

# Introduction to Emergency Social Services



## Module 1: Overview of ESS



## Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers



Revised: September 2005

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Edition Revised 2005 for Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General

Developed By

**The Emergency Management Division,  
Justice Institute of British Columbia**

April 2000



**JUSTICE INSTITUTE**  
*of* **BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
**Emergency Management Division**

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Reprinted from:  
September 2005

*Introduction to Emergency Social Services*

New Westminster, B.C.: Emergency Management Division, Justice Institute of B.C.  
[www.jibc.bc.ca](http://www.jibc.bc.ca)

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

Introduction to emergency social services. -- Rev., Sept. 2005

"Module 1: overview of ESS. Module 2: personal preparedness for ESS workers."

"©2000 the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security."

"Edition revised 2005 for Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General."

"Developed by the Emergency Management Division, Justice Institute of British Columbia."--P.

ISBN 0-7726-5436-0

1. Disaster relief - British Columbia. 2. Emergency management - British Columbia - Planning. 3. Disaster relief - British Columbia - Citizen participation. 4. Volunteer workers in social service. 5. Disaster relief - Problems, exercises, etc. 6. Emergency management - Planning. I. Justice Institute of British Columbia. Emergency Management Division. II. British Columbia. Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. III. British Columbia. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. IV. Title: Overview of ESS. V. Title: Personal preparedness for ESS workers.

HV551.5C3I57 2005

363.34'83'09711

C2005-960206-6

# Introduction to Emergency Social Services



## Module 1: Overview of ESS



**For further information about  
Emergency Social Services:**



ESS Office  
Provincial Emergency Program  
PO Box 9201 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9J1



1 800 585-9559

[www.ess.bc.ca](http://www.ess.bc.ca)



Welcome to the self-study guide for Introduction to Emergency Social Services, Module 1: Overview of ESS and Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers.

Completion of this guide is a prerequisite for other courses in Emergency Social Services. It is recommended that Module 1 be completed before Module 2.

Thank you for taking the time to volunteer and to participate in the Emergency Social Services Program.



## Table of Contents

About The ESS Program.....	1-1
About The Introduction To ESS Course.....	1-1
About The Overview Of ESS Module.....	1-1
Learning Objectives .....	1-1
How Disasters Affect People.....	1-2
Definition Of ESS.....	1-3
What Services Are Provided? .....	1-3
What Role Does The ESS Program Play In Emergency Management? .....	1-6
BCERMS – BC’s Emergency Response Management System .....	1-6
Who Plans For ESS?.....	1-7
When Are These Services Provided? .....	1-9
Local Authority Emergency Program Structure.....	1-10
Where Are These Services Provided?.....	1-11
Why Plan For ESS? .....	1-13
Provincial ESS Support Programs.....	1-14
Legislative Authorities For ESS.....	1-18
Acronyms .....	1-20
Glossary .....	1-21
Web Sites .....	1-23
Quiz .....	1-25





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**About The  
Emergency  
Social Services  
Program**

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is an emergency response program made up of dedicated individuals who share a common goal of assisting people in an emergency.

**About The  
Introduction To  
Emergency  
Social Services  
Course**

The Introduction to Emergency Social Services course provides new ESS workers with fundamental information about the Emergency Social Services Program.

This course is made up of two modules:

- Module 1: Overview of ESS (see course description below).
- Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers (designed to help you prepare yourself and your family, friends, and employer so that you will be able to respond quickly in a time of need).

The two modules together can be completed in approximately three hours.

**About The  
Overview Of ESS  
Module**

This module is intended to provide new ESS workers with a general overview of the ESS Program.

**Learning  
Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

- ✓ define Emergency Social Services
- ✓ describe the basic Emergency Social Services: the provision of emergency food, clothing, lodging, and family reunification
- ✓ describe other Emergency Social Services: the provision of services such as emotional support, volunteer services, communications, first aid, health services, child care, public information, transportation services, pet care, and recreation services
- ✓ define Emergency Management
- ✓ discuss the relationship between the local ESS team and municipal, regional, provincial, and federal governments
- ✓ identify ESS Support Organizations

# How Disasters Affect People



Although disasters may harm the physical environment, they also affect people. Lives are lost, people injured, homes destroyed, and families dislocated. Disasters affect the psychological, social, and economic well-being of individuals, families, and entire communities.

Take a moment now to think about the hazards that may threaten the safety of your community.

List 5:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Although most of us will not experience a disaster in our lifetime, many others will not be as fortunate.



Take a moment to think about the impact on your life if your home was destroyed today.

List 5 losses you might experience:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



List 3 emotions you think you might feel if you were to lose your home in a disaster:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Definition Of ESS

Emergency Social Services are those services provided on a short-term basis (generally for 72 hours) to preserve the emotional and physical well being of evacuees and response workers in emergency situations.

## What Services Are Provided?



When people are forced to evacuate their homes temporarily or their homes are damaged or destroyed, they may require assistance with essential services to maintain life and health. They will likely be directed to go to a Reception Centre for assistance. A Reception Centre is a safe place where people can gather to get information, register, and receive assistance with their needs.

Some of the services available at a Reception Centre are described below.

### Referrals for Food, Clothing and Lodging

- provides food and meals to people who are without food or food preparation facilities, including both evacuees and emergency response workers
- provides essential clothing, blankets and toiletries for evacuees
- provides safe, temporary lodging for those who are forced from their homes, and who are without insurance or unable to immediately access their insurance policies and are unable to stay with family or friends



### Family Reunification

- registers evacuees, takes inquiries about people's safety and whereabouts, and assists in reuniting families



Additional services may be provided at Reception Centres. The needs of each particular emergency will determine the services to be provided. When necessary, communities should plan to provide the services listed below.



### **Emotional Support**

- provides emotional support for evacuees and ESS workers, and provides referrals to appropriate human services agencies when needed



### **Volunteer Services**

- coordinates assignments for trained volunteers and trains “walk-in” volunteers to assist where needed



### **Communications**

- ensures the effective flow of key information in and out of a Reception Centre



### **First Aid**

- provides basic first aid support and makes referrals to appropriate health care facilities as necessary



### **Health Services**

- assists in dealing with public health issues such as communicable diseases as well as ensuring safe water, food, and sanitation
- provides assistance to people with special needs, the dependent elderly, and people with physical or mental disabilities



### **Information**

- ensures that accurate, up-to-date, relevant information and print materials are available for evacuees as well as workers

### **Child Care**



- arranges for qualified childcare workers to provide activities in a supportive environment for young children who have experienced a disaster. Some Reception Centres may provide a child care area for parents to care for their own children
- oversee children who arrive at a Reception Centre without a parent or guardian

### **Transportation Services**



- arranges transportation for evacuees to hotels, motels, or Group Lodging facilities, as required

### **Recreation Services**



- organizes and provides activities for all ages and special needs groups in a Reception Centre or Group Lodging



### **Multicultural Services**

- provides needed translation services



### **Pet Services**

- assists with the care of domestic pets through the provision of food, water, exercise, and shelter

### **Other services as required**

## What Role Does The ESS Program Play In Emergency Management?



## British Columbia's Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS)

Emergency Management is defined as an organized effort to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency and/or disaster. The purpose of Emergency Management is to save lives, reduce suffering, protect property, protect the environment, and reduce economic and social losses.

Emergency Social Services plays an important role in Emergency Management by:

- helping people remain independent and self-sufficient
- helping people meet their basic survival needs during a disaster
- reuniting families separated by disaster
- providing people with accurate and up-to-date information about the situation at hand
- helping people re-establish themselves as quickly as possible after a disaster

BC has an Emergency Response Management System that will ensure a coordinated and organized provincial response and recovery to all emergency events.

