Emergency Information Plan

Your Community Name Here

Community Hall address

Community Hall Phone Number

Date

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**The “City/Town/Rural Municipality” of “Your Community name here” Emergency Plan**

The City/Town/Rural Municipality of “Your Community name here” has an emergency plan that coordinates the community’s response to any major event or emergency.

There are six main components to the plan. These are:

**The Public Emergency Management Plan** – It describes the methodology and general process that the municipality will uses to respond to emergency events as well as the bylaw that established the planning process, but contains no confidential information. This section also contains information that individuals can use to create a personal/family/business plan to assist in emergency situations.

**Council Emergency Plan** – This plan is specific for Municipal Mayors/Reeves and Councilors. It describes their roles and responsibilities, how to declare a local emergency and provides background information on emergency management in general.

**Emergency Response Plan** – This plan is for the Emergency Management Organization Coordinator and the Emergency Operations Centre Team members. It describes roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Operations Centre Team members as well as outlining how to establish and operate the Emergency Operation Centre.

**Emergency Information Plan** – This is the crisis communications plan.  It outlines the how information will be shared, including public notification and media releases.

**Evacuation Plan** – This plan is for emergency services staff who are in tactical command of an incident site(s). Their tactical operations achieve the goals and priorities of the Emergency Operations Centre and Council. This plan provides direction for escalating events from day-to-day emergencies to fully supported major disasters.

**Plan reference section** – containing contact list information for people and resources as well as forms and other emergency operations centre documentation.

## EMERGENCY DEFINITION

An emergency is defined as any abnormal or unique event which occurs with some degree of surprise to demand unusual, extensive and demanding response effort, however caused, which has resulted in or may result in:

* the loss of life; or
* serious harm or damage to the safety, health or welfare of people; or
* widespread damage to property or the environment.

A major emergency is a further escalation with the potential to exceed the community’s emergency response capabilities. A major emergency will require resources from other communities and the province.

## Emergency Operation Centre

The emergency plan enables the activation of an Emergency Operations Centre that will:

* Assist emergency personnel to respond quickly and effectively to potential disasters such as wildfires, major storms, chemical spills, floods, plane crashes, or tornados.
* Provide a concentrated assessment and decision-making body that can best utilize all available resources, and if necessary, resources from the Province.
* Prioritize recovery goals and objectives.
* Coordination of request for responding, mutual aid and support agencies.
* Provide Policy direction to Incident site responders.
* Provide communications and public/media information packages for elected officials use.

## Crisis Communications

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### Purpose of the Plan

A crisis communication plan provides for the co-ordination of communications within the organization, and between the organization and any applicable outside agencies (e.g. the media, regulatory agencies, customers, suppliers, stakeholders, board of directors, shareholders, unions and the public) in the event of an emergency or controversial issue.

It is the goal of this crisis communications plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that staff and communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of the organization.

### Plan Objectives

1. To assess the situation and determine whether a communications response is warranted and what type of response is most appropriate.
2. To assemble a Crisis Communication Team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses and complete related tasks.
3. To implement immediate action to:
* Designate a spokesperson.
* Identify internal and external parties that should be informed about the situation.
* Communicate facts about the crisis.
* Minimize rumours.
* Restore order and/or confidence.

## Evacuations

### Local Authority Evacuation Orders

Ordering an evacuation of all or part of an emergency area is a very serious step and requires detailed planning. In Saskatchewan, the *Emergency Planning Act (1989)* permits the head of a local authority to declare a Local Emergency, and that allows the local authority to order an evacuation should it be absolutely necessary. There are several other statutes (Fire Services Act, Wildfire Act and the Public Health Act) that can be used to order an evacuation.

When it is determined that an evacuation is required, the warning must be timely and accurate. While the main concern is the preservation of life, those displaced from their homes or businesses may be experiencing inconvenience, anxiety and fear.

Removing people from their homes and livelihoods must not be taken lightly. People will already be under duress during an emergency; however, public safety must be first. It is a delicate balancing act.

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### Evacuation Process

### Stage 1 - Evacuation Alert

Authorities will alert the population at risk of the potential for evacuation because of the danger of possible loss of life and they should be prepared to evacuate the area. This warning will be transmitted by:

* Door-to-door campaign with pamphlets/letter delivered
* Radio and/or television broadcast
* Sirens and mobile public address announcements
* Telephone calls
* Electronic media (internet/social media)

Note: even at this stage, plans will be in place to move handicapped persons, vacationers, and voluntary evacuees. You should also consider readying extra supplies (clothes, shoes, sleeping bags or blankets, personal items (toiletries), playing cards and games for children) to supplement your emergency kit.

### Stage 2 - Evacuation Order

The population at risk is ordered to evacuate the area specified in a formal written order. This is an order and as such does not allow for any discretionary decision on the part of the population at risk. They must leave the area immediately. The police will enforce the Evacuation Order. This order will be transmitted by:

* + Door-to-door campaign with pamphlets/letter delivered
	+ Radio and/or television broadcast
	+ Sirens and mobile public address announcements
	+ Telephone calls
	+ Electronic media (internet/social media)

The area in question will have controlled access and that a pass may be required to regain access to the area.

### Stage 3 - Rescind

An evacuation order or alert is rescinded when it is determined to be safe for residents to return home. An evacuation order may be reinstated if a threat returns. These reentry criteria will be communicated to evacuees through:

* + Radio and/or television broadcast;
	+ Telephone calls;
	+ Electronic media (internet/social media); and
	+ Pamphlets, letter or signage at reception centres.

