

September 24, 2007

To: ESS Directors, Co-Directors and Alternates  
Mobile Support Team Members  
Volunteer ESS Regional Instructors

cc: Local Authority Emergency Program Coordinators  
ESS Support Organizations  
PEP Regional Offices  
Provincial/Territorial ESS Directors

**Re: Emergency Social Services Update**

*Written/compiled by Bob Kennedy*

*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 and Emergency Program Coordinators 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.*

This issue of the ESS Update includes the following topics:

- a) **ESS Staffing**
- b) **ESS Level 1 Online Training**
- c) **ESS Level 1 Supervisors Guidelines**
- d) **ESSD Course Prerequisites**
- e) **Public Safety Lifeline Leadership Training**
- f) **Spring Freshet – Lessons Learned**
- g) **ESSA Online Forum**
- h) **Foster Children**
- i) **Introduction to ESS Manuals**
- j) **EMBC/PEP Logo**
- k) **JIBC ESS Instructors**

a) **ESS Staffing**

- Following the departure of **Maggie Grant** who has settled into her position at the Justice Institute of BC, the ESS Coordinator of Volunteers position has been revisited and has been retitled “PEP ESS Training Specialist”. The position has now been filled and PEP is pleased to announce that **Bob Kennedy** has accepted the position. Bob is a long time member of the ESS family and many may remember him from his past roles as ESSD for District of Saanich, Vancouver Island Mobile Support Team member, Justice Institute Regional Trainer and ESSA Representative for Vancouver Island (South). Bob’s duties will encompass those previously carried out by Maggie, including Mobile Support Team and ESS training coordination. Bob can be reached at (250) 952-5819 or [bob.kennedy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bob.kennedy@gov.bc.ca)

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**b) ESS Level 1 Online Training**

- A new tool is now available for training volunteers in the ESS Level 1 function. The Justice Institute has just released an on-line training module specifically for training new volunteers or refreshing the skills of existing Level 1 responders. To access the online training, visit [http://jibc.bc.ca/emergency/Programs\\_Courses/Online\\_Learning.htm](http://jibc.bc.ca/emergency/Programs_Courses/Online_Learning.htm) Participants will be required to register on line to access the training and there is no charge to do so. This valuable new tool may also be suitable as a group activity for team meetings or shared learning activities.

**c) ESS Level 1 Supervisors Guidelines**

- In conjunction with the release of the ESS Level 1 Online Training, new Guidelines for Level 1 Supervisors are now available. It is important to remember that these guidelines are suggested practices only and are provided to Local Authorities to assist them in developing an ESS Level 1 capacity in their own community. These suggested guidelines will be posted to the ESS website soon and are attached to this Update Letter. PEP policy bulletins are available on the PEP website at [http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/policy/policy\\_06.html](http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/policy/policy_06.html)

**d) ESSD Course Prerequisites**

- It has long been a recommended prerequisite that candidates for the Justice Institute Emergency Social Services Directors' course have completed the Introduction to ESS and Reception Centre Course prior to acceptance. Effective with the ESSD course in September, 2007, these prerequisites will be adhered to strictly as well as the requirement to be approved by the appropriate authority for the jurisdiction represented by the candidate. Examples of appropriate authorities are Emergency Program Coordinator, Band Council or designate, Emergency Program Manager, etc. In the case of the Provincial Mobile Support Team, the candidate must be approved by the PEP Regional ESS and Recovery Coordinator.

