



October 6, 2005

To: ESS Directors, Co-Directors and Alternates  
Mobile Support Team Members  
ESSA Regional Representatives  
Volunteer ESS Regional Trainers  
pc: ESS Support Organizations  
Senior Regional Managers and Regional Managers  
Inter-Provincial ESS Directors

**Re: Emergency Social Services (ESS) Office Update**

*Written/compiled by Maggie Grant*

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

- a) **ESS Transition to Provincial Emergency Program - Update**
  - b) **EP Conference Draw Winners**
  - c) **ESS Forms Available**
  - d) **Supplier Invoice Discrepancies**
  - e) **Referral Tips**
  - f) **Level One ESS (formerly Personal Disaster Assistance)**
  - g) **Justice Institute Training Courses**
- a) **ESS Transition to Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) - Update**

The physical move to PEP took place August 15<sup>th</sup>, and staff are now settled into the former PEP training room. Our new contact information is as follows:

Mailing address: Emergency Social Services  
Provincial Emergency Program  
PO Box 9201 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9J1

Physical address: 455 Boleskine Road  
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E7

General or Supplier Inquiries: 1-800-585-9559 (no change from previous toll-free number)

.../2



Staff Direct Phone Lines:

Jeff Cornell, Manager of ESS Office	(250) 952-5819
David Tomaz, Provincial ESS Coordinator	(250) 952-5820
Maggie Grant, ESS Coordinator of Volunteer Services	(250) 952-5821
Cheryl Venn, ESS Program Administrator	(250) 952-5834
Christine Ritson, ESS Program Assistant	(250) 952-5832
Fax Line	(250) 952-5831

**Reminder:** As of September 1, 2005, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA) – formerly Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) – no longer has a role in Emergency Social Services. Queries from ESS teams or suppliers that were previously addressed by the local MHR office are now handled through the ESS toll-free line.

When the new Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinators (RESSRC) are in place and their orientation complete, it is anticipated that the majority of ESS support will be provided regionally. ESS teams will be advised regarding the role and responsibilities of the RESSRC in future updates.

**b) Emergency Preparedness (EP) Conference Draw Winners**

The following ESS members were the winners of the draw held August 3, 2005 for twelve EP Conference packages (two from each PEP Region):

Lynn Grieder	Denman Island	Helen Cunnington	Kimberley
Gaynelle Lobbes	Campbell River	Dianne McGregor	Nelson
Laurel Exner	Mission	Sandy Miller	Terrace
Erin Robinson	North Shore	Jas Bedi	Prince Rupert
Shelagh Bigsby	Armstrong	Rick Lewis	Prince George
Clara Norgaard	Merritt	Audrey Neilson	Fort St. John

**c) ESS Forms Available**

In the past, many MEIA offices maintained a supply of ESS forms to be made available to ESS teams when needed. With the recent changes to their role, MEIA staff will no longer be storing these forms in their offices. ESS teams interested in supplementing their supply of ESS forms are encouraged to call or e-mail their former Ministry contacts to request access to their stock of forms.

**d) Supplier Invoice Discrepancies**

Now that PEP Headquarters has a greater role in the payment process, ESS Directors may occasionally receive a phone call or e-mail from PEP finance staff to advise of invoice discrepancies with suppliers in their community.

The intent of these communications is to keep you informed of our interactions with suppliers in case they raise the issues with you. You may also want to keep a record of any recurring issues so you can discuss them when you update their Supplier Consent. On occasion, your assistance may be requested in helping to resolve the matter with the supplier, to avoid delaying their reimbursement any longer than necessary.

Any queries that you receive from suppliers regarding outstanding payments should continue to be forwarded to our toll-free line at 1-800-585-9559.

e) **Referral Tips**

While monitoring incoming invoices, staff have found that, at times, the difficulty in reconciling a Referral to its invoice is related to the completion of the Referral form rather than an error in invoicing.

In addition to working with suppliers to address any discrepancies in invoicing, beginning with this Update Letter, we will provide regular training reminders relating to the completion of the Referral form, and ask that you pass these reminders on to your team. By educating suppliers, and ensuring that the forms are completed accurately from the beginning of the process, we hope to avoid unnecessary delays in reimbursement.

Referral tips for this issue:

- A separate Referral form is not required for every individual in a family. Only one Referral is required per family, for each supplier providing services.
- Always remember to enter the Task Number.
- Remember to initial any changes made on the Referral form.
- ESS Rates sheets are often missing on the Supplier copy, and this can result in significant overcharges. Rates sheets are provided in pads with a self-adhesive strip on the back so that a Rates sheet can be attached to the supplier copy of each Referral issued.
- Remember to use the Comment section to enter any clarification for the Supplier (ie. 3 days worth of Medication only), or explanation for Finance staff (ie. exception approved by ESS Office) whenever necessary. More information is always better than too little.

f) **Level One ESS**

Attached to this Update you will find a document entitled “Level One ESS in British Columbia”. This information note is a joint communication from the ESS Office and the Canadian Red Cross which describes the evolution of the Personal Disaster Assistance service to its current position in the ESS continuum as the first level of ESS activation.

If you have any questions after reading the attachment, please feel free to contact our office, or your regional Red Cross office for clarification.

