

M Quarterly E M O



A quarterly publication of the Yukon EMO

Winter 2002

Holiday Greetings from the Minister



Glenn Hart, Minister
Department of Community Services

Our communities enjoy small-town friendliness, caring neighbours and quality services. We know the Yukon is a wonderful, safe place for our families. Yukon Emergency Measures personnel and volunteers play a significant role in ensuring that Yukoners remain safe and secure.

We have a remarkable group of people involved in emergency response and preparedness who work year-round to help others and care for those facing adversity and misfortune. It's to you we extend our gratitude for your selfless service and commitment to providing the emergency response services that Yukoners count on.

In particular, volunteers are the core of many of our community services. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers who actively work with EMO. Your commitment and dedication to the safety and security of fellow Yukoners is appreciated.

As we approach the holiday season, our thoughts turn to those less fortunate than ourselves. Here in the Yukon we have so much to give thanks for. To all of our emergency personnel and volunteers, and your loved ones, I wish you a safe and happy holiday season, and hope the New Year brings happiness for all.



— Golden Horn Acquires New Fire Truck —

A brand new \$220,000 fire truck was officially handed over to the Golden Horn Volunteer Fire Department by the Yukon Government in September. This acquisition further strengthens the emergency response safety net in rural Yukon communities.

Golden Horn, Mount Lorne, Ibex Valley, Hootalinqua and Marsh Lake Volunteer Fire Departments have signed a Mutual Aid



Agreement with the City of Whitehorse. When fire or emergencies present a threat larger than the capacity of any one fire station, other fire departments can be called on for help.

Golden Horn Fire Chief Kevin Taylor, Training Officer Charles McLaren and several volunteer firefighters were on hand to welcome the new truck to the Golden Horn Fire Hall.



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Yukon's Emergency Telecommunications Protocol

Efficient and reliable telecommunications remain critical to emergency response personnel in their efforts to protect life and property. Emergency Measures has been working with Yukon College and various response agencies to develop the *Emergency Telecommunications Training Program*, a four-course offering that will become a core component of the EMO training program.

This comprehensive new program will produce more highly skilled Yukon communications specialists. An important outcome is expected to be improved inter-agency communications (i.e. RCMP, Fire, SAR, etc.). During an

emergency, tactical communications *within* an agency work reasonably well, but communications *between* these same agencies is most prone to breakdown. It is critical to resolve this breakdown in times of emergency.

The training program re-enforces EMO's existing emergency telecommunications protocol. When followed, the protocol serves many key functions:

1. Each agency has autonomy in dealing with its own internal issues,
2. All agencies share information quickly and efficiently,
3. All communications critical to the response or recovery effort are directed through the Incident Commander and;
4. The Incident Commander prioritizes and allocates the communications resources at their disposal.

