

Emergency Support Services Information Package

ESS Introduction

Emergency Support Services, or ESS, is a community-based emergency response initiative designed to safeguard the physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being of individuals impacted by an emergency or disaster. ESS offers temporary provisions and services to facilitate evacuees in swiftly re-establishing themselves after an emergency.

Whether the emergency is a small-scale incident like a house fire or a major disaster like an earthquake, the ESS objectives remain the same:

- Aid individuals in fulfilling their fundamental survival needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and emotional support.
- Support evacuees in maintaining independence and self-sufficiency.
- Provide those affected by the disaster with precise, pertinent, and current information.
- Facilitate the reunification of family members separated by the disaster.
- Contribute to the recovery process and assist individuals in swiftly re-establishing themselves.

ESS volunteers are commonly referred to as the heart of emergency management. These responders deliver essential services to individuals displaced by emergencies, offering guidance, resources, information, and compassion to uphold evacuees' health and well-being. Communities equipped with robust ESS teams exhibit greater resilience, stability, and the ability to achieve a prompt and complete recovery.

Response Levels

Emergencies have varying degrees of scope, impact, and complexity. The magnitude of an emergency dictates the appropriate activation response. There are three potential activation levels.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
A small scale, localized event.	A substantial, moderate scale, emergency.	A complex emergency or disaster, marked by a large scale evacuation.
An incident involving less than 12 people.	An incident involving more than 12 individuals, frequently entailing multiple families and/or entire neighbourhoods.	An incident encompassing a significant number of evacuees, frequently affecting multiple neighbourhoods, entire communities, or jurisdictions.
Services provided at the incident site.	Services can be delivered on-site or at a Reception Centre.	Services provided at Reception Centres and/or group lodging facilities.

Services Provided

ESS offers short-term, temporary assistance for individuals and families displaced from their homes due to an emergency or disaster. This aid enables evacuees to plan their next steps and support their recovery. Key support categories encompass:

- Clothing
- Family Reunification
- Food
- Lodging

Local ESS teams, alongside the provincial ESS program, collaborate with diverse emergency response agencies specializing in disaster support. Leveraging these partnerships, ESS teams may also coordinate specialized services:

- Child Activity Services
- Cultural Services
- Pet Services
- Social-emotional support
- Transportation
- Volunteer Services

About the Team

Volunteers serve as the cornerstone of ESS, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the program. The ESS team, a community-based emergency initiative, is predominantly staffed by dedicated volunteers, with support from the local government and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR). Comprising individuals who are devoted, caring, and passionate, ESS team members are committed to assisting community residents in the event of a disaster.

These volunteers actively seek opportunities to contribute, demonstrating a strong desire to support the community and aid others during times of crisis. Their mission is to safeguard the physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being of evacuees by temporarily providing essential resources and services.

Experience, Qualifications, & Skills

Prospective volunteers are not required to possess specific training or prior experience when joining the ESS team. Upon application, individuals are assigned to different services based on their personal skill sets and preferences. Training opportunities will be offered to volunteers, allowing them to acquire valuable experience within the program.

Key qualifications for volunteers include:

- Minimum age of 16 years
- Possession of a valid driver's license
- Successful completion of a Police Information Check and a Vulnerable Sector search

Volunteer Commitments

Active participation from volunteers is crucial within the team. Quarterly commitments entail approximately two hours every three months, with additional time allocated for training, tabletop exercises, and event callouts. ESS team members allocate their time to three key areas: preparation, training, and response:

- The District of Tofino hosts quarterly meetings, each lasting about two hours, to prepare and review various aspects of the ESS program.
- Virtual training courses, conducted through the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), are free and can be completed at the participant's pace.
- Exercises and drills, organized by the District of Tofino or neighboring local governments, occur two to three times annually. Volunteers actively participate in these planned activities, fostering training, development, and team building.
- Response time commitments during ESS emergencies vary based on callouts and the emergency's complexity. Volunteer response times are flexible and contingent on availability.

Recognizing ESS team members as volunteers, the District of Tofino covers any costs incurred for training or development purposes. Additionally, volunteers receive an honorarium at the end of each year in appreciation of their efforts.

Benefits of Becoming a Team Member

Volunteering as a member of the ESS team presents a wealth of benefits for individuals seeking to actively engage in their community. One of the primary advantages is the opportunity to learn and develop new skills related to emergency management and response. ESS volunteers receive free training and education, providing a pathway to acquire valuable knowledge in disaster preparedness. This hands-on experience not only enhances personal emergency readiness but also offers a chance to make a substantial contribution to community resilience.

