PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

Peace River Regional District Emergency Plan

Emergency Communications Appendix

AUGUST 31, 2020

Amendment Record

It is understood that any Emergency Plan is a living document, as such, there will be the need for revision and updating as required. This document is intended to be the basis from which to build an effective and coordinated response to an event affecting the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). The PRRD is responsible for the update, distribution, and maintenance of the plan. Revisions will be distributed and posted as they are issued, and each copy of the plan or section within the plan must show the date of its latest revision.

It is intended that the plan is updated periodically as changes occur in the hazards, risks and vulnerabilities effecting the PRRD. These changes and updates will be reviewed and incorporated during regular reviews and operational deployment reviews.

Record of Revisions

Version	Date	Remarks	By
1.0	August 31, 2020	Initial Plan Development	Communications Coordinator
1.1	November 26, 2020	Plan review and modifications	Communications Manager
1.2	November 30, 2020	Addition of Appendix and Drafts, placed in EOC Drive	Protective Services
1.2R	December 1, 2020	Redacted private information for public release	Protective Services

Distribution List

Copy	Version	Agency	Type/Format
1	1.0	Peace River Regional District - Staff	Electronic
1	1.1	Peace River Regional District - Staff	Electronic
1	1.2	Peace River Regional District - Staff	Electronic
8	1.2R	PRRD Staff, EEC and Public (redacted version)	Included in Agenda

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About Emergency Communications in the PRRD

Communication is a key factor in the local authority's response to an emergency or disaster. When an emergency event happens, getting information to affected individuals and the public is an essential part of effective emergency management. Timely, accurate, clear, concise, and credible messages have a tremendous impact on how the public reacts during an emergency, and their perception of the response or recovery efforts.

Emergency information does not and cannot occur in isolation of other response and recovery activities.

Emergency Communications Principles

Communications principles are designed to strategically guide how the PRRD will communicate with the Board, staff, residents, media, and other stakeholders during a disaster.

Guiding Principles:

- The top priorities in a disaster are the safety and well-being of first responders, employees, and the community. This principle guides all decisions and actions regarding communications.

- The Peace River Regional District is committed to timely and consistent communications with the Board, staff, the community, and the media.

Roles and Responsibilities

Some emergency events may require an Information Officer team to best manage the communications and information requirements. Additional responsibilities and duties of Information Section team members may be determined by the Senior Information Officer or EOC Director as the response continues to evolve.

The Senior Information Officer or EOC Director may request additional duties not listed here as response evolves. All serving under the Information Section must follow the direction of the EOC Management Team.

Please Note: No other PRRD staff is permitted to provide information to the public, media, or other stakeholders unless authorized by the Information Officer and/or EOC Director.

Senior Information Officer (or Information Section Chief)

The PRRD Communications Manager is typically the Senior Information Officer in the EOC, although this position may be filled with other Regional District staff or contracted personnel when necessary.

The Information Officer administers all public information, media relations, and internal and external communications pertaining to the event. This includes the supervision of any support personnel, emergency call centre, and media centre staff.

Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Direction	• Identify and strategize the critical communications actions during the first hours of a major emergency; • Obtain guidance and approval from the EOC Director regarding all information to be released to the Board, staff, community, and the media;
Media Relations	• Advise members of the media of protocols at the onset of an emergency; • Work in partnership with the media to disseminate public information; • Liaise with the media to coordinate interviews, media conferences, and other media relations activities;

	• Prepare speaking notes and background information for spokespeople; o Provide media training to prepare spokespeople for media appearances; • Track and respond to media inquiries; • Monitor and correct media broadcasts to ensure accuracy;
Risk Management	• Liaise with the Risk Management Officer to identify potential liability or safety concerns for the public; • Advise the EOC Director of all unusual requests for information and all major, critical, or unfavourable media comments;
Internal Communications	• Provide PRRD staff with relevant and accurate event information; • Provide information and direction for EOC Information section staff; • Provide a communications channel between elected officials and the Emergency Operations Centre's management team;

External Communications	• Continually develop key messages for all audiences;
	
	• Liaise with and provide information for partner organizations and first responders, including Search & Rescue, ESS, RCMP, and Fire Departments;
	
	• Issue timely and consistent communications for life safety, health, assistance, and recovery for all audiences;
	
	    o liaise with and support internal and external Information Officers;
	
	    o ensure that the Emergency Operations Centre can receive and address public enquiries;
	
	• Coordinate public communications with all involved local authorities, and responding agencies.

