

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN B.C.

Emergency management is based on the following fundamental principles:

It is up to the individual to know what to do in an emergency to protect themselves and their family. If the individual is unable to cope, governments respond progressively, as their capabilities and resources are needed.

If there is an emergency, police, fire or ambulance, along with local and regional responders, are usually first at site. Most incidents are contained at the site level.

Municipalities and regional districts will activate their emergency plan and set up a local emergency operations centre to support responders if the situation escalates and the response requirements become more complex.

Day-to-day, the provincial government is available to respond to calls through an emergency coordination centre that is staffed 24/7.

The provincial emergency management structure is activated when a BC community or any significant infrastructure is threatened by an emergency or disaster which may overwhelm a local authority's ability to respond. There will be an increase in the activation level of provincial regional emergency operation centres and the provincial emergency coordination centre to support local governments' emergency operations as required.

Additional assistance is provided by the Government of Canada if the emergency escalates beyond provincial resource capabilities. Requests from the province to the Government of Canada are managed through Public Safety Canada, which maintains close operational links with provincial and local emergency authorities and maintains inventories of resources and experts in various fields.

In practice, the response can move quickly from the local to the national level, where the required resources and expertise can be identified and triggered. Public Safety Canada maintains the Government Operations Centre (GOC), which operates 24 hours, seven days a week.