Volunteering with ESS facilitates the development of a robust professional network within the field of emergency management. By actively participating in exercises, meetings, and training courses, individuals forge valuable connections with like-minded peers and professionals.

ESS team members derive satisfaction from making a tangible difference in their community during times of crisis. Contributing to the well-being of fellow residents instills a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Moreover, volunteers have the opportunity to deploy their skills and expertise to other communities, broadening their impact and creating a sense of interconnectedness in the broader emergency management landscape. Overall, volunteering for the ESS team is a rewarding experience that offers a comprehensive set of benefits, encompassing skill development, education, community engagement, and personal growth.

Development & Training

Approved volunteers will be provided with complimentary training opportunities aimed at skill development, knowledge enhancement, and confidence building. The District of Tofino is dedicated to ensuring that all volunteers undergo relevant and effective training. This involves active participation in annual exercises and successful completion of designated coursework.

Volunteers will undergo training sessions facilitated by the Justice Institute of British Columbia. The foundational training courses encompass:

Course Title	Course Description
EMRG-1200 Incident Command System 100	Participants will be familiarized with an efficient system for commanding, controlling, and coordinating responses at emergency sites. Acknowledged for its flexibility and scalability as an all-hazards system, ICS offers a standardized response framework adaptable to events of any magnitude. Develop a fundamental comprehension of the Incident Command System, including its organization, principles, basic structure, and common responsibilities.
EMRG-1600 Introduction to ESS	Acquire a foundational understanding of the fundamental concepts and structure of ESS in British Columbia. Evaluate your preparedness for volunteering in ESS and delve into the responsibilities of an ESS responder. Completion of this course is a prerequisite for all other ESS courses.
EMRG-1607 Level One ESS	This course facilitates the community Level One Emergency Support Services function by delivering fundamental training to new ESS responders.
EMRG-1610 Introduction to Reception Centres	Acquire knowledge about the fundamental operations of a reception centre during emergencies or disasters. This course provides essential training for ESS responders who may be assigned to work in or assist with the operations of a reception centre.
EMRG-1612 Introduction to Group Lodging	Gain the skills to transform facilities into shelter-style accommodations for individuals displaced from their homes during a disaster. This course provides essential training for ESS responders who may be tasked with working in or supporting activities at a group lodging facility.
EMRG-1615 Registration and Referrals	This course outlines the procedures for registering evacuees and offering referrals for essential needs such as food, clothing, and lodging. It also encompasses basic interviewing skills. Participants will complete the Emergency Support Services File, including the Registration and Service Record, as well as Referral forms.
EMRG-1620 ERA Tool for Responders	This course is designed for ESS responders who will be utilizing BC's Evacuee Registration & Assistance (ERA) tool. Participants will gain proficiency in the tool's evacuee search and registration features through software simulations. This training allows participants to familiarize themselves with ERA before obtaining user access.
EMRG-1622 ERA Tool for Management	This course is tailored for ESS personnel in supervisory roles. Participants will acquire proficiency in the tool's management features, encompassing responder management, supplier management, community management, and report generation.

Updates have been implemented in the ESS training materials to incorporate cultural safety considerations. Supplementary resources and training materials on cultural safety are available through the BC Government Indigenous Relations Behaviour Competencies. Moreover, for emergency management-focused insights, participants can access webinars via EMCR's ESS Community 2 Community series.

Application Process

The District of Tofino ESS application process comprises five steps:

- **Step 1: Application Form**
 - Complete the application form in its entirety.
 - Submit the form to the Emergency Program Coordinator via email at ESS@tofino.ca or in person at the Municipal Office.

- **Step 2: Interview**
 - Applicants will undergo an interview conducted by the Emergency Program Coordinator or ESS Director.
- **Step 3: Reference Check**
 - The Emergency Program Coordinator or ESS Director will contact provided references.
- **Step 4: Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search**
 - Successful completion of this check is mandatory for all applicants.
- **Step 5: Documentation**
 - Complete onboarding documentation, including but not limited to the Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy, and Photo Release Waiver.

Throughout the process, all applicants will receive email notifications regarding their progression to the next stage. Applicants are responsible for maintaining valid and updated email addresses, as well as ensuring email filters are able to accept District of Tofino communications.

More Information

Making an informed decision is crucial. Should you have any inquiries or require additional information, we encourage you to reach out to us at:

Emergency Program
District of Tofino
121 Third Street, Tofino, BC
Phone: 250.725.3229
Email: ESS@tofino.ca