



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND ECO COMMUNITIES GUIDANCE



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following guidance document was prepared in partnership with the University of Guelph, from a team of students who participated in their Capstone Course. Seeds for Eco Communities would like to acknowledge the following young professionals for their efforts to support delivery of this guide - Laura Newman, Leah McMenemy, Caitlin Karelsen and Katerina Trieselmann.

Katerina, Caitlin, Leah and Laura worked collectively to develop a first of its kind resource for eco communities around the globe that may want to consider a role for their communities in emergency management. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the project was evident at all stages of guidance development. Seeds for Eco Communities is thankful for this partnership and support provided.



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SECTION 1: ECO COMMUNITY ROLE IN EMERGENCIES

This guidance document explores the concept of emergency management and how eco communities could play a role in providing support in times of emergency. It describes possible roles for eco communities to support both their own members as well as their broader community, and how they can prepare to do so.

It also outlines how playing this role creates a unique and purposeful partnership opportunity between an eco community and their nearby local government and/or Indigenous communities, and why this partnership and exchange of services is so important.



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This guidance document describes emergency management in the Ontario context for illustrative purposes, however many of its principles and approaches can be applied at the global scale. The audience of this guide includes current and emerging eco communities as well as local scale governments who may want to explore building eco community supports into their emergency management planning efforts.

One of the first steps to understand the opportunities for eco communities around emergency management is to examine the types of emergencies that have occurred and are expected to occur into the future in your location. This should include consideration of changing climates that ultimately have implications at the local level.

Taking Ontario as an example, their seasonality makes them susceptible to a wide variety of natural disasters⁶. Within a single year, Ontario communities can face threats of tornadoes, floods, wildfires and winter storms, just to name a few⁶.

For an eco community to play a helpful role in emergency management, it will likely need to prepare for a number of possible scenarios. When working in partnership to provide extended supports to the broader community, it is suggested that eco communities be very clear in communicating the scope and scale of the types of services and resources available to share.

Regardless of the emergency at hand, it is always good to plan ahead with prevention measures where possible and to have a plan for response, mitigation and recovery. Having the plans, resources and training in place ahead of time will ensure an eco community is available to support in a meaningful way, when an emergency does unfold.

Emergency Management



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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND ECO COMMUNITIES GUIDANCE

Needs of those affected by emergencies will vary based on the nature of the specific disaster, as well as individual factors like health, capabilities, and the degree to which any individual is affected⁵. An eco community is an excellent resource for meeting those needs, and it should provide a welcoming, supportive environment to access necessities and services on an as-needed basis. See Section 2 for specific capabilities of eco communities and Section 3 for specific needs of people facing different disasters. Although you will see a common threat on needs and capabilities, it is important to understand your local demographic, local resource opportunities and constraints to fully navigate how local eco communities may be best equipt to provide support in emergency situations.

Eco communities ability to support both their immediate and broader community through emergencies will be a function of planning and preparedness, along with contributions from a designated emergency response team. Eco community members will also likely have a role to play - before, during and potentially after the emergency. It is important to incorporate diverse perspectives from both eco community members and the local communities who are partnering in emergency management planning efforts, in order to be practical, efficient and as helpful as possible without putting excessive strain on the eco communities own resource needs.

In addition to promoting unity and confidence within the community, an early, open and inclusive planning approach will ensure that emergency management plans are well equipped to meet the unique needs of a diverse array of people from the broader community. It is critical to incorporate local Indigenous voices at the heart of planning and decision making and incorporate opportunities for ongoing Indigenous knowledge sharing and advice to guide supportive services offered during times of emergency^{7,8,10}.

By playing a helpful role in emergency management, eco communities can form a relationship with neighboring governments and communities, allowing for further partnership opportunities on shared goals, including providing further resources, training and assistance to the public on eco communities^{7,8,10}.

SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Section 2.1 - Capabilities Menu

The eco community centre is a keystone of the eco communities emergency management capabilities. This section focuses on the things that eco communities will be able to provide in response to emergencies, such as providing temporary accommodations at the community centre, to support members of local neighbouring communities in need.



Emergency Shelter/Housing



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In the event that people are displaced from their homes, eco communities can provide a place to stay temporarily. For many people, this may just be for the duration of the disaster. For others, a slightly extended stay might result from unsafe conditions making it impossible to return home immediately (for example, a significant portion of their house being lost or damaged).

