

**Emergency Preparedness Committee Brief, October 12, 2023**  
***BC Emergency and Disaster Management Act Modernization***

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**Background**

On October 3, 2023, the Province introduced Bill 31 the Emergency and Disaster Management Act, which will replace the Emergency Program Act.

**Overview of major policy concepts**

- Shift to four phases of emergency management
- Guiding principles and recognition of Indigenous rights
- Require consideration of climate change
- Broaden definitional framework for emergencies.
- New tools for response and recovery – E.g.: ability to order assistance - require a municipality to host evacuees from another municipality, power to order business closures, durations of states of emergency will be longer, Recovery periods.
- Recognizes plural and dynamic forms of Indigenous governance.
- Agreements for co-management and shared decision-making
- Requires coordination, collaboration, and provision of information between partners – New consultation guidelines.
- Includes and protects Indigenous knowledges.
- Addresses disproportionate impacts and promotes cultural safety.
- Accountability and transparency- full review of the legislation within five years of it receiving Royal Assent.
- Recognizes critical infrastructure owner roles in risk assessments and emergency management- The provincial government will be authorized to order critical infrastructure owners to take mitigation or preparation actions and will be able to take steps to ensure the coordination of critical infrastructure owners during the response and recovery phases.
- Recognizes the important role volunteers play – Province to establish standards, protocols, and procedures for volunteers.

**Additional Information**

- 1) Technical paper - B.C.'s Modernized Emergency Management Legislation: A New Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Response, and Recovery :  
[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/legislation/tp\\_bc\\_modernized\\_em\\_legislation.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/legislation/tp_bc_modernized_em_legislation.pdf)
- 2) Bill 31 – 2023: Emergency and Disaster Management Act:  
<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/42nd-parliament/4th-session/bills/first-reading/gov31-1>