Under the Emergency Program Management Regulation, communities must make provisions for the delivery of Emergency Social Services. The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) provides support to local ESS teams by providing training and consultation in developing their plans. Local ESS teams, as critical members of the local Emergency Management program, train and respond in the BCERMS model as do all provincial government ministries, crown corporations, most municipalities and many regional districts.

## Who Plans For ESS?

In most communities, local ESS teams made up of volunteers, municipal or regional district staff, and members of existing community service organizations plan for and deliver Emergency Social Services. A community's Emergency Program Coordinator ensures the appointment of an ESS Director. Some local authorities may appoint a municipal employee as ESS Director, while others may recruit a volunteer to fulfill this role.

An ESS Director recruits volunteers to be responsible for each of the Emergency Social Services functions, (e.g., Referrals for Food, Clothing & Lodging, Emotional Support, First Aid, etc.). These volunteers come together to form the ESS Planning Committee (see organization chart, page 1-10).

Supervisors for each service recruit sufficient individuals or members of community organizations to share the responsibility for the ESS planning process and to respond on a 24-hour basis if required.

## ESS Planning Committee



Emergency Social Services are based on function – in a small community, a team of 5 or 6 people may be able to provide all of the required Emergency Social Services. For example, a small team may be able to register evacuees and ensure they have necessary clothing, toiletries, food, and a place to stay. Even if the evacuees require medical assistance, support from a member of the clergy, or short-term shelter for their pets, a small team of ESS workers may be able to arrange for these services.

In a large community where thousands of people are affected by an emergency or disaster, many ESS workers may be required to provide the basic services to evacuees. Even greater numbers of ESS workers may be required to assist evacuees with specialized services such as child care or pet care.





## When Are These Services Provided?

A community's overall Emergency Response Plan outlines the emergency roles of all response agencies, including Law Enforcement, Fire & Rescue, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Emergency Social Services, Utilities, and others. Senior officials from each of these response groups form the community's Emergency Management Organization or Emergency Planning Committee. They are tasked with developing and implementing plans and measures in emergencies and disasters. The ESS Director represents the ESS team.

### ESS Activation Levels

There are four levels of activation for ESS.

**ESS Level 1** involves the evacuation of only one or two families (or up to 10 people), without activation of a Reception Centre. Services are usually provided at or near the site of the incident, and may be delivered by members of the ESS team or other agencies designated by the local authority. A Level 1 ESS response is frequently activated by local fire or police dispatch, and generally requires only two ESS responders. This is the most common level of ESS response.

**ESS Levels 2 – 4** involve larger numbers of evacuees, increase in complexity, and will normally result in call out of the ESS team and activation of a Reception Centre.

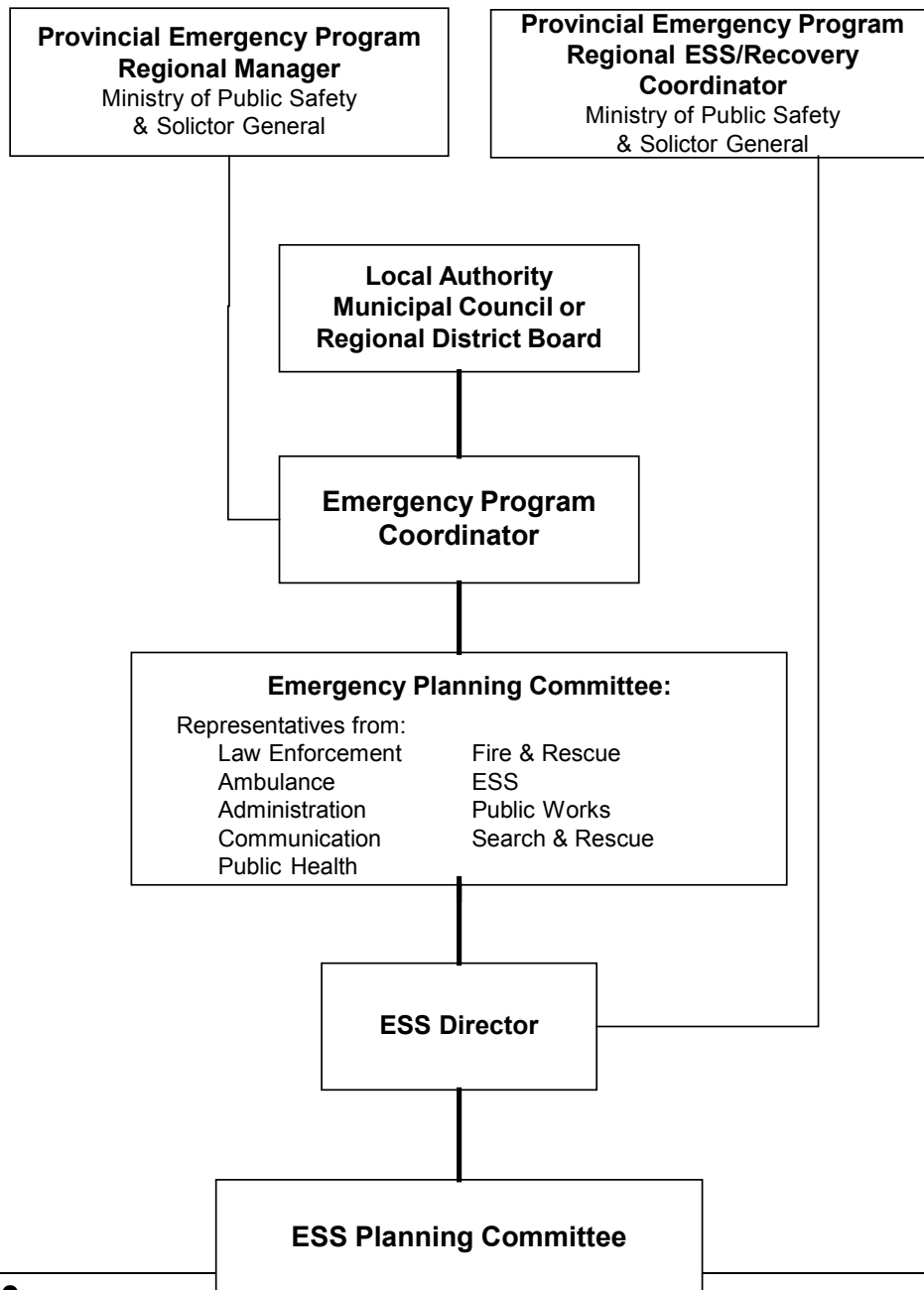
The ESS Director will be notified by the local Emergency Program Coordinator (or designated alternate) of the need for an ESS response. The ESS Director will then activate the ESS Plan, calling out necessary volunteers and providing ESS as required. Services are provided for up to 72 hours to those affected by the disaster and in need of assistance. During those 72 hours evacuees should be making alternate arrangements for their families with the assistance of their insurance company or community organizations.

An ESS team and community unaffected by disaster, may even be required to act as a "host community". The "host community" receives evacuees forced to



leave their community because of a disaster or unsafe conditions and provides them with Emergency Social Services.

## Local Authority Emergency Program Structure

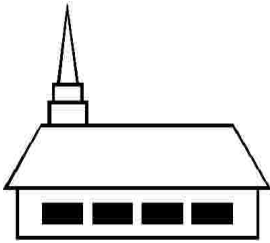


## Where Are These Services Provided?



Emergency Social Services are delivered primarily at Reception Centres, Group Lodging facilities, or directly to people who cannot come to these centres and facilities because of disability or transportation problems. Facilities designated as Reception Centres and Group Lodging facilities may include:

- recreation centres
- school gymnasiums
- church halls
- hotel conference or meeting rooms
- shopping malls



If a suitable facility is not available, a site may be selected and tents or trailers may be brought in. Examples of sites include:

- municipal parks
- camp grounds
- school playing fields
- parking lots



The location of Reception Centres will depend on the facilities available in a community or on the specific requirements for a facility during the emergency response.

