Ocean Falls
Emergency Response Plan

ANNEX B – Communication Plan

Central Coast Regional District

Updated by Frontier Resource Management Ltd
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Annex B - Communication Plan

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1   Master Phone List

See separate Excel spreadsheet for complete list of all 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 involves two elements:

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 Ocean Falls faces some unique communications challenges due to its isolated and remote location.

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 BC Wildfire Service 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

EMBC	**1-800-663-3456**
CCRD – Bella Coola	**(250) 799-5291**
Bella Bella RCMP	**250) 957-2388** **(250) 957-2389**
Provincial Ambulance Service	**1-800-461-9911**
Coast Guard – Denny Island	**(250) 957-2706 or** **(250) 957-2713**
Forest Fire Reporting Only	**1-800-663-5555**
Air or Marine Emergency	**1-800-567-5111**
Power Outages and Hydro Emergencies	**1-888-769-3766**
Bella Bella General Hospital	**(250) 957-2314**
Western Marine Fuels Spill Response	**1-855-294-9116**

4. Notify CCRD Emergency Executive Committee (EEC) and initiate call out to local responders – refer to CCRD Annex A – EOC Activation and Specific Hazard call out list (ie Tsunami 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 CCRD 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 4.2 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.

A communication log of phone and radio transmissions should be recorded. Also, there may be an extensive amount of radio transmissions and phone messages handled by the EOC. So, 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 one designated 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 ways 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 Local Websites

Websites are an excellent platform for informing the public about emergency preparedness and any current emergency situations. Emergency notices are posted on the CCRD website (ccrd-bc.ca) and consideration should be given to adding emergency information on the Ocean Falls (oceanfalls.ca) website. An Emergency Preparedness section on the web page could 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 sites would also inform people how the CCRD are working with local agencies and groups to prepare for emergencies.

4.1.2 Bulletin Board Program

Emergency notices and preparedness information should also be posted on various bulletin boards around the communities. Work with bulletin board hosts to designate an emergency section on the boards. Suggested locations to post information include the Post Office, the Lodge and the marina.

Information regarding emergency notifications and contact information for emergency coordinators, local RCMP and other local emergency numbers should be included on the notices. Bulletin boards need 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 storms.

4.1.3 Newspaper and Local Flyers

The Coast Mountain News is the closest newspaper but it is a bi-weekly publication which limits its effectiveness in reporting on emergencies in a timely manner. The CM News does host a facebook site that is updated on an ongoing basis. Community flyers can also be used to distribute information to homes. Instructions on when and how to receive information during emergency situations should be provided as 'cut-out' sections to be retained by readers for easy reference.

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. Post warning notice on website
d. Request CBC radio station to issue warning notice to people in Ocean Falls area
e. 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 emergency responders have already been notified as per section 2 above)
    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 the community, initiate phone call out to those residents at risk.
    c. Request CBC radio station to transmit emergency message to local residents.
    d. Post notice to local Facebook page (also send to Coast Mountain news for posting on their page).
    e. For high risk areas, consider deploying qualified crews to go door to door.
    f. Utilize VHF channel LAD 1 and/or Marine 6 to transmit notice.
    g. As the emergency unfolds, additional warnings/directions may need to be provided on an ongoing basis using means above.
    h. Sound the emergency fire siren if necessary.

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/Ocean Falls websites and Facebook and Notice Boards around the communities

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/Ocean Falls webpages
    c. Posting to local Facebook page

d. Broadcast notice on CBC radio
e. Publish information notice in Coast Mountain News
f. Post information on Notice boards various local bulletin boards

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

A mass email list should be developed for Ocean Falls residents and businesses. Information bulletins could be distributed with request that recipients pass the email on to their respective groups and constituents.

4.3.2 Fax-out Notices

A list of all known facsimile numbers for Ocean Falls contacts 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

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). Notices can be emailed and printed by location hosts or printed copies should be provided for posting. 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 a tsunami event, and recognized areas of concern, call-out notifications may be done specifically to the potentially affected residents or businesses.

4.3.5 FM Radio and TV Broadcasts

Information and bulletins can be requested for broadcast on CBC radio, Prince Rupert.