**e) Public Safety Lifeline Leadership Training**

- Following the success of the ESS Leadership course, it has been recognized that other Public Safety Lifeline (PSL) volunteers could benefit from similar training. As a result, the course has been re-developed to include participants from Search and Rescue, Emergency Communications, PEP Air and Road Rescue as well as ESS. The course was piloted in Kimberley and Victoria last fall and was very well received. A third course was recently offered in Smithers and upcoming course offerings are scheduled for Kamloops, Prince George, J.I. – New Westminster campus, Parksville and Nelson. Check the JIBC web site for details at: [http://jibc.bc.ca/emergency/Programs\\_Courses/PEP\\_Academy/ESS/ESS\\_Course\\_Information.htm](http://jibc.bc.ca/emergency/Programs_Courses/PEP_Academy/ESS/ESS_Course_Information.htm)

**f) Spring Freshet – Lessons Learned**

- The process of de-briefing following the activity of planning for and responding to the recent spring freshet is still underway. Already there have been many issues recognized that will serve to enhance planning for future events and thereby the effectiveness of response and recovery. Never before have so many stakeholders shared their experiences, best practices, and lessons learned and PEP is pleased to embark on further planning in areas such as vulnerable populations, mass feeding, worker care, enhanced psycho-social support, integrated planning, including First Nations and response guidelines and coordination. As planning in these and other areas progress, watch for further updates in these pages.

**g) ESSA Online Forum**

- The Emergency Social Services Association (ESSA) has launched what has the potential for being a powerful tool in keeping the ESS community in touch with one another as well as acting as a forum for discussion on tips, best practices, lessons learned or just general information. PEP encourages wide spread use of the ESSA Online Forum available at: <http://essa.ca/phpBB2/> . Registration is free and is required to access the forum. You are invited to sign on, share some information about yourself and your team, learn what others are doing and share your thoughts on a wide variety of topics.

**h) Foster Children**

- In answer to questions regarding registration of foster children, Ministry of Children and Family Development provides the following. Foster children are considered to be a part of the immediate family so would be registered on the same file as the foster parent(s). It is the responsibility of the foster parents to inform MCFD of their evacuation status, so ESS workers do not need to take action on that front (unless of course the child is unattended). As for whether or not the file should be restricted, the official answer is yes. However, the fact that it's a foster child may not be evident unless the adults report it as such. One would think that the question asked at the outset regarding the restricted file would prompt them to request the restriction, but there's no guarantee of that.

**i) Introduction to ESS Manuals**

- In an effort to control the cost and effectiveness of the Introduction to ESS manuals, it should be mentioned that these manuals should not be used as a recruitment tool, indiscriminately distributed to anyone who wishes to have one. The recommended practice is to distribute them only to individuals who have expressed an active interest in remaining with ESS. As an example, in a recent five month period almost 900 manuals were distributed by the Justice Institute and we know that the number of new ESS volunteers comes nowhere near to approaching that number. There will be exceptions whereby it is good practice to distribute manuals to key individuals, such as elected officials or others who “need to know”. The Introduction to ESS Online should be encouraged wherever possible although it is recognized that not all have access to high speed internet.

**j) EMBC/PEP Logo**

- With the Provincial Emergency Program now a part of Emergency Management BC (EMBC) along with the Office of the Fire Commissioner, the BC Coroners Service and Business Continuity Planning, corporate labelling has become standardized for all levels of government. As a result PEP will now be using the logo that appears at the top of this update letter. The PEP logo is being phased out, so please do not use on any future newsletters, brochures or other publications that your organization produces.

**k) JIBC Instructors**

- In the interest of proactive standardization a change in the title from ESS Volunteer Regional Trainers - in keeping with terminology used by the Justice Institute of BC - will now be known as ***Regional Instructors***. Although only a minor change, it is indicative of the direction being taken by the Emergency Management community in BC as methods of service delivery and cooperative approaches to planning, response and recovery continue to improve.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this update, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Sincerely,

*ORIGINAL SIGNED BY*

Brenda Fox  
Manager of Training and Volunteer Programs  
250-952-4811

Attachments:   ESS Level One Supervisor Guidelines  
                  Sample Interview Questions for ESS Volunteers  
                  Sample Volunteer Service Agreement  
                  Standards of Conduct for ESS Workers  
                  Level One ESS Kit – Suggested Contents  
                  Sample Community Resources List  
                  Sample Important Telephone Numbers  
                  Tips for Level One ESS

