

Overview

Declaration of a State of Local Emergency

Section 12 of the *Emergency Program Act* gives the Mayor and Council, or Chair and Board of a Regional District the authority to declare a State of Local Emergency if extraordinary powers are needed to deal with the immediate effects and public safety issues caused by an emergency or disaster.

A State of Local Emergency is most commonly used when public safety is a concern and there is a need for the mandatory evacuation of people. These powers may also be needed for the removal and care of livestock, allow for use of land or personal property as a staging area, limit access to areas, coordinate emergency medical services, authorize entry on to land or into buildings, the demolition of trees or structures, procurement of essential resources and control of pricing etc.

There are [specific instructions and templates](#) available that are commonly used in a declaration of State of Local Emergency outlining the requirements for its issue. A copy of the declaration must be forwarded to the Director of the Provincial Emergency Program for final approval. The area that the declaration covers and the specific powers requested must be clearly detailed. Supporting documentation may also include a map showing the area.

There is also a requirement for the public to be notified. This is usually done through a news release, media clips or interview or by posting to a web site.

A State of Local Emergency expires after seven days. There is an application process in place for extending it for a longer period. This request for an extension must be made at least three days prior to the expiration of the original declaration. The local declaration may also be cancelled by the Solicitor General or may be superseded by a Provincial State of Emergency. It may be cancelled by bylaw, resolution or order. There is also a requirement to notify the public when the declaration is cancelled.

In serious or widespread emergencies, the provincial government may decide to declare a Provincial State of Emergency. This would supersede a local declaration and enhance the ability of the provincial government to respond to a large scale event.

There are experienced local emergency coordinators and Provincial Emergency Program personnel available for help and consultation prior to issuing a local declaration.

More information on declaring a State of Local Emergency is available at www.pep.bc.ca

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Provincial Emergency Program
June 14, 2005