

Reception Centre Service

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Reception Centre Service

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Reception Centre Service

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Foreword

This manual, produced by the Office of Emergency Services, Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Public Health Agency of Canada, is a practical guide to planning, organizing, training staff, operating, and managing the Reception Centre Service in a disaster.

The purpose of the Reception Centre Service is to facilitate and support the delivery of the five basic Emergency Social Services - Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency Food, Registration and Inquiry and Personal Services - to disaster victims affected by a disaster.

The information offered in this manual is based on current knowledge and practice derived from case reports and the practical experiences of Reception Centre Service volunteers and organizations, and the personal experiences of disaster survivors and evacuees.

It is hoped that this publication will be a useful tool for planners, trainers and workers responsible for the Reception Centre Service in communities across Canada.

Acknowledgements

This manual is the product of the commitment and dedication of many people.

We are grateful, first of all, to the volunteers, social service and health professionals from across Canada who, in the last 25 years, were involved in the planning, management, and delivery of the Reception Centre Service to survivors of over 50 major disasters such as forest fires, ice storms, tornadoes, floods, toxic spills, explosions, and transportation accidents.

We are particularly indebted to provincial and territorial directors of Emergency Social Services, especially Ray Hopke, Ivan Poitras, Ron Fortier, Sharon Robins, Ivan Carlson for their assistance in the preparation of this manual.

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Raymond Lafond, Social Work Consultant with the Office of Emergency Services, Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Public Health Agency of Canada, was responsible for researching and writing the manual.

Introduction

Emergency Social Services

Human Consequences of Disasters

Each year a variety of natural, technological, and human-made disasters such as floods, fires, tornadoes, ice storms, blizzards, hazardous chemical spills, transportation and industrial accidents strike communities across Canada.

Although disasters may cause destruction to the physical environment, they primarily affect people. Lives are lost, people injured, homes destroyed, and families dislocated. The resulting human grief as well as the social and economic disruptions affect the well-being of individuals, families and the community as a whole.

Emergency Social Services

In a large-scale disaster, the volume, urgency and intensity of human needs and the degree of social disorganization are such that regular community social service resources are unable to cope. The situation requires the implementation of an emergency social services response system to meet urgent physical and personal needs until regular social services or special recovery programs are effectively in operation.

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is a planned emergency response organization designed to provide those basic services considered essential for the immediate and continuing well-being of persons affected by a disaster.

Six Emergency Social Services are considered essential when disasters strike:

- The **Emergency Clothing Service** which supplies clothing or emergency covering until regular sources of supply are available.
- The **Emergency Lodging Service** which arranges for safe, temporary lodging for homeless or evacuated people.
- The **Emergency Food Service** which provides food or meals to those persons without food or food preparation facilities.
- The **Registration and Inquiry Service** which assists in reuniting families and which collects information and answers inquiries regarding the condition and whereabouts of missing persons.
- The **Personal Services** which provide for the initial reception of disaster survivors or evacuees arriving at Reception Centres; inform them of immediate emergency help available; offer temporary care for unattended children and

dependant elderly; assist with the temporary care of residents from special care facilities; provide or arrange for provision of financial and/or material assistance; and offer immediate and long-term emotional support to people with personal problems and needs created or aggravated by a disaster.

- The **Reception Centre Service** which sets up and operates Reception Centres, is a one-stop service site, where evacuees are received and in which five of the Emergency Social Services are provided: clothing, lodging, food, registration and inquiry, and personal services.

Emergency Social Service (ESS) Planning

ESS Planning in a Community

Responsibility for ESS planning in a community rests with a community's existing social service agencies and organizations such as:

- municipal or provincial departments of social services
- municipal or provincial departments of public health, mental health, family and children's services
- public or private social service agencies
- branches of national organizations
- service clubs, church groups
- business and professional associations.

A community's ESS response organization is built from and integrally linked to the existing community human service organizations. Its role is to support and assist the local human service structure, *not replace it*.

ESS Organization Chart

An example of a suggested community ESS response organization is included in **Appendix A**.

Community Emergency Response Plan

The Community Emergency Response Plan describes the measures that each municipal department -- fire, police, health, transport, utilities, social services, etc. -- is expected to carry out when a disaster occurs. Once written, the ESS response plan becomes part of the overall community emergency response plan and should be read in conjunction with the main plan.

Emergency Social Services And Canadian Disasters

In the last few decades, community Emergency Social Services' response organizations across Canada have responded to an incredible array of disasters and traumas:

- **Air disasters:** Arrow Air Crash, Gander, NF (1985), Air Ontario Crash, Dryden, ON (1989), Swiss Air Crash, Peggy's Cove, NS (1998)
- **Acts of terrorism:** Air India Crash, Ireland (1985), Terrorist attack of September 11, on the USA (2001)
- **Armed conflicts:** Gulf War (1990), War in Afghanistan (2001-2002)
- **Avalanches:** Blanc Sablon, QC (1995), Kangiqsualujjuaq, QC (1999)
- **Earthquake:** Charlevoix and Saguenay, QC (1994)
- **Train derailments:** Mississauga, ON (1979), Hinton, AB (1986), Oakville, MB (1992), Toronto Subway Crash (1995), Biggar, SK (1997)
- **Disasters at sea:** Sinking of the Ocean Ranger Oil Rig, NF (1982)
- **Shootings:** Quebec National Assembly (1984), Montreal Polytechnique (1989), Taber, AB High School (1999), Ottawa-Carleton Transit Commission, ON (1999), Cairine Wilson Secondary School, Orléans, ON (2000)
- **Forest fires:** Manitoba Forest Fires (1989), Penticton Fires, BC (1994), YT, NWT, AB, SK, MB, ON, QC Forest Fires (1995), Okanagan Valley Forest Fire, BC (1998), Saskatchewan Forest Fires (2002)
- **Environmental disasters:** St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire, QC (1988), Hagersville Tire Fire, ON (1990), Walkerton E.coli Outbreak, ON (2000)
- **Highway accidents:** Cormier Village Hay Ride Accident, NB (1989), Lac Bouchette Bus Crash, QC (1993), Les Éboulements Bus Crash, QC (1997), Windsor Car Pile-Up, ON (1999)
- **Mining disasters:** Westray Coal Mine, NS (1992), Giant Yellowknife Mine Criminal Explosion, NWT (1992)
- **Social unrest:** Oka Crisis, QC (1990)
- **Weather related disasters**
 - **Floods:** Bishop Falls Flood, NF (1983), Pemberton Flood, BC (1984), Perth-Andover Floods, NB (1987) and (1992), Floods of 1995 in BC, AB MB, the Saguenay Floods, QC (1996), the Manitoba Flood (1997)

- **Ice storms:** St-John's and Bell Island, NF (1985), Great Eastern Ice Storm of 1998, ON, QC, NB
- **Tornadoes:** Barrie, ON (1985), Edmonton, AB (1987), Maskinongé, QC (1991), Aylmer QC (1994)
- **Complex disasters:** Reception of Kosovar Refugees, ON, NB, NS (1999).

Chapter 1

The Reception Centre Service

1.1 Introduction

When disasters strike, people may be killed or injured, homes or properties damaged or destroyed, and utilities interrupted or severely damaged. People may have to temporarily evacuate their homes or communities. Whenever disasters do occur or threaten, people affected may require immediate assistance with basic needs such as clothing, lodging, food, being reunited with family members, emotional support and other personal or special assistance such as first aid or transportation.

1.2 Reception Centre Service

The Reception Centre Service (RCS) is an Emergency Social Services' response organization whose primary purpose is to plan, organize, operate and manage Reception Centres in order to facilitate and support the delivery of the five other basic Emergency Social Services to disaster victims.

1.3 Reception Centre - Definition

A Reception Centre (RC) is a one-stop service site or facility - school gym, church hall, community hall, arena, or other appropriate location - where, in a disaster or emergency, people evacuate to and where their immediate basic needs are met by the five Emergency Social Services (ESS) response teams: Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency Food Service, Registration and Inquiry Service, and Personal Services.

Past disaster experience has shown that disaster survivors or evacuees may arrive at RC with minor injuries, without necessary medication or may be ill or recovering from an illness. First Aid and Public Health Services are therefore provided in addition to the five basic ESS. Other municipal emergency services may also be needed by evacuees in the RC such as transportation, sanitation and recreation.

Depending on the number of people to be assisted in a community, several RC may be required. During the 1998 ice storm, for example, 320 Reception Centres were opened in the province of Quebec alone.

1.4 Reception Centre Service - A Multi -Purpose Response Service

In the last few decades, Canadian communities have experienced a wide array of disasters: floods, forest fires, tornadoes, ice storms, hazard chemical spills, bus, train and plane crashes, shootings, mine explosions, social unrest, and terrorist actions.

Canadian disaster experience has shown that the Reception Centre Service must be flexible and creative in its response efforts so it can offer immediate and appropriate services and support to meet the varied needs of disaster survivors and evacuees. It must also be able to respond to the many unexpected problems that materialize in disasters. To date, Reception Centres have been used by Emergency Social Services as:

- a safe and secure haven where people can take refuge from danger and destruction (Mississauga Train Derailment, St -Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire, Perth-Andover Flood)
- a place where trained staff and pre-planned services bring a sense of order after the chaos triggered by sudden, unexpected disasters (Barrie Tornado, Edmonton Tornado, Saguenay-Lac St Jean Flood)
- a place where people can catch their breath, regroup, and figure out what to do next after experiencing a devastating and disorienting experience such as having to evacuate their home in the middle of the night as flood waters rushed in (Lac St Jean - Saguenay Flood) or a toxic cloud enveloped their community (St Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire)
- a place where one's basic needs for warmth, hot food, a hot shower and the company of other disaster victims can be had (St John's and Belle Island Ice Storm, Great Eastern Ice Storm of 1998)
- a place to rest after long exhausting car or bus ride to escape raging forest fires (Saskatchewan and Manitoba Forest Fires)
- a place where families can be together with relatives, friends and neighbours waiting for news of loved ones who are seriously injured, trapped or missing (Glance Bay Mine Explosion and Fire, Westray Coal Mine Disaster, Les Éboulements Bus Crash) or grieving for loved ones who are dead and awaiting recovery or identification (Air India, Swiss Air)
- a reception site where people can recover physically, emotionally and express a variety of acute reactions in a safe and understanding environment (Kosovo Refugees, Swiss Air)
- a place to meet with other victims to press for information, explanations, additional services, compensation, legal action (Barrie Tornado, St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire, Perth-Andover Flood, Hagersville Tire Fire, Saguenay-Lac St Jean Flood, Walkerton E.coli Outbreak)
- a place of respite where day care or recreational activities are organized for children so parents have time to better assess their situation and discuss immediate concerns (Edmonton Tornado, St-Basile Le Grand PCB Fire).

1.5 Purpose of the Reception Centre Service Manual

The purpose of this manual is to explain in detail how to plan, organize, operate and manage the Reception Centre Service. It also describes the varied roles and responses presented above as well as lessons learned. The manual describes in detail:

- how to organize the RCS in a community
- how to operate and manage a Reception Centre in a disaster
- how to facilitate and support the delivery of ESS (clothing, lodging, food, registration

and inquiry and personal services) and of other Support Services (first aid, public health, health care) to evacuees in a disaster

- how to operate and manage a Reception Centre when it is used as a:
 - central information and meeting site for evacuees
 - a staging site for the evacuation, reception and repatriation of evacuees
 - disaster assistance centre
 - family support centre for individuals and families whose loved ones have died in a major transportation or industrial accident or whose loved ones remain missing or are trapped and await rescue.

Chapter 2

The Reception Centre Service

Organization

2.1 Preparedness Planning

Disasters are often sudden, unexpected events that can strike anyone, anytime, anywhere. If a community is to provide basic Emergency Social Services (ESS) – clothing, lodging, food, registration and inquiry, and personal services – to disaster survivors or evacuees at the earliest possible moment after a disaster, it must have in place well-trained Reception Centre Service organization ready to open, set up, and manage one or more Reception Centre where these basic ESS' can be provided.

This chapter describes in a step by step manner how the Reception Centre Service (RCS) is organized. It spells out the **roles and responsibilities** of the RCS personnel **prior to, during and after a disaster** so a prompt, effective, and coordinated response can be achieved in an emergency.

2.2 Organizing the Reception Centre Service in A Community

2.2.1 Coordinator of the Reception Centre Service

The **first step** to organizing the Reception Centre Service (RCS) in a community is the appointment and training of the Coordinator of RCS by the Director of Emergency Social Services or other persons or organizations familiar with the RCS.

The roles and responsibilities of the Coordinator of RCS include:

Prior to a Disaster

- establishes and chairs an RCS planning committee
- recruits and trains RCS volunteers
- liaises with Emergency Health Services to ensure that First Aid, Public Health and Health Care personnel are assigned to each RC site
- in consultation with the Director of ESS, organizes and carries out a **survey** of facilities (schools, churches, arenas, community halls, etc.) in the community that could be used as Reception Centre sites
- signs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organizations who have agreed to allow their facility to be used as a Reception Centre should a disaster occur (*see Appendix G - Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Use of Buildings as Reception Centre Facilities by the Colledgeville Emergency Social Service Organization* for an example of a MOU)

- establishes a **list of the resources** - volunteers, equipment and material - required to set up and operate one or more Reception Centre (*see Appendix C - Equipment and Supplies required by Reception Centre Service at Operational Sites* for a list of these resources)
- locates the Reception Centre Kits and inspects their content, ensuring that all of the equipment and supplies in the Kits are present and in good working order.
- organizes a **survey** to identify the resources available in the community to operate one or more RC and signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organizations, companies, clubs, national organizations or other community groups willing to provide personnel, equipment or supplies to assist the RCS
- summarizes survey information in a **RCS Resource Directory** and maintaining up-to-date records of these resources (*see Appendix J - Reception Centre Facilities - Directory Update* for an example of how to keep an RCS Resource Directory up to date
- ensures that essential supplies and equipment necessary to operate the RCS at all operational sites have been **stockpiled** and are available for immediate use should a disaster occur (*see Appendix C*)
- **meets** with the Coordinators of each of the five ESS (Emergency Clothing, Lodging, Food, Registration and Inquiry, and Personal Services) and the directors of organizations providing First Aid, Public Health and Health Care services to disaster victims or evacuees in Reception Centres:
 - reviews roles and responsibilities of the RCS
 - reviews planning and response measures of each of the response organizations as well as coordination of all services
- **trains** RCS volunteers in all aspects of RCS operations: administrative services, telecommunication, meeting and greeting, sanitation, maintenance, recreation, security and any other appropriate services that may be required
- **writes** the RCS response plan
- **tests** the RCS plan by participating in ESS exercises and **updating** the plan on a regular basis
- provides information to RCS volunteers on common **sources of stress** prior to, during, and after a disaster and coping measures they can take (*see Appendix P - Emergency Workers and Volunteers - Coping with Stress During and After a Disaster*).

During a Disaster

- reports to the Emergency Social Services Operation Centre (ESSOC) or other site as directed and communicates with the Director of ESS. If required, activates and directs the RCS operation
- maintains an RCS log and provides ongoing reports on evacuee needs, nature of activities, problems encountered and important statistical data (e.g., number of evacuees receiving services, equipment used, etc.) to the Director of ESS (*see Appendix E - Reception Centre Service - Operations Log*)
- requests equipment, material, or human resources from the Director of ESS, e.g., telecommunication equipment, transportation, additional volunteers, etc.
- keeps track of RCS requests
- helps resolve RCS problems or issues that arise at Reception Centres or other operational sites.

After a Disaster

- turns over to the Director of ESS administrative documents from Reception Centres and other related operational sites
- conducts an evaluation of the RCS activities
- prepares a report on RCS activities for the director of ESS
- ensures that all RCS operational sites are restocked and borrowed equipment is returned (*see Appendix C*)
- participates in the evaluation of ESS activities
- ensures that RCS volunteers are included in stress management sessions, if required.

2.2.2 The RCS Planning Committee

The **second step** to organizing the Reception Centre Service is for the Coordinator of RCS to establish, especially in larger communities, an RCS planning committee. Persons with knowledge and experience in providing temporary accommodation to people such as hostel managers, hotel and motel operators, managers of public housing complexes could be included in the planning committee.

The roles and responsibilities of the RCS planning committee include assisting the Coordinator of RCS in:

- developing and formulating the RCS response plan and procedures and ensuring that it is co-ordinated with other components of the ESS response plan
- training RCS volunteers
- testing the RCS response plan by holding regular RCS exercises and participating in ESS exercises
- assessing, revising and updating the RCS plan
- procuring supplies and equipment needed to perform RCS functions.

2.2.3 Supervisor of Reception Centre Service at Reception Centres

The **third step** to organizing the RCS in a community is for the Coordinator of RCS to appoint and train RCS supervisors for each Reception Centre in the community. This person's role is similar to that of a hotel manager who supervises the many services delivered by hotel staff: reception of guests, cleaning services, food services, recreation, security, and so on.

The roles and responsibilities of the Reception Centre Supervisor are to:

Prior to a Disaster

- recruit and train RCS volunteers in all areas of Reception Centre Service operations:
 - meeting and greeting evacuees
 - care of evacuees
 - administrative services
 - telecommunication
 - sanitation
 - maintenance
 - communication
 - recreation, and
 - security services
- meet with the Reception Centre supervisors and personnel of each of the five Emergency Social Services, as well as those of other Support Services such as First Aid, Public Health, and Health Care and other community support agencies who may provide services to disaster survivors or evacuees in the Reception Centre and review with them:
 - roles and responsibilities of RCS personnel
 - roles and responsibilities of the various organizations providing services in the RC

- layout of building and allocation of space to each of the services in the RC
- initial reception of evacuees and provision of immediate assistance
- traffic flow in the building
- identification tags
- location of exits and egress plan in case of evacuation
- evacuation procedures
- equipment and supplies provided by RCS
- supplies and equipment each of the service organizations should have available on hand to assist evacuees
- coordination of requests for rental or purchase of supplies and equipment,
- administrative services (importance of retaining copies of all purchase order forms, receipts of goods or services provided for payment of suppliers and reimbursement purposes),
- coordination of services to evacuees in the RC,
- priority actions before evacuees arrive, as they arrive, once they settle in
- closing of the Reception Centre

(See Chapter 5, Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities, and Delivery Guidelines for a description of the roles and responsibilities of each service in the RC as well as Priority Action Checklist and Guidelines);

- identify supplies and equipment required to operate a RC and ensure that these are readily available for each RC selected *(See Appendix C for a list of Equipment and Supplies required by the Reception Centre Service at Operational Sites)*
- locate the Reception Centre Kit (RCK) and inspect. Ensure that all of the equipment and supplies in the Kit are present and in good working order. **Note: Some RCK supplies may have deteriorated with age. Inspection needs to be thorough.**
- write response plan for assigned RC
- test assigned RC response plan by participating in ESS exercises
- revise and update the RC plan on a regular basis; and
- co-ordinate RCS plans with those of the five ESS, those of supporting agencies and other municipal emergency services.

During a Disaster

- report to assigned RC, if required
- if possible, briefly walk through facility with owner or facility operator and record condition of building and of equipment and supplies to be used by RCS. Note any major damage

- activate and direct RCS operations in the RC (*See Chapter 5, Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities, and Delivery Guidelines for Priority Action Checklists on Opening, Operating, Managing and Closing of Reception Centre for details*)
- ensure that the five ESS and other support services are operational
- coordinate the delivery of all services to people cared for in the RC
- if required, revise access/egress routes and lay out of services to ensure a smooth flow of evacuees into and within the RC
- communicate ASAP with evacuees
 - bring them up to date regarding the emergency
 - explain services provided in the RC
 - answer questions or concerns evacuees may have (*See Communication Guidelines Section 5.10.2 for detailed information*)
- maintain a RC log and provide ongoing reports on survivors' or evacuees' needs, nature of RC activities or problems encountered to the director of ESS. (*see Appendix E - Reception Centre Operations Log*)
- meet on a regular basis with the Supervisors of the five ESS and other support services to discuss administrative and operational activities and issues
- authorize and sign all requests initiated by RCS for materials and supplies required to operate and manage the RC and sign all invoices for RCS goods delivered to the RC
- keep track of available and committed resources
- liaise on a regular basis with the owners or persons responsible for the facility
- deal with problems that arise in the RC
- if required, coordinate relocation of evacuees from RC to Group Lodging Facilities with the Chief of Emergency Lodging and communities' transportation Services
- if the Reception Centre is to remain open more than 12 hours, ensure availability of backup staff, prepare work schedule, and daily activities schedule.

After the Disaster

- if required, include RCS volunteers in stress management activities

- hold an operational debriefing with staff prior to the RC being closed
- clean RC, both inside and outside and return to prior level of operations
- inspect RC facility with owner or person responsible before leaving the facility. *(See Closing Reception Centre Checklist Section 4.3.4 for more details)*
- restock Reception Centre Kits and RCS facilities and return borrowed equipment
- turn over to the director of ESS RCS daily logs, receipts, claims and outstanding invoices for processing
- prepare a report on RCS activities for the director of ESS and
- participate in the ESS operational debriefing.