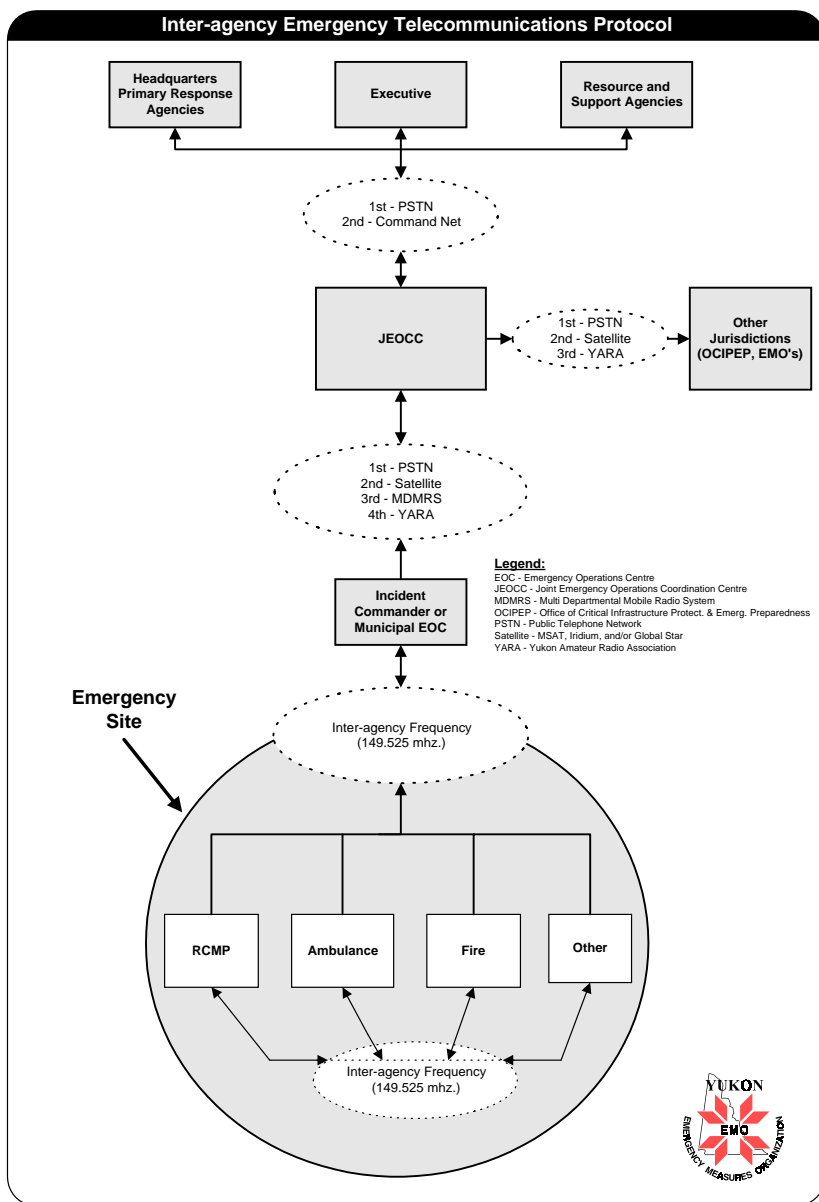
Communications among response agencies and between the

response agencies and the Incident Commander must take place on the Yukon-wide Inter-Agency frequency. The value of using the Inter-agency frequency is that it allows all responders to be aware of what each of the others is doing. This provides enhanced safety and increased efficiency. The MDMRS radio system is available to all response agencies and many government departments. However, during emergencies the use of the MDMRS channel(s) covering the emergency site is reserved for the use of the Incident Commander. Due to the limited capacity of the existing MDMRS system, multiple use by many agencies is difficult. To make the most efficient use of MDMRS and maintain command and control, the Incident Commander will prioritize requests for access to the MDMRS network and grant permission accordingly.

Four training modules are being developed:

- **Response Team Member**
- **Telecommunications Equipment Deployment**
- **Coordinating Emergency Telecommunications**
- **Managing Telecommunications Systems**

The first two modules have been developed and are available for delivery now. The remaining modules will be completed early in the new year, and will be available to a selected group of participants shortly. For more information on EMO's telecommunications training program, or to arrange for the delivery of either of the first two modules, contact Tonny Jansen at EMO (867) 667-5220.



Earthquakes Rattle Yukon Nerves

Recent earthquakes have served as a fresh reminder to Yukon emergency response personnel of the very real possibility of a catastrophic quake here in the territory. On November 3, 2002 a major earthquake in Alaska caused damage and was felt across the Yukon. The quake epicenter was 150 kilometres south of Fairbanks near Denali Park, which places it at around the same latitude as the Klondike region. Residents of many Yukon communities felt aftershocks in the days and weeks following the November 3rd quake.



Photos above: Damage in Alaska, Nov. 3, 2002

Measured at 7.9 on the Richter Scale, it was the largest quake in this area since the 1964 earthquake that rocked Anchorage and killed over 100 people. The last time quakes sent significant tremors through the Yukon was in 1988 (6.0) and 1985 (6.9), both of which occurred in

the Nahanni region. In June 2001, a 5.7 quake near Haines Junction was believed to have caused minor cracks in the Aishihik Dam.