Provision for longer term shelter on a larger scale are unlikely to be a common function of what eco communities can offer, given most communities are typically smaller in size. However, with the proper planning eco communities can have resources in place to quickly assemble substantive temporary shelters. They are an ideal location for such shelters given eco communities often have a significant amount of available green space to accommodate.



Shelter should include access to a place to sleep, food, clean water, and first aid. When planning to provide emergency shelter, the following should be thought through in advance of the emergency.

1. *Understand Your Capacity*

How many people can safely fit into available spaces for an extended period (i.e., overnight, several days or more) without disobeying fire regulations?

Where specifically will they sleep, eat, shower and receive other critical supports such as medical assistance and trauma response?

2. *Plan and Practice for an Emergency Situation*

Who is on call in the eco community to respond to a large-scale emergency where multiple people need emergency housing?

What specifically, is everyone's role?

Where are supplies such as sleeping pads, cots and tents stored such that they can be accessed quickly?

How often are the supplies checked for functionality and expiry dates?

Tip: It is a good idea to carry out a dry run of emergency responses so that everyone is prepared to respond quickly when an emergency does arise.

3. *Offer Training for Emergency Response Support Team*

While housing many people on limited notice, individuals may face concerns such as medical problems, panic and accessibility issues.

Tip: Offering first aid, basic emergency management, sensitivity and cultural training to members of the response team can help aid response issues.

Food accessibility includes adequate sanitation, meaning that clean or disposable dishes are essential. Individuals should feel comfortable and dignified accepting food. Distribution of food during large-scale emergency situations should be done by the emergency response team to ensure food is delivered in an efficient and effective manner to those who need it. In smaller-scale cases, individuals should be able to visit and access food as needed.

One of the incredible benefits of partnering with an eco community during a food crisis is that many eco communities have a vast array and substantive storage of healthy fruits and vegetables. In the summer month if the timing is right, these could be directly harvested from the community garden. In the cooler winter months many eco communities keep a hefty supply of preserved vegetables, fruits and even meats in their cold cellars, in preparation for times of need.

In emergencies, local grocery stores may have their fresh food supplies impacted or spoiled, food sourced from local eco communities can help provide an essential source of nutrition and wellness in times of need.



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Emergency Water

Setting up an extended and back up water supply is a good planning practice regardless of pending emergency needs. The amount of emergency water that is available to supply will depend on available water sources in your location as well as the community budget. If you have access to a clean fresh spring water source, with enough pressure on your eco community, that is ideal. A natural fresh water spring can provide virtually limitless water supply to a community during an emergency, acting as a refill station for those in need. If the source has already been verified as suitable for drinking in advance, this will be a critical resources in times of emergency.

Groundwater is also a good choice, pending its size, a ground water well can provide a stable supply of water during an emergency. As most communities are run partially or entirely on renewable energy sources with back up supplies, it is likely that an eco community well will be up and running when others water sources are unavailable. It is notable that groundwater will likely require some filtration before it is suitable for consumption as drinking water.



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Some communities may also be connected to municipal water supplies. However, in some emergencies where there is no electricity, municipal water supplies may not be operational. To supplement main sources, it is ideal to have an independent water storage system such as a greywater tank and rainwater collection devices, hosting a back up supply of water, if needed.

Issues relating to water contamination or emergencies requiring people to have extended stays away from home, are examples of times in which the public may need to access water supplies on an eco community. Water is also essential for health and can help play a preventative measure in emergencies that may involve heat exhaustion. It can aid in ensuring cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation of people, animals, eating and sleeping environments during an emergency. As our Indigenous knowledge keepers teach us - water is life.

It is important to regularly maintain water systems for sanitation and to ensure water filtration devices are checked and replaced when needed. This should include periodic water sampling and assessments of the entire system to ensure it is functioning adequately. It is also important to understand and account for any limitations, such as the daily volume of water limitations on some ground water sources. Volume limitations need to be well understood in advance of an emergency, to avoid running out of the communities water supply.



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Emergency Energy and Power

Energy sources are often one of the first things impacted during an emergency. This can lead to immediate impacts on health for those who depend on medical devices powered by electricity, or those who have medications which need to be kept in a refrigerated environment. Loss of power may also impact a persons ability to communicate.