2.2.4 Reception Centre Service Workers

The **fourth step** to organizing the RCS is to recruit and train RCS workers who, under the direction of the RC Supervisor will assist in the operation and management of the RC. Under the direction of the RC Supervisor, the RCS workers:

Prior to a Disaster

- receive training on the role and responsibilities of the Reception Centre Service in planning, setting-up, and managing a Reception Centre
- receive training in their assigned RC role and responsibility, for example as meeters and greeters, clerical and administrative services, sanitary services, maintenance, volunteer coordination, and so on. *See Chapter 5, Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities, and Delivery Guidelines for a detailed description of the various tasks RCS workers are responsible for in a Reception Centre.*
- participate in RCS exercises.

During a Disaster

- prepare the RC for the reception of disaster survivors or evacuees - *See Reception Centre - Opening Checklist page ___ for a detailed description of duties*
- prepare RC for the arrival of the five ESS teams and Support Services such as First Aid, Public Health, and Health Care, and other emergency support services, as required
- distribute equipment, supplies, and signage stored in the Reception Centre Kit to respective ESS teams and other support services

- post appropriate RC related signs both inside and outside the facility
- if required, assist RC Supervisor with log entries
- establish and maintain facility records including those related to supplies used, expenditures made, donations received
- duplicate, distribute or post rules and regulations and other information evacuees may require
- assist with facility operations as required, e.g., parking services, security services, transportation, storage and distribution of supplies, maintenance of facility, sanitation, fire watch, recreation, etc. *See Chapter 5, Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities, and Delivery Guidelines*).

After the Disaster

- assist with closing of the RC: clean-up, returning borrowed equipment or supplies, storing and restocking RC supplies and equipment
- ensuring that logs, invoices are returned to the RC Supervisor
- participate in RCS operational debriefing.

2.2.5 Reception Centre Volunteer Coordinator

The **fifth step** to organizing the RCS is to recruit and train a Reception Centre Volunteer Coordinator (RCVC). Past experiences have shown that caring for thousands of evacuees over a prolonged period of time is exhausting. It is essential therefore that additional people be recruited to assist with Reception Centre Service and other ESS if these services are ongoing.

The RC Volunteer Coordinator is responsible to:

Prior to a Disaster

- become familiar with all the RCS and ESS tasks at Reception Centres
- assist RC Supervisor recruit RCS staff, if required.

During a Disaster

- If the disaster affects a greater number of people than expected, is prolonged or RCS response staff have themselves been impacted, the RCVC would set up services in the Reception Centre and recruit additional ESS or RCS staff from

disaster survivors or the general community. (See Appendix N For a Sample of Volunteer Positions that British Columbia ESS has identified as required to assist in a disaster)

- report to Reception Centre and set up volunteer recruitment desk, if required
- assign staff to maintain the recruitment desk
- match requests for volunteers from RC Supervisor or ESS Supervisors with available list of volunteers or recruit volunteers
- screen volunteers and assign them to RCS or ESS personnel familiar with tasks and who can provide on the job training to volunteer(s).

After a Disaster

- participates in the RCS evaluation
- sends thank you letters to volunteers and prepares backup lists of volunteers for future disasters.

2.3 Emergency Social Services - Reception Centre Role and Responsibilities

The Reception Centre Service's primary task is to assist and facilitate the delivery of the five Emergency Social Services to disaster survivors or evacuees arriving at Reception Centres.

2.3.1 Services Provided by ESS in Reception Centres

Summarized below are the basic roles and responsibilities of the five ESS:

- **Emergency Clothing** supplies clothing or emergency covering until regular sources of supply are available.
- **Emergency Lodging** arranges for safe, immediate, temporary lodging for homeless or evacuated people.
- **Emergency Food Service** provides food or meals to those persons without food or food preparation facilities.
- **Registration and Inquiry** assists in reuniting families. Collects information and answers inquiries regarding the conditions and whereabouts of missing persons.
- **Personal Services** provides for the initial reception of disaster victims arriving at Reception Centres informs them of immediate emergency help available, offers temporary care for unattended children and dependent elderly persons, assists

with the temporary care of residents from Special Care Facilities, and offers immediate and ongoing emotional support to people with personal problems and needs created or aggravated by a disaster.

2.3.2 ESS - Organizational and Operational Roles and Responsibilities at Reception Centres

As part of their emergency preparedness response plan, the Coordinators of each of the five ESS assign Supervisors and staff to each Reception Centre to provide their respective services to disaster victims or evacuees seeking assistance with their basic needs.

Summarized below are the common roles and responsibilities of each of the five ESS at Reception Centres. Please consult each of the five ESS' manuals for detailed information on the organization and operation of each of the Services. (ESS manuals are now available on Public Health Agency of Canada's Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response website: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/emergency-urgence/index_e.html)

Common Roles and Responsibilities of each of the five Emergency Social Services at Reception Centres.

Prior to a Disaster

Supervisors and Staff of each of the five ESS:

- are usually pre-assigned to a Reception Centre. As part of their preparedness planning activities, they would meet with the RC Supervisor and RCS staff operating and managing a facility, would visit the RC and familiarize themselves with the facility, its resources and shortcomings, and with the area or space allocated for the delivery of their respective Services
- would participate in ESS or community-wide exercises designed to test RC operations and management including the delivery of each of the five ESS and other Support Services - First Aid, Public Health Services and Health Care Services that may also be present at the RC; and
- would familiarize themselves with lines of communication and authority within the RC. Supervisors and staff of the five ESS report directly to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative direction and to their Coordinator of Service for program direction (*See Appendix A for lines of authority and communication*).

During a Disaster

- report to their assigned RC and, if required, set up and operate their respective Service

- prepare work schedules for staff, rotate and replace staff ensuring that their respective Service is available to meet evacuee needs on a full-time basis or in accordance with directives set out by the RC Supervisor in consultation with other Service providers
- ensure that the delivery of supplies and equipment required for the ongoing operation of their respective Service is coordinated with the RCS personnel
- report on a regular basis to the Coordinator of their respective Service at the ESS Operation Centre and to the RC Supervisor on the needs of evacuees, activities to date and problems or issues
- maintain a log of all actions and/or decisions taken and
- consult with the RC Supervisor regarding major procurement requests or changes in the delivery of their Service

See Chapter 5 , paragraph 5.2 for detailed description of each of the five Services' responsibilities at Reception Centres.

After a Disaster

- ensure that staff are included, if required, in stress management activities
- ensure that staff participate in RCS and ESS operational debriefings
- turn over to their respective Coordinators logs, records, documents, receipts and invoices for processing or safekeeping and,
- prepare a report on their respective Services' activities for the Coordinator of their Service.

2.4 Provision of Emergency Health Services at Reception Centres

2.4.1 Lessons Learned in Previous Disasters

Past experiences have shown that, in major disasters or emergencies, evacuees may arrive at Reception Centres:

- with minor wounds or injuries
- without their medication, mobility aids or other necessary health aids
- exhausted and sometimes dehydrated from evacuation and travel over great distances

- having been recently discharged from hospital or with various ailments or illnesses
- experiencing hypertension as a result of the disaster event or because of the threat posed by the disaster e.g., rising flood waters, approaching forest fires
- with health concerns generated by the disaster event itself e.g., fear, for example, that their own health or their children's health are at risk because of exposure to toxic smoke, radiation, biochemical agents, etc.
- from nursing homes, homes for persons with mental disabilities, hospitals because of a major disaster. Such was the case during the Great Ice Storm of 1998 when electrical power to 4,000,000 people in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick was disrupted from a few days to over six weeks. Many of the people required more advanced health care services, ones usually provided by nurses or doctors.

2.4.2 Assigning Emergency Health Services (EHS) Personnel and Volunteers to Reception Centres

In Canadian communities, the Emergency Health Services (EHS) is the emergency response organization responsible for organizing, coordinating, and delivering community-wide health services in a disaster or emergency. They are also responsible for assigning health personnel to RCs. Arranging for the provision of EHS in the RC is the responsibility of the Director of Emergency Social Services and the Coordinator of RCS. Once provision of EHS has been arranged with EHS authorities, it is important that the Reception Centre Supervisor liaise with the EHS personnel assigned to his or her RC so that health services to be offered to evacuees, space allocation and delivery procedures can be discussed.

2.4.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Emergency Health Services Personnel and Volunteers at Reception Centres

(1) First Aid Workers

In past disasters, some disaster victims arrive at the RC with minor injuries that need to be attended to by first aid workers.

In most communities, responsibility for the provision of First Aid in Reception Centres has been assigned by Emergency Health Services to St John Ambulance. However, Red Cross or other trained volunteers may also be involved in organizing the delivery of First Aid in an RC.

As with Emergency Social Services personnel, the Supervisor of First Aid Services and First Aid personnel working in the RC report to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative purposes and to the Coordinator of Emergency Health Services for program delivery.

(2) Public Health Services Workers

In most communities' Emergency Health Services response plans, the Medical Officer of Health is responsible for ensuring that health personnel such as public health nurses and public health inspectors are assigned to Reception Centres to monitor public health.

Public Health Personnel are responsible for:

a) Public Health Nurses

- establishing a program of preventive health care to avoid the spread of communicable disease, respiratory infections and other illnesses
- establishing procedures to detect and refer persons with medical or health problems to appropriate specialists and facilities in the community
- assuming responsibility for the total health care and personal needs of those evacuees requiring health services and assistance such as infants, the elderly, pregnant women, persons with physical disabilities, people receiving home care, etc.
- requesting the procurement of special apparatus for evacuees with special needs, e.g. canes, wheelchairs and special resources necessary for the care of infants
- ensuring that where prescription drugs for evacuees are needed this requirement will be looked after
- ensuring the safe and secure storage of all drugs brought into the a RC in addition to meeting the specifications for their storage to ensure their effectiveness and
- securing transportation for those evacuees requiring hospitalization.

b) Public Health Inspectors

- providing regular inspection of all Reception Centres in operation in a community or region to ensure compliance with public health regulations
- monitoring food, water, sanitation and other public health related areas
- carrying out water purification measures if required
- apprising and providing consultation to the Reception Centre Supervisor of all public health related activities.

As with Emergency Social Services personnel, the Supervisor of Public Health Services

and Public Health personnel working in the RC report to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative purposes and to the Coordinator of Emergency Health Services for program delivery.

(3) Health Care Services

Lessons learned from The Great Ice Storm of 1998 demonstrated the need, in exceptional and extreme events, to have health care services personnel (doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, orderlies) available in RCs to meet the needs of evacuees who:

- were in hospital but had to be evacuated to make room for the more seriously ill
- were ill or recovering from a major illness at home
- who are bed ridden and living at home but who need daily nursing care or are on electrical life support
- who reside in public or private Nursing Homes or Special Care Facilities and had to be evacuated because electrical power was disrupted
- are fragile or have mobility problems and need assistance
- have a mental disability
- have a mental illness but are living independently in the community.

Health Care personnel familiar with nursing home, special care facility health services need to be recruited ahead of time from private and public special care facilities, medical clinics, and other health facilities to provide similar services in RC in case such exceptional as the ice storm happen again, e.g., an earthquake, a major flood, a chemical, biological, radiation or nuclear incident, an influenza epidemic, etc.

In the wake of a winter storm flooding in 1997, 150,000 people in the state of California were evacuated including several nursing facilities. In the wake of this storm, a Shelter Medical Group (SMG) Committee was convened to establish policies and procedures to meet the medical needs of people who must move during a disaster from their residence or care facilities to alternative locations. The SMG published a *Shelter Medical Group Toolkit* in which they included two Appendices which are included in this manual and which could assist the Emergency Health Services in assessing which medically persons can be relocated to a Reception Centre (see *Appendix R - Emergency Evacuation Destination Categories for Medically Fragile Patients and Residents*) as well as a list of suggested supplies for general and medical treatment units at Reception Centres (see *Appendix S - Suggested Supplies for Medical Treatment Units/Shelters: General and Medical*).

As with Emergency Social Services personnel, the Supervisor of Health Care Services and health care personnel working in the RC report to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative purposes and to the Coordinator of Emergency Health Services for program delivery.

2.5 Amateur Radio Emergency Services

In past disasters, the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) has played a major role in the delivery of Reception Centre Service. Because ESS does not have access to a short wave radio system, it is essential that the Director of ESS arrange with the local Emergency Measures Coordinator for the assignment of ARES volunteers to provide telecommunication services at Reception Centres and other ESS sites. Although cellular phones are reliable and useful, they are also subject to overload in a major disaster. ARES telecommunication services have proven reliable and their personnel competent and effective in assisting ESS.

2.6 Role of Other Community Emergency Response Organizations and Agencies at Reception Centres

Canadian experience has demonstrated that, depending on the disaster event or circumstances or, as a disaster evolves, many municipal, provincial, and federal agencies as well as volunteer non-government organizations (NGO's) may be involved in providing assistance or support to disaster survivors or evacuees at Reception Centres. Chapter IV provides examples of the numerous government and non-government agencies that may become an integral part of the RCS response. The guiding operational principle should be that the Reception Centre Service should be sufficiently flexible to meet the changing needs of survivors or evacuees at Reception Centres by liaising and involving agencies or organizations that can best meet these needs.

(In addition to Chapter IV, see Appendix M For assistance that may be provided to Reception Centres by other municipal emergency response organizations).

2.7 Staffing Reception Centres

In a major disaster, the RCS may have to operate on a 24-hour basis. Backup staff will be required to replace initial response staff. Staff replacement should be a priority as soon as disaster needs of people affected have been assessed.

2.8 Training of Reception Centre Personnel and Volunteers

Reception Centre personnel and volunteers representing their assigned emergency response organization will be trained by their own respective organization:

- Reception Centre Service personnel and volunteers are trained by the Reception Centre Supervisor
- Supervisors and personnel of each of the five ESS are trained by the Coordinators of their assigned Service
- Support Service Agency Supervisors and personnel are trained by their own respective organization or agency: First Aid, Public Health, and Health Care Services

The Director of Emergency Social Services is responsible for ensuring that all response agencies operating in the Reception Centre are properly trained. Volunteers who are recruited to assist with the delivery of some services should receive basic training.

2.9 Recruiting RCS Personnel

Suggested Sources of Personnel

Persons with knowledge and experience in providing accommodation or coordinating activities for large groups of people are well suited to organize and operate the RCS. These people, as part of their daily tasks, would be familiar with:

- coordinating and providing services to large groups of people
- managing large facilities serving people
- processing information, data and
- setting up filing systems.

They could include: hotel or motel personnel, managers of homes for the elderly persons, managers of hostels or YWCA, YMCA, managers of special care facilities, public housing managers, arena managers, recreation workers, school principals, personnel of national organizations familiar with disaster reception services or persons trained to provide these services in disasters.

Selection Criteria

In considering candidates for key RCS positions, the following criteria are suggested for consideration:

- experience in organizing, coordinating or managing activities for large groups of people
- familiarity with the community
- leadership, administrative and organizational ability, knowledge of logistics
- flexibility
- ability to cooperate and to delegate responsibilities
- good communication skills and
- good training skills.

Regardless of their previous training and experience, candidates will need training in Emergency Social Service planning and Reception Centre Service organization and operation.

Desirable Personal Skills for RCS Workers

In a major disaster, people arriving at Reception Centres may be extremely anxious and upset. It is important, therefore, to recruit mature, sensitive RCS workers who are:

- caring individuals who can express genuine concern for the needs of the survivors
- good listeners who can assess a survivor's emotional state and respond appropriately
- able to remain calm under pressure
- able to communicate clearly both orally and in writing and
- able to record information accurately and legibly.

2.10 Communication Skills

The RC Supervisor should ensure the availability of personnel who are capable of responding to persons who have specific communication needs: hearing impaired, blind, persons who cannot read, or persons who may not speak or understand the language of the majority. Persons may have to be recruited from the evacuated community to assist.

Chapter 3

Reception Centre Facility Survey And Directory

3.1 Introduction

Once the Reception Centre Service personnel has been selected and trained, one of their first emergency preparedness task is to organize and carry out a survey of various buildings in the community that could be used for Reception Centre purposes. The survey enables the Reception Centre Service (RCS) to collect specific information about the location, resources, and capacity of each of the buildings selected as Reception Centre facilities. The information collected on each RC facility is then summarized in a Reception Centre Resource Directory. Such a directory allows the Director of ESS and the Coordinator of RCS to have immediate access to information about RC facilities and select the facility or facilities that are the most appropriate to respond to the immediate

needs of displaced persons.

3.2 Selecting Reception Centre Facilities

Buildings or sites to be used as Reception Centre facilities are selected by the Director of Emergency Social Services (ESS) and the Coordinator of RCS in consultation with the municipal Emergency Planning Coordinator. These emergency planners will determine the number and type of facilities required by the community to be fully prepared to meet the needs of persons displaced by a disaster or emergency.

3.2.1 Criteria for Selecting Reception Centre Facilities - Checklist

Because Reception Centres are used to receive large groups of people of all ages and are expected to provide a wide variety of services, it is important that facilities being considered as RC sites meet basic criteria that will facilitate the provision of Reception Centre Service to disaster survivors and evacuees. Listed below are some basic criteria to assist the Director of ESS, Emergency Planning Coordinator, and RCS personnel in selecting Reception Centre Facilities:

(1) Availability

facility should be available and accessible 24 hours a day, year round with a minimum of delay for opening and set up.

(2) Location

on or near a major thoroughfare so it can be easily located and accessed by cars, buses, emergency or other service vehicles

easy access to public transportation.

(3) Amenities

large parking lot or outside yard or access to nearby parking areas where large numbers of cars can park and buses load or unload passengers with ease

building with a **large entrance** area so hundreds of people can be received at a time

building with a **room that has a large surface area such as a gym**, arena, bingo hall, community hall so the five Emergency Social Services as well as First Aid, Public Health, and Nursing Services can be set up and easily accessed by evacuees and where tables and chairs can also be set up for several hundreds or several thousand people.

access ramp for handicap or elderly

elevators if facility has several floors

large cafeteria that can serve several hundred people at a sitting

sanitary facilities for men and women, accessible to handicap, as well as showers
(see *Appendix F for Reception Centre Sanitary Standards*)

facility with **excellent heat, ventilation, and, if possible, air conditioning** equipment. Facility must have an emergency generator or immediate access to one. Generator should produce sufficient voltage for heating and lighting large facility

several **private rooms** where evacuees or staff can meet in privacy

room with **running water** for First Aid, Public Health, and Nursing services

rooms where people with special needs can receive care in privacy: the elderly, persons who are ill, mothers with infants, emergency workers

room to set up **day care** or play area for children

storage room for equipment and supplies that can be easily accessed by service vehicles

room for Reception Centre Service to set up telecommunication centre and administration

rest area separate from evacuees for all personnel working at Reception Centre

facility should have excellent internal telecommunication equipment including a P.A. system that can be heard throughout the facility. It should also have a switchboard, and sufficient telephones for evacuees to use.

(See *Appendix H - Reception Centre Service - Facility Survey and Record*. This form will assist RCS personnel in reviewing and recording information on the amenities that a facility contains)

3.2.2 Buildings Suggested for Use as Reception Centres

The following buildings have been used in various communities across Canada as Reception Centres in disaster situations: high schools, college and university residences, church halls and basements, community halls, union halls, Canadian Legion halls, bingo halls, arenas, auditoriums, town halls, and commercial shopping centres.

3.3 Completing the Reception Centre Facility Survey

It is essential that the Reception Centre Service, as part of their initial emergency preparedness planning process, complete a physical survey of all the buildings selected as Reception Centre facilities. This comprehensive survey will provide the RCS and Director of ESS with readily available information about the buildings (e.g. reception capacity, number of bathrooms available, telephone lines available, etc.) in a written format. (see *Appendix H - Reception Centre Survey and Record*) for a form that can be photocopied and used to record basic information on each Reception Centre facility.

3.3.1 Suggestions for Completing the Reception Centre Facility Survey

One way of completing the Reception Centre Facility Survey is for RC Supervisor and RCS staff assigned to a building to be used as a Reception Centre to complete the survey while holding a regular meeting in the facility.

A second method is for the RC Supervisor assigned to a facility to recruit members of a group already associated with the designated building to complete the survey. Such individuals might be a school principal, teacher, custodian or minister, people most familiar with the building and its equipment. This is especially important if members of that group have agreed to act as RC managers or workers in case of a disaster.

3.4 Reception Centre Directory

Once a survey of all Reception Centre Facilities in the community is completed, RC personnel should summarize the information collected in an RC directory. The directory facilitates the assignment of evacuees to appropriate facilities in an emergency.

Appendix I offers an example of a Reception Centre directory developed by the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services. The directory should be reviewed at least once a year to ensure the information is accurate and up to date.

To keep the information in their Reception Centre Directory accurate and up to date, the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services mails a letter (*Appendix J*) to the owner or manager of a particular facility accompanied by a photocopy of the latest Reception Centre Survey Record on file. They are asked if the information in the Survey Record is accurate, and if not, to correct, sign, and return it to the Reception Centre Service.

Owners and operators are also informed that signing and returning is an acknowledgement of their willingness to continue to participate as a Reception Centre site should they be called on.

3.5 Written Agreement for Use of Facilities as Reception Centres

Once suitable buildings in the community have been identified as possible Reception Centres, the RCS personnel should contact the owners or managers of these resources and written agreements for their use in an emergency should be completed. With some

RC resources, such as commercial facilities, compensation and methods of payment would have to be agreed upon ahead of time.