Experience from previous disasters indicates that as few as 10 to 25% of the population may require assistance. Even if evacuees don't require assistance, they will be encouraged to go to a Reception Centre to register and get current information regarding the disaster. Once evacuees' immediate survival needs have been met, evacuees will continue to be welcomed at a Reception Centre where emotional support and additional information and directives regarding the emergency response will be provided.



Picture yourself being told to evacuate from your neighbourhood in the middle of the night. At the police roadblock you are directed to report to a local gymnasium that has been set up as an Reception Centre. What would you like to see at the Reception Centre when you arrive?



List 5 items:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

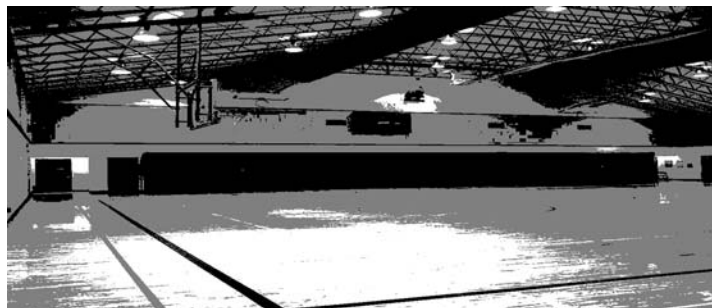


How would you like to be greeted on your arrival at the Reception Centre?

List 5 ways:



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## Why Plan For ESS?

In order to respond promptly to the needs of evacuees and response workers, an ESS team needs to plan, train, and exercise together.



Establishing a team of people and organizations familiar with a community's services helps ensure that people with the ESS knowledge, skills, and resources will be there to help when disaster strikes.



Developing an ESS plan involves identifying a community's human and material resources that will be required in an ESS response. This process includes identifying people with skills in areas such as crisis intervention, amateur radio operation, translation services, volunteer management, first aid and food safety.

ESS workers should survey community resources and establish written agreements with suppliers such as hotels, motels, restaurants, and thrift stores to assist with the provision of services in time of disaster.

The location of resources such as cots, bedding, and insulated food coolers should also be identified.

It is important that all of this information be included in a written ESS plan that can be implemented in an organized and coordinated manner as soon as an emergency occurs.

## Provincial ESS Support Programs



Most emergencies can be handled by a local authority's ESS resources. However, when a large number of people are displaced by an incident, the province may be asked to assist.

### Mobile Support Teams (MST)

If a community is overwhelmed by a disaster and does not have access to support from neighbouring communities, the province may provide assistance at the request of the Emergency Program Coordinator or ESS Director. The ESS Office activates Mobile Support Teams (MST).

- MSTs are regionally-based teams composed of trained ESS volunteers
- MSTs can travel, on short notice, to any community not able to mobilize a sufficient number of trained volunteers to deal with a local emergency
- MSTs provide on-site training and consultation for local residents to assist them in organizing ESS during an evacuation
- travel and accommodation costs of MST response to an emergency are covered by the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP)
- management, training, and exercising of these teams are funded by the ESS Office
- information regarding the MST can be requested from the ESS Office at 1-800-585-9559

## ESS Support Organizations

The ESS Office has agreements with ESS Support Organizations to provide additional resources to communities in major emergencies.

The following ESS Support Organizations include (listed in alphabetical order):



### **BC Housing**

BC Housing maintains lists of lodging resources available throughout the province. If more people are displaced than can be housed in their local area, BC Housing may refer them elsewhere for shelter. BC Housing is currently exploring forms of temporary lodging that could be moved into a disaster area. It also maintains a stockpile of cots and blankets throughout the province to equip Group Lodging facilities when required.



### **Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation Canada**

In British Columbia the Tzu-Chi has taken on the task of mass feeding in times of disaster. The organization will be responsible for tracking the Mobile Feeding Units (MFU) assigned to the province from the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS). They will also provide support to communities in addressing their planning for mass feeding needs in times of emergency or disasters.



### **Canadian Disaster Child Care Society (CDCC)**

This group trains and coordinates qualified volunteers to provide skilled child care services at Reception Centres.



Canadian Red Cross

### **Canadian Red Cross Society**

The Canadian Red Cross trains community volunteers in Family Reunification functions. When requested by the ESS Office during a response, Red Cross may provide family reunification volunteers, with disaster experience, to assist local volunteers. The Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) can be used if there are multiple registration sites, and to respond to large numbers of inquiries from outside the disaster area.



JUSTICE INSTITUTE  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Emergency Management Division

### **Justice Institute of BC (JIBC)**

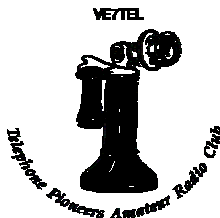
The Emergency Management Division (EMD) of the Justice Institute of B.C. develops and delivers ESS basic and advanced training. On request, the EMD's ESS Instructors and Volunteer ESS Regional Trainers will provide or coordinate on-site training during a response. The instructors are also utilized as consultants in operations as required.



St. John Ambulance

### **St. John Ambulance**

St. John Ambulance maintains a provincial database of people who have taken its First Aid courses and who are willing to help in the event of an emergency. St. John Ambulance sends personnel to set up and staff first aid stations.



### **Telephone Pioneers Amateur Radio Club**

TPARC is responsible for providing emergency amateur radio communications. The club has developed a packet radio communications system that allows electronic mail to be sent by amateur radio workers.





### **The Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is responsible for training local ESS volunteers in the functions of Meet & Greet and Emotional Support.

On request from the ESS Office, The Salvation Army can provide additional Meet & Greet or Emotional Support workers, if needed, from outside the affected area.

### **ESS Staffing Bureau**

When requested by the affected community, the ESS Office may bring in ESS response workers from outside the immediate area to assist during a disaster. Depending on the complexity of the deployment, the ESS Office may establish an ESS Staffing Bureau close to the disaster area to coordinate accommodation and other needs for these responders. Most ESS Support Organizations have key roles in the ESS Staffing Bureau. Their tasks include:

- receiving all incoming personnel and ensure they are adequately prepared for their assignments
- providing pre-assignment briefings
- determining whether personnel are healthy
- arranging housing and meals
- providing debriefing services
- reviewing expense claim forms to facilitate reimbursement when personnel are ready to return home

## Legislative Authorities For ESS



### **The *Emergency Program Act***

Under B.C.'s *Emergency Program Act*, municipalities and regional districts are required to establish and maintain an Emergency Management plan, of which ESS is an important component.

### **Provincial Government Support For ESS**

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is responsible for:



- managing a provincial emergency response
- assisting local authorities with planning for an emergency
- supporting volunteers through a PEP Task Number, to ensure that they are eligible for Workers' Compensation and liability insurance when they are involved in an ESS response or engaged in approved training



The ESS Office at PEP Headquarters in Victoria:

- provides overall leadership and coordination of ESS across BC
- develops policies and procedures for use by ESS teams
- supports communities in building capacity and planning for and operating ESS
- funds training for volunteers

- liaises with local governments, provincial ministries, federal government departments, non-government organizations and other key emergency management stakeholders
- provides volunteer support
- supports local and regional level ESS responses to disasters and emergencies; and
- manages provincial level ESS responses

## Federal Government Support For ESS



At the federal government level, Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC), through the *Emergency Measures Act*, develops programs and policies to prepare for national disasters. PSEPC oversees Canada's involvement in international emergency preparedness matters, and provides post-disaster financial aid to help communities rebuild following a disaster.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Office of Emergency Services is responsible for supporting emergency health and social services in the provinces, territories or abroad. It manages the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS), which includes emergency supplies and medical and pharmaceutical supplies, which are available upon request from provincial and territorial governments and from other parts of the Government of Canada.

