



***Bella Coola  
Emergency Response Plan***

**ANNEX B – Communication Plan**

*Updated by Frontier Resource Management Ltd  
January, 2018*

# Annex B - Communication Plan

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# 1 Master Phone List

See separate Excel spreadsheet for complete list of emergency contacts and phone numbers.

## 2 Introduction

Communications is a fundamental and crucial element in responding to emergencies and disasters. Dependable communication systems are necessary for responders to effectively deal with emergencies. Back-up communication systems are needed for isolated communities to contact outside supporting agencies for help. People at risk need to be notified and warned quickly. Accurate and timely information needs to be provided to the media, including social media. Inconsistent, untimely and inaccurate information can lead to confusion, unnecessary fear and can often result in panic. Errant communications can even create the emergency that is trying to be avoided. Therefore, it is essential that a comprehensive communication system be established prior to an emergency.

Emergency program communications are comprised of 2 distinct sections:

- 1) Emergency Reporting and Operations Communications
  - Receiving and reporting emergency notifications
  - Routine correspondence between personnel and agencies
  - Notification of responders when events occur
  - Emergency contact between responders during events
  - Involvement of outside assistance providers
  
- 2) Public Communications
  - Awareness of emergency issues
  - Alerting of emergency events
  - Reporting of ongoing situations
  - Media Strategy

Many of these components are intrinsically connected and will rely on shared communication means while others require specific equipment resources. It is recognized that Bella Coola faces some unique communications challenges due to mountainous terrain, difficult access and a high probability of becoming separated from other parts of the community and outside resources.

### 3 Emergency Reporting and Operations Communications

This section describes the 'internal' communication system of responders and managers formally involved in dealing with emergencies and disasters.

#### 3.1 Steps for Incident Reporting and Response Initiation

An impending emergency or event may come to the attention of the CCRD from a variety of sources, including the general public, EMBC, line Ministries or emergency responders like RCMP or Coast Guard. Once aware of a potential emergency, the following steps are to be taken:

1. Is it a community emergency?  
Emergency Coordinator, or designate, to determine whether emergency can be handled by first responders or line Ministries or whether a coordinated multi-agency response is required. For example, a vehicle accident will usually be handled by RCMP and ambulance services and do not constitute a community emergency. A remote forest fire would be handled by Wildfire BC and would not constitute a community emergency unless people and homes are threatened.  
If the information regarding incident is unclear, dispatch a qualified person to confirm whether incident/situation requires response.
2. Activate Emergency Management Plan.  
Once it is determined that the situation is, or has potential to become a community emergency, activate the Emergency Response Plan.
3. Call Emergency Coordination Centre and acquire a task number.  
Report emergency to appropriate response agencies:

#### Emergency Notification Options

<b>EMBC</b>	<b>1-800-663-3456</b>
<b>Bella Coola RCMP</b>	<b>(250) 799-5363</b>
<b>Provincial Ambulance Service</b>	<b>1-800-461-9911</b>
<b>Forest Fire Reporting Only</b>	<b>1-800-663-5555</b>
<b>Air or Marine Emergency</b>	<b>1-800-567-5111</b>
<b>Power Outages and Hydro Emergencies</b>	<b>1-888-769-3766</b>
<b>Bella Coola General Hospital</b>	<b>(250) 799-5311</b>
<b>Columbia Fuels Spill Info Reporting</b>	<b>1-800-661-7378</b>

4. Notify CCRD Emergency Executive Committee (EEC) and initiate call out to local responders – refer to Annex A – EOC Activation and Specific Hazard call out list (ie Flooding Annex).  
The EEC Secretary is responsible to initiate call-out as per the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Call-Out List. The EOC Director or the EEC

Secretary may assign this task as required.

5. The calls must be placed quickly to ensure timely response. Email or faxed copy should follow as soon as possible to confirm the call out.