The most desirable facilities for RC purposes are particularly well-equipped high schools or community colleges.

Because these are often used in a disaster situation, a recommended standard format for agreements between ESS and school administration is offered in *Appendix G*.

Letters of agreement regarding the use of facilities for RC purposes should also be obtained from organizations such as community centres, churches, and recreation facilities. The standard agreement recommended in *Appendix G* can be modified to fit the style of agreement necessary for a given group. The best agreement is one which spells out in clear, simple language what ESS and other organizations are agreeing to do.

Written agreements should also specify financial liability due to damage, loss or injury.

See **Appendix Q** for an example of a letter written by Jeff Fisher, Director of ESS for Prince Albert and an employee of Saskatchewan Social Services, to the Campus Director of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Larry Fladager, requesting a review of arrangements agreed to previously for the use of the SIAST facility as a Reception Centre for the upcoming forest fire season and liability arrangements.

(Public Health Agency of Canada's Office of Emergency Services thanks Jeff Fisher and Saskatchewan Social Services for providing us with the letter and allowing us to include it in the RCS manual.)

Chapter 4

Reception Centre Operations General Guidelines

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides general guidelines, priority action checklists, and operational guidelines to help Reception Centre Service (RCS) personnel to successfully operate and manage a Reception Centre (RC) when a disaster strikes.

The general guidelines are a summary of lessons learned from past ESS and RCS disaster response experiences.

The priority action checklists provide a quick overview of the essential activities the RCS Supervisor, RCS personnel, and RCS Support Agencies need to carry out at a Reception Centre:

- prior to the arrival of evacuees
- as the evacuees arrive
- as the evacuees settle in and
- when closing the facility.

The operational guidelines are offered to RCS personnel and Support Agencies so they can better understand some of the major tasks carried out in a Reception Centre.

4.2 Reception Centre Service - General Guidelines

The following general guidelines are based on previous Emergency Social Service and Reception Centre Service disaster experiences and are meant to assist ESS and RCS in planning their emergency response:

- **Immediate mobilization of RCS personnel.** The Director of ESS **needs to mobilize** RCS, ESS, First Aid, Public Health, and Health Care Services' personnel as soon as possible when a disaster occurs. Experience has shown that decisions to evacuate an area are sometimes taken at the last minute and evacuees arrive at Reception Centres before the RCS, ESS, and other Support Agency teams are on the scene to assist them.
- **Avoid moving evacuees** from one Reception Centre to another. This adds to the confusion and affects morale.
- **Use Reception Centre facilities close to the disaster area.** Disaster survivors usually want to remain close-by to assess what is happening, protect their property from further damages, safe-guard their belongings, and start cleanup and repairs as soon as possible.
- Return evacuees to their own homes or alternate lodging as quickly as possible.
- Avoid using elementary schools as Reception Centres. Much of the equipment such as drinking fountains, toilets, lunch rooms are not suited for adults or large groups of people.
- In most disasters, the majority of evacuees usually arrange to stay in hotels or motels or with relatives or friends. Survivors may therefore be spread out over a wide area.

Past disaster experiences have shown that evacuees may want to meet as a group in one central facility to share information, assess the disaster situation or threat, provide mutual support, take legal action against organizations or businesses they judge responsible for the emergency or seek information and services from government agencies or NGO's. A central Reception Centre may have to be set up to bring evacuees together and assist them with their requests. RCS and ESS personnel will need to work closely with the municipal Transit Services to arrange for the transportation of evacuees from their lodging sites to the central RC site.

- In some disasters, people affected by the event have been offered free accommodation by hotels and motels. Once again, past disaster experiences have demonstrated that hotels and motels do not have the personnel, resources or training to deal with the many immediate needs of survivors such as emotional support, locating family members, providing basic clothing, financial assistance, etc. RCS, ESS and Support Agencies need to be sufficiently flexible to promptly relocate their services to these sites if required.
- **Computerize Reception Centre information on evacuees as soon as possible.** Information such as the number of evacuees affected, their location, their immediate needs, the number of meals required, etc. needs to be readily available for various operational and administrative purposes.
- **Authority to expend money** for Reception Centre administration and services need to be discussed and agreed to ahead of time. The municipal Director of ESS is the persons usually responsible for discussing disbursement and reimbursement procedures with municipal officials or with Provincial / Territorial Directors of ESS. **All RCS expenditures need to be supported by proper requisitions, invoices and receipts for reimbursement purposes.** The administrative and financial activities of the RCS operations are an integral part of the ESS and RCS emergency preparedness planning process.

4.3 Reception Centre Service - Priority Action Checklists and Guidelines

As stated previously, the Reception Centre Service' primary role is to facilitate and support the delivery of the five ESS - Clothing, Lodging, Food, R&I and Personal Services - to disaster survivors and evacuees.

This section provides **checklists** describing some of the most important activities that the Reception Centre Supervisor and the RCS personnel have to carry out when opening, operating, managing, and closing a Reception Centre. The activities listed would generally apply each time a Reception Centre is to be opened.

4.3.1 Priority Action Checklist - Before Evacuees Arrive

The Reception Centre Supervisor is responsible for opening, managing, coordinating, the delivery of services to disaster survivors or evacuees, and for closing the Reception Centre.

When the RC Supervisor receives a request to open a RC, his/her first operational priorities are as follows:

First Priorities

1. Contact building owner/custodian to secure access.
2. Initiate RCS staff call-out.
3. Report to the RC. Bring Reception Centre Kit.

Priorities - As Reception Centre is Opened

1. Establish RC Supervisor's office and administrative services.
2. Start RC operations log. Record date and time of RCS staff arrival.
3. Brief RCS staff, ESS supervisors and Support Agencies on:
 - type of disaster or emergency
 - number of people expected and time of arrival
 - special requirements or problem areas, if any and
 - unusual resource requirements.
4. Check operational status of each Service: personnel, supplies, equipment available or required, space allocation, operational procedures and so on

first aid
clothing
lodging
feeding
registration and inquiry
personal services
public health
health care
administration
maintenance
telecommunication
sanitation
security

5. Ensure all RCS, ESS, Support Agency staff wear some identification.

6. Have RCS personnel immediately check readiness of :
 - Sanitation facilities - clean, sufficient supplies available
 - Fire exits - unlocked and easy to access
 - Emergency generator - ready for operation
 - Emergency lighting
 - Heating equipment
 - Ventilation or air conditioning operation
 - Internal communications: switchboard, public address system
7. Designate a first aid room or area as soon as possible. Room should have running water.
8. Post appropriate signs on main streets leading to the RC indicating the location of the RC.
9. Arrange parking control if not provided by police.
10. Post appropriate signs in the RC indicating where and what services are offered.
11. Establish telecommunication centre close to RCS Supervisor's office. Maintain communication with the Assistant Director of ESS at the Emergency Social Services Operations Centre (ESSOC).
12. Restrict use of telephone and two-way radio to authorized personnel.
13. Take an inventory of equipment and materials that belong to the facility and assess and record general condition of the facility. Use a video camera for a visual record of the state of the facility prior to the evacuees' arrival

4.3.2 Priority Action Checklist- As Evacuees Arrive

1. RCS personnel posted in the front entrance or foyer of the RC meet and greet the evacuees and inform them of the various services available.
2. Personal Services volunteers may also meet and greet victims or evacuees to offer emotional support or personal care to unaccompanied children, dependent adults or elderly or groups with special needs.

3. Accompany persons requiring First Aid or with any health concerns to the First Aid Room or Health Care Services.
4. Depending on the nature of the disaster event, general well-being or condition of disaster survivors, people are directed to the Service they judge to be the most pressing, e.g., clothing, food, registration and inquiry etc.
5. Emergency Food Service would usually have hot drinks, juices, snacks, sandwiches, fruits available for evacuees upon arrival.
6. Evacuees would be asked to register as soon as possible after they have arrived **but not until their immediate basic needs have been met.**
7. As soon as the basic needs of evacuees are met, the RC Supervisor should hold an information meeting to:
 - introduce him/herself and supervisors,
 - reassure evacuees about the safety of the location,
 - bring them up to date regarding the disaster or emergency,
 - inform them of services available, locations of emergency exits, smoking areas, and
 - answer questions evacuees may have.

The RC Supervisor would let evacuees know when updated information about the event will be next presented. Evacuees should be briefed even if there is no information to report. In some emergencies or disasters, radio and television sets are provided so evacuees can follow news reports. (See *Communication Guidelines Section 5.10.2* for more details on the importance of communication with evacuees).

8. Ensure adequate telephone services are installed for the use of evacuees.
9. RC Supervisor needs to check with the RC Coordinator at ESSOC to determine how long evacuees are expected to remain in the RC. This information is essential for the Emergency Food Service who will either have to prepare or order food in.
10. RC Supervisor would arrange to meet regularly with RCS, ESS and other Support Services Supervisors to provide update about the disaster event or situation, check operational status of each Service, establish shift schedules for staff and, review RC daily schedule.
11. If a community is acting as a host community, ensure that community leaders from evacuated community, e.g. band councils, elected officials, are involved in briefing and caring for their own community members as well as acting as liaison for mutual problem solving.

12. Request assistance of evacuees if required.
13. If appropriate, request the community's Parks and Recreation department to organize activities for children.
14. Maintain accurate records of equipment and supplies purchased or borrowed.

4.3.3 Priority Action Checklists - Continuing Priorities

Once evacuees have settled in and Services are fully operational, the RC Supervisor is responsible for:

1. Briefing evacuees daily at set times
2. Monitoring the morale of evacuees.
3. Monitoring operational status of facility.
4. Maintaining daily schedules for each Service.
5. Briefing RC Coordinator at ESSOC on the needs of evacuees, nature of activities and problems encountered.

4.3.4 Priority Action Checklist - Closing Reception Centre

Plans for closing the RC begin as soon as evacuees return to their home or are transferred to Group Lodging Facilities or Commercial Accommodations or other forms of temporary lodging, unless it is used as a central information and meeting site.

The Director of ESS, after consultation with the Emergency Response Coordinator, informs the RC Coordinator of the RC closures. The RC Coordinator would pass this information on to RC Supervisor at each RC.

Once the RC Supervisor is informed of the closing of the RC, he/she would:

1. Ensure that the Reception Centre facility and grounds are cleaned by RCS personnel.
2. Arrange for the inspection of the facility by owner. Conduct a joint inspection with the owner. Resolve any problems and document unresolved issues. If damage is serious, video tape and report to Director of ESS.
3. Arrange for inventories of supplies and equipment. Verify with Director of ESS as to disposition of some supplies.
4. Restock equipment and supplies.
5. Return borrowed and rented equipment to suppliers. Obtain final invoices for

equipment and supplies purchased or rented.

6. Arrange for disconnection and removal of additional telephone services and for final billing for utilities and disconnections.
7. Turn over Operations Log, receipts and outstanding invoices to the Director of ESS.
8. Post a notice informing disaster survivors or evacuees where further assistance is available.
9. Arrange for letters of appreciation or recognition of staff, donors of goods, services and facilities used during the operation.
10. Prepare final report on the Reception Centre operation for the Director of ESS

4.4 Reception Centre Service Operations Log

The Reception Centre Service Operations Log is the form used to record and describe all significant activities that occur in a Reception Centre. The Log is essential for the smooth and effective operation of a Reception Centre facility.

The RCS Operation Log summarizes:

major management decisions regarding administration and delivery of services, request or reception of supplies and equipment, logistics and

daily summaries of facility status, activities, and problems encountered.

The RCS Operations Log assists in:

briefing incoming replacement personnel

keeping track of equipment and supplies borrowed, received or purchased referring to earlier decisions

briefing superior and

maintaining continuity of services.

The RC Supervisor may appoint a support person to log this information. Refer to *Appendix E*, for an example of an RCS Operations Log sheet.

4.5 Staff Identification

RCS, ESS, and Support Agency personnel should wear identification such as name tags,

armbands, vests, caps or buttons:

so they can be readily identified by evacuees who need assistance or information and to allow all RCS personnel access to the disaster area or facility and to have unhampered movement through the facility.

4.6 Administrative Services

Systematic administrative procedures - the paperwork or "red tape" - part of a Receptions Centre's operation are necessary and important. They should be instituted at the beginning of the facility's operation and continued until people return home or are otherwise relocated. RCS personnel need to know that all disaster expenditures by the RC have to be recorded and accounted for so the municipality or social service agencies or other organization acting on its behalf can be reimbursed by provincial or territorial ministries or agencies responsible for disaster financial arrangements.

Basic Administrative Services in a RC Include:

establishing and maintaining the RCS Operations Log, facility records, including those related to the purchase or rental of supplies, equipment, services

tagging or recording all articles loaned or borrowed

duplicating and distributing daily schedules and other necessary information

establishing and maintaining office coverage to monitor phones, radio, tv and, if necessary assist the telecommunications team and

in some situations, personal possessions such as important family records and valuables may be volunteered by evacuees for safekeeping. Accurate records must be kept of all items volunteered.

4.7 Daily Supply Status

The RCS volunteers report to the RC Supervisor on a daily basis to inform him/her as to what additional supplies are needed. Provision and coordination of supplies are the responsibility of the RC administrative services.

4.8 Evacuee Assistance

The RC Supervisor should encourage maximum participation of evacuees in the operation of the RC. Such participation provides a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the general well-being of the facility. The RC Volunteer Coordinator would be responsible for coordinating and assigning volunteers to various RC tasks.

Evacuees can assist by:

providing emotional support to persons who are distressed

caring for infants or young children individually or in groups so parents can attend to disaster-related needs or enjoy temporary relief (**Note: care of infants or children by evacuees should be supervised by municipal Day Care or Nursery personnel**)

helping to care for the dependant elderly

assisting with administrative and clerical work and records keeping and

assisting with food service, sanitation, maintenance, night watches, etc.

4.9 Registration of Evacuees

Registration of all occupants in the RC facility is important:

to help in locating missing persons or separated family members
to maintain an accurate list of who is in the facility

to report the number of occupants to the RC Coordinator

to determine feeding and sleeping arrangements

to determine any special requirements, such as health needs and persons requiring other special care

to determine general supply needs

to ascertain useful skills and interests

to assign people to special teams or other work assignments and

to provide data for possible post-evacuation services.

Chapter 5

Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities and Delivery Guidelines

Emergency Social Services and Support Services

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of the Reception Centre Service is to set up and manage Reception Centres to facilitate the delivery of Emergency Social Services and other Basic Support Services (First Aid, Public Health, Health Care) to disaster victims or evacuees.

This chapter describes the Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities and Delivery Guidelines of Emergency Social Services, First Aid, Public Health, Health Care and other community services or agencies that may be called on to assist with the reception

and care of disaster victims or evacuees.

5.2 Emergency Social Services - Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities, and Delivery Guidelines

5.2.1 Introduction

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is a community emergency response organization responsible for the delivery of those basic services considered essential for the immediate and continuing well being of persons affected by a disaster. Six ESS are considered essential when disaster strikes:

- Emergency Clothing
- Emergency Lodging
- Emergency Food
- Registration and Inquiry
- Personal Services
- Reception Centre Service

5.2.2 Common Role And Responsibilities of ESS at Reception Centres

As part of their emergency preparedness planning process, the Coordinators of each of the six ESS assign Supervisors and staff to provide their respective services to disaster survivors or evacuees arriving at Reception Centres.

Since this manual describes the overall role and responsibilities of the Reception Centre Service, this Service will not be described below. What is summarized below are the common roles and responsibilities of the Supervisors and Staff of each of the five other ESS at Reception Centres:

(1) Prior to a Disaster

- staff of each of the five ESS are usually pre-assigned to a Reception Centre
- as part of their emergency preparedness planning activities, they meet with the Reception Centre Supervisor and Reception Centre Service (RCS) staff operating and managing the Reception Centre they have been assigned to and discuss administrative and program roles, responsibilities, and guidelines for the reception, care, and delivery of services to disaster victims and evacuees
- visit the RC with RC Supervisor and RCS staff to
 - familiarize themselves with the facility, its resources and shortcomings
 - review areas allocated for the delivery of each of the five ESS
 - discuss reception centre procedures and traffic flow of disaster victims when

- they first arrive at the RC and within the RC once they have settled in
 - discuss set up of ESS and delivery procedures, and
 - shift schedules if the RC is opened for more than 12 hours;
- discuss ahead of time the staff, supplies, equipment that each of the five ESS will be bringing to the Reception Centre to operate their respective Services. Each of the five ESS are responsible for the purchase and provision of supplies and equipment required by their respective Service to meet evacuee needs. For example, the Clothing Service is responsible for purchasing blankets and basic clothing supplies that may be required by evacuees when they first arrive at the RC. In a disaster, the Supervisor of Clothing Services at the RC would arrange with the Coordinator of Clothing at the Emergency Social Services Operation Centre (ESSOC) for the purchase and delivery of any additional clothing required by the Clothing Service at the RC. Delivery of equipment and supplies to the five ESS needs to be coordinated with the RC Supervisor and RCS personnel
- familiarize themselves with the ESS lines of communication and authority. Supervisors of the five ESS report directly to the Reception Centre Service Supervisor for administrative direction and to the Coordinator of their assigned Service for program direction (See *Appendix A* for lines of authority and communication); and,
- participate in ESS or community-wide exercises designed to test RC operation and management including the delivery of each of the five ESS.

(2) During a Disaster

- report to their assigned RC and, if required, set up and operate their respective Service
- prepare work schedules for staff, rotate and replace staff ensuring that the Service is available to meet evacuee needs on a full-time basis or in accordance with directives set out by the RC Supervisor in consultation with the Coordinator of RCS
- report on a regular basis to the Coordinator of their respective Service at the ESS Operation Centre and to the RC Supervisor on the needs of evacuees, activities to date and problems or issues
- maintain a log of all actions and/or decisions taken; and,
- coordinate with the RC Supervisor regarding the delivery of equipment or supplies.

(3) After a Disaster

- ensure that staff participate in RCS and ESS operational debriefings
- turn over to their respective Coordinators logs, records, documents, receipts and

invoices for processing or safekeeping and,

- prepare a report on their respective Services' activities for the Coordinator of their respective Service.

5.2.3 Reception Centre Role and Responsibilities of Each Service During a Disaster

(1) Emergency Clothing Service

The Supervisor and Staff of the Emergency Clothing Service (ECS) are responsible for:

- setting up and operating the Emergency Clothing Service in accordance with the Reception Centre response plan
- organizing and implementing a system of distribution for blankets and basic clothing
- assessing clothing needs of disaster survivors or evacuees arriving at the RC using the guide of one complete outfit of clothing per person if required (Note - depending on circumstances clothing may be provided onsite or people may be referred or transported to regular clothing distributors)
- providing Personal Comfort Kits for evacuees e.g. grooming articles, toothpaste, toothbrushes and towels, if required
- sorting and storing supplementary clothing supplies and blankets brought to the RC
- keeping an accurate record of clothing articles that have been loaned, borrowed or rented, and
- liaising with the Reception Centre Supervisor if a sorting and storage area for donated clothing is required in the facility.

(2) Emergency Lodging Service

The Supervisor and Staff of the Emergency Lodging Service (ELS) are responsible for:

- setting up and operating the Emergency Lodging Service in accordance with the Reception Centre response plan
- locating emergency accommodation for evacuees using the Emergency Lodging Resource Directory
- recording information on private accommodation volunteered by private citizens
- assigning evacuees to private homes, commercial accommodations or Group

Lodging Facilities as instructed

- if required, coordinating transportation of evacuees with the communities' Emergency Transport Services
- if accommodations are in short supply, ELS staff assign the frail, elderly, handicapped, family with infants and emergency response workers to commercial hotels according to predetermined guidelines
- maintaining records of where evacuees are lodged and liaising with Registration and Inquiry Service to assist them in keeping track of evacuee whereabouts and locating evacuees
- informing evacuees assigned to various accommodation sites of services available to them in Reception Centres or elsewhere in the community; and
- keeping track of available and committed lodging resources and lodging space.

(3) Emergency Food Service

The Reception Centre Supervisor and Staff of the Emergency Food Service (EFS) are responsible for:

- setting up and operating the Emergency Food Service in accordance with the Reception Centre response plan
- preparing **nutritious** snacks and hot or cold beverages for when evacuees arrive
- keeping accurate records of food supplies taken from school /church / community centre inventories and/or of food purchased or ordered
- consulting with the Coordinator of EFS at the ESS Operation Centre if prepared meals or large supplies of food have to be ordered in
- liaising with the RC Supervisor on a regular basis to determine the number of evacuees to be fed
- arranging for the provision of special meals to evacuees with special dietary needs
- supervising the security of food preparation, handling, service and storage and liaising regularly with Public Health Inspectors, and
- reporting regularly to the Coordinator of Food Service at ESSOC on food related activities at the RC.

(4) Registration and Inquiry Service

The Supervisor and Staff of the Registration and Inquiry Service are responsible for:

- setting up and operating the Registration and Inquiry service in accordance with the Reception Centre response plan
- explaining the purpose of R&I and encouraging persons from evacuated area to register their family
- assisting disaster survivors or evacuees in registering and in completing Registration and Inquiry cards
- initiating the R&I process in the RC and reuniting families, if possible
- liaising with the RC Supervisor to keep him/her apprised of R&I activities
- providing statistical information on number of people evacuated, number of people in RC, evacuee special needs to RC Supervisor and Coordinator of R&I at ESSOC,
- liaising with the Central Registry and Inquiry Bureau and providing their telephone number to disaster victims who relocate to accommodation outside the RC, and
- ensuring confidentiality and accuracy of information.