### Reception Centres

Signage and access to information is vital at reception centres. Describe how will you keep residents informed and deliver instructions at the centre?

### Shelter-In-Place

As residents shelter in place, consider how you will keep them informed. Some residents may require support. Consider ways for those residents to reach out for help.

### Reception centre staff

* List of contact info for people to staff reception centres.
* Information package to reception centre, including:
	+ Information gathering forms for reception centre staff (who, how many, contact info, where are they going, special medical conditions, how are they going (private vehicle), possible pets/livestock at the house/location).
	+ Information on how displaced resident will get updates (web page, alerting app, media, direct contact, information boards at evacuation centres).

People to go door to door assisting police services:

* Other individuals (list, with contact info).
* Maps of community/area to be evacuated (assigned areas for clearing).

## Protocols for evacuations

* Letter from Authority Having Jurisdiction to residents
* Evacuation designated routes (if applicable to be included in directions)
* Notification process (e.g., media, alerting App, SaskAlert, siren, church bell)
* Home marking (tape colour to distinguish each condition)
	+ Residents notified and are evacuating or have evacuated (orange)
	+ Residents notified and are refusing to evacuate (police to follow-up) (blue)
	+ Residents not home (information left) needs follow-up (yellow)
	+ Animals alone at/in residence (green)

Phone lists appendixes:

* EOC staff
* Community spokesperson and alternates
* Phone Tree Captains and alternates for residential lists
* Phone Tree Captains and alternates for receptions centre staff
* Phone Tree Captains and alternates for families requiring assistance to evacuate
* Phone Tree Captains and alternates for personnel assisting police with door to door notification
* Media outlets
* Web site and social media site administrators

## Notification Methods and Process

* Siren or church bell
* Web page and social media pages
* Door to door
* Telephone (community lines or individual resident’s lines) (where are they calling from)

# Media Relations Reminders - Information for Leaders

In general:

* Always return media calls. The more co-operative you appear, the better.
* Communicate with the media – talk to them as well as listen to them. During a crisis, you may learn a great deal from the media that can be useful to you in further dealing with the situation.
* Avoid antagonizing the media. A short tone at a press conference, during a phone call, or elsewhere can affect your future relationship with an individual or other media who may hear the conversation.
* Consider establishing a dedicated website that will provide information, photos and video to media.
* Consider establishing a dedicated phone number for media inquiries – and make sure someone is available to answer the calls and keep track of the questions/answers.
* Consider how information you release to media may affect other agencies, businesses or individuals. If you say things that may result in media calling other agencies, call those agencies first to warn them of impending calls.
* When talking to the media, be sure to give credit to other agencies, groups or individuals working on the crisis, including your own staff or volunteers.
* Try to be pro-active with new information. Even those things may be frantic; if you acquire new information regarding the crisis, reach out to the media.
* Be honest. Don’t make false or misleading statements

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# Handling Media Interviews – Information for Leaders

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### How to prepare for broadcast interviews:

* Prepare key messages you want to make.
* Anticipate difficult questions and prepare appropriate responses.
* Practice answering questions.
* Cover controversial areas ahead of time.
* Know who will be interviewing you, if possible.
* Determine how much time is available.
* Audiences often remember impressions, not facts.

### Do's and don'ts during the interview:

* Do be specific.
* Do use analogies.
* Do be authentic and animated.
* Do listen.
* If you don't have the answer or can't answer, do admit it and move on to another topic. Tell them you will get back to them with the most recent information.
* Don’t guess or speculate.
* Don't accept "what if" questions.
* Don't accept "laundry list" questions.
* Don't go off the record.
* Don't think you have to answer every question.
* Don't speak for someone else.

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### Tips on appearance

* Avoid wearing pronounced stripes, checkered or small patterns.
* Grey, brown, blue or mixed coloured suits/dressed are best.
* Avoid wearing sunglasses.

### After the interview

* + You can ask to check technical points, but do not ask to see advance copy of the story.
	+ Follow up with the reporter regarding incorrect information that was reported.

**News Conference Guidelines – Information for Leaders**

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* When you notify media of news conferences/availabilities, be sure to define what kind of event you are having. News conferences are typically held to announce something for the first time. Press availabilities are held simply to make individuals available to answer questions or demonstrate something.
* Don't call unnecessary news conferences/availabilities. If it's not worth their time, you may upset the media.
* If holding a news conference, try to tell media in advance some details of what you will be announcing.
* Gauge the size of your crowd carefully when reserving a room; better to have too much than too little space. Make sure microphones, chairs, lighting and water are in place at least 30 minutes prior to the event.
* Decide format in advance (who will introduce speakers, who decides when question/answer period ends, and other details?).
* Decide in advance whether handouts are needed. If speaker is giving a talk for which there is a text, you may want to wait and hand out material after the talk so media will stay and listen.
* Check to see what else is happening in your organization or in the community before scheduling a press conference.
* Consider whether you need to let other organizations and agencies know you are having a news conference. (You may wish to invite others to attend or participate in your event.)
* Decide who will maintain control at the news conference, who will decide where cameras are set up, who sits where.
* Try to plan the length of the news conference, but be flexible.
* Consider the time of the news conference. If you want to make the noon, 6 p.m. or 11 p.m. TV and radio news, you need to allow time for crews to travel and edit tape.
* If you are going to set restrictions on an event such as limited photo access, try to put the restrictions in writing and communicate to the media at least 24 hours in advance.