Assistant Information Officers

Assistant Information Officer(s) report directly to the Information Officer and are responsible to provide support to the Senior Information Officer's administrative needs, such as:

Duties and Responsibilities

Section Organization	• Set-up and dismantle Media Centre as required;
	
	• Set up and dismantle Call Centre as required;
	
	• Ensure proper file organization of section work and data
	
	    ○ Ensure file copies of all media and public information releases are provided to the EOC Planning Section for permanent records;
	
	• Conduct shift change briefings in detail;
	
	    ○ ensure in-progress activities are identified and follow-up requirements are conveyed;

Communications	• Ensure proofreading, quick sign-off and quick delivery of communications;
	
	• Work with EOC Director to arrange appropriate staffing to efficiently handle incoming media and public calls;
	
	• Oversee communications channels for all audiences;
	
	• Assign and coordinate distribution of fact sheets to media and other external and internal audiences;
	
	• Monitor media and social media channels:
	
	    ○ Facebook
	    ○ Twitter
	    ○ Online, print and broadcast media
	    ○ Blogs

Call Centre Staff

The Call Centre is the first point of contact between residents and the EOC. Call Centre staff should be calm and courteous when directing calls and taking messages. Call Centre Staff may answer common questions included on the FAQ response sheet, but may need to take messages or forward more complex calls. Call Centre staff report to the Senior Information Officer and are responsible for the following during an emergency:

Duties and Responsibilities

Communications

- Answer incoming calls:
  - gather as much information from the caller as possible for tracking purposes;
  - track all public enquiries and types of questions;
  - provide statistics to the Information Officer;
  - provide the Planning Section with daily call logs;
- Provide public information:
  - adhere to scripts, information sheets, and Frequently Asked Question sheets;
  - redirect callers to the appropriate agency for response (ex. Fire-related questions may be redirected to the Wildfire Management Service);
  - never provide personal opinions;
- Provide administrative support to the Information Section:
  - making phone calls as instructed;
  - update PRRD communications channels;
  - filing, photocopying, and other administrative tasks;
  - other related duties as assigned;
- Forward the following calls directly to the Information Officer:
  - Media inquiries;
  - Internal/ stakeholder inquiries;
  - Political or controversial questions not included on the FAQ Response Sheet.

Spokesperson

The Board Chair is the spokesperson for the Peace River Regional District. When the Board Chair is not available he/she may delegate to another Board member the responsibility to be the spokesperson for the Regional District. In the absence of an elected official acting as the spokesperson and with permission from the Board Chair, the Chief Administrative Officer and appointed management staff are authorized to speak with the media regarding the current emergency, only providing messages that pertain to the Peace River Regional District's responsibility and facts related to emergency response and recovery efforts.

Duties and Responsibilities

Communications

- Review speaking notes and key messaging prior to delivering information to strengthen confidence and ownership when speaking;

- Understanding the organization's policies and EOC roles and responsibilities;

- Only speak to information that can be released for the current emergency; and

- Staying within the scope of the Peace River Regional District's responsibilities, unless authorized to speak on behalf of other responding agencies. Refrain from criticizing other responding organizations and people.

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Policies and Procedures

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1. **Internal Information Verification and Approval Procedures**

   During the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre, all public releases of information must be reviewed and approved by the EOC Director. Depending on the nature of the information, the EOC Director may also require that this information be reviewed and approved by the Policy Group.

   The EOC Director will expect that all response-related information is first verified through the Operations Section Chief and/or the relevant Incident Commander(s). No information should be released to the public without first being reviewed, verified, and/or approved by the management representatives (Section Chiefs or Officers) from applicable functions within the Emergency Operations Centre.

2. **Internal Communication**

   Keeping employees, volunteers and other internal stakeholders informed about the emergency event is an important part of the overall communications plan. There are many formal and informal channels where information is exchanged between response workers, regular employees, and the public or other external partners.

   Many of the methods used to inform the public can also be used within an organization to advise employees or volunteers. The following methods may also be considered:

   A) **Scripts/FAQs/Fact Sheets**

      i. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and/or fact sheets should be maintained throughout the event and distributed to key internal stakeholders such as operators, call takers, and frontline personnel. An appropriate version of these documents should also be made available to all employees and volunteers even if they are not directly involved in the response or recovery efforts.

      ii. These documents can also aid in orienting new response workers.