(5) Personal Services

The Supervisor and Staff of Personal Services are responsible for:

- setting up Personal Services in previously allocated area and providing services in accordance with the Reception Centre response plan
- providing emotional support to persons experiencing strong emotional reactions as a result of the loss or serious injury of a loved one, of being separated from family members, of loss of home, pet, property, of fear of being killed or injured or because of the uncertainty created by the disaster event
- setting aside rooms where PS can meet privately with persons or families experiencing acute stress reactions or requiring special assistance
- providing or arranging for the temporary care of children who are not accompanied by a parent or other temporary guardian such as a teacher and making similar arrangements for dependent adults, that is, elderly persons or persons with special needs who need temporary assistance

- advising the RC Supervisor as to the space, supplies and equipment required to care for these persons
- issuing financial aid to individuals or families requiring assistance with basic needs. Financial assistance may be issued by municipal or provincial Income Assistance personnel or Emergency Measures personnel according to predetermined guidelines, and
- providing information on stress reactions people of all age ranges may experience as a result of the disaster and measures they can take to better understand, express, and manage these reactions.

Consult the Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency Food Service, Registration and Inquiry, and Personal Services manuals for detailed information on how each of these Services are planned and organized prior to a disaster and how they operate when a disaster strikes. Copies of these manuals are available at the following internet address: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/emergency-urgence/>

5.3 Emergency Health Services - Reception Centre Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines for Delivery of Services

5.3.1 Lessons Learned in Previous Disasters

Past experiences have shown that, in major disasters or emergencies, evacuees may arrive at Reception Centres:

- with minor wounds or injuries
- without their medication, mobility aids or other necessary health aids
- having been recently discharged from hospital or with various ailments or illnesses
- experiencing hypertension as a result of the disaster event or because of the threat posed by the disaster e.g., rising flood waters, approaching forest fires
- with health concerns generated by the disaster event itself e.g., fear, for example, that their own health or their children's health are at risk because of exposure to toxic smoke, radiation, biochemical agents, etc.
- from nursing homes, special care facilities, hospitals because of damage or interruption of utilities in their facility due to the impact of the disaster. Such was the case during the Great Ice Storm of 1998 when electrical power to 4,000,000 people in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick was disrupted from a few days to over six weeks. Many of the people who sought refuge or services at Reception Centres required more specialized health care services, ones usually provided by health care workers, home nursing, or doctors.

It is essential, therefore, that basic health services be part of the overall Reception Centre Service response plan.

5.3.2 Responsibility for Health Care Services in Reception Centres

In Canadian municipalities, the Emergency Health Services (EHS) is the emergency organization responsible for organizing, coordinating, and delivering community-wide health services in a disaster or emergency. They are also responsible for assigning health care personnel to RCs. Arranging for the provision of Health Care Services in the RC with EHS authorities is the responsibility of the Director of Emergency Social Services and the Coordinator of RCS. Once provision of HCS has been arranged, it is important that the Reception Centre Supervisor liaise with the HCS personnel assigned to the RC to discuss health care services to be offered to evacuees, space allocation and standard operating procedures.

5.3.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Emergency Health Services Personnel and Volunteers at Reception Centres

(1) First Aid Workers

In most communities, responsibility for the provision of First Aid in Reception Centres has been assigned by Emergency Health Services to St John Ambulance. However, Red Cross or other trained volunteers may also be involved in organizing the delivery of First Aid in an RC.

As with Emergency Social Services personnel, the Supervisor of First Aid Services and First Aid personnel working in the RC report to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative purposes and to the Coordinator of Emergency Health Services for program delivery.

First Aid - Priority Action Checklist

Priorities - As Reception Centre is Activated

Assess available first aid supplies and anticipate supplies that will be required

Establish channels of communication with Emergency Health Services, if required

Priorities As Evacuees Arrive

Provide first aid to evacuees if required

Ensure that transport to medical facilities is available for disaster survivors or evacuees with serious health problems.

Continuing Priorities

Establish a shift schedule so First Aid volunteers are available on a 24/7 basis to provide basic services to evacuees.

(2) Public Health

In most communities' Emergency Health Services response plans, the Medical Officer of Health is responsible for ensuring that Public Health personnel such as Public Health Nurses and Public Health Inspectors are assigned to Reception Centres to monitor the public health of evacuees.

Roles and Responsibilities of Public Health Personnel

a) Public Health Nurses

- establishing a program of preventive health care to avoid the spread of communicable disease, respiratory infections and other illnesses
- establishing procedures to detect and refer persons with medical or health problems to appropriate specialists and facilities in the community
- assuming responsibility for the total health care and personal needs of those evacuees requiring health services and assistance such as infants, the elderly, pregnant women, persons with physical disabilities, people receiving home care, etc. requesting the procurement of special apparatus for evacuees with special needs, e.g. canes, wheelchairs and special resources necessary for the care of infants

ensuring that where prescription drugs for evacuees are needed this requirement will be looked after

ensuring the safe and secure storage of all drugs brought into the a RC in addition to meeting the specifications for their storage to ensure their effectiveness and

securing transportation for those evacuees requiring hospitalization.

b) Public Health Inspectors

providing regular inspection of all Reception Centres in operation in a community or region to ensure compliance with public health regulations

monitoring food, water, sanitation and other public health related areas

carrying out water purification measures if required

apprising and providing consultation to the Reception Centre Supervisor of all public health related activities.

As with Emergency Social Services personnel, the Supervisor of Public Health Services and Public Health personnel working in the RC report to the Reception Centre Supervisor for administrative purposes and to the Coordinator of Emergency Health Services for program delivery.

(3) Health Care

Lessons learned from The Great Ice Storm of 1998 demonstrated the need to have additional health care services personnel available in RCs to meet the needs of evacuees who:

were in hospital but had to be evacuated to make room for the more seriously ill

were ill or recovering from a major illness at home

who are bed ridden and living at home but who need daily nursing care or are on electrical life support

who reside in public or private Nursing Homes or Special Care Facilities and had to be evacuated because electrical power was disrupted

are fragile or have mobility problems and need assistance

are mentally challenged

have a mental illness but are living independently in the community.

Health care providers such as nurses, orderlies, home care workers familiar with home care health services need to be recruited ahead of time from private and public special care facilities, medical clinics, and other health facilities to provide similar services in RC in case exceptional disasters as the ice storm, earthquake or a major flood occur.

Important Guideline: Whenever possible, personal care home staff and home care workers should accompany clientele to Reception Centres to provide for ongoing healthcare needs. Continuity of care is vital to the physical and emotional well-being of residents.

5.3.4 Influenza Pandemic, Biochemical Attack, Radiation Accident

The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 on the United States and the anthrax attacks that followed heightened the level of awareness of governments world wide to the need to be prepared to immediately respond to the health effects of similar events. In Canada, the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal health authorities have developed

emergency health plans to respond not only to biological and chemical attacks but also to other potential health hazards such as the release of radiation from a nuclear site or an influenza pandemic.

If an influenza pandemic was to occur, the medical system may be overwhelmed and medical care may have to be set up at alternate emergency care sites such as Reception Centres. A large number of health care workers as well as volunteers would have to be recruited to care for the sick and operate and maintain the RC.

The Emergency Social Services response organization and its six response Services would be called upon to deliver its Services and in recruiting, screening, training, and supporting volunteers. The Reception Centre Service would play a major role in recruiting volunteers to coordinate the delivery of the RC in such situations.

The Emergency Health Care response organization would be in charge of:

- training and allocating health care professionals and volunteers to care for patients and for other specific tasks. E.g., infection control procedures, use of respirators and care of patients on respirators, safety and protection of workers, use of protective equipment, etc.
- locate the necessary health care equipment and supplies to supplement what is already available in a RC
- setting monitoring and care standards.

Similar procedures would be followed if a community was exposed to a radiation leak. De-contamination procedures for evacuees and staff would be organized by health care authorities with the assistance of other emergency response organizations such as fire, ambulance, police services.

Provincial, territorial, and municipal Directors of Emergency Social Services need to develop appropriate emergency response plans in case of a pandemic influenza, of biochemical attacks or of radiation contamination incident. Planning for such events should be coordinated with Emergency Health Services. They would identify the various staff, equipment, supplies and care guidelines required to respond to such events.

5.4 Pets

5.4.1 Responsibility for Pets

The local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), community animal control officers or other animal organizations are usually responsible for developing response plans for the care of pets in an emergency.

5.4.2 Operational Guidelines

Health and safety considerations do not permit lodging pets in the same space with

people, with the possible exception of seeing-eye dogs. However, because people derive comfort and reassurance from their pets, lodging and care of pets demand management's early attention. People may refuse to relocate if they cannot bring their pets, or they may bring their pets even if forbidden to do so.

It is important, therefore, that appropriate planning measures for the emergency care of pets be discussed with SPCA workers or animal control officers in the community **during planning stages**. Other sources of assistance in planning for pets include veterinary hospitals, breeder associations, kennel owners, pet supply stores and so on.

If time and space permit, set aside or construct separate facilities for pets. Volunteers can create a compound by stretching plastic over wire fencing or using tennis courts. Arrange to provide water and food until owners can take custody of them.

During The Great Eastern Ice Storm of 1998, a special kennel was set up to care for over 600 pets

5.5 Sleeping Arrangements at Reception Centres

5.5.1 Operational Guidelines

Reception Centres are set up to provide basic Emergency Social Services to victims of a disaster. Although most disaster survivors may not take advantage of ESS offered in the immediate hours after a disaster, many do come to Reception Centres in the days following for information and for basic ESS needs. Because large numbers of people may avail themselves of these services, usually set up at the RC in large spaces such as gyms, arenas, community halls, it is recommended that Reception Centres **not be used** as Group Lodging Facilities for evacuees.

The Emergency Lodging Services (ELS), located in the RC, are responsible for arranging or providing temporary lodging to disaster survivors and evacuees who are homeless or require temporary lodging as a result of a disaster. As part of their emergency preparedness planning process, the ELS have made arrangements with hotels and motels in the community to accommodate people in times of disaster. In most disasters to date, people affected usually have arranged to stay with friends and relatives. Some, however, choose to stay at commercial facilities.

In some major disasters, such as the Great Ice Storm of 1998, the number of people requiring temporary lodging may be so great that commercial facilities may not be able to meet emergency lodging needs. In such circumstances, the Emergency Lodging Services **sets up and operates Group Lodging Facilities** in buildings such as schools, churches, community halls, arenas, auditoriums or other public facilities not normally used for living purposes but which are adapted as dormitory type of accommodation for large numbers of people. During the Great Ice Storm, several communities did open Group Lodging Facilities that remained operational for several weeks. However, most of the 320 Reception Centres that were in place during the ice storm did not offer sleeping

accommodation. Evacuees preferred to sleep in their home or at friends who had alternate sources of heat. Evacuees came to the Reception Centres to eat, meet with friends and with government officials or for recreational activities.

In some smaller communities where dormitory type of facilities are limited or in some disaster situations, Reception Centres may have to be used to accommodate people. In such circumstances, the Emergency Lodging Services' Group Lodging Facility personnel would take charge of establishing sleeping arrangements in the RC in consultation with the RCS supervisor and personnel.

Consult Chapter 5 of the *Emergency Lodging Manual* for details on sleeping guidelines for Group Lodging Facilities.

5.6 Sanitation Services

Sanitation services in the RC may be provided by regular maintenance staff or RCS workers assisted by evacuees. The municipality's sanitation service provides assistance with removal of garbage.

5.6.1 Priority Action Checklist

Priorities - Before Evacuees Arrive

- Post appropriate signs indicating location of men and women's washrooms, if required
- In consultation with Public Health Services obtain additional portable toilets if needed
- Check inventory of sanitary supplies: toilet paper, soap, sanitary napkins, towels, diapers, etc., and obtain additional supplies, if needed
- Determine how many trash cans, garbage cans, plastic trash bags, etc., are available and obtain additional supplies, if needed

In consultation with Public Health Services, determine best possible waste disposal system and implement it immediately.

Priorities - As Evacuees Settle In

- Keep toilet areas as clean as possible and keep portable toilets emptied
- Control use of limited water available for sanitary purposes
- Maintain cleanliness in all areas of facility

- Inform residents of need for their cooperation and assistance.

5.6.2 Operational Guidelines

Sanitation Standards

When large numbers of people congregate, the highest possible sanitation standards are necessary to prevent the spread of disease and to maintain morale. Develop and post written sanitation and hygiene regulations. Coordinate with Health Services for preventive sanitation measures.

Shifts

If the RC is large, the sanitation service team should be subdivided into toilet, trash and garbage, and general cleaning. Depending upon the assignment, shifts should be short and rotated because of the unpleasantness of the tasks involved.

Toilet Facilities

Toilet must be kept constantly clean.

Garbage

Containers for garbage and trash should be placed throughout the RC. These should be emptied regularly to avoid fire and health hazards and maintain morale. Rental of large commercial garbage containers will facilitate garbage storage and removal.

Sanitation Supply Checklist

Refer to *Appendix C*, for a checklist of sanitation supplies and various other supplies required to maintain cleanliness in the RC.

5.7 Maintenance

The maintenance staff who regularly service the RC facility is responsible for power and lighting, heating, and ensuring proper ventilation of building.

5.7.1 Priorities - Before Evacuees Arrive

- If required, obtain and connect portable generators to provide power for heat, lighting, cooking, ventilation, communications, and other essential activities. If a building is to be used as a RC, ensure that proper electrical connections for generator use are installed ahead of time.
- Obtain a supply of lamps, flashlights and batteries for lighting purposes, and distribute them to essential areas in the facility.

Priorities - As Evacuees Settle in

- Monitor air quality and temperature and keep them within comfortable limits.

5.7.2 Operational Guidelines

Maintenance

People who own or operate the facility would provide technically competent persons to maintain such complicated equipment as air conditioning, power plants, water systems, heating, plumbing and electrical systems or improvised or specially installed systems provided to make the building usable for the reception of large numbers of people.

Why Proper Ventilation is a Priority

With many more people than normal in the building, it is essential that fresh air be evenly distributed throughout the facility. Ventilation with outside fresh air is important for both air quality and for temperature control (*See Appendix F*).

5.8 Security

For normal security and safety functions, the RC Supervisor may have to rely on RCS workers or volunteers for such concerns as traffic control, access to facility, fire prevention and control. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to request support from the local police or from a security agency.

5.8.1 Priorities - Before Evacuees Arrive

- Ensure staff are in place to direct traffic in parking area if required
- Ensure staff is available to direct movement into the building through entrances as determined by the RC Supervisor
- Identify and clear all fire exits so they are unobstructed and easy to access. Ensure security doors are unlocked

Establish security patrols if required. Security is particularly important if certain areas of the facility are off-limits to evacuees e.g., classrooms, labs, pools and so on.

5.8.2 Priorities - As Evacuees Arrive

- Establish regular security controls, if required
- Ensure that security and safety regulations are adhered to
- Maintain security services if required.

5.8.3 Operational Guidelines

(1) The Need for Basic Rules and Scheduling

Written regulations for fire, security, alcohol, smoking, and sanitation should be posted and obeyed.

(2) Fire Prevention

Brief evacuees as soon as possible on the fire regulations that apply in the facility and on the location of fire exits.

- Inspect all portable extinguishers to assure they are usable
- RESTRICT SMOKING to outside the facility only

(3) Use of Non-electrical Light or Heat Sources.

Kerosene lamps and heaters or candles **SHOULD NOT BE USED** if there is no electricity. Light sources requiring an open flame are a fire hazard. Also some heat sources emit gases that are dangerous to health when they are allowed to build up in living spaces.

(4) Alcoholic beverages are not to be brought into the Reception Centre

People who go out for the day or evening and return intoxicated are not allowed into the RC. If the RC is also providing sleeping accommodation, set aside a classroom where people who are inebriated can be accommodated.

Discuss this issue with the RC Advisory committee.

5.9 Telecommunication

Internal telecommunications, switchboard, telephones, public address system are usually operated by staff who normally work in the facility. Alternate telecommunications should be planned for with Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) or municipal telecommunication services.

Use of cellular phones and hand held receivers by RC Supervisor and RCS personnel. Cellular phones and hand held receivers are important telecommunication tools. However they can easily become a nuisance in a Reception Centre because of the noise emitted and because of the status they seem to confer to individuals or to the event. Evacuees conversing with RCS personnel can become annoyed if they are constantly interrupted by personnel taking calls. Unless the Reception Centre is under imminent threat, RCS and ESS personnel should restrict the use of cellular phones to the service areas or communication room. Cellular phones and two way radios should not be used to convey confidential or important information about the event or people (e.g, medical condition) as their signals can be picked up by scanners or overheard by evacuees.

5.9.1 Priorities - Before the Evacuees Arrive

- Establish telephone or radio contact with the Coordinator of Reception Centre Services at ESS Operation Centre and arrange for regular contacts.
- Establish means of communicating with evacuees using public address system or portable loud speaker (available in Reception Centre Kit)
- Ensure evacuees have access to public telephones. Additional telephones may need to be installed. Evacuees need reminding that they are responsible for long distance calls unless other arrangements have been made with the telephone company.

5.9.2 Priorities - As Evacuees Settle In

- Provide disaster survivors and evacuees with newspapers, radio, TV, communication bulletins, newsletters, posters, personal messages, and other communications in addition to meeting with them on a regular basis. Arrange to have information written in the languages spoken by various groups evacuees.

5.9.3 Operational Guidelines

- Maintain routine and emergency communications with:
 - RC population
 - Supervisors of Services
 - ESS Coordinator at ESSOC
- Log all important communications for the record.

5.10 Communication

5.10.1 Communication with Residents Is Essential

In a major disaster, evacuees will be understandably anxious and fearful about what has happened and what the future holds. They will also be inexperienced in adjusting to the crowded conditions and other disruptions in their normal lives. They will be hungry for official, reliable, accurate information about the disaster. Such information will help reduce anxiety and reduce the spread of rumours.

5.10.2 Communication From Management to Evacuees

(1) Information to Provide as Soon as Evacuees Arrive

An information meeting should be held **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** with evacuees in the RC facility to:

- introduce RCS, ESS, First Aid, Public Health, and Health Care supervisors, and staff
- reassure residents about the safety of the location
- bring them up to date regarding the disaster or emergency
- explain ESS and Health related services available
- announce important rules and regulations
- set schedule for daily briefings
- request assistance if required.

(2) Information to Provide on a Regular Basis

- special emergency notices issued by the local government
- information on disaster and reassurance about safety of RC location
- opportunity for evacuees to ask questions and check rumours
- review of services available
- directions for moving to another facility, if necessary.

(3) Regular Briefings to Evacuees Are Essential

It is vital, in the early stages of a disaster, that people know they will be brought up to date at a specific time.

Briefings are required even if there is no information to report, because:

- the lack of new information, and the fact there is no change in the situation, is important information
- the briefing will help dispel rumours that can be damaging to morale and order and
- the scheduled briefing indicates that management recognizes the importance of communicating to the population.

Do not withhold important information from evacuees. However, ensure that you present it in the proper context so that it will not be misinterpreted, cause unnecessary distress or loss of morale. Whatever the content of a message, you must convey it in

terms of your having the general situation under control. Discuss your communication strategies with the RC Advisory Committee.

(4) Special Communication Needs

The manager may need to be aware of the specific communication needs of various people, e.g. hearing impaired, blind, persons who cannot read or persons who may not understand English well. Proper resource persons should be available to explain verbal or written rules and regulations to them.

5.10.3 External Communication

(1) Telephone Service

- In the early phases of a disaster, do not use the telephone unless you have a real emergency to report. Do not tie up lines that may be urgently needed for emergency operations.
- Ensure sufficient public telephones are installed to allow evacuees to contact concerned friends and relatives.

5.10.4 Communications With the Media

(1) Interviews with the Reception Centre Supervisor

The Reception Centre Supervisor may receive requests from the media for personal interviews or for interviews with evacuees. Each municipality, as part of their emergency response plan, has a Public Information Team which specifically deals with the media. All requests for interviews should be channelled through them.

(2) Interviews with survivors

Immediately after a disaster, survivors' anguish, grief and terror quickly become the subject of media attention. Survivors need privacy at this time, so they can work through and gain control over the strong emotional reactions triggered by the disaster. During this phase the needs of the media run counter to the needs of the survivors. Media scrums where survivors have to face flood lights, flash bulbs, microphones, cameras, and reporters can add to the emotional overload at a time when decrease in input is essential.

It is important, therefore, to encourage contact between media and survivors that produces sensitive coverage of the human impact of the disaster, respecting the vulnerability, privacy and confidentiality of survivors. Having reporters select one or two representatives from each medium to interview some survivors and then pool their information is one way of resolving this sensitive issue. Interviewees should always be

consulted before arrangements are made with the media.

5.11 Evacuee RC Advisory Committee

Once disaster survivors settle in, the RC Supervisor should discuss with them the establishment of an Evacuee Advisory Committee to:

- act as liaison between RCS personnel and evacuees
- assist with setting up RC daily schedules (for meals, recreation) or establishing guidelines regarding curfews, access to services, evacuee behaviour or other issues that arise
- settling disputes between evacuees
- requesting additional services
- meet with other evacuees to discuss to discuss common issues and to provide mutual support.