At 7.9, the recent shaker is classified as a ‘major’ earthquake, of which there are about 18 in the world each year. Earthquakes higher than 6.0 are considered ‘strong’, and quakes over 8.0 are considered ‘great’ and capable of causing considerable damage. Richter increments are exponential—each .1 on the scale is 10 times more powerful than the previous measurement. Because the Yukon is located in a geological transition zone for two of the world’s major tectonic plates (the Pacific and the North American), the territory’s residents are closer to the centre of many of the earth’s tremors.

After the November 3rd quake, Yukon road maintenance crews were immediately dispatched to check bridges for any structural damage. Similar visual inspections were also conducted at Whitehorse, Aishihik and Mayo dams - standard procedure after any seismic event.

These recent occurrences present a good opportunity to refresh people’s awareness about earthquake preparedness. Yukon communities and emergency response personnel are encouraged to work with community leaders and residents to ensure that everyone is prepared and knows how to respond in an earthquake. Consult the Government of Canada’s comprehensive publications on earthquake preparedness found on their website at:

http://www.ociepc-bpiepc.gc.ca/info_pro/self_help_ad/general/earthquake_e.asp#prepfor

It’s also timely for emergency response personnel, utilities and community leaders to review contingencies and disaster planning related to major seismic events. Contact EMO for more information.

QUICK TIPS

– What to do BEFORE an earthquake

- Prepare an emergency plan for your family and household.
- If you live alone, develop a plan for yourself with links to neighbours and friends.
- Prepare your home or workplace (e.g. safety kits with food, water, First Aid; know how to shut off water, electricity, gas; evacuation plans etc)
- Take a first aid course, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Know the safe places to be - and where not to be - in your home during an earthquake.
- Practise taking cover in the safe places.
- Know what not to do after an earthquake.

Safe places:

- under heavy tables or desks
- inside hallways
- corners of rooms
- strong archways

Dangerous places:

- near windows or mirrors
- under any heavy objects that can fall
- the kitchen where the stove, refrigerator or contents of cupboards may fall on you
- doorways where the shaking may slam the door on you



Whitehorse Feels the Mercury Rising

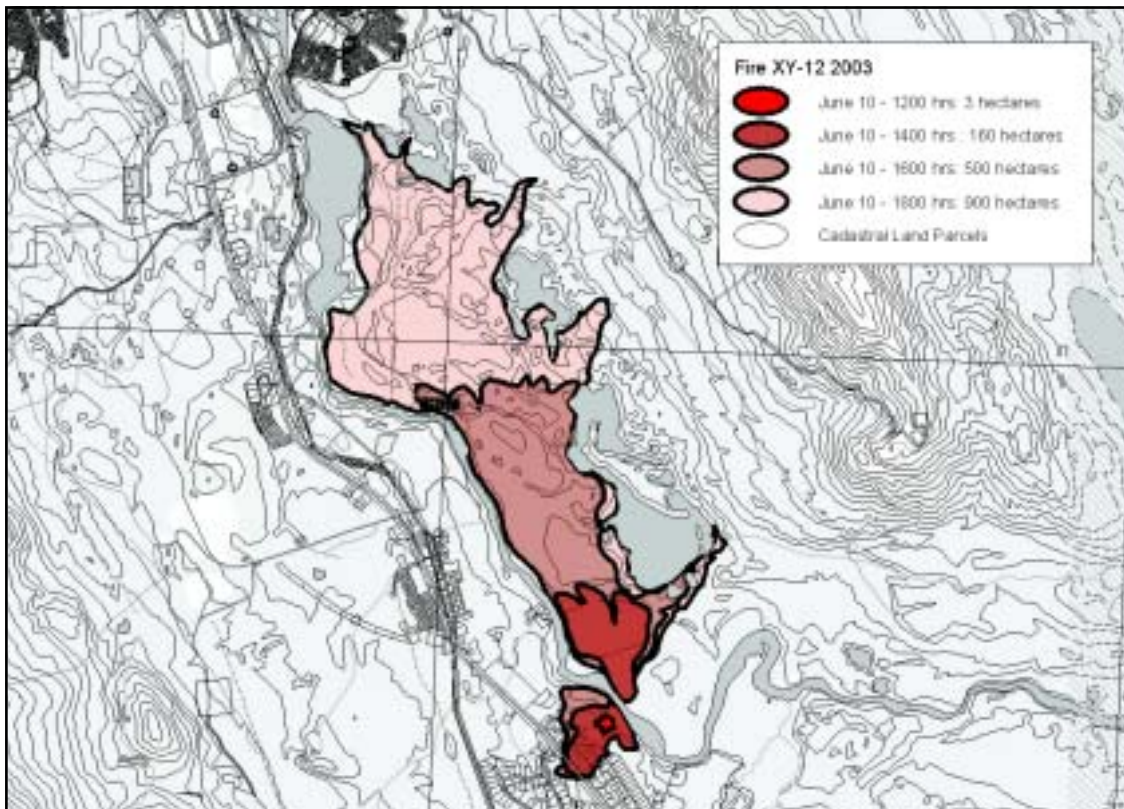
The City of Whitehorse began its current series of emergency response exercises by conducting the Paper Exercise **Mercury Falling** in April 2002. This exercise, **Mercury Rising**, was the second in the series planned for 2002 and 2003 designed to practice the City of Whitehorse's Emergency Plan. The third exercise in the series will be a full mock disaster exercise planned for May 2003.

