



Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program Manual

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.” — *Alan Lakein*

Introduction

This Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP) manual is designed, along with other resources, to help neighbourhood leaders start up or develop their own NEPP program. It is a newly developed program (as of December 2020), and certain elements are still in development. Supplementary resources will be made available online as they are available. If there is something specific that might be useful, please contact your local emergency program.

Recognizing that each neighbourhood group is unique, this booklet provides guidelines only. It is up to you and your neighbourhood group to adapt these guidelines to suit the requirements and interest of your specific neighbourhood.

Please note: Some of the content in this guide has been adapted from Prepared BC. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the guide's contents at the time of publication, the Regional District of Central Kootenay does not guarantee the completeness or accuracy of the information provided

Last updated: Fall 2020

References:

Prepared BC Website

EMBC Neighbourhood Preparedness Guide

Regional District of Nanaimo NEPP handbook

District of Mission Neighbourhood Emergency Support Teams program

Naomi Weidner MA thesis (2004) – Neighbourhood Emergency Networks

<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301270>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4945213/>

What is NEPP?

NEPP is a program that is intended to support neighbours to reach out and build resiliency within their neighbourhood. During a disaster your neighbours will be your most reliable and immediate source of help, until assistance from first responders arrives.

NEPP is built for self-sufficiency. It is a program that provides the tools you need to expand from being personally prepared to develop an emergency plan that works for you and your neighbours to support each other.

Keep Connected

Local Emergency Program:

RDCK: www.rdck.ca

RDCK Emergency program/NEPP website (under development)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/rdcentralkootenay>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/RDofCK>

Other Websites:

Prepared BC (Provincial Government)

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

Get Prepared (Federal Government)

<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdnssgd/index-en.aspx>

BC Wildfire Service <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>

Environment Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment.html>

For Emergency Updates:

VoyentAlert! Notification system. Register at:

<https://rdck.ca/EN/main/services/emergency-management/emergency-alerts.html>

Why Have NEPP?

Benefits of a NEPP team

1. You will **NOT** be alone in a time of disaster
2. You will be **better prepared** to act quickly and appropriately in any situation
3. You will be **better informed** on how to take care of yourself and loved ones until help arrives
4. You will know if any of your neighbours need extra help, and have plans in place to support them.
5. You will be able to identify and minimize existing **hazards** around your home and neighborhood
6. You will understand what items are recommended to **gather** and how to **store** them
7. You will be prepared if you are required to **evacuate** your neighborhood
8. You will have a **communication** plan
9. You will know where to get **accurate information** on the situation
10. You will know **who to go to** in your neighborhood for specific skills or resources
11. You will have **peace of mind and increased confidence** in your disaster resilience and self - sufficiency
12. You will have built **relationships** with neighbours and planned how to support each other with shared resources and supplies

In a major disaster, first responders may not be able to get to you for some time. With this in mind, it is important to be prepared for a minimum of one week, but ideally 2 weeks or more. This is even more critical if you live in a remote or isolated rural area. Working with neighbours allows you to build up your own resilience through resource and skills sharing, you will all fare better than remaining as independent households.

Where to Start

Things to consider for personal/household preparedness:

- Be Grab and Go Ready!
- Shelter in Place instructions
- Family/ Communication Plan
- Water storage
- Identify and secure hazards
- Clearly identify utilities and know how and when to shut them off
- Emergency planning for your pet

Remember: Check your supplies annually to keep them up to date

Personal/Household Preparedness is the foundation

You will only be able to work on a Neighbourhood Preparedness Program if you and your family have prepared in advance.

You can pick up your copy of the Personal Emergency Preparedness Guidebook and other planning publications from the local Emergency Program, or go to the PreparedBC website.

Developing Your Plan

Connect with your Neighbours, maybe consider a local website, Facebook page or newsletter.

When it is safe to do so, you could consider hosting an event such as a BBQ or potluck, but until then please follow the recommended precautions due to COVID-19 and limit in person contact.

If there is already a group established, like a residents association, or a block watch group, see if you can promote NEPP there.

If your neighbourhood is participating in the FireSmart Neighbourhood Recognition program already, then maybe that group would be keen to support the NEPP too.

