your RESSRC will be in contact again to determine dates for a proposed training schedule. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your team's training plan, please contact the RESSRC for your region.

d) Worker Care "Be a Leader" Poster

The **Be a Leader** poster was developed by the British Columbia Disaster Worker Care Committee, with the support of the Provincial Emergency Program ESS Office and the BC ESS Council. The purpose of this poster is to promote good worker care practices to leaders in emergency management, including those working in an ESS facility (i.e. Reception Centre, Group Lodging, Volunteer Intake Centre, etc.), Emergency Operations Centres at all levels of government and support organizations.

Copies can be requested from the ESS Office at the Provincial Emergency Program by calling 1-800-585-9559 or emailing ess@pep.gov.bc.ca. The poster can be viewed on the ESS website at <http://www.ess.bc.ca/whatnew.htm>.

e) Registration and Referrals Statistics Record – training update

On the Registration and Referrals Statistics Record there is a space for recording the cost of commercial accommodation. In view of the latest changes to the accommodation rate policy, please advise Documentation Unit workers to use the rate provided on the new ESS Rates sheet to give a "ball park" estimate of accommodation costs rather than trying to determine what each individual accommodation supplier is charging. The form is not meant as an accounting ledger, but rather to provide an estimate of costs for the Situation Reports, so approximation is perfectly acceptable.

f) **Policy Clarification regarding Insurance**

Please take note of the following updated ESS policy information regarding the question of insurance:

*Emergency Social Services workers are encouraged to ask the family or individual if they have property or tenant insurance as part of the recovery process, however, people should not be denied access to Emergency Social Services because they **may** have insurance. ESS workers **are not** to engage in a discussion about insurance policies, deductibles, etc. If the evacuee is indicating they need assistance and have no other resources immediately available, or if the family or individual is having difficulties contacting their insurance agent or are uncertain about their coverage, services should be provided up to 72 hours as usual.*

*If the family **has insurance** that can cover their costs, instruct them to make necessary purchases, keep all receipts and contact their insurance agent immediately to arrange for payment of services. If their home is unfit to live in, they will want to confirm their coverage for **additional living expenses**. Where the evacuee is denied access to their home by civil authorities, for instance under a mass evacuation order, they should ask their agent specifically if they have **prohibited access** coverage. If **they** have difficulties contacting their insurance agent or are uncertain about their coverage, services should be provided as usual, pending clarification of insurance.*

Assistance in resolving insurance related concerns is available by calling the Insurance Bureau of Canada Consumer Information Line at 604 684-3635 ext. 222, or toll free at 1 877 772-3777.

***Note:** PEP does not have the ability to be reimbursed by an evacuee's insurance plan/company.*

This information will be updated in all training material, operational guidelines, the ESS Field Guide and the ESS website. The Level One Action Checklist has also been updated to reflect this clarification, and the corrected version is attached to this Update letter.

g) **Best Practices for Unattended Children**

The ESS Office continues to work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in an effort to create policy guidelines for ESS teams in regards to caring for children who arrive at a Reception Centre without a parent or other responsible adult. Your local authority Emergency Program Coordinator or other staff may also be able to offer advice or assistance pertaining to risk management and other issues in relation to caring for children.

Until a provincial policy is in place, we offer the following best practices for managing unattended children:

- Attempt to identify team members with child care skills and appropriate criminal record checks to provide basic services to children in a Reception Centre;
- Ensure that at least two volunteers are working in the Child Care area at all times;
- Complete an ESS File Registration and Services Record for unattended children, with appropriate notations in the comment box and mark as "Restricted". It is recommended that you consult with MCFD staff before responding to Inquiries;

- Wherever possible, make contact with local MCFD staff prior to a disaster, during the planning stage, to discuss what assistance or advice they **may** be able to offer in developing a strategy for dealing with unattended children;
- During an emergency, if no local MCFD support is available, contact the MCFD 24-hour After Hours line for advice:
 - In Vancouver, the North Shore and Richmond, call **660-4927**
 - In the Lower Mainland from Burnaby and Delta in the west to Maple Ridge and Langley in the east, call **660-8180**
 - For the rest of the province, call toll-free **1-800-663-9122**.

h) **BC ESS Council**

Effective July 2006, the ESS Advisory Committee has become the British Columbia Emergency Social Services Council. The purpose of this council is to provide a forum for a collaborative approach to the delivery of ESS within British Columbia. Members include all of the ESS Support Organizations listed below:

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS	
(listed in alphabetical order)	
• BC Housing	• Justice Institute of BC (JIBC)
• Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation Canada (Tzu Chi)	• The Salvation Army (TSA)
• Canadian Disaster Child Care (CDCC)	• St John Ambulance (SJA)
• Canadian Red Cross (CRC)	• Telephone Pioneers Amateur Radio Club (TPARC)
• Emergency Social Services Association (ESSA)	

The primary objectives of BCESSC are to provide an integrated approach to ESS and enhance the level of services throughout British Columbia. Key objectives of the BCESSC will include:

- Information sharing and networking between ESS Support Organizations (Non-Government Organizations (NGO), other government ministries and agencies) and the ESS Office/PEP;
- Understand and re-enforce the roles and responsibilities of the ESS Support Organizations within the ESS framework;
- Opportunity to learn from and better coordinate emergency responses;
- To provide support for communities, ESS Support Organizations in the delivery of ESS;
- To increase the capacity of communities and ESS Support Organizations to provide Emergency Social Services;
- A collaborative effort between government and non-government organizations to provide feedback and propose suggestions to issues, policy and procedures for emergency response as it relates to ESS; and
- Promotion and awareness of the ESS training program, educational activities and other training opportunities.