If an Evacuee Advisory Committee is formed, the RCS Supervisor and RCS personnel would meet with them to review the committee's:

- expected roles and responsibilities
- degree of authority they have in setting policies or guidelines.

The RCS Supervisor and personnel should not use the committee to rubber stamp policies that have already been decided ahead of time. If the committee is consulted regarding policies, their recommendations need to be taken seriously. Otherwise, evacuees may become demoralized and lose respect for RCS personnel.

5.12 Recreational and Social Activities

(1) Need for Recreational Activities

If disaster survivors or evacuees have to spend several hours in the RC, recreational and social activities may have to be organized. This is especially important if large numbers of children and adolescents are present. Such activities may assist in reducing feelings of fear and anxiety especially with children as well as providing some relief from boredom.

In some Provinces and Territories child care volunteers have been trained to reach out and comfort young children in traumatic disaster situations. Consult your Provincial or

Territorial ESS Director for details regarding available training.

(2) Assistance With Recreational Activities

Use existing community recreational facilities and staff to assist with recreation programs. Recreation workers from the community regularly organize activities for children, teens, and elderly persons. Many of them are trained help people recover a sense of safety and security through social and recreational activities.

5.13 Day Care Services

If a RC remains open to provide ongoing ESS and other services to survivors, the RCS personnel may have to arrange for the provision of Day Care Services for children who accompany their parents to the RC. Such services provide relief to parents who can leave their children with trusted persons while they attend to the practical details of putting their lives back together. It also helps both parents and children deal with fears of being separated from one another.

Licensed municipal day care agencies can help set up such services in the RC and provide well-trained staff. Parents are reluctant to leave their children with **unscreened volunteers**. Volunteers for these services should be selected ahead of time and criminal record checks as well as abuse registry background checks should be carried out by people organizing these services.

5.14 Services Available to Reception Centres from Other Municipal Emergency Response Organizations

Refer to *Appendix M*, for a description of a number of services provided to Reception Centres by various municipal emergency response organizations.

Chapter 6

Reception Centre Service

Reception Centres As Information and Meeting Sites

6.1 Introduction

In some disaster situations, such as the St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire (1988), the Hagersville Tire Fire (1990), the Oka Crisis, and the Manitoba Floods (1997), Reception Centres have been used as **central meeting and drop-in-sites** where evacuees, who have relocated to the homes of relatives and friends or to hotels and motels and who feel isolated and helpless as they watch the events unfold on television, can meet with neighbours and other community members to:

- discuss the disaster event, its progress and emergency measures being taken by officials to combat it, prevent further damage, protect homes and property (Hagersville Tire Fire 1990, Manitoba Flood, 1997)
- to obtain or gather information about the disaster, its potential effects on the health of victims, compensation payments, disaster programs and services (St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire 1987, Oka Crisis 1990)
- to meet with emergency officials or police who will accompany them to their home

to retrieve pets, valuables or essential items

- to apply for and collect financial assistance for accommodation, meals and other essentials until they can return home (Oka Crisis, 1990, Manitoba Flood 1997)
- to take legal action against individuals, private or public companies or organizations or government agencies that may be responsible for the disaster event (St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire 1987).

In several of these disaster events, the municipal Directors of ESS, at the request of municipal officials, mobilized ESS and Reception Centre Services personnel who opened and managed several central Reception Centres in various cities and villages so evacuees affected could meet to discuss the situation amongst themselves or with elected officials. In the following section, a description of the RCS response to the St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB fire is provided as an example of the type of information services that may have to be provided by RCS, ESS and other community agencies to meet evacuee needs in special disaster circumstances.

6.2 St-Basile-Le-Grand PCB Fire and Evacuation

On Tuesday evening August 23, 1988, a warehouse containing poly-chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) caught fire forcing 3,500 residents from the communities of St-Basile-Le Grand, St-Bruno and Ste Julie, Quebec from their homes when a toxic cloud of black smoke, containing dioxins and furins, two highly cancer producing substances, generated by the fire, spread over their residential areas. Residents remained out of their home for a total of 19 days while soil and water samples were analysed to determine contamination levels.

Two elementary schools and one high school were used to lodge approximately 1,000 evacuees on the first night. From day 2 to day 6 approximately 278 evacuees were lodged and fed at two of the elementary schools which were used as Group Lodging Facilities. The remaining evacuees stayed with relatives, friends and at commercial accommodations. One week after the fire, evacuees lodged in the schools were relocated to hotels and motels. For the next twelve days the two elementary schools, one in St-Basile and one in Ste Julie, were transformed into drop-in-centres and public meeting places. Approximately 300 evacuees would come to each of the Reception Centres each day for information and various services. Approximately 400 evacuees attended evening meetings every third day to question public officials on the disaster response, health issues, on when they would be able to return home, and on compensation measures.

Listed below, along with a brief description of their responsibilities, are the agencies,

who, both in St-Basile and in Ste Julie, were asked to set up service information booths and services for evacuees who came to the two Reception Centres :

- **Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Products.** This agency offered information to farmers and consumers concerned about contamination of vegetable gardens, crops, farm animals, and land by the toxic fumes. (Most of the area evacuated was occupied by farming families who serviced the Montreal area with milk, vegetables and pork. The pigs and other farm animals had been placed in quarantine and farmers were prohibited from eating or selling vegetables.)
- **Quebec Provincial Police.** The QPP was in charge of the perimeter surrounding the evacuation zone that officials believed had been contaminated by PCB fallout. They organized brief trips into the evacuated zones so evacuees could pick up pets left behind or additional clothing.
- **Quebec Protection Civile.** This agency is the emergency measures organization in Quebec and is responsible for assisting communities in developing emergency response plans. In this particular emergency, their personnel was also in charge of issuing cheques to evacuees for meals and other incidentals. They were assisted in their task by municipal employees and personnel from the Quebec Treasury Board. All of the evacuees from the affected zone came to the Reception Centre to first of all apply for financial assistance and receive their cheques. This was a long tedious process at first as each applicant had to present proof that they lived in the evacuated area before they were assisted. Cheques were issued for a period of three days which meant that evacuees had to go through this verification process several times during the evacuation period.

General Guideline: It is important that municipal and provincial departments of social services agree on specific financial rates for disaster victims ahead of time. Otherwise there may be undue delays and confusion as departments attempt to set policy and arrive at equitable rates. Rates should take into account if meals are being taken at restaurants and if people have to pay for laundry and other incidental expenses. Disaster victims may balk at being offered welfare rates since they do not consider themselves welfare recipients.

- **Emergency Lodging Services** assisted evacuees who required assistance with accommodation and other related services. The Lodging Service set up their own Emergency Operation and Coordination Centre as they had to arrange hotel and motel accommodation for 1200 people and manage the service for several weeks.
- **Emergency Food Services** provided beverages and snacks to evacuees at the Reception Centres.
- **Citizen's Committee of St-Basile-Le-Grand** also had a booth where forms were

provided to evacuees and discussion took place about taking legal action against the owner of the warehouse, the municipality of St-Basile and the Quebec provincial government. The committee organized public regular evening meetings with various municipal and provincial officials to discuss issues surrounding the PCB contamination and compensation.

- **Public Meetings of Evacuees and Disaster Response Officials at Reception Centres.** Reception Centre Services personnel were in charge of setting up these meetings which were held every third evening at the Reception Centres. More than 400 evacuees and over 40 elected officials, government representatives from the municipal and provincial governments as well as scientists, toxicologists, lawyers, and emergency measures workers attended these meetings. RCS staff had to set up chairs, install speakers and microphones for officials sitting at the head table and floor microphones for the evacuees, provide parking control, security, ensure that the fire department brought fans because there was no air conditioning in the gym, prepare coffee and snacks, provide day care for children, assist tv, radio and local cable tv crews set up, and so on.
- **City of St-Basile** also set up an information booth where city staff were available to answer questions from citizens about services available from the municipality.
- **Public Health** had set up health clinics in each of the Reception Centres. Several Nurses and a doctor were available to take blood pressure and recommend health measures to mothers who were breast feeding, pregnant women, persons exposed to the smoke from the fire and other health-related questions.
- **Psychosocial Services.** Social workers, psychologists and public health nurses also offered emotional support to individuals who were upset or experiencing strong stress reactions related to the event. Many evacuees were concerned about the potential health impact of PCBs on themselves and their children. They were also convinced that their homes had been devalued and that they might not be able to return to their neighbourhoods and farms for a long time.
- **Day Care and Recreational Services.** Since many families felt isolated in hotels and motels rooms, the local transit commission provided free bus service to the Reception Centres. Parents who had to go to work could leave their children at a Day Care set up in the Reception Centre. Municipal Recreation and Parks employees organized day trips and recreational activities for older children.
- **Bulletin Boards.** Bulletin Boards were set up by several agencies:
 - The Ministries of Agriculture and Environment set up a bulletin board which listed the latest contamination test results taken from homes, fields, and animals in various areas

- One bulletin board provided the newspaper clipping of articles from the major French and English newspapers on the PCB evacuation
- Another bulletin board was reserved for personal messages and shuttle bus schedule to hotels and motels
- In the Reception Centre in Ste Julie, the municipality had set up a bulletin board with a map of the municipality showing areas evacuated.
- **Information Table.** In each of the Reception Centres several tables had been set up where evacuees could pick up pamphlets and information sheets on a variety of subjects: PCBs, dioxins and furans, decontamination measures for people, pets, household items, notices warning people not to eat fruits and vegetables from the evacuated area, pamphlets on typical stress reactions adults and children may experience and how to cope, notices of public meetings etc.

Chapter 7

Reception Centre Service

Reception Centres as Staging Areas for Evacuation, Reception and Repatriation

7.1 Introduction

Each year, several Canadian communities have to evacuate because floods and forest fires threaten their homes or their communities. In some of these threatening situations, evacuees may be transported by planes and buses to host communities located several hundred miles away. In 1989, for example, 30 northern Manitoba communities, which were threatened by some 500 raging forest fires, were evacuated. More than 23,000 residents were forced to seek refuge in Winnipeg, Thompson, Portage, Brandon, Dauphin, Gimli and several other Manitoba communities. In 1995, communities in Alberta, North West Territories, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec also had to evacuate their homes because of major forest fires. In 1997, thousands of residents of Manitoba had to leave their homes because of flooding. In 2002, over 4,500 people had to be evacuated from Northern Saskatchewan communities because fires were threatening their communities.

7.2 Manitoba and Saskatchewan's Experience in the Evacuation, Reception and Repatriation of Flood and Forest Fire Evacuees

Practically every year, Emergency Social Services response organizations in communities across Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan organize and manage the evacuation of communities threatened by forest fires or floods. Both provinces have developed evacuation knowledge and expertise which they share in the **checklists** and **guidelines** which follow and which apply also apply to not only for Reception Centre Services but general Emergency Social Services preparedness and response planning.

7.2.1 General Guidelines

As always, clear and consistent **COMMUNICATION** is at the heart of any successful emergency response situation, especially when the lives of people are threatened.

Floods, especially flash floods, and forest fires are two life threatening events that require immediate and appropriate response from emergency authorities.

The decision **to evacuate or not to evacuate** a community can be a complex process involving many different levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) and a host of emergency response organizations from each of these jurisdictions - police, fire, social services, health, transport, natural resources, environment.

What is essential is that the various governmental and non-governmental representatives meet **early** to discuss and agree on evacuation measures and warning and evacuation message to be issued to the evacuating community.

Evacuation warning messages should be:

- clear, simple, practical, direct
- issued as early as possible
- explain why evacuation is necessary
- explain when evacuation will occur - specify time
- how people will be evacuated - specify means of transportation
- where they are being evacuated to (reception community or communities)
- where people are to meet to evacuate - specify location
- who is in charge of the evacuation
- where information on the evacuation can be obtained
- what evacuees are allowed to bring with them

Communication guidelines if there is a decision not to evacuate because the community is not yet in danger:

- explain why

7.2.2 When a Community First Assesses the Possibility of an Evacuation - ESS Response Guidelines and Checklist

The threat of rising flood waters or of dense smoke or of an approaching fire are warning signs that individuals or a community may have to evacuate. Usually, the band council or the mayor and local emergency measures officials will meet to discuss the threatening situation and evaluate the need to evacuate residents of their community. Whenever such preparedness planning meetings are held, the local Director of Emergency Social Services (ESS) usually attends to discuss measures and procedures to be followed by ESS if an evacuation does take place.

Whenever such emergency meetings are held, the Director of ESS should **immediately meet** with the Coordinators of the six Emergency Social Services and Support Agencies (First Aid, Public Health and Health Care Services, Transport, Police) to review ESS preparedness planning and response measures in case of an evacuation.

Topics and tasks to be covered may include:

- a review of the roles and responsibilities of each ESS Service and Support Agency Service should an evacuation occur
 - advising the Provincial Director of ESS that an evacuation may take place and that the Directors of ESS in the receiving communities be advised
 - immediately updating list of the community's residents and preparing specific lists with the assistance of nurses and community health workers of :
 - who is ill or is recuperating at home and may require special transportation
 - number of elderly who are not mobile or have special health requirements and may also require special transportation (e.g., air ambulance) or may have to be evacuated first
 - number of pregnant women and mother with infants or small children - aged 5 or less that may have to be evacuated first
- Guideline:** Nursing station or community health care staff would also prepare a list of prescription drugs people in the community are taking and have it at the ready should an evacuation take place
- review and coordinate transportation plans with nursing station, RCMP, local school bus owner, regular bus lines

Guideline: If special transportation is required for the ill and the elderly, one or two health workers may need to accompany residents. If there are not a sufficient number of nurses available locally, federal or provincial health authorities may have to be contacted to provide additional help.

- meet with band council's emergency response committee to:
 - review detailed evacuation procedures
 - relocation plans and communication with authorities in receiving communities
 - communication of evacuation message to citizens: how it will be done, who will follow up to check if message was received by everyone
 - essential clothing supplies and other personal items that evacuees will be allowed to bring with them (see *Appendix L - Emergency Kit - Evacuation Checklist*)
 - care and feeding of pets that have to be left behind

7.2.3 When a Community Decides to Evacuate - ESS Response Checklist and Guidelines

In most emergency situations, the decision to evacuate a community is made by the local band council or municipal council. The council would usually make such a decision based on information they have received from the Provincial Ministry of the Environment, if it's a flood, or from the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources if it's a forest fire. These Ministries would consult other provincial Ministries and local authorities before deciding to evacuate.

When a community decides to evacuate, the Director of ESS would immediately meet with the community's emergency response authorities, the Coordinators of the six ESS and Support Agencies - Public Health, Transportation, Police, Ministry of the Environment or Natural Resources to review evacuation procedures and guidelines.

Immediate priorities would be:

- arranging for the opening of a Reception Centre to be used as a **staging area**, that is a site where all evacuees are asked to report to prior to being transported by either air, water or road to the relocation community
- informing residents regarding
 - time the RC will be opened

- time buses will arrive and approximate time of departure
- what clothing supplies and personal items to bring with them
- a reminder about bringing their medical prescriptions, hearing aids and batteries, glasses with them or any mobility aid they require to get around
- arranging for the immediate transportation of the sick, the elderly, pregnant women and women with infants and small children

Guidelines: It is important to record the name address and telephone number of the Reception Centre in the receiving community where the elderly, the sick, pregnant women and women with small children are to be relocated to so family members who are leaving at a later time or day can be sent to the same locality and Reception Centre.

Because relocation will trigger some stress reactions, its important that family members and people from the same community be lodged together so they can provide mutual support, care for their elders and small children.

It is also easier for the band or municipal authorities to be present at the RC to assist members of their community, provide them with updates of the event or discuss any protective measures to be taken at home.

7.2.4 Reviewing Role and Responsibility of each ESS and Support Agency Services at the RC Staging Site

Emergency Clothing Service

The Emergency Clothing Service (ECL) would:

- if its early Spring or the trip is to last over 10 hours or is overnight, remind evacuees to bring blankets and pillows, and personal care kit (e.g, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, and face cloth)
- decide ahead of time exactly what clothing items evacuees are to bring with them and communicate this information clearly and accurately to all evacuees
- consult Transportation authorities before communicating with evacuees so they will know if there are luggage restrictions
- advise ECS in receiving community about clothing needs of evacuees.

Emergency Lodging Service

The Emergency Lodging Service (ELS) would:

- coordinate with the Registration and Inquiry and assist in preparing a list of the names and emergency address where evacuees will be relocated to. It is especially important to know who will be lodged at the RC in the receiving community, who will seek accommodation with friends and relatives in the relocation community or other community in the province or out of province. This information is necessary for emergency measures officials who will want to verify if everyone has been evacuated and where they have relocated to in case they have to be notified of additional emergency measures.
- Once the ELS has consulted evacuees about relocation plans, they would then contact the ELS in the receiving community to inform them of lodging needs.

Emergency Food Service

The Emergency Food Service (EFS) would:

- prepare sandwiches and snacks for the trip
- have an ample supply of milk, juice and water available for each bus, especially if they are travelling at a very hot time of day or have to travel a long distance before arriving at the nearest community
- provide serviettes and handi-wipes for each person
- if the bus trip is over 10 hours, arrange with restaurants along the route to be on standby to prepare and serve meals to evacuees. Once the buses are on their way the Coordinator of EFS would call the restaurants to confirm approximate arrival time and number of meals to prepare. If there are no restaurants or communities along the way, EFS would prepare additional meals that would be served in transit.

Registration and Inquiry Service

The Registration and Inquiry (R&I) workers would:

- complete registration cards for each person or family evacuating
- record in the Emergency Address and Telephone Number section (box 16) the emergency address where people will be relocating to

- remind those persons who will be staying with relatives to call the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) in the relocating community if they move to a new address. If possible, provide them with the telephone number of the CRIB
- provide each person or family with copy 1 (yellow) of the registration form
- keep copy 2 (pink) of registration form for R&I records
- send copy 3 (white) to the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau in the receiving community
- R&I staff would check with each registrant if they have special dietary, medical or transportation needs. This information is then relayed to the Coordinator of R&I who will pass on the information to the Director of ESS who will then provide this information to the Director of ESS in the receiving community.

Personal Services

Personal Services staff would:

- assist evacuation staff if some residents refuse to leave their home
- provide crisis intervention with individuals and families, if necessary
- assist with the evacuation of the dependent elderly
- make arrangements with PS workers in receiving community if evacuees have special needs such as requiring commercial accommodation, private home care
- send PS workers on each of the buses to reassure residents and assist with issues that may present themselves

Reception Centre Service

The Reception Centre Service staff would:

- open and operate the Reception Centre that is being used as a staging area
- have RCS volunteers meet and greet evacuees as they arrive and inform them of the various services available
- provide regular updates to evacuees about the threatening event, the arrival and departure of buses other relevant information

- if there is any delay in the evacuation
 - organize recreational activities for children and adolescents
 - provide a room where the elderly and mothers with infants can rest until the buses depart

7.2.5 When the Community Evacuates and is in Transit - ESS Checklists and Guidelines

Past evacuation experiences have taught ESS planners and responders many valuable lessons about this particular phase of an evacuation, that is, when residents are finally on busses, planes or boats and on their way to the receiving community. Listed below are some important lessons:

- if possible, the bus convoy should be accompanied by police - one police car at the head of the convoy and one at the end. This safety precaution is necessary in case the busses encounter a dangerous situation, for example, in the case of a forest fire, the fire has crossed the highway, heavy smoke is impeding visibility, bus breakdowns, or, in the case of a flood, road has been washed out or road is flooded
- each bus should be equipped with short wave radio so drivers can be in touch with the police cruisers accompanying them, with one another, and with the officials in charge of the evacuation. Although cell phones are useful, they may be inoperable in remote areas.
- buses should stop at regular intervals so passengers can stretch or to go to the bathroom. It is important that stops be discussed ahead of time so that toilet facilities are available.
- plan ahead for buses to make a scheduled stop for a meal in a community. If these communities have ESS teams, they could assist with reception, meals and other needs.
- each bus should have an ample supply of water or juices so passengers avoid becoming dehydrated.
- while in transit, passengers need to be kept informed of the following:
 - fire situation in their home community and surrounding area
 - news about loved ones left behind to protect their community or fight the fire

- distance to receiving community
- plans on arrival

Guideline: Keep messages short, simple, and clear as some people may be anxious about the situation.

7.2.6 Information on Evacuees to be Relayed to Receiving Community by Evacuating Community

It is important to underline that the reception of thousands of evacuees by a host community requires the involvement of many of the receiving community's emergency response organizations. Past disaster experience shows that the host community may have to open their Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) to coordinate the delivery of services of all types : police, health, transportation, public works, emergency social services, public information etc.

Listed below are some basic guidelines developed by Manitoba ESS and various municipal emergency response organizations as a result of lessons learned while acting as hosts to a large number of evacuees in their communities.