Exercise Mercury Rising was conducted as a Table Top exercise on October 23rd, 2002. The exercise scenario involved a wildfire causing destruction in Pine Ridge and threatening Riverdale, one of three significant hazards identified by the City's Emergency Planning Team (EPT) in October 2001.

Participants included the Mayor and representatives of Council, city staff, members of Yukon EMO and staff from federal and territorial

departments and agencies. The exercise involved a scale of emergency that demanded co-ordination between responding agencies and between the City and Yukon EMO. Some problems were introduced to force the consideration of the relative responsibilities of the City's emergency team and Yukon EMO.

The opening scenario presented the EPT with a hot and dry June day with extreme wildfire danger. Firefighters and managers from the City, Golden Horn and INAC were responding to a wildfire just below Pine Ridge sub-division and a voluntary evacuation from homes in the area was underway. The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) had been set up and the EPT had gathered in Council Chambers. Control of the fire had proved troublesome but was partially contained.



Each member of the EPT was presented with a series of situations based on the progress of the wildfire which required the player to coordinate aspects of his/her particular responsibilities with other members of the EPT. A debriefing that followed the exercise produced a number of observations and recommendations.

The exercise was considered a major success, and it revealed that the City's Emergency Planning Team is well trained, with sufficient depth. Exercises like Mercury Rising not only provide the opportunity for members of the EPT to practice their responsibilities and for the team to maintain the City's overall capability to respond to disasters and emergencies, but also to introduce new people and to try new equipment and routines in the City's EOC. For more information on exercises or a copy of the final report, contact the City of Whitehorse.



Training Calendar

Basic Emerg. Plans and Operations	Jan. 29-30, 2003	0830 – 1630	Haines Junction, Location TBD
Basic Emerg. Plans and Operations	March 5-6, 2003	0830 – 1630	Whitehorse, JEOCC
Emergency Tele-communications	Beginning in February	0830 – 1630	Various locations as requested
Transportation of Dangerous Goods – First Responder Awareness	Course will take place in various communities during the months of March, April and May, 2003		
Emerg. Social Services/Emerg. Health Services – Basic Training	The basic course is currently being developed. We hope to make it available in the new year.		



Numerous recommendations were made as a result of **Mercury Rising**, many of which are already being incorporated into disaster response planning.