## Acronyms

<b>BCERMS</b>	British Columbia Emergency Response Management System
<b>CDCC</b>	Canadian Disaster Child Care
<b>CRIB</b>	Central Registry and Inquiry Bureau
<b>EOC</b>	Emergency Operations Centre
<b>EPC</b>	Emergency Program Coordinator
<b>ESS</b>	Emergency Social Services
<b>ESSD</b>	Emergency Social Services Director
<b>GL</b>	Group Lodging
<b>JIBC</b>	Justice Institute of BC
<b>MEIA</b>	Ministry of Employment & Income Assistance
<b>MST</b>	Mobile Support Team
<b>PEP</b>	Provincial Emergency Program
<b>PHAC</b>	Public Health Agency of Canada
<b>PREOC</b>	Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre
<b>PSEPC</b>	Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Canada
<b>RC</b>	Reception Centre
<b>TPARC</b>	Telephone Pioneers Amateur Radio Club

## Glossary

<b>Disaster</b>	A calamity caused by accident, fire, explosion, or technical failure, or by the forces of nature that has resulted in serious harm to the health, safety, or welfare of people, or in widespread damage to property (as defined in the <i>Emergency Program Act</i> )
<b>Emergency</b>	A present or imminent event that is caused by accident, fire, explosion, or technical failure, or by the forces of nature and requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people, or to limit damage to property (as defined in the <i>Emergency Program Act</i> )
<b>Emergency Management</b>	An organized effort to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency
<b>Emergency Management Organization</b>	An organization made up of officials from local emergency response agencies, tasked with developing and implementing plans and measures for emergencies and disasters who are responsible for the management/coordination of emergency activities on behalf of the local authority
<b>Emergency Operations Centre</b>	EOC – a designated facility established by an agency or jurisdiction to coordinate and support the overall response
<b>Emergency Program Coordinator</b>	A generic term referring to a person(s) responsible for management/coordination of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities on behalf of the local authority

<b>ESS</b>	Emergency Social Services are those services provided on a short-term basis to preserve the emotional and physical well being of evacuees and response workers in emergency situations
<b>ESSD</b>	The Emergency Social Services Director is responsible for the management / coordination of a local ESS program / team
<b>Evacuation Order</b>	An Evacuation Order may be issued by authorities having jurisdiction in response to imminent potential of loss of life or injury because of any potential danger to the population at risk, the residents, in the affected area. These orders are issued in the interest of life safety
<b>Incident(s)</b>	An occurrence caused either by humans or by natural phenomena, that requires prompt action by response personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and the environment, and to reduce economic and social losses
<b>Local Authority</b>	A local authority means: a) for a municipality, the municipal council b) for a regional district, the board of the regional district c) for a national park, the superintendent
<b>PEP Task Number</b>	A control number assigned by PEP to each response or training event for the purpose of tracing an approved response and providing support for ESS workers with Workers' Compensation Board and personal liability coverage

## Web Sites

BC Housing	<a href="http://www.bchousing.org">http://www.bchousing.org</a>
Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation Canada	<a href="http://www.tzuchi.ca">http://www.tzuchi.ca</a>
Canadian Disaster Child Care Society	<a href="http://www.members.shaw.ca/disasterchildcare">http://www.members.shaw.ca/ disasterchildcare</a>
Canadian Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.ca">http://www.redcross.ca</a>
Emergency Social Services Association	<a href="http://www.essa.bc.ca">http://www.essa.bc.ca</a>
ESS Office	<a href="http://www.ess.bc.ca">http://www.ess.bc.ca</a>
Justice Institute of BC	<a href="http://www.jibc.bc.ca">http://www.jibc.bc.ca</a>
Provincial Emergency Program	<a href="http://www.pep.bc.ca">http://www.pep.bc.ca</a>
Public Health Agency of Canada	<a href="http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ep-mv/index.html">http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ep- mv/index.html</a>
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Canada	<a href="http://www.ocipep.gc.ca">http://www.ocipep.gc.ca</a>
St. John Ambulance	<a href="http://www.sja.ca">http://www.sja.ca</a>
Telephone Pioneers Amateur Radio Club	<a href="http://www3.telus.net/mike_sankey/">http://www3.telus.net/mike_sankey/</a>
The Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.sallyann.org/eds">http://www.sallyann.org/eds</a>





## Quiz - Module 1: Overview Of ESS

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the following statement and circle the letter corresponding to the correct answer. When you have completed the quiz, submit it in person or by telephone or fax to your local ESS Director or Support Organization (e.g., Red Cross or Salvation Army).**

1. Emergency Social Services will assist evacuees with which of the following?
  - a) Sandbagging of their primary residence
  - b) Moving furniture
  - c) Temporary accommodation
  - d) Replacement of towels and household linens
  
2. What is the name of the legislation (Act) that guides ESS in B.C.?
  - a) Emergency Preparedness Act
  - b) Emergency Program Act
  - c) Social Services Act
  - d) Disaster Measures Act
  
3. Which level of government has the **primary** responsibility for ESS in British Columbia?
  - a) Local authorities
  - b) Provincial government
  - c) Federal government



**True or False (circle the appropriate letter)**

- |   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|
| 4. Food, clothing, lodging, and family reunification are considered essential to the emotional and physical well being of people in emergency situations. | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 5. An ESS Director will activate the ESS Plan upon direction from the local Emergency Program Coordinator or designated alternate.                        | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 6. When a disaster involves only one or two families the Level One ESS volunteers provide the same Emergency Social Services but on a smaller scale.      | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 7. PEP provides WCB coverage and liability insurance to registered ESS volunteers at training sessions, exercises, and responses.                         | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 8. ESS is available to those people who have insurance but are unable to access it.   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |

**In the box beside the name of each ESS Support Organization, place the letter that best describes the service that team provides.**

<b>SUPPORT ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> I. BC Housing Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada	A. Emergency Communications
<input type="checkbox"/> II. BC Housing	B. First Aid
<input type="checkbox"/> III. Telephone Pioneers Amateur Radio Club	C. Group Lodging
<input type="checkbox"/> IV. Canadian Disaster Child Care	D. Family Reunification
<input type="checkbox"/> V. Canadian Red Cross Society	E. Meet & Greet
<input type="checkbox"/> VI. St. John Ambulance	F. Mass Feeding
<input type="checkbox"/> VII. The Salvation Army	G. Child Care Services

Answers: 1-C; 2-b; 3-a; 4-T; 5-T; 6-T; 7-T; 8-T; 9-F; 10-C; 11-A; 12-G; 13-D; 14-B; 15-E



# Introduction to Emergency Social Services



## Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers





## **Table of Contents**

About The Emergency Social Services Program .....	2-1
About The Introduction To Emergency Social Services Course .....	2-1
About The Personal Preparedness For ESS Workers Module .....	2-1
Learning Objectives .....	2-1
About This Module .....	2-2
Before The Assignment .....	2-3
Key points from the ESS meeting.....	2-5
Key points about ESS workers .....	2-8
The “Grab and Go” bag checklist.....	2-11
Key points about the “Grab and Go” bag .....	2-12
Key points to discuss with your employer .....	2-15
Sample letter to the employer .....	2-16
During The Assignment .....	2-17
Key points: What new volunteers may experience during their first assignment.....	2-24
After The Assignment .....	2-25
Key points: What new volunteers may learn about being an ESS worker .....	2-26
Quiz .....	2-27





## **About The Emergency Social Services Program**

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is often referred to as the “Heart of Disaster Response.” The desire to assist people in a time of disaster motivates many volunteers to make a commitment to ESS.

## **About The Introduction To Emergency Social Services Course**

The Introduction to Emergency Social Services course provides new ESS workers with fundamental information about the ESS Program.

This course is made up of two modules:

- Module 1: Overview of the ESS Program
- Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers (see course description below)

The two modules together can be completed in approximately three hours.