   B) **WINK Intranet**

      i. The Peace River Regional District WINK intranet will be utilized to provide response and recovery information to employees. The posted information must be easily accessible and kept current for it to be utilized effectively.

      ii. Following events that disrupt regular business, WINK can provide employees with current event information, precautions, employee expectations, response directions, and updates on the business functions of the organization.

3. The Public, Media, and External Communications

The public, media, and external communications role of the Peace River Regional District will include the release of information about regional services (e.g., drinking water, air quality…) and public safety issues in unincorporated (electoral) areas.

A) Responding Level of Government

During and after an event, the public may not distinguish the types of questions that are appropriate for each level of government but will rather direct questions to all levels of government.

In the table below is a series of questions that the public may ask and in the box beside the questions the level of government that should respond to the question is identified.

Public Inquiry	Level of Government to Respond
∅ What is happening? ∅ Who is responsible? ∅ What is the impact on me? ∅ What do I need to do id I am evacuated? ∅ How can I assist? ∅ Flooding: ▪ where is it; ▪ what is causing it; ▪ how is it being addressed or responded to? ∅ I have livestock potentially being affected by the emergency?	Peace River Regional District Emergency Operations Centre responsible for the emergency
∅ What compensation is provided? ∅ What controls/regulations: ▪ are in place; ▪ required; ▪ were broken? ∅ Why did this happen? ∅ Why was this allowed to happen? ∅ Why did you not prevent it? ∅ Who is responsible?	Province of BC or Government of Canadian
∅ Fire: ▪ Have you called 9-1-1; ▪ where is it; ▪ how did it start; ▪ how is it being addressed or responded to?	BC Wildfire Management Service ü call 1 800 663-5555; ü *5555 from a cell phone; or ü www.bcwildfire.ca/
∅ Highway or road closures: ▪ where is it; ▪ what caused it; ▪ how is it being addressed or responded to?	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure www.drivebc.ca
∅ Hazardous Material Spills ▪ have you called 9-1-1; ▪ where is it; ▪ what caused it; ▪ how is it being addressed or responded to?	Responsible Producer

Likewise, the type of information provided by the different levels of government will differ. The following table indicates the types of messages that could be expected from each level of government.

Level of Government	Message Type
Peace River Regional District	∅ Public Safety/Risk Management (What to do…) ∅ ESS Information (Reception Centres) ∅ Evacuation Routes/Road Closures ∅ States of Local Emergency ∅ Public Reassurance Future Plans/Timelines ∅ Mitigation Actions ∅ Contact/Further Information Direction
Province of BC	∅ Impact/Involvement of Ministries/Agencies ∅ Support Role of Province ∅ Messages from Subject Matter Experts ∅ Messaging on Financial Support (DFA) ∅ Emergency Management Structure
Government of Canadian	∅ Support role to Province ∅ Impact/Involvement of Federal Government ∅ Technical Information/Expertise

Drafting Messages

During an event, getting out messaging quickly and effectively communicating with all involved is a very important part if emergency response. When you are drafting your messaging, it is important to keep several considerations in mind to ensure your message is effective.

A) Audiences

When drafting your messaging, consider who the intended reader of the messaging is. A message intended for the media will have different goals, information, and language than a message for internal stakeholders. Understanding your audience helps you provide the information they need in a way that works for them.

i. Directly Affected Audiences

These are audiences which are directly impacted by the emergency.

Examples include residents who live in the area, and workers whose employment is located in the area.

ii. Indirectly (Peripheral) Audiences

These audiences include those who are **NOT** directly impacted by the emergency but may have interests or concerns related to the event.

Examples of indirectly affected audiences include friends and family of directly affected audiences, those who work or live near affected areas, and more.

B) Key Messaging

Key Messages are the main pieces of information you want to convey when you are drafting your messaging. They will include important details such as actions that affected residents should be taking, evacuation routes, and scheduling information updates.

As each audience has different information needs, key messages should be tailored to best communicate with different audiences. All public messaging should be written in plain language that is understood by the general public.

Important key messages may include:
- Confirmation – What happened and why?
- Safety Instructions
- What actions is the organization taking
- New information updates and actions
- Empathy statements
- Accountability
- Corrective actions / next steps

Ask yourself – What information would I want if I was in this situation?