More information on FireSmart is available here:

<https://rdck.ca/EN/main/services/emergency-management/wildfires/firesmart.html>

Some suggestions to help promote your meeting:

- Going door to door to explain the NEPP program and handout a flyer
- Reaching out to your neighbourhood block watch or other neighbourhood groups
- Putting up a flyer on a local community board
- Social media

Topics to discuss at the initial meeting:

- Introductions— get to know each other
- Describe NEPP's purpose
- Familiarity with neighbourhood
- Household emergency preparedness
- Neighbours with unique needs— children, elderly, people with disabilities
- Skills and resources each person can offer
- Local emergency program
- Next meeting time and date

Reach out to your local Emergency Program who can help with things like handouts and advice as you start up your local team.

Identify Skills and Responsibilities

You may not have all of these resources in your neighborhood, but if you do, they may be a good source of information and skills in the event of an emergency.

Leadership team

- Provides overall leadership of the plan before, during and after a disaster.
E.g. administrators, community group leaders, etc.

First aid

- Provides basic first-aid care and emotional support in the neighbourhood. They determine a location for a first-aid station in the neighborhood and plan ahead for and neighbours who may need special care.
E.g. nurses, doctors, or first-aid attendants

Communication

- Provides a communication link within neighbourhood groups as well as outside resources.
E.g. amateur radio operators, social media followers.

Caregivers

- Cares for by providing a safe, clean environment in addition to shelter, food and care for neighbours who need help after a disaster until they can be referred for assistance by the local authority's Emergency Support Services (ESS) or other community disaster resources. Some considerations are: children, persons with special needs and health challenges, and pets.
E.g. anyone with an interest in caregiving, nurses, childcare providers.

Damage assessment

- Conducts a quick assessment of structures in the neighbourhood to assess which appear safe, damaged or destroyed.
E.g. construction workers, engineers, or anyone with Rapid Damage Assessment Training.

Fixing and cleaning up

- Industrial cleaners, firefighters, utilities workers, Search and Rescue volunteers, trades people.

Identify anyone who may need extra assistance, including:

- Families with small children

- Elderly people
- People with disabilities
- People with pets

Responsibilities to assign:

- Checking on others
- Checking utilities and other potential hazards
- Gathering information
- Conducting a damage assessment of the neighbourhood
- Providing care for pets, children or persons with special needs and health challenges
- Providing basic first aid
- Setting up shelter, equipment
- Overseeing meetings/preparedness activities & functions
- Communications

Establish NEPP Leadership

NEPP leadership does not have to mean one person as a leader. It often works better when the responsibility is shared.

Some of the key responsibilities of NEPP leaders are:

Liaising with your Local Emergency Program

Your local emergency program is a valuable resource, and can be there to assist you when needed. Some resources you may be able to obtain from your local emergency program are:

- Workshops and meeting assistance
- Handbooks and other printed materials
- Online resources
- Online forums and group meeting places
- Volunteer opportunities e.g. as part of the Emergency Support Services team

Keep updated lists of neighbours

Greet newcomers and invite them to join the team

Share the plan

Update your plan regularly and share updates

Hold annual/semi-annual meetings

Establish a schedule for meetings. These can correspond with another event or can be held virtually using an online tool like Zoom or Skype

Ideally the leaders are familiar with the area, have good relations with others in the neighbourhood, and have good interpersonal and communications skills.

Get to know your neighbours!

Identify Resources

Identify resources

Who has what in the event of an emergency? Ideally this information will be documented and stored with your Neighbourhood Emergency Plan.

Some important resources to consider are:

First Aid supplies

Generator / Power Supply

Water

Tools– ladders, shovels, and other hand held tools

Shelter

Safety– hard hats, gloves, other protective gear

Pet supplies

Cooking

Communication

Transportation

Security

Knowing where these items are, and how to access them, enables quick and efficient action.

Neighbourhood/ Personal Safety Principles

-Safety first

You are number one! Look after yourself before anyone else.

-Be prepared

If you are not personally prepared, you cannot help your neighbours.

-Teamwork

Working together will solve issues faster than working alone.

-Know your limits

Only do what you know how to do and rest when you are tired.

