

Season's Greetings from the Minister

As Christmas draws near, our thoughts often turn to loved ones, to those who are less fortunate, and to those who make ongoing contributions to the wellbeing of our communities through their dedicated work in emergency services.

The Yukon has a strong contingent of exceptional emergency personnel and volunteers who give their time, skills and energy so selflessly throughout the year. These professionals rise to the challenges of the job, often placing themselves at risk to assist people in trouble. I extend to them my sincere appreciation for their effort, commitment and service to the people of the Yukon.

These are challenging times in the world. Here in the Yukon, we are so fortunate and so blessed. To all of our emergency personnel and volunteers, and your friends and family, I wish a very happy and safe holiday season.



Pam Buckway, Minister
Community and Transportation Services



Change in SAR NIF Program Policy

Several changes to the New SAR Initiatives Fund (NIF) program were recently approved. The policy changes are designed to make NIF funds more accessible, to encourage additional investments in projects that benefit search and rescue, and to improve project management and ease of auditing.

The existing 25 per cent funding contribution requirement from provincial/territorial sponsored projects will be replaced with a requirement for cost-sharing and partnering for all project proposals. A revised project scoring system will provide additional weight in these areas as well as in the area of relative need, such as potential to improve the search and rescue system

In addition, the definition of what kind of support qualifies as 'cost-sharing' has been expanded to include 'in kind' contributions, not just financial contributions. All contributions must be valued, documented in the NIF proposal and capable of being monitored and audited. Project monitoring and audit are strengthened by a new budget form that will capture specific information related to in-kind contributions.

The NIF Program Guide will be updated by April, 2002. Proposals submitted for the 2003/2004 project cycle onward will be required to conform to the changes in policy. For more information, visit the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's website at: www.nss.gc.ca.



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Canadian
Red Cross
Croix-Rouge
canadienne



Government of
Canada

Gouvernement du
Canada

**BE PREPARED
NOT SCARED**
*Emergency Preparedness
Starts With You*

Emergency Preparedness Information Campaign

The September 11th emergency exposed a lack of emergency planning at the individual level. It is apparent that many families and businesses do not have plans in place to deal with emergency situations that may occur. As the emergency took place on a weekday, the majority of citizens were at work or performing their regular daily tasks. Children were in schools, and for the most part the regular activity patterns of Whitehorse residents carried on as normal.

Had this emergency taken place on a weekend, a completely different situation would have unfolded. Children would not have been in schools, but rather they could have been in a number of different locations throughout the city without their parents or guardians. Government buildings, while officially closed for business, still have staff at work in various capacities. Greater numbers of people would be in commercial buildings without the knowledge of evacuation plans for that location.

During a weekend a greater number of people would be at cabins and similar rural locations without communications or the ability to get in touch with others during an emergency. In short, a completely different situation would exist in responding to community needs during an emergency on a weekend.

While government agencies and responders are reviewing and updating emergency plans, individual citizens, businesses, commercial property owners and others should also consider developing emergency plans so that in the event of an emergency, they and their families, customers and tenants know what to do to maintain their safety and security.

The Emergency Measures Branch has launched a territory-wide information campaign to promote family and business emergency planning. Through the month of December radio and print advertising will encourage Yukoners to pick up free copies of the “Be Prepared – Not Scared” emergency planning guide at local grocery stores. Grocery stores are being used for this promotion as it is anticipated that there will be better success in distributing this information through locations that are more family oriented.

The Yukon Government website has also been updated to allow Yukoners to download a variety of planning documents specific to certain aspects of emergency preparedness such as caring for pets and large animals, emergency sanitation, care for the elderly and other potential emergency situations.

Beginning in the New Year, another campaign will commence to promote and recruit new membership to emergency service agencies such as the Red Cross, St. John’s Ambulance, Hospice Yukon, local Volunteer Fire Departments and Search And Rescue groups and similar organizations.



Prepare now for an earthquake

A guide for families and individuals to prepare for surviving a major earthquake.