C) CAC Principle

When drafting messaging, consideration should be given to ensure statements contain **Concern, Action,** and **Commitment** messaging.

1. ***Concern*** – Ensure the messaging conveys empathy and concern for the health and wellbeing of those affected.

2. ***Action*** – Outline the steps and processes that are being taken to help or advise those affected.

3. ***Commitment*** – Emphasize the goals of the organization/response efforts to support those affected. If possible, commit to specific timelines or actions.

Getting the Message Out

The Peace River Regional District has several communications channels to distribute our messaging both internally and externally. These channels include:

External Communications

Website - prrd.bc.ca

The PRRD website is to be considered the main source of information. All external information should be posted to the PRRD website and the website should be kept as up to date as possible.

North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts

The PRRD uses the North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts system to send information to external and internal audiences who have subscribed. There is a contact list for EOC staff as well as a specific distribution list for members of the media.

Social Media

The Peace River Regional District currently has four social media accounts. Which will be used to reach external audiences.

Internal Communications

Website - WINK

The PRRD Intranet (WINK) is the main source of staff news. Posts concerning emergency events should be posted to 'Staff News'.

All-Staff Emails

All-staff emails may be sent through the Outlook address book for emergency messaging at the discretion of the CAO or EOC Director.

Communication Methods and Techniques

Public Information

Communication with the public is a critical element in response and recovery. Establishing and maintaining effective communications channels is critical to a successful response. During a crisis period, everyone wants information immediately.

The Peace River Regional District will post all new public information through official PRRD channels and the public will be advised to visit these channels to view information.

Important communications considerations for the Peace Region include response and communications in rural or remote communities that include a lack of connectivity that may lead to difficulty getting messages to affected individuals. Use any combination of the below tactics to ensure messages reach as many affected residents as possible.

A) Call Centre

Reception/switchboard will expand call handling capabilities

EOC Call Centre Phone Number: 250-784-4838   (local 138 if transferring)

During a significant event that overwhelms the Peace River Regional District Switchboard capacity, an external Call Centre will be considered. This could be done through a professional Call Centre upon acquiring approval from Emergency Management BC.

B) PRRD Website

The Peace River Regional District website will be used to provide information to the public. The information must always remain current and relevant. A prominent link will be created on the main website page and updates must be posted on a regular schedule with event/disaster-specific information.

Emergency template web pages or "dark pages" will be pre-designed, scripted, and authorized web pages will reside on a server behind the live site. During an emergency, these pages can be quickly loaded onto the live site to provide valuable information to the public and media without delay.

For assistance in initiating emergency website templates, contact:
New Harvest Media – Josh Anderson: 250-782-5501

C) North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts

The North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts system is a regional mass communications system that notifies registered users about Emergencies and Public Alerts within their specified areas by text, email, phone, or through the Everbridge App. During an emergency event, all impacted residents should be encouraged to sign up for the system to receive timely communications, as well as to inform emergency planning through additional registration details included at sign up.

PRRD staff as well as Member Municipalities are set up as Group Managers (or Organization Admins) to send out messages for their communities. Managers are able to send and schedule notifications.

Through the Manager Portal of the Everbridge system, we can create groups of specific users. This function is used for both internal groups, such as EOC staff or PRRD employees, as well as external groups such as media.

Media Group

The Media Group should be included on all notifications surrounding emergency-related news. This includes all new emergency events, event updates, along with any additional information you would like to media to help share. The Media Group does not need to be included on information that is specifically directed towards evacuee's only or confidential information.

Please note that being added to the North East BC Emergency Public Alerts (NEBCEPA) Media Group is optional and not all members of the local media may be part of the group.

D) Social Media

In the age of technology and social media, information (and misinformation) spreads quickly and can be difficult to control, often resulting in emergency response communications being reactive rather than proactive. Establishing your social media pages as the official sources of information and updating regularly is now an important part of emergency response.

Social Media Best Practices

- ∅ Always refer to an official source
- ∅ Monitor posts
- ∅ Remember to include who, what, when, where, how and why in your posts
- ∅ Verify all information you post
- ∅ Watch the speed of your "timeline" - frequent posts vs too many
- ∅ Never speak ill of other organizations
- ∅ It's a crisis, not a contest – borrow, post, re-post, share
- ∅ Check every group or person offering help before posting it
- ∅ Avoid hearsay and clear up rumours, avoid sensationalism
- ∅ Refer to those affected as survivors, not victims

∅ Remember – you are a resource for those affected first, a resource for their families second, and a resource for the surrounding areas.