## **About The Personal Preparedness For ESS Workers Module**

Although most ESS work involves meetings, planning, and getting ready to respond, the day may come when you are called upon to help at the time of a disaster. This module is designed to help you prepare yourself and your family, friends, and employer so that you will be ready to respond in a time of need.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the activities required of an ESS worker before, during and after an ESS response
- ✓ Explain the slogan, “Sharing the Responsibility”
- ✓ Assemble a “Grab and Go” bag
- ✓ Practice “Worker Care” principles



## About This Module



This module tells the story of Susan, a new ESS volunteer, and the preparations she makes for her first ESS assignment. Susan's story is presented as an example of what a new volunteer might experience. Because each volunteer has unique characteristics and life circumstances, experiences may vary.



The key points of the story are presented after each section to allow quick review.

The module is presented in three parts, each of which introduces new information about ESS:



### **Before the Assignment**



### **During the Assignment**



### **After the Assignment**

Included with the module are some helpful materials:

- A list of items to put in your “Grab and Go” bag
- A sample letter that your ESS Director could send to your employer to help you discuss taking time off work if you are called out on an assignment
- A quiz to help you check your new knowledge of ESS
- Brochures:
  - When Disaster Strikes
  - Volunteers
  - Emotional Health – Returning Home From A Disaster Assignment
  - Help When You Need It Most
  - Disaster Response Routes
  - Out-of-Area Contact Card



- Emergency Supplies Checklist





## Before The Assignment

### The New ESS Volunteer



Recently there was an advertisement in the Middleton Times inviting people to an ESS meeting at the recreation centre. Susan was one of the people who attended and, as a result of the information presented at the meeting, she decided to join the ESS team. The following pages describe her experiences from the time she was recruited to the end of her first ESS assignment, and the preparations she and her family made.

Susan lives in Middleton, a community of 35,000 people, with her husband and two children. She is a teller at the Middleton Bank, and does some volunteer work for her son Jason's Beaver Troop and for her daughter Shelley's Guide Troop. Her husband Steve works as a computer programmer for the local community college. Jason and Shelley are now old enough that their parents can spare the time to do some volunteer work for their community.



## Sharing The Responsibility

*Breakfast time at Susan's home, the morning after the ESS meeting:*



"Steve, you know that meeting I went to last night – the one about disasters?"

"Sure. How did it go?"

"It was really interesting. You know, if there was a disaster, like a forest fire or a flood, and we had to evacuate, we'd probably have to go to a Reception Centre for things like food and a place to stay. I'd heard about Reception Centres, but I didn't know who ran them. Actually, they would need a lot of help from volunteers."

"I'll bet you volunteered, didn't you?"

"As a matter of fact, I did. It isn't a huge time commitment, and I'll learn a lot of things that will be helpful to our family. Did you know that if we lost phone service after an earthquake, the pay phones might still be working? We should probably keep some quarters handy. And the Disaster Response Routes - I thought they were the roads we should use if we had to evacuate, but they're exactly the opposite. We're supposed to keep away from Disaster Response Routes so they're available for emergency vehicles."








"You're right, that is helpful to know."



"The ESS Director who presented the seminar gave us a lot of useful information. There are a few things we need to talk about in case there is ever a disaster here. She said that if a disaster happens, we might be alone for as long as 72 hours. We're not prepared for that.

She also told us about the commonly used slogan "Sharing the Responsibility". Maybe this evening the four of us can start doing our share by putting together a 'Grab and Go' bag. We should also talk about how our family would get back together if we were separated at the time of a disaster."

### **Key Points From The ESS Meeting**

-  People should be prepared to be on their own for up to 72 hours.
-  Disaster Response Routes should be kept clear for emergency vehicles – they should not be used to leave the area, unless directed by emergency response personnel.
-  Evacuees requiring food and lodging arrangements are directed to a Reception Centre.
-  While some Reception Centre workers may be employees of the city/municipality and/or community services agencies, the majority of ESS workers are local volunteers.
-  If home phones are not working, pay phones may still work, so everyone should keep some quarters on hand.
-  The slogan "Sharing the Responsibility," commonly used by emergency preparedness workers, means that everyone should share the responsibility of planning for a disaster.
-  Everyone should have a family reunion plan in place to get the family back together as families may be separated at the time of a disaster, with parents at work and children at school, for example.



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**Introduction to Emergency Social Services  
Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers**

- Planning can make a vital difference in reuniting the family when communications break down following a disaster.



## Consulting The Family



While we were developing our family reunion plan, Steve and the children asked a lot of questions about my new role as an ESS volunteer.

Here are some of the things that I explained to them:

- I might be asked to work as a Registration & Referrals worker at a Reception Centre, registering evacuees and completing Referral forms for meals, clothing, or accommodation for people who need them. People might need this kind of help because they had to leave their homes in a hurry, are unable to stay with family or friends, or have no insurance to cover their expenses while they are out of their homes.
- Instead, I might be assigned to a Group Lodging facility, where people sleep in a large hall because there is nowhere else to stay.
- I would wear an ESS ID and nametag so that people would know that they could ask me for help.
- If a disaster hit Middleton, many people would probably want to volunteer. The ESS Program prefers people to volunteer before the disaster so they can be trained.

What I wanted my family to understand was that I could be assigned to one of several places, depending on what was needed at any given time. All jobs are considered important in a disaster response.



Steve wanted to know more about the financial impact of volunteering. He was concerned about what would happen if I took time off work, and whether I would lose pay. We can't really afford for me to lose three days' wages.

We agreed that I would only go on an ESS assignment under certain conditions. For example, I would only go if my employer agreed that I could take the time as paid time off, and if one of our relatives could baby-sit the kids so Steve could go to work. As a young family we have to be realistic about what we can and can't do.









I also told him that ESS workers on assignments have Workers' Compensation Board and liability insurance coverage through the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP).

We spent some time talking about ESS workers returning after an assignment and their need for support and understanding at home. It helped to look over the ESS Emotional Health pamphlet series I was given at the team meeting.

After our talk, we both felt comfortable with the idea of me volunteering as an ESS worker.



## **Key Points About ESS Workers**

-  An ESS worker may be called upon to do any one of many jobs at a Reception Centre or Group Lodging facility, depending on the need. All jobs are important.
-  ESS workers can be recognized by their ESS ID (usually vests) and nametags.
-  Registration & Referrals workers are ESS workers who register evacuees, assess their needs, and provide Referral forms for meals, clothing, or accommodations.
-  Many people want to volunteer during an emergency. New volunteers are registered and provided orientation and training so they know what to do. However, it is preferable to have volunteers trained in ESS before a disaster strikes.
-  All ESS workers have Workers' Compensation Board and liability insurance coverage through PEP, even those who only volunteer during the disaster response.
-  ESS workers should discuss with their employers whether they will be paid during an assignment. This should be done before a disaster occurs.
-  ESS workers need family support to go on an assignment.
-  Emotional support and understanding are important for ESS workers when they return home from an assignment.





## The “Grab And Go” Bag Project



At the ESS meeting, I was given a “Grab and Go” bag checklist (see Page 2-11) to help me pack the items I might need in an emergency.

I sat down at the kitchen table with the checklist to decide what items I already had and where to get the items I still needed. For the flashlight, battery-powered radio, and the first aid kit, I thought I would try either the drug store or the hardware store. As for clothes, I checked off the sweatshirts, pants, and waterproof jacket from my wardrobe, but I still needed work gloves and sturdy, comfortable walking shoes.



As I was thinking about this, Shelley ran into the kitchen and sat down right next to me. “What are you doing, Mom?”

“Getting started on my ‘Grab and Go’ bag.”

“Let me look ... ooh, snacks and drinks, clothes - cool! Can I have a bag, too?”