September 11th Whitehorse Airport Emergency Report

The Honourable Pam Buckway, Minister of Community & Transportation Services and the minister responsible for Emergency Measures, tabled the Whitehorse Airport Emergency Report in the Yukon Legislature on October 13th.

The report covers many aspects of the events of September 11th and what has taken place since then to improve emergency preparedness and response in the Yukon. Specifically, the report provides an accounting of the events as they unfolded, the agencies involved in the response, the timeframes within which they reacted, deficiencies in response activities and actions now underway to address these deficiencies.

The report was issued to the public to provide a factual recounting of the day's events and to encourage Yukoners to provide their comments and suggestions for improving emergency preparedness and response.

As many had seen television reporting of the two aircraft crashing into the World Trade Centre in advance of the events here in Whitehorse, these shocking images heightened public anticipation during the emergency at the Whitehorse Airport.

While an emergency of this type had never before occurred in the territory and the probability for a similar situation occurring again is remote, many valuable lessons have been learned from this emergency and response plans are being updated accordingly.

The report is available at all Yukon Territorial Agents in the communities, the Info desk at the main administration building or may be downloaded from the YTG website, www.gov.yk.ca

Those wishing to provide comments on the response that was delivered on Sept. 11th, or if you have suggestions on how to improve emergency preparedness in general, please submit your suggestions to:

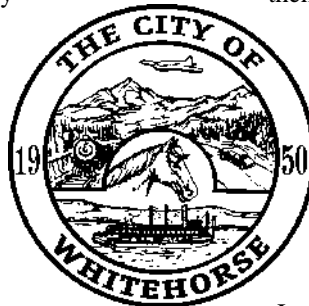
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Email: emo.yukon@gov.yk.ca



City of Whitehorse Emergency Exercises

Building on emergency exercises it conducted in 1999, the City of Whitehorse is again planning a series of emergency exercises in 2002 and 2003. Given the events of September 11th and how Whitehorse residents and emergency personnel were affected, the exercises are timely and eagerly anticipated by participating agencies.

Between April and November 2002, the City of Whitehorse is planning to conduct two emergency exercises involving a forest fire scenario. The first exercise will be a "tabletop" exercise which consists of having all agencies discuss their various responses to a given set of scenarios. The second one will be a communications exercise involving the City's Emergency Operations Centre and all levels of government, including First Nations. In 2003, the city plans to conduct a related exercise, or simulation, that will actually mobilize emergency personnel and equipment.



Working with City employees and staff from numerous partner organizations, including territorial and federal agencies, a consultant will facilitate the group and assist them in planning and producing the two exercises.

All participating staff have attended emergency exercise design courses. The consultant will also produce the final reports for both exercises.

The City of Whitehorse has a population of approximately 23,500 and covers an area of 430 km². The city has mutual aid agreements with neighbouring communities as well as with

Juneau, Alaska. By exercising their plan, the City hopes to enhance their plans through lessons learned and also ensure that emergency response agencies work together effectively to reduce the effects of a disaster on our community.



Gone to the Dogs

“Dig! Dig! Dig!” Rick Staley’s voice carries across the snow-covered slopes. Yeti, an avalanche rescue dog, paws through the snow until he digs up a sweater buried there for him to find. Rick and Yeti are certified in avalanche rescue by the Canadian Avalanche Rescue Dog Association (CARDA), a British Columbia-based group of volunteers who train dogs for avalanche rescue.

Rick lives in Haines Junction and is a member of Kluane Search and Rescue. Rosanne Konrad and “Freya”, with Whitehorse District Search and Rescue, and Todd Powell and “Willy”, from Carcross Area Rescue Team Association, are training for their avalanche validation tests in January 2002. When they become certified, the territory will have three dog and handler teams specialising in avalanche rescue.



When a dog team responds to an avalanche site, the dog is ‘patterned’ over the debris while the handler observes the dog closely. ‘Indications’ from the dog alert the handler that there is scent in the snow, and the handler then decides where a probe and shovel team needs to probe and excavate. The use of trained dog teams is one of the fastest ways of finding a buried victim in snow.