(1) Before Evacuees Leave Their Community

- Host communities need to be given as much **lead time and information** as possible to enable them to arrange reception, accommodation, and transportation on arrival, if required. Lead agencies responsible for evacuation and reception in each of their respective communities need to discuss and coordinate such information and activities as:
 - number of people to be evacuated
 - number of people requiring accommodation
 - number of families with small infants, number of frail elderly or persons with special needs or with health problems that will require special accommodation or mobility aids
 - departure and arrival times of evacuees
 - method of transportation and registration. In some threatening situations or because they live in isolated areas, some communities have had to be evacuated by plane. In other circumstances, some evacuees have used their own vehicles and travelled to friends and relatives either in or outside their own province/territory

to stay. It is important, however, that people who evacuate using their own vehicles first go and register at the designated Reception Centre in the nearest host community so:

- they can be accounted for
- their emergency address recorded in case relatives or friends are seeking their whereabouts or if they need to be informed of important developments
- receive assistance with gas or other incidentals.

In some situations, evacuees have been registered before leaving their communities and lists with their names faxed to the host community

- essential items evacuees are to bring with them
- name and address of Reception Centre being used in the host community to receive evacuees.

7.2.7 When Evacuees Arrive in a Host Community

When evacuees arrive in the host community, they should report immediately to the Reception Centre set up by the host community. If people are travelling by car or buses, police in the host community can meet them at a specified point and escort them to the Reception Centre(s) or appropriate signs posted on major roadway can guide them to the Reception Centre

- **ESS at host community Reception Centre provides the following:**
 - **Emergency Food Service** provides beverages, snack or meal especially if people have travelled long distances. Formula milk for infants may also be required.
 - **Registration and Inquiry** ensures people are registered and emergency address and telephone number are recorded. All evacuees, especially those travelling in their own cars, must report to the host RC so they can be accounted for and registered. Emergency officials may want a list of the evacuees to confirm who has left the community and how many remained behind to fight the flood or fire.
 - **Emergency Lodging** is responsible for assigning evacuees to private homes, commercial accommodation or Group Lodging Facilities
 - **Personal Services** provides emotional support to individuals or families who may have experienced losses or are seriously distressed by the event or as a result of the evacuation

- **Emergency Clothing** may need to provide basic clothing and have other items on hand such as: comfort kits, diapers, handy wipes, etc.
- **Financial assistance** may be required for personal incidentals. These allowances are usually provided by staff from Income Assistance as per guidelines established ahead of time
- **Health Services** are also available to assist people who may have left prescriptions behind, require special diets or have other health needs
- It is important that elected officials, emergency personnel and ESS staff from the evacuated community accompany the evacuees and are involved in the care of their own community members. The evacuated community can provide translation services, food services, clean-up and identifying special need requirements for evacuees who hesitate to come forward. Evacuees, in several instances, have operated and managed Group Lodging Facilities on their own with the assistance of a liaison person from ESS living in the receiving community
- Coordination between evacuated and host community prevents overlap in services and ensures that only authorized personnel purchase equipment or supplies
- Communication with evacuees is very important. Daily information meetings are held at a central Reception Centre site. Additional information meetings are called whenever vital information is received from the home community. Information can also be disseminated through daily newsletters distributed to all places evacuees are housed or in shopping malls, etc.
- In some emergency situations, the Reception Centre may remain open to provide drop-in-services to evacuees dispersed in the host community (**See section 6.2**).

7.2.8 When Evacuees are Ready to Return Home

When the disaster or disaster threat has passed and evacuees are ready to return home, it is important, once again, that they report to a central Reception Centre site so:

- evacuees are accounted for before leaving. This is especially important when planes or buses have been chartered to repatriate people. Each bus or vehicle should leave filled to capacity or with all evacuees on board. Returning people by regular air flights can be very expensive.
- Evacuees returning by personal vehicle can be provided assistance for meals on the way or with lunches or other items required for the trip.

- Evacuees are usually returned to their home community in the following order of priority:
 - Staff responsible for municipal services or facilities such as hospitals or nursing homes arrive in the evacuated community ahead of time so they can prepare their respective facilities for the arrival of evacuees. If the community has been flooded or soot from the forest fire covers the ground or homes, municipal personnel may have to carry out an initial clean up before people can return.
 - Next to be returned are people who have been housed in gyms, arenas, curling rinks, etc.
 - Then people housed in private homes and hotels and
 - Finally the elderly and those with health-related problems.

The Public Information Services in the host community should ensure that information that the emergency is now ended and where and when evacuees should report to for repatriation be widely publicized. A telephone number where evacuees can obtain additional information regarding the re-entry process should be provided.

(9) ESS Services Once Evacuees Return Home

Once evacuees return home, they may require ongoing support and services from Emergency Social Services. Listed below are some services provided in past disasters:

- **Financial Assistance** - Evacuees may require financial assistance for food and accommodation if they cannot return to their home because of damages to their home or the presence of soot, flood water or other contamination.
- **Self-Advocacy** - ESS may have to support efforts of disaster victims to obtain proper compensation for losses from Disaster Assistance Programs
- **Psychosocial Outreach** - If people have experienced major losses, a psychosocial outreach program may have to be organized to help people with ongoing acute emotional reactions and social issues. If people have to stay in Reception Centres because of lack of accommodations, physical and social activities may have to be organized for them and for children.
- **Clean-up** - Community members may require additional help with clean-up of their homes especially if they have been flooded.

Chapter 8

Reception Centre Service

Reception Centres as Disaster Assistance Centres

8.1 Edmonton's One-Stop Disaster Assistance Centre*

* The information in this section was adapted from an article written by R.A. Stutchbury entitled "Edmonton's One-Stop Shopping for Disaster Assistance" which appeared in the **Emergency Preparedness Digest** (1988? pp. 23-25) and from a report prepared by the city of Edmonton Social Services entitled "Report on M.E. Lazerte Victim Assistance Centre".

8.2 Tornado Strikes Edmonton

On the afternoon of Friday, July 31, 1987, the eastern part of Edmonton and of the counties of Strathcona, Leduc and Wetaskiwin, experienced severe winds, rain and tornadoes. Twenty-seven people were killed, and approximately 200 hospitalized because of injuries. Property damage in excess of \$330 million was incurred, mostly in the areas of the Sherwood Industrial Park, Clearview and Evergreen Trailer Park.

8.3 Municipal, Provincial and Federal Emergency Planning and Response

Less than 24 hours after the tornado, the first of three meetings was held in the government Emergency Operation Centre at Alberta Public Safety Services. Representatives from Emergency Preparedness Canada, various provincial departments, the City of Edmonton and the Counties of Strathcona and Leduc met to co-ordinate aid to victims and decided to set up 'one stop' victim assistance centres in each municipality.

(R.A. Stutchbury, Edmonton's One-Stop Shopping for Disaster Assistance, EPC Digest ... pp. 23-25).

Organized within 24 hours after one of the most important disaster to strike a large Canadian city in the last 25 years, Edmonton's Disaster Assistance Centre was, according to all concerned, a success of efficient disaster relief. It is offered here as a model for those communities who, once basic ESS needs are met, want to transform their Reception Centres into Disaster Assistance Centres (DAC) to facilitate the initial recovery process of disaster survivors.

8.4 Location of the Edmonton Disaster Assistance Centre (DAC)

The M.E. Lazerte Composite High School, situated in the northeastern corner of the city **close to the most severely damaged residential areas**, is what is known as a "community school." This means that community groups are able to use all the facilities of the school and the staff is geared to the needs of their community. It was an ideal choice for the Edmonton Victim Assistance Centre.

8.5 Setting up the DAC

A meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, August 2 to allocate space at the DAC. The Centre staff assembled at 8:00 a.m., August 3. Each agency organized its workspace and moved in necessary equipment. The school was able to provide typewriters as required, along with equipment such as tables and chairs.

Representatives from each agency met at 9:15 to confirm they were ready for action. At this meeting, each agency described the services they would be offering. This step was invaluable as it gave everyone in the Centre an idea of what was available for victims and survivors.

The DAC opened shortly before 10:00 am on August 3.

8.6 Agencies Represented and Services Provided

Essential municipal, provincial federal, private and volunteer agencies were represented in the Centre and offered the following basic services:

Registration

Disaster survivors who came to the DAC first registered with the Red Cross. Following registration, a volunteer escorted them to Information and Referral Services.

Information and Referral

Edmonton Social Services operated the Information and Referral service. Their role involved:

- Initial assessment of victims' immediate needs and concerns
- Provision of immediate emotional support to persons experiencing strong emotional reactions
- Information on and referral to other community resources. Clients were provided with a checklist of the agencies to visit and a diagram of the school indicating their location. A volunteer guided them to the first stop
- Coordination of child care service and
- Responding to telephone inquiries.

Housing

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Alberta Mortgage and Housing combined to provide housing for those families whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged. The two agencies had a number of two- and three-bedroom townhouses and apartments available. These units were provided for one month rent free and no damage deposit was required. Single-family residences were provided from the available rentals and Alberta Social Services supplied cash vouchers for the one month's rent. One hundred and twenty-four housing units were allocated during the Centre's operation with most of this activity occurring in the first three days.

Financial Assistance

Representatives from Employment and Immigration Canada were located with Health and Welfare Canada, Alberta Social Services and, from day three, Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Workers' Compensation. This group provided financial assistance to disaster survivors:

- The **Unemployment Insurance Canada** staff registered claimants for unemployment assistance - 1500 persons were without work as a result of the tornado
- **Health and Welfare Canada** staff received survivor and family allowance applications, initiated lost-cheque actions for federal cheques, and registered address changes for such things as family allowance and pension cheques

- **Worker's Compensation Board of Alberta** staff registered injured workers and helped with survivors' benefits and employer's enquiries
- **Alberta Social Services** provided crisis counselling and financial assistance. They were able to issue cheques and cash vouchers on the spot for such basic needs as food, clothing, lodging, transportation, medical and household needs and burial costs. All transactions were recorded on a portable computer at the Centre.

Health and Counselling Services

Health and counselling Services were headed by the **Edmonton Board of Health**, assisted by **Alberta Mental Health** and the **Psychologists' Association of Alberta**. These agencies provided health counselling services for families experiencing emotional and mental stress that was impacting on their health. Counsellors were available for immediate emotional support and, on an ongoing basis, for longer term follow-up.

This service was housed in the Student Services wing of the M.E. Lazerte School. This included a reception area and 5 individual offices which were available for counselling sessions and which provided the necessary privacy and confidentiality required.

While the Social Service staff in Information and Referral, and the Public Health and Mental Health staff in Counselling, were directly charged with counselling and emotional support, all the other agencies found that they were, to a degree, also required to play the role of helpful listener.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs

Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs provided a consumer education counselling service to assist affected families. These included:

- tip sheets on "How to hire a contractor" and consumer complaints involving home repair contracts
- information on Landlord-Tenant and Mobile Home Site tenancies
- information regarding insurance disputes and
- family financial counselling - how to deal with creditors, credit care, credit contracts, planning for a reduced income.

Free Legal Advice - Free local advice was offered by a local law firm.

Storage - uninsured victims of the tornado could receive free storage for one month.

Alberta Public Safety Services

Four officers of the Alberta Public Safety Services registered 685 applications for assistance under the Disaster Financial Assistance arrangements. The registration officers, in addition to their expected duties of explaining disaster assistance and completing applications and affidavits, were frequently expected to be knowledgeable about all aspects of home and automobile insurance. This requirement was eased when a representative from the Insurance Bureau of Canada came to the Centre.

Edmonton Water and Sanitation

A representative from Edmonton Water and Sanitation was present throughout the operation arranging for support from utility companies for such immediate needs as clean-up and disinfection of flooded basements, yard clean-ups, transporting debris and various other occurrences.

Volunteer Agencies

- **Red Cross** representatives registered attendees and provided most of the administrative support staff: information desk at front doors, Registration and Inquiry desk, escorts to guide the affected families through the entire Centre, switchboard operators, runners and message carriers for the entire Centre, food providers for lunch, dinner and snacks on August 3, friendly listeners in the cafeteria to give affected people someone to talk to while waiting.
- **The Salvation Army, Edmonton Food Bank and the Edmonton Relief Services Society (ERSS)**, combined forces. The Salvation Army maintained a counselling service, referring people who needed food, furniture, clothing, etc. to their own warehouse, the ERSS warehouse, and to the Food Bank. This approach provided some measure of control for the distribution of donated supplies and freed the warehouses to perform their primary functions of collection and distribution.
- **Two Mennonite** groups volunteered their service for clean-up or repair or rebuilding.
- **Commercial Agencies.** The Insurance Bureau of Canada had a volunteer representative in the Centre from day two to day five and handled many requests for information about insurance.

Additional Services. Some additional, thoughtful services were provided to make it easier for tornado victims to cope with trauma.

- **Child Care Room** - A child-care room was established with a supervisor from Edmonton Social Services, assisted by Red Cross volunteers. Many parents and

children did not want to be separated. However, where this was not a problem, the parents were able to visit the different agencies and not worry about their children.

- **Staff Meeting Room and Media Briefing Room** - The staff meeting room and media briefing room were very useful and must be considered as essential in any future Centre. They provided a quiet place away from the flow of people and also gave us the chance to work well with the media.
- **Public Affairs** - Public Affairs staff from the city and the province were busy with interviews, questions and requests for permission to film Centre operations.
- **School Staff Representative** - A School staff member, whose primary duty is to co-ordinate community activities in the school, was available for the duration of the operations of the centre.. She had access to all parts of the school, the authority to call in extra caretakers, and the energy and ability to foresee and meet many of our needs before we were really aware of them. Her access to the school facilities meant we had the use of a photocopier (between 15,000 and 20,000 sheets of paper were used) and a word processor. The word processor was used to prepare a Centre directory, information sheets for victims, etc., and to amend these as required.

Other agencies that could also be present at the DAC- Since each disaster is different, other agencies, not mentioned here, could also be required at the DAC such as: Natural Gas, Telephone Company, Hydro, Better Business Bureau, Canada Post and so on.

(6) Management and Operation of the DAC

- (a) **Management of the DAC** - The Director of Social Services for the City of Edmonton, who is also the ESS Director, and a staff officer from Alberta Public and Safety Services co-managed the DAC.
- (b) **Operational Meeting Prior to Opening** - Since the Centre had been organized on such short notice, the staff meeting held immediately before the Centre opened was an essential step because the Information and Referral Centre would not have been able to do its job if the different agencies had not reviewed the roles they would play.
- (c) **Daily staff meetings - Staff meeting involving representatives from each agency were convened daily at 3:00 p.m. for the following purposes:**
 - exchange of information on agency policies
 - information dissemination regarding new resources or services
 - problem resolution and

- statistical reporting.

8.7 Recommendations for future DAC Operations

On August 17, an operational debriefing of agencies who had offered services in the DAC and a City sponsored reception for volunteers was held. Recommendations for future DAC planning included the following:

- that clear understanding of rules and duration of service be negotiated with participating agencies
- that internal communications systems be investigated to minimize the loss of time and energy in communicating with various components of the centre
- that specific planning be made for child care including equipment, staffing (mature, well trained) and record keeping of children cared for, parent/guardian names, children's names and ages, where parents can be reached, if necessary, and pertinent medical histories
- that Social Services be in charge of volunteer management at any Centre and that they plan positions to be filled and then draw on the volunteer bank to fill those positions
- that a statistical recording system be designed to provide records and pattern of usage for follow-up reports and future planning. Forms and instructions should be consistent and simple for all agencies
- that an expense record system be established to serve as a check on expenditures and to provide a base for future planning
- that such a centre(s) be located as close to the affected area(s) as possible
- that responsibilities for co-ordination of activities in the Centre be clearly that of the City of Edmonton (particularly relevant to provincial agency/city relations)
- that inter-communication and parallel systems be established between Disaster Assistance Centres if more than one is established to track more accurately number of people/ businesses served (planning should benefit from all experiences). (*I would add consistency in services offered, policies and operation procedures).

Chapter 9

Reception Centre Service

Reception Centres as Family Support Centres

9.1 Introduction

Major transportation accidents such as air plane, train, bus or subway crashes, major industrial explosions or accidents such as the Sinking of the Oil Rig Ocean Ranger, the Westray Mine Explosion, or human caused disasters such as the Air India Plane Crash, the Montreal Massacre, Giant Yellowknife Criminal Explosion, the Ghakal Family Massacre cause multiple deaths and precipitate severe stress reactions in loved ones. In some disasters, such as the Ocean Ranger, Air India, Westray Mine Explosion, St Bernarde-Beauce Bus Crash, and Swiss Air family and friends had to wait several days or even weeks before rescuers recovered the bodies of those killed. In some cases, it took several months to identify the recovered bodies because of complex DNA identification processes (Swiss Air).

Whenever such tragedies occur it is important to immediately set up a central Reception Centre facility where emotional support and other important personal services can be provided to family members, relatives and friends of persons

- who are missing and awaiting rescue
- who are missing and presumed dead
- who are dead and await recovery, or
- who are dead and await identification.

9.2 The Westray Mine Family Support Centre

On Saturday May 9, 1992, an explosion at the Westray Coal Mine in Pictou County Nova Scotia killed 26 miners. Immediately following the explosion, a Family Support Centre for anxious family and friends awaiting news on the fate of their loved ones was opened. The Reception Centre was located in a community hall located above the Plymouth Fire Hall. The Family Support Centre (FSC) was staffed by several organizations: a

psychologist from a local hospital, clergy, Emergency Social Services, and Red Cross volunteers. On Sunday, May 10, eleven of the miners' bodies were recovered. The FSC remained open for a total of 8 days after which the search for the remaining 15 miners, presumed dead, was abandoned because of the danger of further explosions and mine collapse. The bodies of these miners have not yet been recovered.

9.2.1 Primary Purpose of Family Support Centre is Mutual Support

The primary purpose of a Family Support Centre is to :

- bring victims' families together and allow them to grieve in a safe environment *thereby defusing some of the trauma through mutual support*
- help those affected realize that their general reactions are similar to other people
- discuss mutual concerns: how to interact with those responsible for body recovery and identification, government or company officials, the media and the public
- to be consulted as to what was being planned for them in the next few hours and days
- facilitates access to information and support services
- be in an environment where their traumatic experiences would be regarded as normal given the circumstances

9.2.2 Family Support Centre Planning

As part of their emergency preparedness planning process, Emergency Social Services needs to plan for the organization and management of Family Support Centres (FCS). The RCS which normally organizes and manages Reception Centres would manage the FCS which would provide the following services:

- **Food Services** - would prepare meals, snacks, and beverages in the centre or have them brought in.
- **Emergency Lodging** - would arrange accommodation for families arriving from outside the area.
- **Registration and Inquiry** - would set up a Central Registry and Inquiry Bureau to deal with inquiries.
- **Personal Services** would:

- Offer emotional support and comfort to persons affected
- Ensure that bereaved families have access to clergy and other support services.
- Identify bereaved families at risk
- set up outreach emotional support or arrange referrals to similar services back home.
- **Health Services**

Would provide basic health services to family members experiencing physical shock or who require medical care. At the Swiss Air family support centre, located in the Lord Nelson hotel in Halifax, the Nova Scotia Health Services set up a Health Care Centre where family members could seek medical assistance.
- **Other Community Support Services**

Depending on the circumstances other community emergency response groups such as police, community's information officer may be required to assist families.

9.2.3 Organizing and Operating a Family Support Centre

Preplanning and Training

In order to respond promptly, effectively and appropriately at a Family Support Centre, it is necessary that a FCS service plan be developed and team members be trained in advance.

Joint Planning

The FSC plan is developed by Director of ESS with the assistance of the ESS planning committee and the Coordinators of each of the Services in cooperation with police, fire, coroner or hospital staff, clergy, and other relevant community emergency response organizations . Experience has shown that joint planning is necessary in order to:

- Establish the legitimacy of activities, gain sanction and support from proper authorities
- Prevent overlap in functions and response by defining roles and responsibilities
- Become a clearing house for information and support activities.

9.2.4 General Operational Guidelines for Family Support Centres

The following guidelines, collected from the experience of previous Family Support Centre teams, provide practical information on how to put the FCS plan into operation:

Reception

Out-of-town families should be met at their place of arrival and brought to the reception site. When families arrive at the FCS, one or more Personal Services (PS) workers should be assigned to each family or its representative. The PS worker would remain with them as long as necessary, or at least until each family has made funeral arrangements.

Registration

Families should register as they arrive, giving their names, addresses, phone numbers, religious preferences and the name of their loved one.

Information on Victims

Experience from past disasters has shown that information concerning a loved one's condition should be provided by a delegated official (coroner's office, police, or other) to family members first. Families are deeply hurt when this information is provided to the media first or if they first hear it from the media.

If the loved one is alive, the family would be taken to the hospital. A PS worker would escort the family to the hospital where another family support team would be waiting to provide help.

Families of deceased victims should be helped through the painful process of answering questions, making funeral arrangements, and, in some instances, identifying the body and gathering personal belongings.

Keep families as well informed as possible. If families have to return to their homes because of delays in locating missing persons a daily briefing for each family should be arranged. Frequent updates will help family members deal with the uncertainty.

Other Helpful Services

If possible, provide rooms where families can express their grief in private. Provide telephones so that families can contact relatives and friends. Prepare a list of the funeral homes in the cities where the victims lived. Some families from outside the disaster locality may require assistance in arranging accommodation and transport.

When families have to wait long periods of time because of search and rescue, body recovery and identification, providing food and beverages in a homelike facility helps people relax and prepare themselves for the hours of waiting.