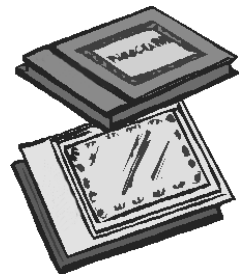
I knew the kids should be prepared too, so Shelley, Jason, and I went on a shopping trip. Without too much difficulty we were able to get the things we needed for our bags. The most challenging part was persuading the kids to include healthy snacks like bottled water and dried fruit and nuts.



Most of the personal items, like Steve’s spare glasses, were easy to find. The only thing that was time-consuming was getting all our papers together to copy. My driver’s license, medical card, home insurance and list of phone numbers of friends and family all had to be copied. Including the papers for Steve, Shelley and Jason, we had about twenty documents to take to the corner store to photocopy.



Since we were making a family project out of the “Grab and Go” bag, I bought four small, inexpensive photo albums with plastic sleeves, one album for each person. We put each document in its own sleeve for easy access, and included recent family photos to help raise our morale





in the event of a disaster, and to assist us in locating missing or separated family members and pets.

We almost forgot our dog Max in our planning. Luckily he came to check out all the activity as we were packing our bags, and we realized that he would need his own supplies in the event of a disaster. The kids packed a spare leash, a 3-day food and water supply, and one of his favourite toys. We also chose an accessible place for Max's travel kennel.

We confirmed with Steve's brother Mark, who lives in Ontario, that he would be our out-of-area contact person. Mark needed to know that, following a disaster, each of us would notify him of our condition and location. All our friends and relatives would be instructed to contact him to find out about our family's safety and whereabouts. All four of us then completed out-of-area contact cards. Steve and I decided to keep our cards in our wallets, while Shelley and Jason put theirs in their "Grab and Go" bags.

I made some last-minute changes to the contents of our bags when I remembered the ESS Director's suggestion about choosing light-weight items - everyone (except Max) has to carry his or her own bag.

The last thing I did was stick a note to the refrigerator door, reminding me when to replace items that expire, like water, batteries and Steve's back-up supply of prescription medications. I decided to follow the ESS Director's suggestion to check our bags twice a year when we change our clocks to Daylight Saving Time and back to Standard Time.



## The "Grab And Go" Bag Checklist



### Clothing

- T-shirt/sweat shirt/sweater
- good walking shoes
- waterproof jacket
- pants
- baseball cap/hat
- underwear and socks



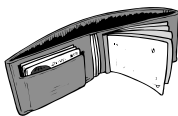
### Personal hygiene

- soap
- face cloth
- towel
- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- personal items (for example, razor, lip salve, and deodorant)



### First aid

- small personal first aid kit
- antiseptic solutions
- band aids
- tweezers, scissors, and nail clippers



### Identification (copies)

- driver's license
- fanny pack with name tag and photo ID
- personal photographs (including those of pets)
- out-of-area contact card
- important ESS phone numbers



### Food and water

- granola bars or similar
- 1 - 2 litres of water



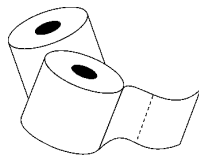
### Tools and equipment

- flashlight
- battery operated, wind-up, or solar radio
- batteries for flashlight and radio (check twice a year)
- lighter/matches
- folding knife
- bottle/can opener
- garbage bags



### Medical aids

- spare eye glasses/contact lenses
- prescription medications



### Extras

- space blanket
- toilet paper and handi-wipes
- feminine hygiene products
- duct tape
- ball of string
- scissors and pliers
- cash including quarters for phone calls
- wide tip permanent marker
- books, cards, items that make you feel comfortable



## **Key Points About The “Grab And Go” Bag**

- Preparations such as packing a “Grab and Go” bag can make a big difference in the event of a disaster.
- Most of the items on the checklist won’t need to be purchased – look around your home for items that you already own; if items must be bought and you are on a limited budget, try spreading out your purchases over several paychecks.
- Pack healthy foods with a long shelf life.
- Remember to pack supplies for your pets.
- Consider including a few personal photos as well as pictures of your pets.
- Identify a person who is willing and able to act as your family’s out-of-area contact person. Seek his or her support in the family’s reunion planning process. The person should have an answering machine to record calls when away, and should routinely check for messages.
- Keep your out-of-area contact card in your wallet, “Grab and Go” bag, or other readily accessible location.
- Pack lightly – each person will have to carry his or her own bag.
- Decide on a system to remind yourself when it is time to replace items that may expire, for example, twice per year when you change your clocks to Daylight Savings Time and back to Standard Time.



## The Employer

A few weeks passed after completing the “Grab and Go” bag project. Since then I had attended a number of ESS meetings and training sessions, and decided that now was the time to discuss my ESS work with my employer.



I thought it would be a good idea to give my manager a letter from my ESS Director and an ESS brochure before meeting to discuss possible time off for ESS assignments.

*The Setting: The Middleton Bank, the Manager’s office.*



“Good morning Susan. Come in and we’ll go over the letter I received from your ESS Director. ”

“Hi, Joanne. Thanks for taking this time to talk to me.”

“No problem. I read over the letter and the brochure you gave me. I guess what we need to decide is how we would handle your time off work if you were called out to help with ESS. I have a few questions. Are you volunteering for Middleton or the province?”

“Well, the provincial government sets the standards, but every community is responsible for setting up their own ESS teams or Program, so I’m actually volunteering for Middleton.”

“I see. As I understand it, if there were a disaster here, like a major forest fire, you would almost certainly be needed. How long would an assignment like that take you away from work?”

**Introduction to Emergency Social Services**  
**Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers**

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“ESS assignments are usually up to 72 hours, but could be extended.”



Introduction to Emergency Social Services  
Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers

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“So you could be called out to help at any time and you could be away for three days. If we were short-staffed or really busy, that could be a concern for both the bank and for me.”



“The ESS Director said these assignments don’t happen very often in our community, and I don’t have to accept an assignment. If I were called out, I would certainly discuss it with you first to make sure it was OK.”

“That sounds reasonable. What about training? Are you expected to attend ESS training sessions during working hours?”

“Well, for new volunteers like me, training sessions are offered on weekends or evenings, so that shouldn’t affect my work. More senior people like the ESS Directors and some of the managers attend courses at the Justice Institute of BC. Their courses can be up to five days duration.”

“Then it seems to me that there are two things we have to agree on. Let’s start with the easy one. I’m sure the bank will have no problem with you helping in a local disaster response. So let’s agree that if a disaster struck the city, then your time as an ESS worker would be treated as paid leave for up to three working days. After that we would have to discuss further. Does that sound reasonable?”

“I think that’s very fair.”

“Now, as to training, if at some time in the future you want to take extra ESS courses during working hours, I would like to review the courses and timing before we agree to time off and whether it would be with or without pay. Is that OK with you?”











“It certainly is. I really appreciate your consideration, Joanne. You know, once I’m trained, perhaps I could offer personal preparedness training to the staff at lunch time.”

“That’s a good idea. We can consider it when the time comes. But I do want to let you know that the bank is generally supportive of volunteer efforts, especially for something as worthwhile as ESS. What I will do now is write you a memo outlining what we’ve discussed and send a copy to the human resources department. Anything else?”

“No, I think we’ve covered everything. Thanks again.”

As I left the room, I realized how fortunate I was to be working for the Middleton Bank. Some employers, such as small companies, may be unable to make the same arrangements due to lack of staff or funds.

### **Key Points To Discuss With Your Employer Before You Are Called Out On An ESS Assignment**

-  Although the province sets the standards for ESS, each community is responsible for its own ESS program.
-  ESS volunteers are required primarily for their own community.
-  ESS assignments don’t happen very often.
-  It is possible that an experienced ESS worker could be called to help in other areas of the province.
-  ESS assignments are generally up to 72 hours duration but could be longer.
-  Volunteers do not have to accept an ESS assignment.





🔑 Training for new volunteers is generally held on evenings and weekends.