### **3.2 Inter-Agency Call-out Protocol**

Any responding agency perceiving a need for site support for any emergency should notify the CCRD. They may request the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) through their most senior agency representative available who would contact the Emergency Coordinator (EC) to activate the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

### **3.3 Communications Hub - EOC**

Once set up, the EOC becomes the central contact point, or hub, for communications coming in and going out. This includes communications with responders and field operations, internal and outside agencies (PREOC) and information for the public. Refer to Annex A – EOC Plan for detailed information on communication set up for an EOC.

#### External Communications

Phone and internet will be main form of communication with outside world and local public. Immediately upon activation of the EOC, the communications system must be established. The following are critical procedures:

- Notify PREOC (or EMBC Regional office) of EOC location and contact numbers (interim if these are being established).

#### Internal Communications

Communication with local responders and field operations will primarily be done via radio. Early in the set up of the EOC, it is important to establish which radio channels will be used to communicate with responders and operations personnel (see radio section 5.2 Radio Systems).

During a large event, involving many different response groups, each unit will need to use their own channels for communicating amongst themselves. However, to communicate with EOC, the EMBC Emergency Channel should be used as this will be the channel monitored by the EOC. To contact the various operations units, the EOC will use their respective channels, thus it is important that the EOC has access to all channels.

Where radio communications is main method of communicating, then a radio log of transmissions should be recorded. Also, there may be an extensive amount of radio transmissions and messages handled by the EOC. In order to

apply a level of precedence appropriate to the circumstance, the following levels apply:

- Emergency – message having life and death urgency
- Priority – Important message, request with specific time limit
- Routine – Regular message traffic

Radio operators should clarify which precedence class their transmission fits with.

### **3.4 Site Communications**

At the site level, it is up to each unit crew to determine which communication system is most appropriate for their site (ie, vhf radio or cell phone). Part of this determination includes confirmation that the EOC can be contacted if needed. In accordance with the Incident Command System, the leader at each site, unit leader or Incident Commander, will be the person communicating with the EOC and Operations Section Manager. So, to maintain consistency and avoid conflicting communications, all situation updates and requests for resources should flow through just one person at the site level.

## **4 Public Communications**

Communicating with the public about emergencies involves a multi faceted approach. Long term education is needed to raise awareness and preparedness. Sudden emergence of dangerous situations requires rapid notification to those people at risk. Accurate and timely information updates are needed to reduce stress and avoid panic during emergency situations. Those affected by the events need to be connected to supporting services. Therefore, public communication involves a number of programs.

### **4.1 Raising Public Awareness**

The EEC should use every opportunity to promote the emergency program to the public. There are a number of mediums that can be employed to provide residents the opportunity to keep informed of emergency preparedness measures and be aware of how to seek information and instruction in the event of an emergency. The EMBC 'PreparedBC' website is an excellent source for the public to access instructional material dealing with emergency preparedness.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/preparedbc>

#### **4.1.1 CCRD Website**

Emergency notices are posted on the CCRD website and Facebook site are excellent platforms for informing the public.

Consideration should be given to develop an Emergency Preparedness section on the webpage to advise people how they can protect their property and be prepared for potential emergencies. How to access help and resources, like sandbags, should be posted. The site would also inform people how the CCRD is working with local agencies and groups to prepare for emergencies.

#### **4.1.2 Bulletin Board Program**

Locations where dedicated emergency program bulletin boards could be set up, subject to permission:

- Hagensborg Post Office
- Hagensborg Mercantile
- Bella Coola Post Office
- Bella Coola Co-Op

To provide information to visitors, bulletin boards should also be located at the wharf, information centres and service stations.

Bulletin boards are to have information regarding Emergency Communication Systems posted along with contact information for the program coordinator, the local RCMP detachment and other local emergency numbers. Boards are to be routinely maintained to ensure information is current and non-emergency messages are not posted.

Information regarding specific preparedness/mitigation items, in the form of posters or removable pamphlets, should be posted in a timely manner relating to seasonal hazards such as fire or flooding.