Dog and handler teams train in avalanche rescue for about two years before becoming certified. The focus of this training is on both the dog and the handler, ensuring that the dog has what it takes and the handler is skilled in assessing avalanche hazard, guiding a team safely to an accident site, and knows rescue practises with or without their four-legged companions.

Handlers who wish to enter the CARDA program must be on a SAR team, proficient in First Aid, have taken at least Level 1 avalanche training from the Canadian Avalanche Association, and be a proficient skier able to travel in most mountainous terrain for extended periods. The dogs, like all search dogs, need to have a good nose, lots of drive or enthusiasm for the job, and be trained to indicate scent in cold and less than ideal conditions. This combination of skills takes time to build, and constant work to maintain them.

Mount Sima ski area and the Canadian Ski Patrol System have been very helpful in assisting with training of local teams. Our thanks also to other SAR team members and dog handlers who have contributed considerable volunteer time and enthusiasm in support of this training. If SAR members are interested in assisting with avalanche dog or general search dog training, please contact Whitehorse, Kluane, or Carcross SAR teams—the handlers look forward to hearing from you.



Getting Ready
for Avalanche Season



Avalanche Rescue

Whump...when you hear that sound and feel the ground settling and you happen to be standing on a snow-covered slope, you will quickly realise you may have missed your opportunity to prepare for an avalanche. Avalanches are a regular part of winter in the mountains in Yukon, and several incidents over the last decade act as solemn reminders of the need to keep backcountry enthusiasts aware of this silent, white killer.

While predictable, avalanche hazards are often poorly understood by the majority of the people who place themselves in avalanche terrain in the north. Continuing awareness and education are key to reducing accidents from avalanches. This winter will see more opportunities for backcountry travellers to learn about these dangers and how to react when avalanches occur.

In Carcross, at the foot of Montana Mountain, hazards like this are a part of daily life for many residents. Snowboarders, skiers and snowmobilers often play in avalanche terrain. The Carcross Area Rescue Team Association is getting involved in educating the community about the associated risks, as well as preparing to deal with accidents when they occur.

Each year, avalanche incidents involving people occur in the Carcross area. Most of these go unreported, either through mild embarrassment or a lack of understanding about how important that information can be to keeping others safe. Education is the



Preparedness in Carcross

key to ensuring safety in the mountains. CARTA is planning a variety of activities that will enhance the safety of people who play in these areas.

Sponsors are being approached and radio spots are being developed to inform backcountry users about avalanche risks. These announcements will air from Christmas through the rest of the winter. Awareness sessions for the community and high school classes are planned for February in association with the Carcross recreation board. CARTA members will receive avalanche awareness and rescue training this winter, and the team aims to have ten searchers who are aware of avalanche conditions site safety and rescue.

A recent purchase of avalanche transceivers with assistance from the Emergency Measures Branch enables CARTA to train members and practise rescue techniques. Carcross Area Rescue Team Association invites SAR members from all teams to join their avalanche practises. For scheduling and details, contact CARTA Training Officer Todd Powell at 668-6797.

Please report any avalanches involving people to the nearest RCMP detachment.

Articles by Todd Powell



Preparing for Travel in Avalanche Country

What is considered avalanche terrain? If it has snow, a slope above 15 degrees, and a surface that isn't rough or densely forested, it may be prone to avalanching. That describes a very large proportion of Yukon terrain. Fortunately, it takes several factors to combine before a slope slides. When you ski, board or snowmobile in these areas, always remember a few basic safety tips:

- 1. Take an avalanche awareness course.** Several courses are offered in Yukon each winter. If you work or play in the mountains, this course may save your life. Contact the Carcross Area Rescue Team Association, Whitehorse District Search and Rescue, Mt. Sima Ski Area, City of Whitehorse, Klondike Snowmobile Association or local sport shops to find out when and where courses are offered.
- 2. Travel with friends.** A lone person caught in an avalanche has few options for rescue.
- 3. Always let somebody know where you will be.** It takes too much time to search a wide area when a simple note or phone call to someone can narrow a search for an overdue party to a specific slope or mountain.
- 4. Wear a transceiver.** Chances of surviving a burial decrease quickly over time. Short of having part of you visible, a transceiver is the quickest way to be found by your party. Make sure that you and those in your party know how to use them (check with local outdoor equipment suppliers to find a transceiver that's right for you).
- 5. Carry snow probes and shovels.** These simple tools allow you to pinpoint a victim and dig them out. There will be no time to go to the car and get them; they must be in your pack.



Emergency Telecommunications Training Coming Soon

Working closely with Yukon College, the Emergency Measures Branch has recently developed the *Emergency Telecommunications Training Program*, a four-course offering that will become a core component of their training program. More comprehensive and specialized than past emergency communications training, Emergency Measures expects this program will produce more highly skilled Yukon communications specialists.

Four modules are being developed that will allow progression from simple operation of telecommunications equipment to management skills for senior level command team members. The program is intended to provide a structured learning opportunity where participants can gain the knowledge and skills required for an effective communications response to any level of emergency.

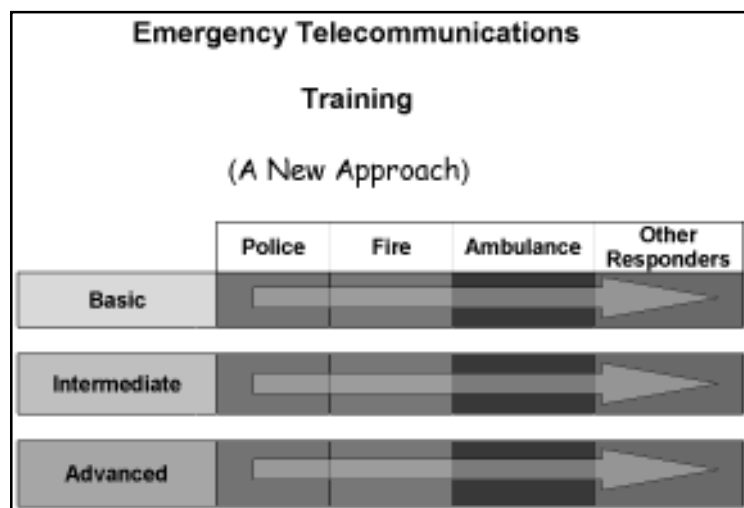
The four modules include:

- **Response Team Member:** using telecommunications equipment effectively.
- **Telecommunications Equipment Deployment:** how to select and deploy various types of communications equipment.
- **Coordinating Emergency Telecommunications:** coordinating emergency site and inter-agency communications.
- **Managing Telecommunications Systems:** planning, implementing and maintaining emergency telecommunications systems.



The Response Team Member course is the first module in the *Emergency Telecommunications Training Program* and is a prerequisite for all other courses. This course prepares participants to communicate effectively using radio equipment in any emergency situation. The course examines basic radio communications theory, legal requirements and restrictions for radio transmission in Canada, radio equipment identification and maintenance, and how to select appropriate communications equipment. Participants gain hands-on radio communications experience and learn radio communication language, the phonetic alphabet and radio distress procedures. This introductory course also covers inter-agency communications and co-ordination concepts.

To qualify for the Response Team Member course, participants must be members of an emergency response organization where effective communications over distances is critical to operational success. Previous use of radio communications equipment is not required, but can be of benefit to the participant.



This training program is being developed by Yukon College for the Emergency Measures Branch, using information provided by volunteer instructors and course material from Yukon Amateur Radio Association and Industry Canada. Funding for this project was provided by the Government of Canada's Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) and the Yukon Government. The Emergency Measures Branch will deliver the program once curriculum development and planning are wrapped up after April 2002. Watch the Spring 2002 newsletter for course offerings.