Some recommendations present ways to improve exercises like this one, such as introducing more realism to the scenario:

- better briefing to controllers to ensure input information is more realistic
- add smoke and higher temperatures to EOC so players feel the pressure

Other recommendations suggest ways to improve exercises:

- compressed time used in the exercise created unnecessary complications
- pay media an honorarium to participate
- simultaneously broadcast the exercise on Channel 9 (with a continuous banner message) to heighten public awareness
- consider the use of phones with headsets for the EPT members

Many recommendations suggest changes to standard operating procedures (SOPs):

- periodic situation reports to Yukon EMO by the EOC Coordinator
- communication to schools and the Department of Education need to be established
- review the SOPs concerning EOC security and message delivery, cost accounting
- consideration given to

instituting a system of GPS tracking for all emergency vehicles

- consideration given to determining another alternate facility for the City's EO
- in other scenarios it will be useful to establish one of the power companies as the primary point of contact
- write an SOP dealing with inspections for structural integrity, traffic control, the stationing of equipment to remove obstructions at the bridge and the use of the dam as an alternate to the Robert Campbell Bridge

Many recommendations specifically address communications issues:

- consider producing templates for press releases concerning most likely activities (i.e. evacuations, declarations of emergencies)
- media centre staff should monitor media reports as an SOP
- public information could be displayed on both an EMO website and on Channel 9, and a public FM or AM emergency information station
- communications centre needs to take control of communications
- conduct additional training in radio and telephone protocol to establish the who, what, where, when and why in a more concise manner
- communication links to other agencies should be "mapped"
- consider the requirement for additional city VHF radios and for a back up system
- review the protocol for cooperation between DIAND Fire Management and the City Fire Department



Report on SAR Training Weekend

This fall, Whitehorse District Search and Rescue Society (WDSAR) and Emergency Measures hosted a Yukon Ground SAR Training Weekend at the Northern Region Headquarters Whitehorse Cadet Camp. On October 25 – 27, more than 30 participants gathered for two full days of intense training, team building and information sharing.

Attendance was impressive with 36 registered participants, further demonstrating the surging interest in search and rescue in the Yukon. However, it also created some planning and organizational challenges that will need to be addressed as SAR involvement continues to grow. Groups represented included RCMP, Parks Canada, firefighters, Yukon Amateur Radio Association and SAR from most Yukon communities.

On Friday evening, Parks Canada representative Lloyd Freese delivered a talk about the Haines Road crevasse rescue in Spring 2002. His presentation describes events before and after an RCMP member fell down a crevasse while on patrol. The successful rescue was carried out by Kluane National Park wardens. Freese's talk was followed by a slideshow by Rosanne Konrad, who attended the Alaska Avalanche seminar in Anchorage last spring.



Saturday's schedule was packed with a broad selection of sessions, including guest lectures. Rob Yeomans made presentations on ropes and knots and survival skills, and Dave McInnis delivered a talk on Ozie Explorer and GPS. Al Ekholm delivered sessions on navigation and

telecommunications, Wayne Merry led sessions on search theory and sign awareness and Lloyd Freese and Jean-Marc Perreault presented avalanche awareness and hypothermia.

After dinner, Kevin Wallinger provided an orientation to the EMO-SAR program and a number of key issues were raised. This session was followed by an evening program including a night sound search with Al Ekholm and search management team prep with

Wayne Merry. On Sunday the main search was held, involving all participants. This thorough exercise worked well and a sound search found the victims and the group was evacuated. All participants took part in the debriefing, and everyone pitched in with camp clean-up.

Many thanks to Whitehorse District SAR for organizing this valuable training event.



Industry Canada Seeks Input

Industry Canada is the agency responsible for providing broadcasting and emergency public alerting services in Canada during disasters and emergencies. Industry Canada has the lead for coordinating an emergency broadcasting service through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Environment Canada and, as required, privately owned networks and stations.

A range of public alerting tools are needed to spread news and information about hazards and severe weather to those at risk whether they be working in offices, sleeping at home, driving on the road or have special needs. Public alerting is primarily the responsibility of public officials, and the majority of emergency events occur at the local level and impact local populations.