Monitoring

Constant social media monitoring is required during an emergency. Set up a series of Google alerts or use a monitoring app (Mention, Radian 6, and Hootsuite).

Monitoring of emergency management web sites, weather information sites, and other real-time sites is important to communication risk management and informing the EOC.

Facebook

The Peace River Regional District Facebook page will be utilised during an emergency. Staff the page 24/7 until rescues are complete, basic needs are met, utilities and communications are restored.

Code of Conduct

The Peace River Regional District Facebook page is subject to the below Code of Conduct that all page users must abide by:

We value the opportunity for dialogue that this Facebook page provides, but reserve the right to remove any comments that do not respect the following criteria. Posts must not be discriminatory, hateful, defamatory or obscene. Posts must not contain personal attacks or be used for personal gain or self promotion. Comments should reflect the topic or subject and not be for the purposes of solicitation or advertisement of any non-government organization, product, or service. Questions related to PRRD business processes should be directed to the appropriate area of the organization. By posting a comment, users agree with these terms.

Violations and Warnings

1st Warning – Staff will delete the comment in the thread, followed by a reply to the post that states why the post was deleted and a reminder for all users to review the Code of Conduct.

2nd Warning – Staff will delete the comment in the thread, followed by a reply to the post that states why the post was deleted. The user will be contacted via Facebook Messenger to notify them that a third violation will result in being banned from the PRRD Facebook Page.

3rd Warning – Staff will delete the comment in the thread, followed by a reply to the post that states why the post was deleted. The user will be contacted via Facebook Messenger to explain the ban and where they can continue getting information about the emergency/response.

E) Meetings/Public Forums/Town Hall Meetings (Face-to-Face)

A public meeting allows the community to express concerns, ask questions, share comments, and the local authority to provide event-specific information. A clear

purpose, agenda, and process for the meeting will be outlined and communicated in advance to all. Depending on the public atmosphere, large meetings can intensify conflicts rather than resolve controversies if not handled properly. If this might be an issue, smaller group meetings will be considered to better focus and manage the process.

Meetings may also be held with selected members of the public (e.g., evacuees). Regular/daily meetings of this nature may go a long way in addressing issues early before they become major problems. During large events, these types of information meetings could be held at an ESS Reception Centre or other location where those impacted by the event may already be gathering.

The use of technology can positively impact the public meeting format through the use of live streams and other online viewing platforms.

Public Meeting Locations: Local halls, hotel conference rooms, and meeting rooms such as the auditorium at the Calvin Kruk Centre.

Current Livestream/Video Streaming Provider:

Sound In Town – Russell Eggleston: 250-261-8002

F) Printed Information (Booklets, Flyers, Posters)

A printed document provides the public with a source of information that can be kept and referred to at a later date. It can contain a brief summary of current or proposed activities, explain the role of the local authority, announce new findings, provide precautionary information, and outline other information relevant to the response or recovery.

Methods of Distribution: Online through PRRD channels and through partnership with local media outlets.

G) Stakeholder Communications

There are many external people or organizations with a connection to the Peace River Regional District and the response efforts. Some of these groups will vary depending upon the specific nature of the event. However, some core stakeholders will remain constant.

Many non-response external stakeholders may be interested in how the emergency event will impact them. Remember that an emergency event may be an opportunity to strengthen relationships with these stakeholders as they see the local authority in action.

These stakeholders may be relying on messaging coming from the Senior Information Officer. Many of the methods described earlier can be used to communicate with these groups, but it is important to adjust the key messages as necessary to meet the information needs of these groups

Media

Local media are an important partner to get information out to residents quickly in the event of an emergency. At the onset of an emergency, staff must reach out to all local media outlets to advise them of the PRRD media protocols.

A regular information schedule should be communicated to local media. The North East BC Emergency & Public Alert Media Distribution group should be included on all public notifications that go out at the discretion of the EOC Director.