National Critical Infrastructure Protection Program

The Government of Canada, provinces and territories are working together to initiate the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Program (NCIPP). The aim of this program is to identify critical infrastructure of national interest so that appropriate measures are taken to protect, mitigate and plan for potential impacts in the event of failures. The objective is to catalogue cyber and physical infrastructure that could be at risk from a variety of hazards.

There are several major components to the program. National Critical Infrastructure (NCI) must first be identified. Next, a protection plan for the NCI is developed. The aim of this broad plan is to have stakeholders address protection issues (threat, vulnerabilities, risk assessment, consequence management) on an ongoing basis. Lastly, North American and international shared infrastructure are identified.

The World Trade Centre incident has accelerated the implementation of the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Program. At this stage, the priority is to identify the NCI that may be vulnerable or at risk in the current international environment. To kick-start the process, Canada's Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness (OCIPEP), the RCMP and Dept. of National Defence have compiled a preliminary list grouped by province/territory and by sector.

This rough compilation of critical infrastructure of national interest now needs to be validated in each region by the appropriate stakeholders. Once the regional list is validated, the next step will be to consider potential protective mea-

asures. From this list of 'primary elements', the NCIPP will eventually be expanded to include critical infrastructure that could be vulnerable to a wider range of hazards. As a result, this broader list will contribute to the development of a national disaster mitigation strategy.

Nationally important infrastructure cannot be identified in isolation of infrastructure that is relevant at regional and local levels.

Local authorities need to know the CI in their jurisdiction that could endanger the health or safety of residents in the case of failure. Similarly, provincial and territorial authorities need to be aware of CI that, in the event of failure, would have a significant regional impact. Only some of the items identified at the regional level are of

national interest, depending on the severity of their potential consequences.

Yukon stakeholders will be involved in the 'top down' process of validating the list of national critical infrastructure, and also participate in a 'bottom up' process of developing our own list of regionally important infrastructure.

Yukon stakeholders will consider two perspectives in developing this preliminary list: safety/security and consequence management. Working together, local law enforcement officials and local authorities will identify local level infrastructure at risk that can pose a threat to the health and safety of residents. Once the 'priority elements' lists of national and regional interest are completed, protective measures to counter the risks posed will need to be examined.



The Fox Lake forest fire is an example of a Yukon event that threatened critical infrastructure, including the highway, power lines and NorthwesTel repeater.



New National Search and Rescue Secretariat Executive Director

The Honourable Art Eggleton, Lead Minister for Search and Rescue, announced the appointment of Jean Murray as Executive Director, National Search and Rescue Secretariat, effective August 27 of this year.

Prior to joining the federal Public Service in 1976, Ms. Murray worked in municipal government and the private sector in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and in New Brunswick. She has held positions with Public Works Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat, and with Transport Canada where she worked in aviation policy,

railway safety and as director of departmental secretariat. Ms. Murray also spent 13 years with the Canadian Coast Guard, where her appointments included director general of rescue, safety and environmental response and director general of marine navigation services. Prior to joining the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, she was director of communications with Statistics Canada.



Ms. Murray was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, and received her university education at the University of London, England, where she also received a post-graduate diploma in Urban Planning. She is a Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Royal Town Planning Institute, and a graduate of the Public Service Career Assignment Program.



Coming Events

Watch for Emergency Training....

The Basic Emergency Plans and Operations Course will be held in the New Year. Dates have not yet been finalized, but please check our website or call EMO in January for details.

Become a Trainer...

In conjunction with the development of the Emergency Telecommunications Training Program (see related article), a "Train the Trainer" course will be offered in March 2002. If you are responsible for training in your organization, and need to use telecommunications during emergency response, this course is for you! Dates will be finalized in January— watch our website or contact EMO for details.



Remember to visit our new website:

<http://www.cts.gov.yk.ca/emo>

Writing by Teresa Earle. Design by Leaf Solutions.

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Additional Copies can be obtained by writing to:

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