To stimulate new public alerting solutions that complement existing systems, Industry Canada is launching a new public alerting initiative. The agency is inviting all levels of government to submit proposals for the demonstration and evaluation of new public alerting technologies or products. Demonstrations, reports and comparative studies resulting from this initiative will be shared with federal government departments, provinces, territories and municipalities.

Yukon EMO is encouraging all Yukon communities to become involved in planning of public alerting systems by participating in the Industry Canada initiative. This presents an opportunity to assess what systems are in place, examine new technology and review system performance and protocols.

For more information contact EMO at 867) 667-5220, or check Industry Canada's website:

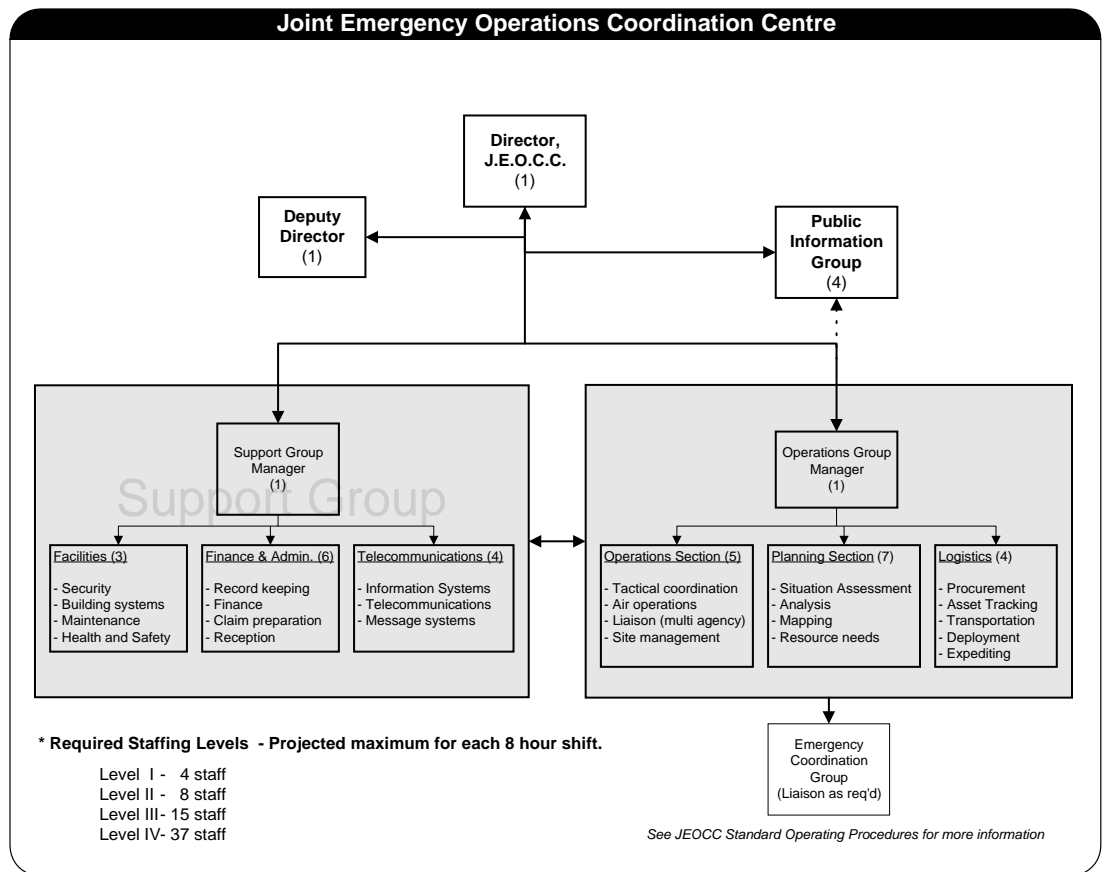
http://spectrum.ic.gc.ca/urgent/english/public_alert



New JEOCC Procedures

EMO personnel have been working with partners to develop new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Yukon's Joint Emergency Operations Coordination Centre (JEOCC). JEOCC is one element of the Yukon Emergency Measures Organization, and the mandate of the Yukon JEOCC is the overall command, control, and coordination of major emergency response, relief and recovery operations in the Yukon. This could include emergency situations in other places that have a direct impact on the normal functioning of the Yukon.