Local Media Outlets	
Alaska Highway News	**Main Contact:** Matt Preprost, Managing Editor **Phone:** 250-785-5631 **Email:** editor@ahnfsj.ca
DC Mirror	**Main Contact:** Rob Brown, Managing Editor **Phone:** 250-782-4888 ext. 112 **Email:** editor@dcdn.ca
CJDC TV / Bell Media	**Main Contact:** Hugh Smith, News Director Laura Krause, Reporter **Phone:** 250-782-6397 **Email:** hugh.smith@bellmedia.ca / peacenews@bellmedia.ca
Energetic City (Moose FM)	**Main Contact:** Adam Reaburn, Owner **Phone:** 250-787-7100 **Email:** adam@moosefm.ca
Peace FM	**Main Contact:** Ray Semenoff, General Manager **Phone:** 250-788-8452 **Email:** ray@peacefm.ca
CBC – Prince George	**Main Contact:** Andrew Kurjata, Reporter **Phone:** 1-250-277-4045 **Email:** andrew.kurjata@cbc.ca

A) Media Release

Media releases should be written in an article format with an account of the situation and any important information that needs to be conveyed to the public. This should include who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Media releases may be distributed by various forms including email, web, and commercial press services. Every media release will state the date, time of issue, in the header, and must incorporate PRRD branding.

B) Media Advisories

Media advisories are used to announce an upcoming event so that the media can easily assess the event and decide on coverage. The advisory should include the same who, what, when, where, why, and how as the release, but not exceed one page in length.

Websites and voice mail recordings may also be used to provide advisory and key message information to the media.

C) Media Conferences/Media Briefings

Regular or ideally daily conferences or briefings held with community leaders and/or experts related to the event will provide the media with copy and footage.

Media conferences are generally considered more formal with advanced notice and media kits being prepared. Media briefings and opportunities are usually less formal and may be held in a meeting room or out in the field. Regardless of the format, always remember to coordinate the time of the conference/briefing with media deadlines.

Depending upon the location, additional equipment may be required to set-up for a news conference. This could include staging, sound systems, lights, backdrops, and podiums. As necessary, equipment is available from the following suppliers:

Sound In Town – Russell Eggleston: 250-261-8002

Systems Sound Source – Trail LeClerc: 250-787-7591

Eaglevision – Ben Haab: 250-787-0924

D) Media Centre

As needed, a media centre may be established to provide media with a functional working space and easy access to news releases, fact sheets, media kits, spokespeople, and other media material. The centre should be set-up near the event or Emergency Operations Centre, but not close enough to interfere with response activities.

The services provided at the media centre can vary depending upon the scope of the event, but it may include workstations for media, briefing/news conference area, internet, telephone, and fax services. Refreshment services such as food and coffee may also need to be made available.

The front meeting room located near the entrance has been identified as a potential media center in the Dawson Creek Office.

Internal/Partner Stakeholders

The PRRD and other responding partner organizations and stakeholders need to work together and present a cohesive, unified front when responding to an emergency. This includes other ministries that may be the primary responder or volunteer groups (such as Search and Rescue) who are an important part of the response team.

A) Coordinating with Stakeholders

At the onset of an emergency, the Information Officer section should liaise with partner organization information teams to share the PRRD Emergency Communications Plan as well as to determine proper timelines and schedules for the coordinated release of public information.

B) Coordinating with Responders

Communicating effectively with first responders ensures that all responding agencies and groups have a coordinated plan and have the proper information to share with affected individuals. Responding organizations may include: RCMP, local and regional fire departments, search and rescue organizations, Industry, and HAZMAT response teams.

All processes and actions should be clearly communicated to responders so that they can take proper actions and precautions as well as give out accurate information.

i.   Sharing of Public Information

Rather than all organizations making individual posts, which may dilute the messaging, it is recommended that partner organizations directly share messaging from the primary responder in that aspect of the emergency.

C) Coordinating with Emergency Support Services (ESS)

If an Evacuation Order is in effect, Emergency Support Services will activate and open a Reception Centre to provide support for the evacuees. The Peace River Regional District does not oversee an ESS team and instead relies on the ESS teams of member municipalities to provide ESS services for the electoral areas.

Front-line ESS Responders have direct contact with evacuees, making it important for them to have current, factual information for questions that may be asked.

The EOC Information Officer section should provide ESS responders with current information, FAQ sheets and any other printed materials that may be helpful.

Use the below pre-approved messages at the onset of an emergency to save time and devote resources to the development of event-specific key messaging. Ensure you enter the specific details about the current event in the input areas and tailor the messaging to meet your information needs.