-Document activity

Make notes of what you do, when you do it and what resulted.

-Report to team leader

This lets others know you are safe and ready to help.

-Improvise, be flexible and adaptable

Emergencies never follow a script, neither should you.

-Take charge responsibly

Encourage people, don't order anyone to do anything and stay safe.

Map Your Neighbourhood

Step 1: Identify a safe meeting place:

A **meeting place** is somewhere all neighbours will gather after they have secured their own home. It is a safe place to organize as a group.

Some considerations are:

- A site that is accessible by everyone at any time
- Somewhere that can withstand a disaster and is away from hazards.
- Consider a backup location in case your primary site is compromised and unsafe.

Step 2: Create your map:

- You can ask your local emergency program to provide map print outs of your area
- Include streets, house numbers, and your NEPP boundaries
- Include access and egress points clearly
- Include your safe meeting point
- Also consider assigning a location for
 - a community care area (for unique needs)
 - First aid area
 - somewhere for pets
 - identify houses with unique needs

Stay in Touch and Update

-Log onto the RDCK get involved NEPP page (**under development**) to register your group, connect with other NEPP groups in the region as well as stay informed on any new materials, workshops.

(Website under development)

-Sign up to receive Emergency Alerts through your local Emergency Program here: <https://rdck.ca/EN/main/services/emergency-management/emergency-alerts.html>

-Stay in touch with your group, host annual BBQ's or social events to keep up to date with neighbours and provide new neighbours with information about your neighbourhood program and invite them to join the team.

-Learn how your NEPP fits into the overall community program and know the resources in your community.

-Check with your local Emergency Program for other volunteer opportunities.

-Connect with other NEPP groups in your community to create a stronger, more resilient group of Neighbours.

Building Resilience & Sustainability

Emergencies can leave us wondering if there was something we could have done to reduce the suffering and loss experienced. This is a good time to look at options for building a new and better community rather than just building back what was.

-Can we avoid this hazard? How?

- Can we build better?
- Can we choose better places to build?

-Can we reduce this hazard? How?

- Can we build better community protection?

-Can we be better prepared for this hazard?

- Carry emergency supplies in your home, vehicle, school and workplace
- Make a plan and share with your families, schools and workplaces

-Prioritize what needs to be done

- Since there are usually resource limitations, what can you and your community do that will provide the most benefit?

-Share your lessons learned and success stories so that other can benefit too

Form Templates/ Examples

Resident Information Sheet

Option 1: Simple Count

Address:

Residents Name:

Occupants: # Adults _____ # Children _____
Cats _____ # Dogs _____
Other _____

Option 2: Detailed List

Address:	Age	Medical Issues/ Special Needs
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- Occupant #1
- Occupant #2
- Occupant #3
- Occupant #4
- Occupant #5
- Occupant #6
- Occupant #7

Detailed Resident Information Sheet

All information received will be held in strict confidence

Address: _____

Residents Name: _____

Occupants: # Adults _____ # Children _____

Cats _____ # Dogs _____

Other _____

Phone (H): _____ (C): _____

(W): _____ Email: _____

Off site owner information:

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Persons who have a key to your home:

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Person to be contacted in case of an emergency:

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Do you have a security system Yes _____ No _____

If yes- Does your system sound an alarm Yes _____ No _____

(or) does it have a silent response Yes _____ No _____

Responding security company:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

What would you be willing to do or share with the community in the event of an emergency?

Skills

Medical EMT
Medical Paramedic
Medical Nurse
Medical MD
Medical Other (specify)
Heavy Equipment Operator
Mass feeding experience
Counsellor
Mortician
Security
Pharmacist
Leadership
Public Speaker
Handyman
Plumber
Carpenter
Electrician
HAM Radio Operator
Other skill you feel would be helpful

Resources

Generator (specify type)
Backhoe
Front end loader
Crane
Field kitchen
Medical supplies
Spot lights
Chain Saws
Power tools
Radio- HAM
Truck- Pickup or other
Other large capacity vehicle
ATV
Winch
Portable refrigeration
Other tools: ladders, shovels, hand held
Pet supplies
Shelter- pop up tents etc.
Other resource you feel would be helpful