## Emergency Social Services Level One Supervisor Guidelines

*Note: These guidelines are recommendations only. The structure and management of the local ESS Level 1 function are the responsibility of the Local Authority.*

### **Position Description:**

The ESS Director or Emergency Program Coordinator has overall responsibility for the recruitment and management of ESS Level 1 volunteers, whether as a part of the community ESS Team or another organization (e.g. Victim Services) tasked with the provision of ESS Level 1 services. This person, or designate, acts as the point of contact between the Level 1 Team Supervisor and all other levels, organizations, and agencies.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the ESS Level 1 Supervisor are determined by the Local Authority to meet local needs.

### **Reports To:**

As determined by the Local Authority, e.g. Emergency Social Services Director, Emergency Program Coordinator, or other designate.

### **Prerequisites:**

- Required:
  - ❑ ESS Level 1 training
  - ❑ Introduction to ESS
  - ❑ Introduction to Emergency Management in BC
  - ❑ Registration and Referrals for Food, Clothing and Lodging
  
- Recommended:
  - ❑ Personal Services Level 1 (Meet & Greet)
  - ❑ Public Safety Lifeline Leadership
  - ❑ Volunteer Management
  - ❑ Reception Centre Course
  - ❑ Resource Acquisition for Food, Clothing and Lodging
  
- Skills and Attributes:
  - ❑ Demonstrated leadership ability
  - ❑ Knowledge of BCERMS
  - ❑ Administrative capabilities
  - ❑ Knowledge of local resources
  - ❑ Interviewing skills

## **Responsibilities:**

- ❑ Safety and health of ESS Level 1 volunteers
- ❑ Recruitment, training and management of ESS Level 1 volunteers
- ❑ Review ESS L1 on line quiz with new recruits
- ❑ Inventory and distribution of forms, response kits, supplies
- ❑ Ensure awareness of and adherence to current policies and procedures
- ❑ Update of community resource list (i.e. accommodations, food, support organizations)
- ❑ Scheduling of volunteers
- ❑ Ensure Regional PEP Office is aware of Supervisor's and/or Team Leaders' names and contact information
- ❑ Ensure a PEP task number has been secured prior to any volunteers responding
- ❑ Facilitate hand over of response upon escalation
- ❑ Receive copies of completed Referral Forms and Action Checklists
- ❑ Ensure pink copies of Referral forms are forwarded to PEP Headquarters in Victoria
- ❑ Submit a copy of the Action Checklist to the Local Authority
- ❑ Submit a Task Report to the PEP Regional Office/RESSRC
- ❑ Ensure necessary documentation for volunteer reimbursement is submitted to PEP, if applicable
- ❑ Inform the PEP Regional ESS Recovery Coordinator of any unusual circumstances, difficulties, or policy issues
- ❑ Post incident interview of responders
- ❑ Initiate formal de-briefing as required
- ❑ Facilitate transition to Recovery phase
- ❑ Act as ESS Level 1 Team representative, as required, with:
  - Community ESS Team
  - Emergency Program Coordinator
  - Support Organizations
  - Community Resources

## **Function Aids:**

- ❑ Level 1 ESS Training Package
- ❑ Sample Interview Questions for ESS Volunteers
- ❑ Sample Volunteer Service Agreement
- ❑ Standards of Conduct for ESS Workers
- ❑ Level 1 ESS Kit – Suggested Contents
- ❑ Community resources
- ❑ Important telephone contacts
- ❑ PEP Policy Bulletins
- ❑ Tips for Level 1 ESS

## Sample Interview Questions for Potential Emergency Social Services Volunteers

1. What experience have you had working in disaster response?

*Open ended question. Should prompt interviewee to put following questions into a disaster response perspective.*

