

## **Emergency Preparedness Recommendations - 2018 Priority Actions**

---

For: CRD Emergency Preparedness Committee

By: S. Masun June 12, 2018

### **Theme 1: Community coordination & communication - Community Liaisons**

*Concept: Establish CRD liaisons/rural emergency program to facilitate community preparedness promotion, engage local knowledge, to coordinate communication sharing and gathering throughout emergency events, and to support long term planning.*

- Establish community liaison concept and role responsibilities that fit with improving regional emergency planning and communication goals.
  - Identify and enlist liaison volunteers (and back up).
- Explore opportunities for liaisons to assist communication in support of rural preparedness and emergency event coordination and enhance regional response efforts.
  - Support community driven preparedness activities to include individual households/ neighbourhoods and work with local response crews to organize information and meeting locations.
  - Engage community in planning updates, identifying community vulnerabilities and coordination needs as demographics and environments change.
  - Work to enhance coordination with local incident command and local response activity information exchange with CRD EOC during emergency events.
- Community liaisons to be supported with education, training and access to information to achieve role responsibilities and regional emergency program goals.
- Install bulletin boards for liaisons to manage up to date information during events.

### **Theme 2: Supporting mental health & wellness**

*Concept: Mental health and wellness needs are documented to increase after disasters. Provide supports to workers, volunteers and residents participating in response efforts and experiencing local disasters to foster resiliency*

- Debrief and provide counselling for all staff (CRD and external agency) and volunteers after EOC deactivation.
- Distribute information on community and individual preparedness, orders/alerts, evacuation/shelter in place planning, recovery resources and changing climate impacts to increase self reliance and reduce confusion and anxiety.

### **Theme 3: Improved permit processes**

*Concept: Reduce challenges to obtaining and accessing permits to increase self sufficiency and facilitate business continuity.*

- Create a system which allows residents to pre-qualify and obtain permits for travel based upon the emergency and a strict set of conditions. Residents would be required to renew the permits annually prior to wildfire season. This would reduce resources staff issuing permits, and calls overwhelming the call centre.
- Ensure agriculture permits are included within the permitting process, and include representatives from the agriculture industry and other important agencies as part of the process.
- Pre-qualify stores, accommodations, food, and suppliers annually to ensure they are able to stay open when supplying emergency services.
- During emergencies, permits should be accessible at various locations, potentially including all CRD offices and community liaisons.

### **Theme 4: Coordinated and targeted education & training**

*Concept: Increased education and training will enhance coordination of emergency planning, EOC, response and recovery activities.*

- Provide education and training for elected officials to support role of responsibility and accountability to area residents, and to clarify role of elected official in EOC.
- CRD/Municipal staff training to support the regional expansion and utilization of the Emergency Notification System.
- Enhanced CRD staff training and stakeholder partnership development to support EOC functions, staffing and response coordination in-line with 2017 lessons learned.

### **Theme 5: Communication coordination to increase resiliency**

*Concept: Planned and coordinated emergency communications reduces impacts of disaster on mental health and wellness and facilitates recovery.*

- List more details including where to get permits, help with animals, road block locations, evacuation routes, and the impact on essential services and

businesses (on all outgoing platforms, posted on website and included in media messaging).

- Develop a short and simple set of guides for responders in various roles including road blocks, door-to-door evacuation notifications, firefighting, emergency operations centre, and other roles.
- Develop a comprehensive crisis communications plan.
- Upgrade internet access at community halls (across the region) to support community liaisons and consistency of information sharing.
- Support the development of a HAM/Amateur Radio network to increase access to local knowledge and coordination into the EOC to increase coordination in the event that normal telecommunications infrastructure is interrupted.
- Establish a CRD Business Registry to disseminate resource information during emergency events to assist early recovery and communication coordination.