#### **4.1.3 Coast Mountain Newspaper Articles**

The local bi-weekly newspaper publication should be used to report on any emergency topic of interest to the general public as available. The editors are receptive to all such information articles and will post emergency communication instructions routinely. Instructions on when and how to receive communications instructions should be provided as 'cut-out' sections to be retained by readers for easy reference.

#### **4.1.4 Local Radio**

The local Nuxalk Radio station (91.1 FM) is another excellent means to help raise public awareness about emergency preparation and response.

#### **4.2 Alerting the Public of Emergencies**

The time available to warn the public of hazardous situations, will vary for each event and therefore, multiple approaches are needed to provide warnings, instructions and directions. Warnings to the public must be issued as quickly and in as many ways as possible. The strategy for providing rapid notification to the community is as follows.

1. When the potential for emergency situations is forecasted (severe weather, heavy rainfall, etc), the CCRD will notify the broad community by:
  - a. Developing simple message to inform but not initiate panic
  - b. Mass email to all persons and organizations on emergency contact list – EEC, Inter-Agency Emergency Management Council, NE Region EMBC, etc
  - c. The Central Coast Communications Society (CCCS) is set up to distribute information bulletins to all local internet clients via e-mail. Bulletins can be emailed to [cccsbellacoola@gmail.com](mailto:cccsbellacoola@gmail.com)
  - d. Post warning notice on website
  - e. Request Nuxalk radio station to issue warning message (91.1 FM)
  - f. Once situation has passed, then the warning should be cancelled by messaging as above.
  
2. If an impending emergency or disaster is looming or has hit, CCRD will send out notification that the Emergency Management Plan has been activated and EOC is/has been set up. Prepare a simple notification statement for distribution. Clearly state whether notice is an Alert, State of Emergency, Evacuation Alert or Evacuation Order. (It is assumed that CCRD emergency responders have already been notified as per Section 3.1)
  - a. Mass email to all persons and organizations on emergency contact list – EEC, Inter-Agency Emergency Management Council, NE Region EMBC, etc
  - b. If emergency situation is localized to a small part of valley, initiate phone call out to those residents at risk.
  - c. If broad part of valley is affected, initiate SD 49 'phone call out tree'
  - d. Request CBC and Nuxalk radio stations to transmit emergency message to Bella Coola residents. Also Hagensborg TV Society can transmit message over local radio.



- e. Post notice to the main local Facebook pages:
    - Bella Coola
    - Coast Mountain News
    - Belco
    - Nuxalk Radio
  - f. For high risk areas, consider deploying qualified crews to go door to door.
  - g. Utilize VHF channel LAD 1 to transmit notice.
  - h. For marine based emergency, issue notice via Marine 6 transmission.
  - i. As the emergency unfolds, additional warnings/directions may need to be provided on an ongoing basis using means above.
3. During the Ongoing Course of Emergency Event, regular information updates need to be provided to the affected public.
- a. Establish regular times and method for sending out information updates so that people know when and how to get information updates.
  - b. Post information on CCRD website, Facebook and Notice Boards at Post Offices, Coop and Hagensborg Mercantile
  - c. Consideration should be given for the CCRD to establish a local email list, where people could subscribe to receive information updates during emergency events.
4. When emergency situation has passed, the public needs to be informed about recovery and reparation efforts and how to access support.
- Distribute information notice by:
- a. Mass email list
  - b. Posting on CCRD webpage
  - c. Posting to Bella Coola Facebook page
  - d. Broadcast notice on Nuxalk Radio station, 91.1 fm
  - e. Publish information notice in Coast Mountain News
  - f. Post information on Notice boards at Post Offices, Coop and Hagensborg Mercantile

### **4.3 Information Bulletins**

Information bulletins should be issued using a standard format to provide familiarity and authenticity. Information bulletins should be prepared and upon approval of EOC Director, it should be distributed as soon as possible.