Facilitating Acute Grief Reactions

Personal Services Supervisors may want to review with all grief support workers present basic psychological first aid guidelines. These can be found in the Personal Services manual. Also included in the manual, under the heading Grief Support Services, are two articles: one describing bereavement responses and the other the experiences of a grief support team involved with families of 39 high school students killed in a bus crash.

Grief Support Follow-up

Follow-up should be provided for those families and individuals who appear to be having difficulty beginning the grieving process. Because some families may live a great distance from the disaster site (for example in plane, train or bus accidents), information should be provided to human service agencies in their localities to facilitate outreach services to these people.

Missing and Body is Not Found or Recovered

In some disasters, such as the sinking of the Ocean Ranger oil rig, the Air India crash, and the Westray Mine Explosion, bodies may not be recovered. In such cases, the lack of physical evidence about the fate of loved ones may delay the start of the grieving process. Families whose loved ones are missing and presumed dead will require additional comfort and support during the waiting period, in initiating grief and working it through. Consult the Personal Services manual under the heading Missing Persons for information on immediate help and ongoing outreach services.

Chapter 10

Training

10.1 Training Responsibilities

The Director of Emergency Social Services or other competent person or agency is responsible for ensuring that Reception Centre Service (RCS) personnel receive training.

10.2 Training Program

The content of the RCS training program should include:

(1) Orientation to Community Emergency Preparedness Planning

- a brief introduction to natural and human-caused disasters and the more common disaster threats faced by the community
- a brief explanation of the emergency preparedness roles and responsibilities of each level of government: municipal, provincial and federal and lines of communication between each level
- a more detailed explanation of the Emergency Preparedness Structure at the Municipal Level including the roles and responsibilities of each municipal emergency response organization such as police, fire, health services, public works, emergency social services, transportation, communication, information etc and
- an explanation of the role and responsibilities of the municipal Emergency Planning Coordinator, of the municipal Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and of the Emergency Social Services Operations Centre (ESSOC) (**See Appendix for an Emergency Social Services - Glossary of Terms**).

(2) Purpose and Role of Emergency Social Services

- an explanation of the five Emergency Social Services and their roles and responsibilities when disaster strikes.

(3) The Reception Centre Service (RCS)

- purpose
- roles and responsibilities before, during and after a disaster
- organization and operation.

(4) The RCS Organization

- Job descriptions of RCS supervisor and workers before, during, after a disaster. Description of the roles and responsibilities of agencies that support the ESS response in Reception Centres, First Aid, Public Health, and Transportation.

(5) The RCS Facility Survey and Directory

- purpose of RCS facility survey and directory and
- RCS facility survey records - explanation of their use, how to complete and keep them up to date.

(6) Reception Centre Management

- General Guidelines
- Priority Action Checklists
- Operational Guidelines

(7) Multi-purpose Role of Reception Centres

(8) The RCS Plan

- alerting and mobilizing
- action to be taken upon mobilizing
- lines of succession
- operating procedures

Chapter 11

Reception Centre Service Plan

11.1 Planning Responsibilities

In order to respond promptly to the needs of disaster victims, the Reception Centre Service (RCS) must have a written plan that can be implemented in an organized and coordinated manner as soon as a disaster occurs.

The RCS plan is developed by the RCS manager and planning committee. Once written, the RCS plan is an appendix to the ESS response plan, which in turn is part of the overall community emergency response plan. Therefore, the RCS plan should be read in conjunction with these plans.

11.2 Some Characteristics of the Plan

The RCS plan should be clear, concise, realistic and kept up to date. It should be flexible enough to allow on-site staff to improvise and make adjustments to meet changing situations. RCS planners should, as part of their emergency preparedness planning process, attempt to anticipate typical problems that could arise within the RCS in an emergency and develop alternate solutions.

11.3 Content of the Plan

The following information is a guide that could be utilized in writing the RCS plan. A brief explanation for each suggested main heading is provided, plus, where applicable, some typical annexes that may be included:

(1) Name and Date

The plan should have a name to distinguish it from other plans.

(2) Purpose

A statement giving the aim of the plan.

(3) Organization and Line of Authority

A statement on the organization and channels of authority with specific details provided

in annexes such as:

- organization charts
- lines of succession and alternates.

(4) Implementation of the Plan

Specific details on when the plan is to be implemented and by whom.

(5) Alerting Procedures

A statement with specific details provided in annexes such as:

- the alert organization to include alternates and levels of response for agencies and individuals and
- the fan out or recall procedures including an alternate method.

(6) Resources

A statement with specific details in annexes which should detail resources required such as:

- **Personnel**

Name, address and telephone numbers* of all trained RCS workers and their job assignments. Remember that you may require back-up staff if initial response staff become fatigued.

- **RCS Facilities**

Address and telephone numbers of all facilities you intend to use as Reception Centres. Name, address and telephone numbers¹ of persons who have access to these facilities.

- **Supplies and Equipment**

Checklist of all RCS equipment and supplies (**See Appendix E**) and their location. Name, address and telephone numbers* of persons who have access to same.

¹ Home and business numbers.

- **Telecommunication**

Name, address, and telephone numbers* of persons or organizations who have agreed to assist RCS with their communication needs (amateur radio, CB clubs, telephone company, messenger service).

- **Multilingual and Other Communication Services**

Name, address, telephone numbers* and communication abilities of persons who have agreed to assist in providing specialized communication services. These services are part of the overall ESS response plan and are called on if required.

(7) Training

A statement with specific details provided in an appendix to include:

- who is responsible for the RCS training program and
- where and when the training will be conducted.

(8) Testing the Plan

A statement with an accompanying appendix to include:

- who is responsible for testing the plan and
- how often the plan will be tested.

(9) Reviewing and Updating

This section should include methods of review and procedures for updating the RCS plan.

Annual updating of names, addresses and telephone numbers of the RCS response teams is essential.

Remember that the plan should be adjusted to meet the particular needs and resources of your community.

11.4 Written Agreement

A written statement of agreement should be negotiated with organizations which have agreed to provide personnel, facilities or equipment to support or operate the RCS.

11.5 Mutual Aid Agreements

Mutual aid agreements are recommended between adjacent communities to ensure that municipalities can promptly and effectively assist each other in the event of an emergency. These plans should be approved by the governing body of each community.

11.6 Testing of the RCS Operations

After the RCS plan has been drawn up, workers recruited and trained, equipment and supplies located, the next logical step is to test the organizational and operational response plans, procedures, and workers' performance. One of the best ways to do this is to hold a series of exercises which in addition to testing the plan, reinforces prior training. The first ones should be "paper exercises". These could involve RCS staff assigned to one Reception Centre. These should be followed by others more ambitious in size and scope involving all five emergency social services. These exercises should be coordinated by the Director of Emergency Social Services. Exercises show up the strengths and weaknesses of a plan. They indicate whether the service as it stands, can achieve its aims, and whether positions are properly defined and people properly assigned. An evaluation with staff should follow each exercise.

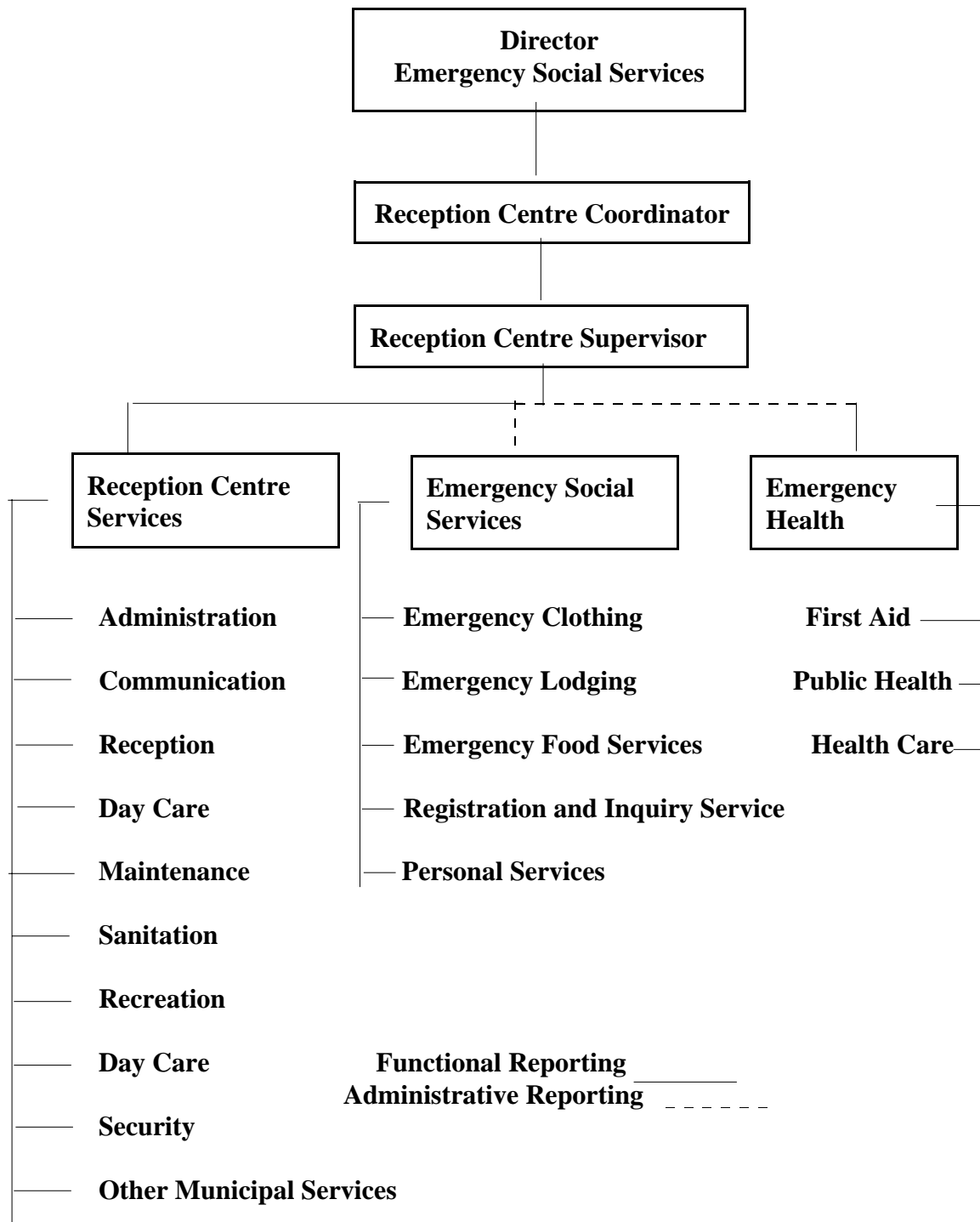
11.7 Distributing the Plan

The distribution of the plan is sometimes overlooked by emergency planners. An emergency plan is of no use if the plan and its provisions are only known to the person who prepared it.

To ensure coordination and cooperation in the event of an emergency, the content of the RCS plan should be made known to relevant emergency response organizations and agencies who will be involved or affected by its execution such as police, fire, health, school board and so on. The distribution of the RCS plan to interested parties is paramount if the desired results are to be achieved during its implementation.

Appendix A

**RECEPTION CENTRE SERVICE
ORGANIZATION CHART**



Equipment and Supplies Required by Reception Centre Service at Operational Sites

1. Reception Centre

In order to set-up the Reception Centre to receive disaster survivors or evacuees and to administer and manage the facility, RCS staff require the following equipment and supplies:

1.1 Stationary and Office Supplies

- service signs for each of the five ESS *
- directional and other signs *
- hats, badges, vests, name tags and/or arm bands*
- chairs or benches
- desks or tables
- paper, pencils*, ballpoint pens, paper clips, rubber bands
- stapler and staples
- felt markers (various colours)
- log sheets - see appendix D**
- message forms (round trip memos)
- reception Centre Forms - see appendix H**
- file drawers, file guides
- envelopes or boxes to ship forms
- cellulose tape, masking tape, scissors, thumb tacks
- telephones (regular and cellular), fax machine,
- computer, printer, modem, e-mail, photocopier
- flip chart, clipboards*,
- index cards (20.5 cm x 12.5

* Items are available in the Reception Centre Kit

** Forms can be reproduced locally

Note - most office supplies and equipment will have to be purchased locally

1.2 Comfort Kits

- soap, towels, face cloths,
- combs and hairbrushes,
- toothbrushes, toothpaste,
- sanitary napkins, tampons
- shaving kits, razors, shaving cream,
- disposable beverage cups

- deodorant

1.3 Sanitation Supplies

- brooms, mops, sponges, buckets or pails,
- household chlorine bleach, disinfectant, deodorizer,
- garbage bags (large, medium, small), toilet paper,
- wastepaper baskets
- garbage cans with tight-fittings lids,
- commercial waste containers,

1.4 Baby Supplies

- disposable or other baby diapers
- milk or formula
- baby powder, creams, ointments,
- bottles and nipples, warmer
- baby food
- sheets, blankets, rubber pads
- portable cribs.

1.5 Emergency Equipment

- flashlights (batteries),
- lanterns (electric),
- emergency generator,
- battery-operated radio, batteries
- portable P.A. system*,
- fire extinguishers

1.6 Recreational Items

- playing cards
- small toys for children
- games, colouring books
- reading materials.

1.7 Tools and Equipment

- shovel, axe
- screw drivers, screws,
- saw, hammer, nails,
- rope*, twine*,

- wrench,
- whistle*.

1.8 First Aid Kit and Handbook*

1.9 Identification

- arm bands*, sign set*
- vests (fluorescent)*, name tags*

2. Supplementary Items

Supplementary items to operate Reception Centres have to be purchased locally.

Appendix D

Reception Centre Kits

1 Reception Centre Kits

The Reception Centre Kit is a plywood case containing the basic operational forms, stationery supplies, and equipment necessary to set up and operate the five Emergency Social Services in a Reception Centre.

2 Location of Kits & Access in an Emergency

A limited number of Reception Centre kits are strategically located throughout the country. Should an emergency occur, provincial authorities may obtain and use them in accordance with existing arrangements respecting federally owned equipment.

Provincial/Territorial Emergency Social Services Directors may obtain one Reception Centre kit to be used for demonstration, display and training purposes. Further information on obtaining Reception Centre Kits as well as supplies and equipment may be obtained by writing to the Provincial or Territorial Director of Emergency Social Services c/o your Provincial or Territorial Department of Social Services.

3 Content of Kit

Arm Band (Red , nylon laminate, adjustable, 4" wide, 18 " long,
Velcro fastener) 25each

Clip, paper (Bulldog type, 65mm long)10 each

Clip, paper (Gem type, 30mm long, box of 100 clips)1 box

Clip board file (Masonite, 15" long, (390mm) long)2 each

Dressing (First Aid, field 4" x 3 ½" pad)4each

First Aid Kit (General purpose, type "B")1kit

Form, printed (Inquiry Card, set of 3, carbon interleaved)750each

Form, printed (Registration Card, set of 3, carbon interleaved)500each

Halazone Tablets (For water purification only, not to be taken orally,
bottle of 100) 1btl.

Manuals (Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency
Food Services, Registration and Inquiry, Personal
Services, Reception Centre Kit in Operation)1each

Marker, (Tube type, black, waterproof ink)2each

Marker, (Tube type, red, waterproof ink)2each

Megaphone (Battery operated, 600 yards acoustical range, Public address set. *User needs to provide batteries. Type and quantity of batteries required is stencilled on top of Reception Centre Box) 1each

Name tags (Labels, Adhesive, 4" x 2", Pckgs of 102)1each

Pencil (General use, box of 10)1box

Pencil sharpener 1each

Punch, paper, hand (For punching single round hole, 1/4 inch (6.35 mm)1each

Rope (Polypropylene, plain lay, 3 strands. 3/8 inch diameter, yellow)200feet

Rubber band (Assortment) 1pack.

Scissors (Straight trimmers, industrial or household use, 6 inches (150 mm) 1each

Sign set (Bilingual, assortment of 60 signs. All signs are 14" x 30"1set except the directional arrows which are 9" x 30". Fluorescent orange background, black lettering. Inscriptions and quantities are: Clothing 2 Lodging 2 Food 2 Registration and Inquiry 2 Personal Services 2 Reception 1 Directional Arrow 8, First Aid 2 Information 2 Women 2 Men 2 Manager 1 Out of Bounds 2 Entrance 1, Exit 1, and 4 blank cards.)

Stapler (Paper fastening, office, desk type. Takes staples with 1/2 inch crown and 1/4 inch leg length, adjustable for use as tacker)1each

Staples (Paper fastening, office type, 1/2 inch crown - 1/4 inch leg. Guide number 13. Box of 5000)1box

Tape (Pressure sensitive adhesive masking tape, Roll of 60 yards 55 metres) 2roles

Thumbtack (Brass plated, 5/16 long. Box of 144)1box

Twine (Cotton, unpolished, 1 pound tube)1tube

Vest (Safety, vinyl coated, weatherproof, nylon cloth. Fluorescent orange-red colour. Open sides with adjustable straps. Snap fastener front closure. Universal size.6each

Whistle (Referee)

1 each

Appendix E

Reception Centre Service

Operations Log

Appendix F

Reception Centres Sanitary Standards

When completing the Reception Centre facility survey, consideration must be given to the following minimum standards of hygiene to provide an environment where the spread of communicable disease is reduced to a minimum.

1. Ventilation Standards

Ventilation space is an important factor that should be taken into account when assessing living space needs. If possible a cubic capacity of 17 cubic metre (600 cu ft) per person should be the aim. Ceilings which are over three metres (10 ft) high would provide the necessary ventilation space e.g. classrooms, gymnasiums, church halls.

2. Sanitation Standards

- Sanitation facilities for 100 persons:
 - five toilets
 - six wash basins.
- Facilities with showers are most desirable. Personal cleanliness tends to boost morale.
- Occupants should be provided with their own soap and towels. If not, liquid soap and paper towels will be required, occupants should keep their own cake soap. Cake soap in common use increases the risks of contagious skin diseases.

3. Water Supply Standards

For all uses - drinking, washing, and food preparation standard water supply in the Reception Centre facility should average as follows:

- Approximately 46 litres (10 gallons) per person per day is desirable. Minimum should be 23 litres (five gallons).
- The average person requires two litres per day for drinking.
- The use of showers is effective in reducing water consumption provided the usage is controlled.

4. Dust Control

- Softwood floors should be oiled to reduce dust. No dry sweeping should be allowed and all floors swept daily with damp sweeping compound.
- Concrete floors should be scrubbed daily with warm, soapy water.

5. Space Allocation for Sleeping

If the Reception Centre is used to accommodate people for sleeping, the following guidelines should be followed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases:

- When reviewing allocation of space for sleeping, every effort should be made to maintain a distance of two metres (six feet), centre to centre, between beds, bunks or sleeping bags.

Such spacing has been shown to reduce considerably the spread of respiratory infections. When there is pressure on the use of space, recourse may be had to tailing of beds to maintain this distance.

- Minimum floor area for sleeping is as follows: Adults: 1.5 X 2.5 (3.75 sq. m.) of floor area. Children: 1.5 X 1.8 (2.7 sq. m.) of floor area.

Appendix G

Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Use of Buildings as Reception Centre Facilities Collegetown Emergency Social Services Organization

1. Introduction

The city of Collegeville recognizes that emergencies may occur which will force large numbers of people from their homes and require their immediate relocation to safe temporary facilities such as schools, churches, community halls, arenas, auditoriums or other public or private facilities.

2. Mandate

As required by Collegeville By-law No. 52-84 and the Ontario Provincial Measures Act of 1983, the municipality of Collegeville, through its Emergency Measures Organizations and its supporting municipal departments, is responsible for providing prompt assistance to its citizens or to persons evacuated from other communities in an emergency situation.

3. Memorandum of understanding

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to confirm the willingness of (name of school, church, club or organization) to permit the use of its facilities as a Reception Centre when required by the municipality of Collegeville during emergency situations.

It is therefore understood between the parties as follows:

The (name of organization) agrees to make its facility (name of facility) available for use as a Reception Centre site to the Collegeville Emergency Social Services during an emergency situation.

The municipality of Collegeville agrees that the Emergency Social Services organization shall exercise reasonable care in the conduct of its activities in this facility and further agrees to replace or reimburse the (name of organization) for supplies used and unusual damage incurred in the operation of the facility as a Reception Centre site.

In the event that either party no longer wishes to subscribe to the roles and principles espoused by this memorandum of understanding, that party shall accordingly advise the other party in writing.

Joan Brown
Director, Collegeville
Emergency Social Services

Roxanna Moore
Chairperson
Collegeville School Board

Appendix H

Reception Centre Facility Survey & Record

Appendix H

Reception Centre Directory

Appendix I

Appendix J

Reception Centre Facilities Directory Update*

Dear:

The Province of Ontario introduced the Emergency Measures Act in 1983. As required by that Act, the Department of Social Services along with a number of other government and community agencies located in this Region, have been actively involved in formulating an Emergency Social Services Response Plan for the Hamilton-Wentworth area.

An important part of the Emergency Social Services preparedness process is to sign an agreement with owners, managers or trustees of buildings that could be used for Reception Centre purposes should a disaster strike. A Reception Centre is a safe location where people, forced to leave their homes due to natural or man-made disasters, are brought to and where essential services such as Clothing, Lodging, Food, Registration and Inquiry (locating and reuniting family members) and Personal Services (emotional support), First Aid and other Health services can be immediately provided.