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 (PIO) and the PREOC Public Information Representatives prior to public issue. The following procedure is to be followed:
- Prepare draft 'Information Bulletin". 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 and authorize draft
- If needed, draft may be emailed or faxed to PREOC PIO for review and comment.
  - PREOC to return draft release with suggested modifications
  - EOC Director and PIO to review any modifications
  - EOC PIO to prepare final release having adopted or rejected PREOC modifications
- 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 contained in the master phone list. 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 Ocean Falls and can be expected to be used for emergency purposes. Some 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 some of the systems unless alternate power is provided for the base stations.

5.1 Telephone Systems

The Ocean Falls community is serviced by a Telus microwave phone system meaning that no land-based distribution lines enter the area. 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, the community 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 Bella Coola in the fall of 2004, even Telus operations was unaware that long distance communication was not available to the Bella Coola area.)

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 Cell Phones

There is no cell phone coverage in Ocean Falls.

5.1.2 Satellite Phones

The following satellite telephone units are available in Ocean Falls:

User/Agency	Contact	# Units/Contact #
Boralex Power		1
Marine Harvest		?

5.2 Radio Systems

VHF radio use is common in the outer coast area. 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. **This channel should be the main channel used to communicate with EOC**.
LAD 1 - 4	Public	Used widely throughout Province. Most radios have these channels
Marine 6 & 16	Public	Used widely in coastal areas, marine distress
RCMP	Restricted	Coverage throughout communities
Ambulance	Restricted	Coverage throughout communities
Min FLNRORD	Restricted	Provincial repeater system, extensive coverage, multiple channels
Coast Guard	Restricted	Extensive coverage of marine areas
DFO	Restricted	Extensive coverage of marine areas
MOTI/IRL	Restricted	Multiple channels, covers highway areas
West Coast Heli	Private	Available by permission, repeater system only covers Bella Coola
Boralex	Private	Repeater system can reach Bella Bella.

5.2.1 Radios with Contact to Outside World

Several agencies with branches located in the outer coast have radio systems capable of connecting to outside bases via repeaters. These channels are restricted but the agency can be used to access outside emergency services should phone service be down. They include:

User/Agency	Contact	Network/Name	Freq.	Units: Veh/Hand
RCMP				
Ambulance				
BC Parks		Environmental	All	4/7

(signed agreement required)		Forestry Marine	All All	
DFO		Walker/King/ Swindle Calvert/Rivers Inlet	Various	10/10
MFLNRORD		VHF/UHF repeater link	10-15	3/5

5.2.2 Local FM Radio Station

There is no local radio station but CBC out of Prince Rupert covers the outer coast and public service notices can be transmitted by them. Information updates, alarm notifications, directions and instructions can be transmitted.

5.2.3 Short-Wave Radio

There is no known short wave (HAM) radio operator in Ocean Falls.

5.3 Internet Communication

Internet communications is available satellite links. So, communication to the outside world is available through social media, email and skype telephone as long as there is power.

6 Appendices

Appendix C-1 – Radio Channels

Chl	Name	Tx	Rx
	Provincial Emergency	154.325	154.325
	EMBC GSAR	149.495	149.495
	Marine 6	156.300	156.300
	Marine Distress (Ch 16)	156.800	156.800
	West Coast Heli	159.975	159.975
	LADD 1	154.100	154.100
	LADD 2	158.940	158.940
	LADD 3	154.325	154.325
	LADD 4	173.320	173.320

Appendix 2 Master Call-Out List Distribution

The following individuals/agencies are provided copies of the CCRD Emergency Plan Call-Out Lists:

Plan/List Holder	Contact	Sections held
Provincial Emergency Program	Debbie Alexander	Master List
Central Coast Regional District	Courtney Kirk	Master List
Deputy Emergency Coordinator	Ed Backman	Master List
EEC Chair	Sam Schooner	Master List

Appendix 3 CCRD Emergency Plan Communication System Resource Questionnaire

Date: _____   Respondent: _____

Organization: _____

Position: _____

Type of radio system used (if known): **Are satellite phones used?** **If so, how many?**
Sat phone users: **Name:**_____ **Phone #**_____ _____   _____ _____   _____ _____   _____
Number of local radio units available: **Vehicle mounted**_____ **Hand-held**_____
Does your radio system have telephone inter-connect ability? **Yes _____   No_____**
Does your radio system communicate with receivers located outside of the valley? **If so, which communities/areas?**   **Are your frequencies monitored 24-7?**

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