

Memo



Date: May 5, 2022
To: Brian Reardon, CAO
From: Sandra Follack, Deputy Chief, City of Kelowna, EPC, RDCO
Subject: RDCO Emergency Program Update – Spring 2022

Emergency Program Changes

The province has been reviewing changes to the Emergency Program Act and EMBC recently provided an update in a Discussion Paper outlining the next steps towards Modernizing the Emergency Program Act.

For background, in October of 2019, the Minister of Public Safety released a Public Discussion Paper outlining a series of policy proposals for consideration in new emergency management legislation, replacing the existing Emergency Program Act (EPA). An engagement period between October 28, 2019, and January 31, 2020, resulted in a report, "What We Heard: Modernizing BC's Emergency Management Legislation. This report summarizes feedback received during engagement sessions with Regional Districts, partners, stakeholders, and Indigenous groups in BC.

EMBC is continuing to engage with local authorities, First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and other partners and stakeholders as legislation. This was delayed due to the Wildfire and Atmospheric River events last year.

Broadcast Intrusive Alerting System

The province recently announced the addition of Flooding and Wildfire events to the National Public Alerting System (NPAS). Over the next month, Local Governments and First Nations are learning how to implement the tool to support evacuation orders. BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) will use it to support tactical evacuations.

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This intrusive broadcast signal will send a message to all media stations and cell phones within a set geographic area. The RDCO Emergency Program is currently reviewing what criteria would be needed in order to issue an alert.

Staffing Changes

In line with the increased resources to the program, a review of EOC staffing was undertaken to look at options for increased efficiency and reduced impacts to local government business continuity. Several recommendations have been implemented and others are still in process.

Key improvements include:

- Setting maximum days in the EOC, with formal transition periods to share the workload
- Increased focus on mentoring in the early part of the season to train more people
- Work with each section on determining where and when contractors can be used
- Use of Teams environment to allow more work to be done remote to allow staff to better manage regular job duties.

Over the next month, all regional EOC staff will be involved in virtual and inhouse training. This will ensure each section is ready for this summer if necessary.

NG911 update

Discussions for Next Generation 911 (NG911) are continuing monthly with a projected completion date of June 2024. ECOMM is projected to be ready in Dec 2023 for technology ready call handling platform. The LGA Agreement process with Telus is currently being discussed with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Emergency Services Working Group (ESWG) to ensure the documentation meets the projected criteria. As the current document is still in draft form, further discussions are required to ensure the levies and costs for municipal and regional districts is clear.