2. What qualities do you bring to a team environment?

*Early indications of skill sets and areas of interest.*

3. What do you know about ESS Level 1 response?

*Should reveal degree of knowledge of emergency response in BC in general. If an existing ESS volunteer, knowledge of Level 1 should be expected. If new to ESS the answer should reveal whether or not the applicant is aware of ESS – which would be preferable.*

4. What makes you believe you would be suitable for the Level 1 Team?

*Reveals level of interest in emergency response in general. May reveal more specific interest in “one-on-one” situations which is helpful in the role.*

5. How do you react to criticism of your work?

*Offers insight into the individual’s ability to follow instructions and accept constructive criticism.*

6. How would you go about dealing with an evacuee who is being difficult?

*Reveals coping skills. Also a way to determine if there’s more of a tendency to go it alone or ask for help.*

7. Have you ever been, or know someone who has been an evacuee?

*May provide some knowledge of the emotional well-being of evacuees, hence empathy.*

8. What would you do to ensure you have received adequate training prior to assignment?

*Reveals whether the individual is a follower or is capable of self motivation by seeking the rights of a volunteer for appropriate levels of training for likely response tasks.*

9. How would you respond to being given a task for which you were not properly trained?

*Same as question 8.*

10. Would you have difficulty or any concerns about providing assistance to a member of a visible minority, another culture, or someone with a developmental or emotional disability? If yes, please explain.

*Reveals level of tolerance for a diverse population or people in a lower income bracket who comprise a high percentage of evacuees being assisted.*

11. Are you likely to have the support of your family and/or employer for this type of volunteer role?

*General question to make the applicant aware that responders need to think about other aspects of their lives which need to take precedence.*



# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES

## WORKERS

### *Responsibilities of ESS Workers:*

- **Commitment** – Workers shall commit to serve their community and the ESS mission to the best of their abilities, assuring the integrity of the program.
- **Confidentiality** – Workers shall respect the confidentiality of information received during an emergency response to anyone other than authorized emergency workers. If necessary, clarification should be sought from appropriate authority. Confidential information must not be used for personal gain.
- **Quality of Service** – Workers shall provide service to individuals affected by disasters in a manner that is courteous, caring, and professional, while respecting the dignity of people receiving services.
- **Behaviour** – Workers shall:
  - conduct themselves in a manner that meets acceptable social standards and contribute to an environment of mutual respect and dignity, free from discrimination or harassment;
  - follow operational guidelines and established reporting structures;
  - exercise discretion with comments made in public about an incident, people or other organizations involved.
- **Self Care** - Workers shall:
  - take care of their own physical and emotional health and support team members to do the same;
  - report unsafe conditions to their supervisor, ensuring the safety of themselves and others.
- **Media Statement** – Workers shall direct all enquiries from the media to the designated Information Officer.

### *Rights of ESS Workers:*

- **Orientation and Training** – Workers shall have access to the appropriate training to ensure safe, efficient and effective performance of duties.
- **Forum for Input** – Workers shall be made aware of and have access to the proper chain of command for handling suggestions and complaints.
- **Support** – Workers shall receive support from the local, regional and provincial levels of the ESS Program.
- **Safe Conditions** – Workers shall have a safe working environment, understanding that there is some inherent risk in responding to disasters.
- **Supplies and Equipment** – Workers shall be provided with the proper supplies and equipment to do their job.

# Emergency Social Services Level One Kit

## Suggested Contents

### Categories:

- ✓ ESS Identification
- ✓ Stationery Items
- ✓ Equipment/Miscellaneous
- ✓ Forms

<p><b><i>ESS Identification</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Vests</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Name Tags</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Lanyard</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> PEP Identification</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Stationery Items</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pens</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pads of Lined Paper</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Clip Boards</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Brown Envelopes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Supplier Lists</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Important Phone Numbers</li></ul>
<p><b><i>Equipment/Miscellaneous</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights with cones for use at night</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Whistle</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Palm Gloves</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Disposable Gloves</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Maps</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Phone Book</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Forms</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> ESS Referral</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Supplier Consent</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Current Rates Sheets</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Action Check List</li></ul>









**IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS  
(Sample Only)**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>CELL</b>	<b>PAGER</b>
Emergency Coordination Centre (PEP)	1-800-663-3456		
ESS Office	1-800-585-9559 (Non-Emergency)		
Fire Dispatch			
Emergency Program Coordinator			
ESS Director			
ESS Alternate/Deputy			
Level 1 ESS Supervisor			
Level 1 Team Leader			
PEP Regional Office			
MEIA Office			
Red Cross			
Salvation Army Thrift Shop			
Victim Services			

## Tips for Emergency Social Services Level One

- If Level 1 Emergency Social Services training is not accessible on-line, requests for the training material should be made by the organization responsible for L1 ESS in the community (i.e. ESS Director, Emergency Program Coordinator, Non Government Organization), 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.** Provincial Emergency Program does not keep a database of L1 responders, so it is important that your community Emergency Management plan, ESS Annex, 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. The EPC will remain the default point of contact should no other resources be available.
- 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 Office, ESS /Recovery Coordinator so that can be incorporated into Regional records. This information would be used to assist you in ensuring your L1 ESS teams receive up-to-date information, such as the ESS Program Updates and correspondence.
- 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 PEP Regional Offices or 1-800-585-9559.
- **Registration and Referrals for Food, Clothing and Lodging training provided by the Justice Institute of BC is strongly recommended for all L1 ESS responders.**
- The Action Checklist is recommended for use and retained by the community L1 ESS team for their records. Your Regional PEP office would also appreciate a courtesy copy, so they can be made aware of any pertinent details, issues or best practices that may arise from the response which could be passed on for possible inclusion in training or procedure updates.
- Attach the green copy of the Referral Form to the Action Checklist for the Local Authority’s records. By doing so, the Supervisor has a copy available if there are any questions or disputes, and the supplier information does not have to be repeated on the Checklist.

- **The start time for the 72 hours coverage for evacuees begins at the time of the incident, *not* when first reported to the ESS Level 1 Supervisor or Team.**
- **Goods and services received by evacuees through PEP are GST exempt.** This should be reinforced with the supplier at the time of accessing goods and services. Situations that require clarification with vendors should be referred to your Local Government EPC, PEP Regional Office or call the Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456.
- Suppliers must submit original receipts in order to receive payment for invoices. This is another point that should be emphasized at the time of access of goods and services.
- Accommodation providers wishing to receive a higher rate than allowed for on the current rates sheet are required to apply for approved government rates at: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/travel/Hotels/AccommodationListing/INDEX.html>
- Extension for services provided may be authorized in certain circumstances. To request an extension contact your Emergency Program Coordinator or designate. If you are unable to contact your EPC, contact the PEP Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) at 1-800-663-3456. The request will go to the duty Regional Emergency Social Services /Recovery Coordinator (RESSRC) for consideration. This service is available 24/7.
- Volunteers are reminded that personal safety is of utmost importance. It should be reinforced that they are to request assistance as required (e.g. Police) prior to entering into uncomfortable circumstances. Volunteers are not expected to have to deal with difficult evacuees during the initial referrals, during follow up, or at the request of the supplier. Refer all such issues to the local EPC or contact PEP ECC at 1-800-663-3456.
- The use of personal vehicles to transport evacuees is discouraged. Such use may be contrary to the volunteers' personal vehicle insurance.
- Emergency Program Coordinators and ESS volunteers should be familiar with guidelines for Recovery Planning to assist those impacted in the transition to recovery services available on the PEP web site at: <http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/Community/recoverytk.html>
- EPCs may be requested to facilitate an initial meeting of evacuees to outline the recovery process and introduce representatives from appropriate parties (e.g. Red Cross, Insurance Agency, Salvation Army). Encourage volunteers and staff to begin thinking about what will be required for recovery from the outset of any response and assist the evacuees in looking forward to the recovery process.