Check 'Message Templates' in the Everbridge Manager Portal to use these templates below:

First Response

EOC Open

The Peace River Regional District has opened our Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as of **TIME** to respond to **EVENT**. We are still gathering information at this time and we will post an update as soon as more information is available.

Watch Official Channels

We will release new information as soon as it is available. Please watch the PRRD website and social media channels for the most up to-date information and subscribe to North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts (nebcalerts.com) to be notified about new information as soon as it is available.

Evacuation Alert

Evacuation Alert Issued

An evacuation alert has been issued for **<geographic area>.**

This is the time to get prepared to leave your home on short notice. Get your grab-and-go bags ready (which should include several days of clothing, toiletries, and medications), your emergency plan, copies of important documents, and important mementos.

For more information on this alert, go to www.prrd.bc.ca.

Evacuation Order

Evacuation Order Issued

An Evacuation Order has been issued for <mark>**<geographic area>.**</mark>

An Evacuation Order has been issued for <mark>**<geographic area>**</mark> due to immediate danger to life, safety and health due to <mark>**<event>.**</mark>

You must leave the area immediately. Evacuees, please register at the Reception Centre at <mark>**<location>.**</mark>

Emergency Literacy

What is the difference between an Evacuation Order and Evacuation Alert?

Local governments are responsible for issuing Evacuation Alerts and Evacuation Orders during emergency situations.

An Evacuation Alert is put in place when there is potential threat to life and property. In an Evacuation Alert, people should be prepared to leave on short notice and have a grab and go bag ready that has important items like several days of clothing, toiletries and medications, their emergency plan, copies of important documents, and so on.

An Evacuation Order is put in place when there is immediate danger to life. When an Evacuation Order is issued, everyone in the area must leave immediately. People will not be allowed back in the Evacuation Order area until the order has been rescinded or downgraded.

When possible, an Evacuation Alert will be issued before an Evacuation Order so people that have time to prepare, however, emergency events can move quickly and there isn't always time. It's important to always have an emergency bag packed and ready to go.

What is an Emergency Operations Centre and how does it work?

When emergencies happen, local governments or other responding organizations will open an Emergency Operations Centre (commonly called an EOC) that acts as a home base during an emergency response. This is where emergency workers work together to make decisions and take actions needed to respond to the emergency event.

What are the priorities of the EOC?

The Peace River Regional District is responsible to help the people living in Electoral Areas during an Emergency Response. When making emergency response decisions, the PRRD follows the British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS) model. The BCEMS objectives in order of importance:

1. Provide for the safety and health of all responders

2. Save lives

3. Reduce suffering

4. Protect public health

5. Protect government infrastructure

6. Protect property

7. Protect the environment

8. Reduce economic and social losses

What are the responsibilities of the PRRD in an Emergency?

Different levels of government have different responsibilities during an emergency. Under the Emergency Program Act, Regional Districts must:

o Provide emergency response planning for rural areas
o Care for the lives and safety of rural residents in the emergency area
o Declare a State of Emergency (when needed)

Grab and Go Emergency Kit

Emergency events can happen quickly. It's important to be prepared and have an emergency bag packed and ready to go.

Make sure your family has an Emergency Kit ready that has important items like several days of clothing, toiletries and medications, your emergency plan, copies of important documents, and anything you feel is necessary to you.

What is ESS?

Emergency Support Services is a program funded through the provincial that helps people who have had to evacuate their homes due to unexpected emergency. These can include large scale events, like a flood or earthquake, as well as smaller events, such as a house fire.

Emergency Support Services provides short term assistance with food, lodging, and clothing. Other services may include transportation, pet care, family reunification, and emotional support care.

Typically, ESS provides services for up to 72 hours (3 days), but can be extended depending on the needs of the emergency. There are around 5,000 ESS volunteers throughout the province, with many long serving members right here in the Peace Region.

Empathy Statements

- We know that this situation is incredibly stressful. Please know that we are working as quickly as possible to get you the information you need to make decisions for your family.

    Continue to watch the PRRD website and social media channels and subscribe to North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts to get new information as soon as it is available.

- There is nothing more important than the safety of our residents and the first responders currently at work to help them.

- We know this is a scary situation for everyone affected by this emergency. Please know that the Peace River Regional District is doing everything we can to help you and your family.