Full Terms of Reference can be found on the ESS website at <http://www.ess.bc.ca/supportorg.htm>

i) **Municipal Toolkit for Volunteer Involvement**

This toolkit is currently being promoted by CivicInfo BC to local authorities. It was developed through the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI), Ontario Network, and is available at <http://www.volunteer.on.ca/English/index.cfm?fuseaction=opportunities.MunicipalVol>.

The target audience is municipal staff; however several of the strategies may also be useful to ESS Directors or Emergency Program Coordinators seeking to:

1. Raise awareness and understanding of municipal staff and elected officials of the importance of volunteers to municipalities.
2. Encourage the adoption by municipalities of the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, or the incorporation of similar principles in the municipalities' volunteer management practices.

j) **Emergency Preparedness Week 2007**

In 1996, Emergency Preparedness Week (EP Week) was launched to provide a framework, national in scope, for co-operation on emergency preparedness public awareness programs and activities undertaken across Canada. The federal, provincial and territorial governments adopted the concept of EP Week as a means of promoting activities that would increase the capacity of individuals and groups to know how to plan ahead, and respond accordingly during and after a disaster.

The provinces, territories and municipalities across Canada offer a variety of events throughout EP Week to provide information and education to Canadians.

The twelfth annual EP Week will run from May 6-12, 2007.

EP Week 2007 will build on the principles in the Emergency Preparedness Guide 2006. The guide reinforces the message *72-Hours: Is your Family Prepared?* http://epweek.ca/index_e.asp

k) **Volunteer Management Software Survey**

There are a number of volunteer management software packages available on the market for maintaining volunteer data -- with a wide range of prices and options. The ESS Office is interested in obtaining feedback from any ESS teams or other disaster response organizations that may be using one of these software tools or other database to help us determine their flexibility and applicability to disaster response volunteer management. If you are willing to provide some input into our research, please contact Maggie Grant with your comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Jeff Cornell
Manager
Emergency Social Services Office

Attachment: Level One ESS Action Checklist

ACTION CHECKLIST - Level One ESS Response

Name of Responder: _____ Community: _____

Call-out Information

1. Date and time: _____
2. Called out by: _____
3. PEP Task Number (1-800-663-3456) requested by: _____
4. PEP Task Number: _____
5. Names of evacuees: _____
6. Number of adults: _____ Number of children: _____
7. Evacuee's home address: _____
8. Evacuee's current location: address and/or phone number: _____

9. Cause of the evacuation (fire, flood, etc.): _____
10. Other Level One ESS Response volunteers attending the incident: _____
11. Bring Response Kit, including:
 - Referral forms ESS Rates sheets Supplier Consent forms
 - PEP or Agency ID A Guide to Disaster Recovery Level One ESS Fact Sheet
 - 'Help When you Need it Most' brochure Community Resources list
 - Additional supplies:* blankets comfort kits teddy bears
12. As soon as you arrive at the scene of the evacuation, check in with the Incident Commander (ie. firefighter or police officer) in charge

Determining Eligibility

Does the family have insurance to cover their loss? If so, their immediate needs may be paid for by their insurance company. If the evacuee indicates they need assistance and have no other resources immediately available, or if they are having difficulties contacting their insurance agent or are uncertain about their coverage, services should be provided up to 72 hours as usual.

Food and Lodging may be provided if:

1. The home is uninhabitable because of an emergency (fire, flood, etc.)
2. Friends or relatives are not available to house the family.

Clothing allowance may be provided if their clothing is destroyed or inaccessible.

If another agency offers food or clothing equal to what is available from PEP, do not duplicate service.

Providing Emergency Social Services

1. Name of hotel/motel where evacuees were placed: _____
2. Name of restaurant or grocery store providing food: _____
3. Name of store providing clothing: _____
4. ESS Rates sheet given to evacuees and to each supplier. (Remind suppliers that evacuees are responsible for any extra costs, i.e. tobacco, alcohol, movies, phone calls)
5. White copy of Referral form given to each supplier **with** attached ESS Rates sheet.
6. Evacuees given: Community Resources list A Guide to Disaster Recovery Guide
'Help When you Need it Most' brochure

News Media

If you are approached by the media, follow the protocol provided by your agency. For general background information, you may provide a copy of the Level One ESS Fact Sheet. For event-specific information, they should be referred to the Incident Commander.

DO NOT:

- give out the family's name or location; you must protect their privacy
- give details on the assistance you have provided to the family
- speculate on the incident - causes, damage, future developments, etc.
- comment on questions of a controversial nature

Follow-up [no later than three days after the evacuation]

1. Contact evacuees to see if they need referral to other agencies or counselling or material assistance. Was a referral needed? _____ If so, what for? _____
2. Send pink copy of all ESS Referral forms to PEP Headquarters.
3. Give green copy of all ESS Referral forms and Action Checklist to your supervisor for their records.
4. Were there unusual aspects to this incident? Problems? Comments? _____
Please describe by attaching an additional sheet.
5. If the incident involved a death or other traumatic event, advise your supervisor immediately.

Date and time task completed: _____

Names and signatures of all volunteers participating in this response (required for WCB purposes):

_____/_____
Print Name Signature / Print Name Signature

_____/_____
Print Name Signature / Print Name Signature