#### **4.3.1 Notification by Email**

The information bulletin will be distributed through mass email list with request that recipients forward the message on to their groups and constituents.

The Central Coast Communications Society (CCCS) is set up to distribute information bulletins to all local internet clients via e-mail. A protocol needs to be developed between CCRD and CCCS to enable this communication option. Bulletins can be emailed to [cccsbellacoola@gmail.com](mailto:cccsbellacoola@gmail.com)

#### **4.3.2 Fax-out Notices**

A list of all known facsimile numbers issued for the Bella Coola region is contained in the master phone list. Currently, the NE PREOC in Prince George (**Fax# 250-612-4171**) is prepared to bulk-distribute fax out notices as required. It should be ensured that the PREOC has the appropriate fax-out list at the onset of any emergency situation.

#### **4.3.3 Bulletin Boards**

Bulletin Board locations are included in the fax-out notification list. Location hosts are to be requested to post the latest information bulletins on emergency boards and any other available conspicuous location (eg doors, windows, tills). In the event that locations are inaccessible for any reason, the EOC staff shall arrange for information bulletins to be posted in appropriate conspicuous locations.

#### **4.3.4 Phone-out Notices**

For events affecting specific areas, such as flood event 'recognized areas of concern', call-out notification lists may be used to notify affected residents or businesses. Call-out lists are contained in the applicable response sections.

#### **4.3.5 School District Notices**

During the school season, the School District office will prepare and distribute information bulletins for take-home by all district students. Bulletins can be faxed to **982-2319** or emailed to: [tmoren@sd49.bc.ca](mailto:tmoren@sd49.bc.ca)

#### **4.3.6 FM Radio Broadcasts**

Information and bulletins can be requested for broadcast on Nuxalk Radio, 91.1 FM.

During serious emergency events, information releases can be broadcast over the Hagensborg TV and Radio Society's FM frequency of 89.9.

Standard releases should be broadcast at 11am, 3pm and 7pm and will inform listeners of other broadcast times if applicable. FM frequency and standard broadcast times should be publicized on local bulletin boards and in the Coast Mountain Newspaper.

#### **4.4 Information Release Protocol**

Release of emergency information must be strictly controlled to ensure accuracy and consistency. Protocol must be adhered to for all information releases.

##### **4.4.1 Authorization**

The EOC Director (usually incident commander and/or emergency program coordinator) should authorize, by signature, all information released from the EOC.

##### **4.4.2 Procedure**

In all but extremely routine or critically time-sensitive circumstances, the EOC Director shall request review of all emergency releases from the EOC Public Information Officer and, if necessary, the PREOC Public Information Representatives prior to public issue. The following procedure is to be followed:

- Prepare draft release on standard 'Information Bulletin' form. Report may be prepared by EOC staff as available using current situation reports and information.
- EOC PIO to review and revise as necessary.
- EOC Director to review
- If needed, draft may be emailed or faxed to PREOC PIO for review and comment.
  - PREOC to return draft release with suggested modifications as applicable.
  - EOC Director and PIO to review modifications (if any) and seek further input from PREOC, if required.
  - EOC PIO (or other staff) to prepare final release having adopted or rejected PREOC modifications as deemed appropriate for the CCRD's, the community's, and the public's best interest.
- EOC Director to authorize issuance of final release. ***The final approval of any EOC emergency information bulletin rests with the EOC Director.***

### **4.4.3 Media List**

A list of pertinent media outlets is provided at the end of this section. Upon consultation with PREOC Information Officers, the EOC IO will determine the appropriate media tools to use in any particular situation.

## **5 Background on Communication System Options**

The following forms of communication options are available in Bella Coola and all of these can be expected to be used for emergency purposes. All of the systems utilize repeater stations that have their own power supply, but base stations require hydro power. So, during power outages, it may not be possible to utilize the various repeater systems unless alternate power is provided for the base stations.