These new procedures are designed to provide direction for the internal management and staffing of the JEOCC. The SOPs describe the role and organization of the Yukon EMO JEOCC, the terms of reference for the components of the



JEOCC team, and detail the office management, administration and communications procedures followed in the JEOCC. The new Standard Operating Procedures were completed in December and will be tested over the coming months.



Arctic Security Group Meets in Whitehorse



In November the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group held their biannual meeting in Whitehorse at the Gold Rush Inn. Almost fifty people from across Canada and the North attended the two-day session on November 18 and 19.

The core function of the working group is to share information across departments and consider four main issues: Sovereignty, Security, Interoperability and Environment.

Participants represent organizations that have a role in providing security in the Arctic. These agencies include:

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Citizenship and Immigration, DIAND – Yukon, Dept. of National Defence, Environment Canada, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Health Canada, Justice Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection & Emergency Preparedness, RCMP, Privy Council Office, Solicitor General of Canada, and the Governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The next meeting of the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group will be held in Yellowknife on May 22 and 23, 2003.



New Manager at EMO



In early December, there will be a new face at EMO. Erin Deacon is joining the Department of Community Services as Manager of Emergency Measures. She is a longtime Yukoner with impressive credentials including a B.Sc. in cartography, a decade serving in numerous capacities with the Canadian Ski Patrol, plus a background in fisheries, First Aid instruction and

SCUBA rescue diving. Recently Erin has worked as the Yukon manager for Gray Line Yukon and Holland America Tours.

Many EMO colleagues will recognize Erin from her many active roles in the Yukon. She looks forward to reacquainting herself with Yukon's emergency response community and encourages people to stop by the EMO office to say hello.

It's worth noting a few other changes to the EMO team. Kevin Wallinger is returning to his position as Emergency Planning/Training Coordinator after serving as acting manager for the past 15 months. EMO's administrative assistant, Linda Kitchen, has recently returned from her secondment at Yukon Housing and Department of Environment. Tonny Jansen is currently on temporary assignment to EMO and will continue to assist with the delivery of training throughout the territory. ❁

Situation Reports

March 30/31 – Haines Junction RCMP members on patrol were traversing a glacier by snowmachine, and the surface gave way under one of the RCMP officers while on foot. He fell into a crevasse. Parks Canada, RCMP and Kluane SAR volunteers assisted with a successful rescue.

April 27 – The “Jaws of Life” was transported to the scene of a motor vehicle accident at mile 1026 of the Alaska Highway near Haines Junction to extract a casualty. Emergency responders had to employ the Jaws of Life for four hours.

May 25 – Numerous local volunteers searched for an Old Crow RCMP member reported missing on the Porcupine River. He had fallen overboard from a boat during peak water flow, but was able to make it to shore. The officer was found two days later in good condition. ❁

July 31 – The RCMP, Parks Canada and Kluane SAR searched for a 16-year-old person who was missing from the Kathleen Lake campground in Kluane National Park. The youth was later found in Whitehorse unhurt.

September 9 – The RCMP requested Kluane SAR to assist with the search for two missing fishermen on Kluane Lake. The bodies of both drowning victims have been recovered.

September 30 – The RCMP requested the assistance of Carmacks SAR to recover stranded canoeists whose canoe had capsized 16 km up the Big Salmon River.

October 29/30 – One person was reported missing on Oct. 28 from a trapper's cabin in the Sixty-mile area northwest of Dawson City. Volunteers searched for the B.C. resident who had ventured away from the cabin on a photography trip. RCMP members who had recently completed SAR training and local members of the Canadian Rangers found the victim after 2 nights in the bush. ❁

Remember to visit our website:

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

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The editors gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions made by numerous members of EMO to this issue of the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization Newsletter.

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