## Sample Letter From Susan's ESS Director To Her Employer



Date  
Ms. Joanne Dufresne  
Manager,  
Middleton Bank  
1432 - 8th Avenue  
Middleton B.C. V9X 9R9

Dear Ms. Dufresne:

I am writing to you as the Emergency Social Services Director for the City of Middleton, to introduce our program and seek your support for Susan Jones, should she be called on to assist us in a disaster response.

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is the part of our community's Emergency Management Program that provides emergency food, clothing and lodging services and other basic necessities to people affected by a disaster or major emergency. Communities across B.C. are responsible for the provision of Emergency Social Services, with the support of both the provincial and federal governments. The services are organized and delivered by trained volunteers, municipal, and provincial workers.

It is very important that our volunteers make prior arrangements with their employers in case they are called on to assist in a disaster response. Should a disaster strike Middleton, the ESS team would be contacted by the city to establish Reception Centres to care for evacuees and assist in re-uniting families and friends. In such a circumstance, I would call on all our trained ESS volunteers, including Susan. This could involve time off from work for up to three working days. It is our hope that your firm and others in Middleton would support any employees who are ESS volunteers by allowing them to take volunteer time off with pay. I stress that disasters requiring ESS are very infrequent in any community. The last time ESS was activated in Middleton was the 2001 flash flood.

I have enclosed a brochure about ESS that explains in more detail its purpose and mandate.

In closing, I would like to thank you in advance for any arrangements you may make to support Susan in her ESS volunteer role.

Sincerely,



**Introduction to Emergency Social Services**  
**Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers**

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Yvonne Beckman, ESS Director  
City of Middleton





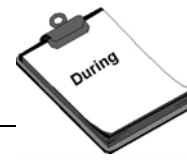
## During The Assignment

### The Assignment

When disaster strikes, all the planning and preparations ESS workers have made, and all the training they have undertaken, will be put to the test. The challenges are numerous, such as being away from their families, helping people who are suffering loss and emotional distress, and making do with what is at hand. However, the rewards are usually greater than the challenges: the joy of reuniting a family, the pleasure of being able to give help and support and really make a difference in people's lives at a critical time, and the new bonds forged with fellow workers that will last a lifetime.

The following account tells of Susan's experiences during her first assignment. She is called out to help when Middleton is hit by a major blizzard that has already lasted for several days. The main provincial highways are closed, leaving travelers stranded. Sections of the community have been without power for more than 24 hours and some local residents are being forced to leave their homes because of the intense cold.

The local ESS team has been activated by the ESS Director and asked to open a Reception Centre in the recreation centre. Wang, a friend of Susan's who owns a four-wheel drive vehicle, has offered to pick up the team. Before they set out, the team made all the necessary arrangements with their families and the few employers who remained open despite the blizzard. We join Susan en route to her assignment with Wang, Karen (the Reception Centre Manager), and Mary, Peter, and Jas (three other team members).



## En Route To The Reception Centre

“What time are we supposed to be there?” asked Wang.

“I told Yvonne that we should arrive by 8:30 this morning,” Karen replied. “We should just about make it on time, despite all the detours we’ve had to take. Middleton has certainly been hit hard. Look at the height of these snow banks. Pretty incredible, eh!”

“I hope we’ll be able to get into the hall when we get there. Who has the key to get in?” I asked.

Karen answered: “I spoke to the caretaker before we left and he’ll be waiting for us. The recreation centre has its own generator, so we should have heat and light. Just in case the electricity goes off, Susan, did you check to see if our Reception Centre kit is complete? I remember that at the last meeting we had the contents out to show everyone.”

I was relieved to be able to answer that I had checked the kit. “The only things I didn’t check were the spare flashlight and radio batteries.”

“Don’t worry, Susan, they should be fine. We bought new ones only two weeks ago,” Peter reassured her. He then added, “By the way, Karen, how many other ESS workers are we likely to get at our Reception Centre?”

“Well there are the six of us and I’m told that we can expect some other workers to arrive soon,” responded Karen. “Let’s take a few minutes to talk about what lies ahead over the next few days.”



She reminded us of the “Worker Care” principles we had learned in our training:

- to buddy up with another worker
- to watch for signs of stress
- to take our breaks together
- to provide a listening ear for each other

We talked about some of the important points from our training, until we pulled up in front of the recreation centre.



## At the Reception Centre

8:45 a.m: When we arrived at the recreation centre, it was still snowing, and the wind was blowing hard. The temperature outside had dropped to -20° C. Tony, the caretaker, was waiting inside for us and let us in.

Karen took charge as Reception Centre Manager ~



“First of all, has everyone signed the PEP Task Registration form? We need to make sure everyone has signed in so that they will have WCB and personal liability coverage. We’ll keep the Task Registration form at the front desk for any other volunteers who arrive later.

“OK, let’s get started. Fortunately this centre still has power, which sure makes everything a lot easier. Susan, do you remember the exercise we did a few months ago when we did the Reception Centre floor plan? Could you, Mary and Wang set up the hall using the same plan? I’m sure that if there is anything you need, you could ask

Tony. Here’s the drawing we used for the exercise.

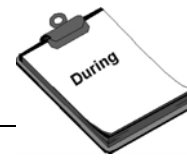
“We’ll need to get the Reception Centre signs up as well.

“Peter and Jas, can you get started on making some warm drinks?

“I’m going to call Yvonne and let her know we arrived safely and are getting things set up. As ESS Director, she will appreciate that information so that she can pass it on to the other Emergency Management officials at the Emergency Operations Centre.”

Half an hour later, Karen assembled the group.

“Let’s talk about the situation. Yvonne told us to expect anywhere from two to three hundred people. They could start arriving at any



time. I'm told that most local people are in pretty good condition, but some of the elderly residents are upset about leaving their homes. There will also be a number of stranded travelers - at least twenty families with very young children, and a few with pets. Since there's only the six of us right now, we'll just have to cope as best we can until our other ESS workers can get here. I'm sure some of the people coming to the Reception Centre for assistance would be happy to give us a hand.

"The other problem is that right now there are very few hotel or motel rooms available in the area, although a few of the fast food restaurants have electricity and are trying to stay open. I'm afraid that means we might have to set up a Group Lodging facility. We'll know better by lunchtime.

"Wang, would it be possible for you to stay a little longer?"

Wang was happy to oblige, and having a volunteer available with a four-wheel drive was invaluable. He asked Karen for directions on what to do.

"Could you and Tony alternate working at the entrance? I'd like you to meet & greet the new arrivals and direct them into the Reception Centre."



Karen continued, "Several trained Meeters & Greeters as well as two Emotional Support workers are scheduled to arrive to take charge of the meeting and greeting roles and to provide support for emotional needs. In the meantime, it would be a great help if Susan and Jas could set up a play area for children as well as a quiet area for those wanting some space away from the activity.



**Introduction to Emergency Social Services**  
**Module 2: Personal Preparedness for ESS Workers**

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That way, we'll be ready in case evacuees arrive sooner than expected."

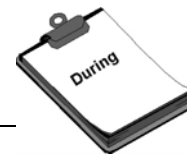
"Once we're set up, Mary will take on her role as supervisor for Registration & Referrals and she and Peter can cover that function until more volunteers arrive. Susan, could you act as the Resource Acquisition worker responsible for getting all the resources needed by the Registration & Referrals workers? We don't have a supervisor or Logistics Chief on site yet, so if you have any questions please come to me for now.

"And before you all get started on your assignments, please remember to respect the privacy of the people you are helping."

Just then five new faces appeared in the doorway, looking ready to help.

Karen greeted them, "Hi there! It's great to see you. Your timing is perfect. We planned on setting up the 'Registration Only' and 'Inquiry About Family and Friends' desks right here next to the Registration & Referrals workers. How does that work for you?"

Ten minutes later, the first evacuees arrived....