### **5.1 Telephone Systems**

Telus is the phone service provider to the community and it is connected to the outside world via a series of microwave towers that link to the fiber optic cable at Anahime Lake. The line from Anahime Lake to Williams Lake is vulnerable to disruption and there is no alternate links available. Optic cable repairs are complicated and it may take a long time before communication is restored following damage. This places Bella Coola at risk of losing routine communication with outside world for extended periods of time. Alternate and back-up communication means is a vital necessity, especially during emergency situations.

Most modern telephones use power for features like call display etc and therefore require 120v electricity to operate. These systems typically have an integrated set of phone lines that don't allow 'normal' phone sets to function. Older style phone networks operate on a 'tip & ring' system where the low voltage electricity in the telephone lines is enough to allow the devices to function normally. If the EOC is equipped with an electronic phone system it is imperative to have back-up devices that function on the old system. This requires a number of basic telephone lines to be present in the building. It is recommended that the EOC have back-up electrical generation to operate the electronic phone network and that a minimum of 2 old-style phone sets be wired in to allow phone contact during power outages.

#### **5.1.1 Long Distance Connection**

The Bella Coola Valley is serviced by a Telus microwave phone system meaning that no land-based distribution lines enter the valley. Outside telephone, or long-distance service, is provided by wireless signal

being transmitted via towers or satellite to connect with the North American telephone grid. In the event that the wireless system is disrupted, Bella Coola may not be able to communicate with other areas of the province using the normal telephone system. This may occur even if local telephone service is not disrupted and it may not be immediately evident that outside service is unavailable. (Following a Telus line disruption in the fall of 2004 even Telus operations was unaware that long distance communication was not available to the Bella Coola area.

### 5.1.2 Cell Phones

Cell phone coverage is limited to the Bella Coola townsite (stretching from harbour to 4 Mile reserve) and central Hagensborg. It is operated by Telus. A large part of the Nuxalk population uses texting for contacts.

### 5.1.3 Satellite Phones

The following satellite telephone units are available in the Bella Coola Valley:

User/Agency	Contact	# Units/Contact #
CCRD	Courtney Kirk	2
RCMP		
Ambulance	Heather Ross	2
MFLNRORD	Kerry Phillips	2
Bella Coola General Hospital	Sharon Carroll	5
BC Parks		4 / 403-997-7413
DFO		7
West Coast Helicopters	Richard LaPointe	1 / 403-997-55407
Monarch Res Consult	Ken McIlwain	1

## 5.2 Radio Systems

VHF radio use is common in the Bella Coola valley. There are common, public channels that are useful to reach a broad number of people and work crews in particular and there are also restricted channels that can only be used by authorized personnel/agencies. A list of radio channels used locally are shown in following table. Frequencies are shown in Appendix C-1 which is not for public distribution given that some channels are restricted.

Channel/Agency	Authority	Comment
EMBC	Restricted	Used by Search & Rescue; RCMP and ambulance also have access. <b>This</b>

		<b>channel should be the main channel used to communicate with EOC.</b>
LAD 1 - 4	Public	Used widely throughout valley. Most radios have these channels
Marine 6 & 16	Public	Used widely in coastal areas, marine distress
RCMP	Restricted	Coverage throughout valley
Ambulance	Restricted	Coverage throughout valley
Min FLNRORD	Restricted	Provincial repeater system, extensive coverage, multiple channels
DFO	Restricted	Extensive coverage of marine areas
MOTI/IRS	Restricted	Multiple channels, covers highway areas
West Coast Heli	Private	Available by permission, repeater system covers valley and sidevalley
Bella Coola Helisports	Private	Used by guides
Bella Coola Community Forest	Private	Used by logging crews and forestry contractor

### 5.2.1 Radios with Contact to Outside World

Several agencies with branches located in the Bella Coola valley have radio systems capable of connecting to outside bases via repeaters. These can be used to access outside emergency services should phone service be down. They include:

User/Agency	Contact	Network/Name	Freq.	Units: Veh/Hand
MoTI/IRS		MOTI Network	Various	1/2
BC Parks (signed agreement required)		Environmental Forestry Marine	All All All	4/7
DFO		Walker/King/ Swindle Calvert/Rivers Inlet	Various	10/10
MFLNRORD	Kerry Phillips	VHF/UHF repeater link	10-15	3/5
RCMP	Rick Skolrood	DET X1 Saloompt E1 Cariboo H1 Hotnar B1		3/4
BC Ambulance	Heather Ross			2

### **5.2.2 Local FM Radio Station**

The Nuxalk Nation operates a local FM radio station (channel 91.1) and this can be used to send out information updates, alarm notifications, directions and instructions.

### **5.2.3 Short-Wave Radio**

Gundy Frostruup is the local Short Wave Radio contact.

## **5.3 Internet Communication**

Internet communications is available in the valley through local service provider Central Coast Communication Society (CCCS) and by individual Explornet satellite service.

CCCS has the ability to initiate local 'chat net' service whereby local people can connect using their computers as phones. This chat ability does not extend to outside the valley but it provides opportunity to communicate with broad group of people should phone service be down.

CCCS can also send mass email notices to all its prescribers but a protocol needs to be developed between CCCS and CCRD for use of the email list.

## 6 Appendices

### ***Appendix C-1 – Bella Coola Radio Channels***

Chl	Name	Tx	Rx
	Provincial Emergency	154.325	154.325
	EMBC GSAR	149.495	149.495
	LADD 1	154.100	154.100
	LADD 2	158.940	158.940
	LADD 3	154.325	154.325
	LADD 4	173.320	173.320
	Marine 6	156.300	156.300
	Marine Distress (Ch 16)	156.800	156.800
	BCCFL Direct	153.800	153.800
	BCCFL Repeater tone 136.5	158.775	153.800
	West Coast Heli	159.975	159.975
	West Coast Heli Bastille Rpt	171.960	166.800
	West Coast Caribou Rpt	167.580	162.615
	BC Helisports	162.750	162.750
	Got Wood Logging	151.115	151.115
	West Chilcotin FP	151.580	151.580
	Forest Road RR 5 Nusatsum	150.200	150.200
	Forest Road RR 8 Rainbow	150.320	150.320
	Forest Road RR 21 Talchacko	151.010	151.010
	MOTI 5 Anahime (tone 114.8)	148.795	143.445
	MOTI 6 Bella Coola (tone 114.8)	148.285	143.295
	MOTI 7 Bella Coola (tone 114.8)	148.585	143.415

### ***Appendix C-2 Master Call-Out List Distribution***

The following individuals/agencies are provided copies of the CCRD Master Contact Lists:

Plan/List Holder	Contact	Sections held
Provincial Emergency Program	Debbie Alexander	Master List
Central Coast Regional District	Courtney Kirk	Master List
Nuxalk Nation Administration	??	Master List
RCMP	Rick Skolrood	Master List
EEC Chair	Sam Schooner	Master List
EEC Secretary	Wendy Kingsley	Master List
EEC Nuxalk Rep	Roger Harris?	Master List



**Appendix C-3 Bella Coola Communication System Resource Questionnaire**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>Type of radio system used (if known):</p> <p>Are satellite phones used? If so, how many?</p>								
<p>Sat phone users:</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Name: _____</th><th>Phone # _____</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr></tbody></table>	Name: _____	Phone # _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Name: _____	Phone # _____							
_____	_____							
_____	_____							
_____	_____							
<p>Number of local radio units available:</p> <p>Vehicle mounted _____</p> <p>Hand-held _____</p>								
<p>Does your radio system have telephone inter-connect ability?</p> <p>Yes _____ No _____</p>								
<p>Does your radio system communicate with receivers located outside of the valley?</p> <p>If so, which communities/areas?</p> <p>Are your frequencies monitored 24-7?</p>								

Please fax back completed survey to (250) 982-2476