**g) Justice Institute Training Courses**

For many years, JI has been required to deliver only 80 courses per year, although they have frequently exceeded this number by stretching existing resources to accommodate as many courses as possible. This year JI delivered half that number within the first two months of the fiscal year, creating an almost overwhelming workload for staff. This additional training affects not only the budget, but also the valuable time of Volunteer Regional Trainers, as well as requiring a great deal of JIBC staff time.

There has not been any reduction in JI funding for ESS training, however there are several new, high priority initiatives planned for this year's JI budget including Referrals Unit Supervisor training, on-line Referrals training and Level One ESS training, as well as course development for the new ESS Management Team training. To ensure timely completion of these important projects, staff will be working at maximum capacity with little time available this year for the additional tasks associated with extra training courses.

The JI has agreed to offer some additional courses to alleviate some of the current waitlist for training. In order to accommodate these courses during this fiscal year, we are temporarily asking host communities to be responsible for refreshments and lunch (if applicable) for the training courses requested.

While the on-line training initiatives will provide greater accessibility of training to ESS volunteers and staff anywhere in the province, we remain committed to classroom learning as the optimal means of teaching ESS courses. The ESS Office and the JI will be reviewing options for accessing training prior to next fiscal, and will communicate the results of those deliberations as soon as possible to allow as much time as possible for communities to work on their training plan for next year.

It may take some time to finalize all the details relating to the transition of ESS to PEP. ESS Office staff are working hard to review and update all existing ESS materials while continuing to move forward on initiatives planned for this year. However, we are energized by the potential for new opportunities to further integrate ESS into the emergency management environment, and we are looking forward to seeing some exciting outcomes in the months and years to come, particularly as the Regional ESS/Recovery Coordinators take on their new ESS support role.

Your patience and support throughout this transition is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Cornell". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jeff Cornell  
Manager  
Emergency Social Services

# LEVEL ONE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

## VISION STATEMENT

The Provincial Emergency Program's Emergency Social Services Office envisions a province where all communities have the capacity to effectively respond to the basic short-term needs of British Columbians affected by an emergency or disaster.

## DEFINITIONS

**Emergency Social Services (ESS)** provides short-term assistance to British Columbians who are forced to leave their homes because of fire, floods, earthquakes or other emergencies. This assistance includes food, lodging, clothing, emotional support and family reunification.

**Level One ESS** (formerly called Personal Disaster Assistance) is defined as a small Emergency Social Services event involving fewer than 10 people that does not require a Reception Centre.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

As legislated by the provincial Emergency Program Act, the local authority is responsible for the preparation for, response to and recovery from disasters. This responsibility includes determining how best to respond to Level One ESS responses within their jurisdiction.

The local authority may choose to utilize a local Emergency Social Services team, engage municipal employees, contract or partner with an organization like the Red Cross, Victim Services or The Salvation Army, or implement another method of providing Level One response for their community.

The responsibility for supporting the volunteers, staff or community agencies who provide ESS services, including Level One, ultimately rests with the local authority, however the ESS Office also assists communities in building this capacity by offering support for Level One ESS response.

## ESS OFFICE SUPPORT FOR LEVEL ONE ESS

The ESS Office supports local authority delivery of Level One ESS in the following ways:

### 1/ Level One Emergency Social Services Distance Education Training

Training through a distance education format is available at no charge to anyone in the province of British Columbia with a designated role in providing Level One ESS. **As of September 30, 2005**, the training package, presently called Personal Disaster Assistance, can be ordered through the ESS Office.

This training package will be updated by the Justice Institute of BC in 2005-06 and will become part of the JI training curriculum in 2006/07. The possibility of making Level One ESS training available online will be explored.

## 2/ Level One ESS Phone Support

ESS Office staff is available 24/7 to provide phone support for Level One Emergency Social Services response province-wide. In communities where no plan is currently in place to provide Level One ESS, staff can walk a community representative through the necessary steps and reporting forms to ensure that clients receive the service. This service is accessed through the PEP Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456.

**Please note** that this is not considered ideal for the clients or community. Better service can be provided if agreements are established and maintained locally prior to the disaster.

### THE FUTURE FOR LEVEL ONE ESS

Since 1992, the ESS Office of the Provincial Emergency Program has had an established agreement with the Canadian Red Cross to support Level One response throughout the province wherever needed, with funding for direct services to evacuees provided through a PEP task number.

The Canadian Red Cross has been involved in Level One ESS response, originally a program called "Burned Out Families", and later renamed "Personal Disaster Assistance", for over 30 years and works with the provincial government and local personnel to support people affected by small scale disasters.

For many years, Canadian Red Cross (CRC) regional offices have recruited and trained volunteers to provide Level One response in communities that requested their services, or in communities with little or no capacity to deliver Level One ESS. Many of the costs associated with supporting these volunteers have traditionally been absorbed by the CRC, however this practice is having to be reviewed.

In the coming months, Red Cross regional staff will be approaching local authorities that rely on CRC volunteers to provide Level One services in order to discuss options and strategies for Level One ESS in their community. Local Authority representatives may also contact their regional CRC office directly - contact information can be found at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) under "In Your Community".