To meet the immediate needs of people in times of disasters, one hundred and forty facilities -i.e., schools, church halls, arenas, and community halls - were surveyed in recent years and were designated as Reception Centres and incorporated into the Region's Emergency Social Service Reception Centre Directory. Your building was one of those surveyed and an agreement was signed with **(name of owner or trustee)** to use it as a Reception Centre if a disaster occurred. Following the signature of the agreement, Reception Centre Service personnel visited your facility and gathered information on resources, equipment and supplies available in your building.

To ensure that survey information about each Reception Centre facility remains accurate and up-to-date, the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services Department has developed a computerized mail-out questionnaire which will be mailed to you in April and October of each year. Your response to this questionnaire will enable the Social Services Department to update the information contained in its Reception Centre Directory.

In addition, your reply will be understood by Social Services as an acknowledgement of your willingness to continue to participate as a Reception Centre site should you be called upon.

Enclosed is a photocopy of the latest Reception Centre Services Facility Survey that we have on file concerning your building. It was completed (date). Would you please review the information on the survey, update it if necessary and return it in the envelope provided.

If you should have any questions regarding any of the above, do not hesitate to contact Bill Hone at 526-4373.

Your interest, co-operation and efforts in assisting the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services Department is greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Michael J. Schuster,
Acting Commissioner.

BH:ng

Emergency Preparedness - Checklist

In the event of a major disaster - flood, fire, tornado, earthquake, hurricane, winter storm, toxic leak - basic supplies and services may not be available or you may have to evacuate your residence or community. You may not have much time to act. Prepare now to protect yourself and your family for a sudden emergency.

Prepare an Emergency Pack

An emergency pack consists of such essential items as *water, food, clothing and first aid supplies* for 3 to 5 days that are set aside in easy-to-carry containers, ready to take with you. Your emergency pack should include the following items:

Water

Water is essential for survival. Plan on a minimum of one litre per person per day for drinking purposes only. Store water in unbreakable containers such as plastic bottles. Record storage date and replace every six months.

Food

Choose foods that require no refrigeration, cooking or preparation, are compact and lightweight, and familiar to users. If food must be cooked, include stove and fuel.

Ready-to-eat canned meals: stews, baked beans, spaghetti, meat, fish, poultry, fruits, vegetables, cereals, trail mix, oatmeal cookies, candies or jellies
Canned milk, juices, coffee, tea
Staples such as sugar, salt, pepper
Baby formula, food and diapers
Cutlery, non-electric can opener

Clothing and Bedding

The secret of protection from extreme cold lies in wearing multiple layers of clothing which prevent the loss of body heat. Most of the body's heat is lost through the head and neck. During the summer, provide protection against sun and heat.

- Include one change of clothing and footwear per person
- Sweaters, woollen socks, tuque or hat, scarf, mittens, and thermal underwear
- Rain gear
- Sturdy, waterproof shoes or boots
- Sleeping bag or two warm blankets per person

First Aid Kit

- Keep a complete first aid kit in your home and car
- Include over-the-counter medications such as aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever, antiseptic, etc. List of family physicians, style and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers
- Be sure to take prescribed medications such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin etc., with you when you evacuate
- Denture needs, contact lens, hearing aids, mobility aids
- Basic first-aid manual

Supplies and Tools

- Battery operated transistor radio, extra batteries
- Candles and candle holders
- Flashlight (one per person), extra batteries
- Hammer and nails, crowbar
- Lantern and fuel
- Matches (in waterproof container)
- Mosquito repellent
- Plastic sheeting
- Pliers
- Pocket knife
- Rope
- Shovel (small)
- Tape
- Whistle

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, wet ones, facial tissues, liquid detergent
- Personal items: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary napkins and tampons, towels and face cloth, comb and brush, lip balm
- Plastic garbage bags and ties

Special Items

- Cards, games and books
- Colouring books

Family Records and Documents

Store important family documents and records in waterproof container

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds

- Passports, social insurance cards, health cards, immunization records
- Money or cash
- Savings and checking account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Prepare an Emergency Car Kit

- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- First aid kit and manual
- Fire extinguisher (2A-IOBC type)
- Flares or reflectors
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Food: non perishable high energy foods such as granola bars, raisins etc.
- Maps
- Shovel
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Water

People with Special Needs

Register in Advance. In case of evacuation, some people may require transportation assistance to Reception Centres or Group Lodging Facilities. People who require this help may have a physical, neurological or psychological disability or have mobility problems.

Persons who are unable to respond independently to an emergency situation which requires them to evacuate their home should register in advance for assistance with a homecare program, local seniors organization or emergency measures organization.

Some Health Care Patients. Persons who receive home health care should discuss emergency plans with their caregiver or home care agency. Persons should also check with their physician if prior arrangements would be necessary for evacuation to a hospital.

Electrical Life Support. If a member of the household is bedridden and requires constant medical care or has electrical life support equipment at home, discuss this NOW with his physician or local emergency measures organization.

Family Emergency Plan

If a major disaster strikes your community, you may be separated from members of your family who are at home, at work, or at school. If your family should become separated in a disaster, here are some suggested measures that you can take to help reunite them:

Identify ahead of time two family meeting places: one outside your home in case of fire and one outside your neighbourhood in case of disaster.

Decide ahead of time on a system of communication. Pick one out of province and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated because of a disaster. It is often easier to call out of province than within the affected area.

All members of your family should have a means of identification on them at all times: e.g., clothing label, wallet card, bracelet with name and address.

Take a basic first aid and CPR class.

Involve all family members in planning for an emergency.

Test your plan. Chances of survival are improved if you exercise your plan.

Pets

Pets may not be allowed in Reception Centres or Group Lodging Facilities for health and space reasons. If you must leave them behind:

prepare an emergency pen for the pets in the home. Ensure there is adequate ventilation.

tag your pet with proper identification and inoculation information.

arrange a layer of plastic and paper or cardboard for the pet.

leave enough dry food and water for three days.

Do not leave pets in a car outside of a shelter.

Adapted from:

Are You Prepared in Case of Disaster?
Health and Welfare Canada. Reprinted 1992.

Self Help Advice
Emergency Preparedness Canada, 1988.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S.A. Background and Fact Sheets.

Hurricane Counselling Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dade County (Florida) Hurricane Evacuation Plan Summary. 1992.

Emergency Kit - Evacuation Checklist

In some situations families may have to evacuate quickly because of a sudden threat such as flooding, fire or toxic leak. Listed below are items which emergency officials may want evacuees to bring with them:

Water

1 litre per person per day for drinking
Water purification tablets

Food

Canned meals: stews, baked beans, spaghetti, meat, fish, poultry, fruits, vegetables, cereals, trail mix, oatmeal cookies, candies or jellies
Canned milk, juices, coffee, tea
Staples such as sugar, salt, pepper
Baby formula, food and diapers
Cutlery, non-electric can opener
Stove and fuel

Clothing

Sweaters, woollen socks, tuque or hat, scarf, mittens, and thermal underwear
Rain gear
Sturdy, waterproof shoes or boots
Sleeping bag or two warm blankets per person

First aid kit and manual, medication

Supplies and Tools

Battery operated transistor radio, extra batteries	Plastic sheeting
Candles and candle holders	Pliers
Flashlight (one per person), extra batteries	Pocket knife
Hammer and nails, crowbar	Rope
Lantern and fuel	Shovel (small)
Matches (waterproof container)	Tape
Cards, games, books	Whistle
	Mosquito repellent
	Colouring books

Sanitation

Toilet paper, wet ones, facial tissues, liquid detergent
Personal items: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste,
toothbrushes, sanitary napkins and tampons, towels
and face cloth, comb and brush, lip balms
Plastic garbage bags and ties

Family records and documents

**Services Provided to Disaster Survivors in
Reception Centre Facilities by
Community Emergency Organizations**

**Services Provided to Disaster Survivors in
Reception Centre Facilities by
Community Emergency Organizations**

**Reception Centre - Sample Floor Plan
Saskatchewan Woodland Institute of
Applied Science and Technology**

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS IN EMERGENCIES	
CB-er's Childcare workers Clean-up of food prep areas Clerical workers Collection site worker - supplies Computer operators Coffee makers Companions Cooks (hot food) Counselling Food preparers (cold food) Food servers Forklift drivers Ham radio operators Home care for elderly and disabled Hosts Interviewers Inventory control Literature distributors Masseuses/Masseurs Medical personnel Messengers Missing person services Mobile feeding operations Movers-relocation	Neighbourhood leaders Outreach workers Peer counsellors Pet control Phone answers Plumbers Receptionists Reconstruction Recordkeepers Registrars Retriever of belongings Runners Shelter Workers Sign Language interpreters Sorters Supply distribution Trainers Traffic directors Translators Transportation (of persons) Truck drivers Volunteer managers Warehouse workers <p style="text-align: right;">... and more!</p>

Reception Centre Management Manual (August 1992) Emergency Social Services Program, Justice Institute of British Columbia. Used with permission.

Emergency Workers and Volunteers Coping with Stress During and after a Disaster*

Emergency workers and volunteers play a critical role in responding to the immediate and continuing physical, social and emotional needs of people affected by a disaster. In a major disaster, thousands of emergency workers and volunteers from all sectors give their hearts and souls to meet the basic needs of disaster survivors and to restore essential services to residents of their communities.

Positive Stress Reactions to Disaster Response

The massive effort put forth by emergency workers and volunteers in response to a disaster is usually a source of strength and pride, of positive growth that comes from a sense of helping neighbours and other members of their community. It also fosters a sense of renewed camaraderie and unity within various organizations and with other response groups, a sense of strength, endurance and competence in the face of overwhelming adversity and increased tolerance to hardship, discomfort, and a sense of mission and purpose. All of these positive experiences contribute to increased closeness with family members, friends, and community. It also leads to a greater appreciation of the generosity and support which often flows from people in their own and other communities.

Common Sources of Stress for Emergency Workers and Volunteers

However, all workers and volunteers involved in the recovery efforts following a disaster or traumatic event need to be aware that a sustained response to such an event can also lead to physical and emotional wear and tear. Disaster workers can be subject to various sources of stress in their work:

Heavy work loads	Long hours on the job	Time pressures
Priority overload	Limited resources	Adverse weather conditions
Physical demands	Mental demands	High expectations
Physical danger	Media presence	Pushing oneself too hard
Political /organizational demands		Resistance to go off shift

Signs of stress to be on the alert during the response effort

Each one of us, when under stress, reacts in a unique way, depending on our personal characteristics and life experiences. You can help others and yourself by knowing the signs of stress and identifying them when they occur.

Listed below are some common signs of stress:

Common Physical Reactions: nausea, muscle tremors, dizziness, chills, increased heartbeat, increased blood pressure, diarrhea, loss of appetite...

Common Cognitive Reactions: confusion, difficulty making decisions, difficulty problem solving, memory blanks...

Common Emotional Reactions: anger, frustration, irritability, fear, guilt, feeling overwhelmed, feeling helpless, inadequate, moody...

Common Behavioral Reactions: anger, aggressiveness, breaking down and crying, hyper vigilance, feeling burned out, smoking more, increase use of alcohol and drugs, withdrawal, isolation, change in sleeping and eating habits...

These are the normal responses of people to stressful circumstances. Although many of these stresses cannot be prevented, you can increase your resistance by staying healthy. It is important, therefore to pace yourself so you don't burn out and become a victim.

Stress-relieving activities are not as difficult or time consuming as one may think. Here are some that you can act on immediately:

- Go for a 15-minute walk during a lunch or coffee break.
- Eat well. Avoid excessive use of alcohol and caffeinated drinks. Drink plenty of water and juices.
- Establish a "buddy" system. Agree to tell each other when you see signs of stress. Encourage and support one another.
- If you hear criticism, don't take it personally. Keep your own criticism in check. Focus on the task.
- Reassure and focus yourself with comments like "I'm doing fine" or "I'm doing the best I can".
- Know and respect your limits.
- Spend time with family and friends. Talk to them. Listen to their stories.
- Get some rest. If you have trouble sleeping, get up and do something relaxing or enjoyable.
- If you feel exhausted and need time off, ask. If you need a change of assignment or setting, ask for a change. And, hard as it may be to turn over your duties to someone else, when it is time for your shift to be over, leave and take time to recharge.

- Be on the watch for any changes in your habits, attitudes and moods.

Stress Reactions After It's All Over

Past experiences have shown that, after such a strenuous and sustained effort, it may take several weeks to adjust to “regular” routines. Families who had to relocate because of the event may also require several weeks to feel comfortable together again.

Here are some common reactions that emergency workers can expect in the weeks following the event:

- Grieving the loss of the exhilaration, the “high” of working together to survive, to help others in need.
- Feeling sad, depressed, irritated with the trivial activities associated with daily living, for example, back on the job or in the home.
- Having ambiguous feelings and questioning why this event happened in a world that is supposed to be safe.
- Feeling helpless, fragile, vulnerable.
- Withdrawing and isolating oneself from families and friends.
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs.
- Difficulty sleeping and eating.
- Poor concentration, memory problems, difficulty problem-solving.

How to Cope

- Communicate openly and honestly about your reactions. Others are probably experiencing similar reactions.
- Visit with friends. Continue to participate in previous social and recreational activities.
- Strenuous exercise and sleep are helpful.
- Accept some of your feelings as normal but be aware that some reactions can jeopardize your physical and mental health and well-being if they remain for too long. Decreased concentration on the job, for example, can lead to errors, accidents and injuries.
- Seek professional help if you are concerned or overwhelmed.

- Family and friends need to be aware of the stress reactions that can surface after an event such as the one we have just experienced. Be patient. Take time to listen.

If you are concerned about a loved one or would like more information about stress responses associated with such an event, contact: (Insert name, telephone number, and address of agencies that provide emotional support.)

- * This information on coping with disaster stress is a summary of coping measures suggested by a variety of disaster response agencies. Public Health Agency of Canada thanks them for their contribution.

**Reception Centre
Letter of Agreement - Arrangements and Liability**

Appendix R

Emergency Evacuation and Destination Categories for Medically Fragile Patients and Residents

Appendix S

Suggested Supplies for Medical Treatment Units or Shelters: General and Medical

Appendix T

Emergency Social Services Glossary of Terms

CENTRAL REGISTRATION & INQUIRY BUREAU (CRIB)

The Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) is a central collection and processing site for

the R&I Service. Reception Centres and all other R&I sites forward copies of Registration and Inquiry Cards to the CRIB for filing, searching, matching and replying to inquiries.

CENTRAL REGISTRATION & INQUIRY BUREAU MANAGER

A person appointed by the Coordinator of Registration & Inquiry responsible for the planning, organization and operation of the Central Registration & Inquiry Bureau.

COORDINATOR - EMERGENCY CLOTHING SERVICE

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of the Emergency Clothing Service.

COORDINATOR - EMERGENCY FOOD SERVICE

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of the Emergency Food Service.

COORDINATOR - EMERGENCY LODGING SERVICE

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of the Emergency Lodging Service.

COORDINATOR - PERSONAL SERVICES

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of Personal Services.

COORDINATOR - RECEPTION CENTRE SERVICE

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of the Reception Centre Service.

COORDINATOR - REGISTRATION AND INQUIRY

A person appointed by the Emergency Social Services Director responsible for the detailed planning, organization and operation of the Registration and Inquiry Service.

DISASTER

A disaster is an emergency that is caused by a real or imminent danger such as:

- fire, flood, drought, storm, earthquake or other natural phenomenon,
- disease in human beings, animals or plants, or
- accident or pollution

and that may result in a danger to life or property, social disruption or a breakdown in the flow of essential goods, services or resources, so serious as to be a national emergency. (Adapted from the *Emergencies Act* (1988), Part I, par.5)

DIRECTOR - EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES

A person in a community appointed to plan, organize and co-ordinate the operations of the six

Emergency Social Services: Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency Food Service, Registration and Inquiry, Personal Services, and Reception Centre Service.

EMERGENCY

An emergency means a present or imminent event that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare of people or to limit damage to property (*Alberta Disaster Services Act*, revised 1995).

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Those measures undertaken immediately after an emergency has occurred and for a limited period thereafter, primarily to save human life, treat the injured, and prevent further injury and other forms of loss. They include response plan activation, opening and staffing of emergency operation centres and reception centres, mobilization of resources, issuance of warning and directions, provision of aid, and may include declaration of states of emergency.

EMERGENCY CLOTHING SERVICE (ECS)

This Service is responsible in an emergency for supplying clothing or emergency covering to those requiring it until regular sources of supply are available.

EMERGENCY FOOD SERVICE (EFS)

This Service provides food or meals to those persons without food or food preparation facilities in an emergency.

EMERGENCY LODGING SERVICE (ELS)

This Service is responsible, in an emergency, for the provision of safe, temporary lodging for homeless or evacuated people.

EMERGENCY PACK

An emergency pack consists of such essential items as water, food, clothing and first aid supplies for 3 to 5 days stored in a tote bag or back-pack and ready to go if a person has to evacuate on short notice.

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES (ESS)

Emergency Social Services is a pre-planned emergency response organization designed to provide those basic services considered essential for the immediate and continuing well-being of persons affected by a disaster. These services are: Emergency Clothing, Emergency Lodging, Emergency Food Service, Registration and Inquiry, Personal Services and Reception Centre Service.

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES OPERATION 35CENTRE (ESSOC)

The location from which the Director of Emergency Social Service or Assistant Director of ESS, Coordinators of each of the six Services, and other support agencies would coordinate Emergency Social Services operations during or following a disaster or emergency.

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES PLAN

A detailed written account of the policies and procedures to be followed in setting up and operating the Emergency Social Services response organization in a community.

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES-PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committees composed of community people, whose training and experience would assist a Director of Emergency Social Services and each of the six Coordinators of Services in planning and organizing ESS.

GROUP LODGING

The lodging of a large number of evacuees in a group lodging facility.

GROUP LODGING FACILITY (GLF)

A building such as a school, church, community hall, arena, auditorium or other public facility not normally used for living purposes that is adapted as dormitory type accommodation for large numbers of people in an emergency or disaster.

GROUP LODGING MANAGER (GLM)

The person appointed by the Coordinator of Emergency Lodging responsible for the administration and operation of a Group Lodging Facility.

INQUIRY CARD

The Inquiry card is a three part card, with one-time carbons, which is completed when a person inquires about the safety and whereabouts of a missing family member or individual.

INQUIRY KIT

A carton box containing 750 Inquiry Cards and the equipment required for the making of inquiries by evacuees. It also includes indexes, a blow-up of the inquiry card, pencils and a pencil sharpener.

INTAKE UNIT

The Intake Unit is one of three operational units at the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB). It is the initial point of contact for the public with the CRIB. The Intake Unit registers survivors and accepts inquiries for those affected by a disaster in person or via telephone, fax, modem, E-mail, internet or other means of communication.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY

A National Emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that (a) seriously endangers the lives, health, or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or (b) seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity of Canada and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada. *Emergencies Act (1988), par.*

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PERSONAL SERVICES

Personal Services provide for the initial reception of disaster victims arriving at reception centres, inform them of immediate emergency help available, offer temporary care for unattended children and dependent elderly, assist with the temporary care of residents from special care facilities, provide or arrange for provision of financial and/or material assistance, and offer immediate and long-term emotional support to people with personal problems and needs created or aggravated by a disaster.

RECEPTION CENTRE

A Reception Centre is a one-stop service site or facility - school gymnasium, church hall, community hall, arena, or other appropriate location - where, in a disaster, people evacuate to and where their immediate needs for clothing, lodging, food, registration and inquiry, and personal services and reception centre service are met by the six Emergency Social Services' response teams responsible for these Services.

RECEPTION CENTRE SERVICE

This Service organizes, sets up and operates Reception Centres, one-stop service sites where evacuees are received and in which the five basic Emergency Social Services are provided: emergency clothing, emergency lodging, emergency food service, registration and inquiry, and personal services.

RECEPTION CENTRE AREA

A geographic area within a community which is serviced by a specific Reception Centre.

RECEPTION CENTRE SUPERVISOR

The person responsible for planning, organizing and managing a Reception Centre facility.

REGISTRATION CARD

A three part card, with one-time carbons, on which families or individuals, displaced by a disaster, record basic information about themselves and their present location so that inquiries about them can be answered .

REGISTRATION AND INQUIRY SERVICE

This Service collects information on evacuees so that families, separated by a disaster, can be reunited as quickly as possible and inquiries, about the safety and whereabouts of individuals, can be answered promptly.

REGISTRATION KIT

A carton box containing 500 Registration Cards and the equipment required for the registration of evacuees. It also includes index cards, a blow-up of the registration card, pencils and pencil sharpener.

REPLY UNIT

The Reply Unit is one of three operation units in the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau and is responsible for replying to inquiries.

RESEARCH UNIT

The Research Unit is one of three operational units in the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau. (CRIB) It is responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining the Master Registration File, the Master Inquiry File, the Resource Information File, and the Pending Inquiry File

- matching information provided by registrants and other information sources with inquiries about survivors and,
- maintaining statistics.

SELF-HELP PREPARATIONS

Those preparations which individuals and families can make now for their own survival and well-being in case of an emergency.