## Helping Hands

### Day 1

I was a Resource Acquisition worker on day one. I took the requests for things like hotel rooms, meals, clothing, and toothbrushes from the Registration & Referrals workers - the people at the front desks who assist the evacuees. I then grouped the requests, contacted local retail outlets whom we had set up agreements with previously, to organize the resources, and let the Registration & Referrals workers know what resources were available. They, in turn, distributed these resources to evacuees.





For the first day we didn't have all the resources we needed. Apparently the hotel and motel rooms filled up within a few hours of the highway being closed. We decided that setting up a Group Lodging co-located with the Reception Centre would be the best option to provide a shelter & services for those who couldn't get a hotel & had no one to stay with. Fortunately the recreation centre had enough floor mats and our ESS team had stored 100 blankets, pillows, towels and comfort kits for a situation such as this.

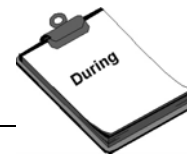
Although we had some games, puzzles and videos available to help people pass the time, some travelers seemed to be frustrated and anxious to get on to their destinations, their families, and their jobs. Some people were very apprehensive because they had lost contact with family members stranded by the storm. Knowing that there were a lot of cars stuck in the snow in isolated locations, their fears were justified.



One farmer lost his barn, his poultry, and many of his prize cattle when an oil can, left burning to keep the barn warm, tipped over and caught the barn on fire. The

place burned to the ground, partly because the firefighters couldn't get to his farm through the snow. Fortunately his family got out safely.

What do you say to someone who has lost everything? Or to Mrs. T., an elderly woman who was distraught when the police insisted she leave her unheated house. She still had vivid memories of families being torn from their homes during the war. We found her a comfortable bed, let her know her cat was being looked after, and tried to give her some sense of normalcy until her son arrived from Hammond to take care of her. All I could say was: "Everyone is here to help you as much as we can. Would you like a cup of tea?" and "Would you like to talk about what happened?" It really didn't seem like enough, although she seemed to appreciate a listening ear.



## Day 2

On the second day, I worked as a Registration & Referrals worker on “the front line” as we called it. Workers had attempted to find a motel room for Mrs. T. along with her close friend, but in the end they chose to stay the night in Group Lodging. It was such a great feeling when her son turned up at the Reception Centre the following day. He was very worried when he arrived, but he was beaming from ear to ear when he found out his mother was okay.

## Day 3

On a typical day I'd be up at six and at the Reception Centre by seven. My first priorities each morning were to sign in on the Task Registration form, get my assignment, and then attend the morning briefing at which Karen would give us directions and support. During my breaks I would talk with the other volunteers about the challenges we'd faced and what we'd tackle next. That really helped.

With all the training and exercises I had done, I felt really well prepared. Still, it was wonderful to have some of the more experienced volunteers around, like Janie. Janie, an ESS Mobile Support Team volunteer from Rosewood, came to Middleton because we were short-staffed. She had been through the Rutherford fires and when something wasn't going smoothly, she'd quietly and competently help us deal with the situation.

At about five or six o'clock we'd finish up the day's work, except for the few people assigned to the night shift. Wang would give us all a ride home, and we'd talk along the way. He'd drop Janie off at the home of the family with whom she was staying, and the next stop was my house. I usually made it home by seven o'clock.

By late afternoon of Day 3, we all noticed that things were quieting down. No new people were coming in for assistance, and the highway had re-opened. We were directed to close the Reception Centre. Everyone just pitched in to get things cleaned up and put away. We generated a list of items needing replacement in the Reception Centre Kit, as PEP would reimburse our costs. Fortunately all the ESS signs and vests were returned. Before we knew it, we were done.



All of us were very quiet on the ride home, after three long days on assignment. We all felt a sense of satisfaction at how well we had pulled together as a team.

### **Key Points: What New Volunteers May Experience During Their First Assignment**

- ESS workers need to remember to sign the PEP Task Registration form daily to ensure WCB & personal liability coverage.
- Resources are not always available when needed.
- ESS responses are generally a maximum of 3 days however could be longer. ESS workers are not expected to work more than 8 to 10 hours per day.
- Respecting the privacy of evacuees is every volunteer's responsibility.
- "Worker Care" is important to the physical and emotional well being of ESS workers.
- ESS work can be both tiring and rewarding.



## After The Assignment

### Susan Talks About The Assignment

Few people are really aware of what ESS workers experience on assignment. This can sometimes be a problem when it is time to go home. It took me a while to get back into my normal routine.

I slept for twelve hours straight when the assignment was over. The next night I was wide-awake at about three in the morning, and I went and sat in the kitchen with all the lights turned on. Steve came to find out what was happening, and stayed to listen to my stories about the people I had helped. I remembered what Karen had said and was careful to respect their privacy. It really helped that Steve listened.



I also told Steve about Janie and how well we had gotten along together during the assignment. He thought it was a great idea to get the two families together for a visit at spring break. That's one of the values of an ESS assignment - people who have worked together often develop friendships and can even become lifelong friends.

The following morning I was a little impatient with Shelley when she sat picking away at her breakfast. Seeing people line up for food and being so thankful for the meals they received gave me a lot of perspective on how lucky we are. That evening, Steve wanted to do something special for me. He offered to take me out for dinner and a movie. I think he was quite surprised when I turned him down – all I really wanted was to have a meal at home and spend the evening with my family.

Over the following days, Steve noticed that I still wasn't quite back to myself. At times I still felt sad, but more often, I remembered with pleasure the ways in which I was able to help, and appreciated all the more my family's good fortune.



My mixed emotions were a little confusing for Shelley and Jason, so we held a family meeting and I talked about how my ESS work and the disaster had affected me. The kids were interested in the photographs I had taken of my team, and asked a lot of questions about the people, and my experiences. It seemed to help them understand what happens to people during a disaster and the importance of volunteering.

One week after the emergency, our ESS team held a debriefing at the recreation centre we had worked in, to discuss our experiences and make suggestions for improvements on how we do our work. It was wonderful to see everyone again. Yvonne, who led the debriefing, kept a list of the recommendations we made so we could update our ESS plan and do an even better job in the future.

It was interesting to learn that almost everyone was experiencing emotions similar to mine. It helped strengthen the bond between us.

After the debriefing, the mayor joined us at the recreation centre to thank us for our contributions on behalf of Middleton and the evacuees. I felt very proud of the work I had done and honoured to be a member of my community's ESS team.

### **Key Points: What New Volunteers May Learn About Being An ESS Worker**

- Following a disaster, an ESS worker can experience a wide range of emotions, from excitement of reuniting families, to sadness at the losses people have suffered.
- Close friendships can form with co-workers during a disaster.
- ESS workers often undergo a change in outlook because of their experience.
- It is a good idea to “debrief” your family on your experience so they have a better understanding of it.
- An ESS team debriefing should take place to discuss what went well, identify lessons learned and areas requiring improvement, and make action plans to implement team



recommendations.



## Quiz - Module 2: Personal Preparedness For ESS Workers

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**True or False – circle the appropriate letter. When you have completed the quiz, submit it in person or by phone or fax to your local ESS Director or ESS Support Organization Coordinator (e.g., Red Cross, Salvation Army)**

1. Everyone should “Share the Responsibility” for emergency planning. T F
2. ESS workers are covered by WCB through PEP. T F
3. Employers are required to pay people sent out of town on ESS assignments. T F
4. A Reception Centre may be run by a combination of municipal employees, community service organization personnel, and ESS volunteers. T F
5. During a disaster, pay phones are more likely to work than your personal phones. T F
6. Disaster Response Routes should be used by people who are leaving the disaster area. T F
7. A “Grab and Go” bag should be personalized with items important to your physical and emotional health. T F
8. Only families with children need a family reunification plan. T F
9. “Worker Care” helps ESS workers maintain their physical and emotional health. T F

Answers: 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T