#### **Theme 6: Promoting a culture of preparedness**

*Concept: Supporting communities through promoting a culture of preparedness.*

- Encourage area resident preparedness initiatives and private land remediation activities such as fuel reduction and flood mitigation with education and supports.
  - Schedule promotional campaigns in spring /fall/winter to increase familiarity with terminology, preparedness, prevention activities and resources available at a household and community level.
  - Broadly promote the Emergency Notification System.
  - Support broad promotion of FireSmart principles and encourage activities on private properties.
- Promote consistent and reliable CRD communication systems to build trust that the regional district will communicate needed information throughout an emergency.
  - Enhance public education with respect to necessary preparations and processes to improve response to evacuation alerts and orders and to enhance community preparedness and resiliency.
- Identify and coordinate to support guide/outfitter and agricultural/hobby farm operations before events occur to enhance communications on preparedness, planning and organization for business continuity and evacuation coordination.

## **Theme 7: Emergency operations centre improvements**

*Concept: Support improvements to the Emergency Operations Centre to increase effectiveness, interagency coordination and external communications.*

- Review and update CRD EOC policies and processes to incorporate lessons learned from the 2017 wildfire season activation and exercise as training.
- Situational awareness and emergency management software that will enhance record keeping related to position logs and decisions made in the EOC using electronic forms and allow the establishment of a common operating platform for information sharing between the CRD and stakeholder representatives.
- During future EOC activations, staff should be rotated out regularly for a break after 10-14 days on an EOC activation.
- Develop process to ensure that communities sheltering in place have resupply needs met.
- Communications improvements:
  - Fire services in electoral areas need better information sharing coordination from the CRD EOC during large scale events that overwhelm local services.
  - The CRD EOC setup should be adjusted to have information placed in the room on the outer edge of the Director. The highest-speed internet connection available should be wired to this corner of the room with a connection for each information team member, to decrease the time necessary to upload files to the internet.
  - Establish a protocol with key stakeholders on how the CRD EOC will communicate with evacuees to ensure that displaced persons have access to status of their situations.
  - EOC Information Officers should coordinate a group with external information officers to develop a strategy for working together in emergencies.
  - Ensure that a CRD EOC representative can be accessed 24/7 during activations. Reduce the spokesperson roles to one primary and one secondary for each level of media.
  - One person on the information team tasked solely to social media when EOC is activated at Level 3 or higher to continuously monitor and update responses.
  - More information during alert, order and the recovery phase to provide resources and assure residents using online, text/email/print, video, audio, signage, and dark web platform to ensure accessibility.
  - Provide information officer training enhancements and improve interagency communication coordination to relay timely information.

## **Theme 8: Cross regional/government collaboration**

*Concept: Work to build relationships with other jurisdictions, local governments and stakeholder agencies to refine emergency response, process and planning.*

- Develop and document clear processes to establish and rescind alerts and orders with other key stakeholder agencies and local governments.
- Work collaboratively with agencies such as RCMP and regional Search and Rescue to develop clear and agreed upon roles and approaches to evacuations and practiced to familiarize teams with responsibility and expected actions.
- Work closely with other adjacent regional districts to enhance collaboration during emergencies including collaborative jurisdictional exercises. Consider a process where staff resources can be shared during single activations to allow cross pollination of information and processes to improve coordination in larger events.
- Relationships with First Nations should be developed and enhanced to incorporate First Nations in regional planning and preparedness efforts and include joint exercises with EMBC to support First Nations preparedness and response under the new agreement with the federal government.
- Implement table top exercise schedule to refine information sharing and interagency/stakeholder emergency response coordination in line with the CRD EOC and Regional Emergency Program (interagency) to educate and uncover weaknesses and make improvements.

## **Theme 9: Supporting emergency social services**

*Concept: ESS is a critical service, requiring enhanced supports to assist volunteer engagement and retention to achieve long term sustainability.*

- Work to enhance ESS capability in rural areas through community volunteer initiatives to support their communities in the event of emergencies and provide link to CRD EOC.
  - Local resources can add depth for the region as a whole as ESS volunteers in unaffected areas can be drawn on to impacted areas through regional response.