Eco communities are typically partially or fully sourced by renewable energy. Although any energy system could be damaged in times of emergency, broader "grid" losses of power don't typically have significant impacts on eco communities that are partially or fully self sustaining with their own energy supply. This makes them an excellent alternative support during emergencies.

Eco communities often source power primarily through solar, and it will store power in a battery bank system. As long as the solar panels and system are not damaged in the emergency, the ongoing supply of sunshine and energy storage banks allow eco communities to keep their lights on and systems working even when the power is out on the grid.



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In power outages, members of the public may call upon the eco community for support with heating/cooling, hot water for washing and cleaning, charging personal devices, or other power related needs. It is important for eco communities to plan ahead and better understand how much power can be stored based on the specifications of their energy system. Carefully consideration needs to be provided to determine energy needs for both the eco community and the broader local communities it intends to support. This will help to avoid situations where the eco community exceeds its capabilities.



Trauma and Healing Supports

The eco community is uniquely equipped to support those undergoing psychological trauma or unwellness. Many eco communities already have health, wellness, trauma management and/or general healing supports built into their community offerings. These resources can be leverage during emergency situations and can include a range of supports including indoor and outdoor spaces for trauma, healing and desired cultural or religious practices. This can be supported by skilled members of the eco community who can provide individual and/or group supports during challenging times.

To ensure eco communities are properly resourced to take on this responsibility, they should ensure their emergency response team is certified if responding to mental-health related emergencies, as well as trained on strategies for helping struggling individuals through the types of emergencies that can be anticipated.

Some trauma and healing supports will not necessarily require a formal certification or degree. This would include Indigenous healing and trauma supports that may be provided through a Indigenous knowledge keeper, elder or healer.

Eco communities may also be well positioned to deliver ecotherapy during emergencies. This could be delivered through licensed and non-licenced counselors who are trained and/or have expertise in delivering different aspects of ecotherapy. Ecotherapy is a unique type of therapy which centres connection to the natural world as a means of overcoming hardships³. It has been shown to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and to improve overall mental wellbeing³.

Overall an eco community can provide a safe place for anyone who is struggling during an emergency. Eco communities should carefully consider and document the amount of healing and trauma supports they can provide to those in need in - both for their immediate and broader communities.

Section 2.2 - Disaster by Disaster Breakdown

When creating an emergency management plan for an eco community, start by identifying which types of emergencies are most relevant to your region and what role your community is realistically positioned to play in each. This includes careful consideration of what supports can be provided both to the immediate eco community but also to those broader communities that the eco community will support, for each type of disaster.

Eco communities can serve as powerful nodes in a local emergency management network. They can range in function from simple warming stations, water and energy refill stations to comprehensive on-site refuges. The role an eco community plays in any given emergency will depend on their physical infrastructure, energy resilience, water and food supplies, formal pre-established agreements with local governments and Indigenous communities, and the directives guiding an eco communities official emergency services plan at the time of activation⁶.

Use the matrix provided on the next page to assess which emergency scenarios your local eco community is positioned to support and at what level of capacity. Ratings reflect general best-practice capacity drawn from the eco community capabilities in this report⁹. Using this matrix as a starting point, assess the infrastructure, energy resilience, staffing, and formal agreement status before confirming readiness for any given category⁹.



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P	Primary: Frontline service point	S	Secondary: Supportive, condition- based	E	Emergency Only: Official direction required	N/A	Not Applicable
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Figure 1: Capability Rating Legend

Disaster Type	Shelter/Housing	Food	Water	Energy/Power
Power Outages & Blackouts	S	P	P	P
Thunderstorms	S	S	P	P
Tornadoes / Severe Wind	P	P	P	P
Windstorms / Ice Storms	P	P	P	P
Extreme Heat Events	P	S	P	P
Floods	P	P	S	P
Erosion / Landslides / Sinkholes	P	P	S	S
Dam Failures	P	P	S	P
Drought / Low Water	N/A	S	P	N/A
Wildfire / Wildfire Smoke	P	P	P	S
Pandemic / Infectious Disease	S	P	S	N/A
Hazardous Materials Spill	E	S	S	N/A
Nuclear / Radiological	E	S	S	N/A

Table 1: Disaster-by-Disaster Capability Matrix

It is important to emphasize that each emergency really is its own unique experience, the above matrix will help guide you towards the types of supports which may be available in different disasters, but really this is just guidance and each disaster will need to be separately assessed to determine what types of supports an eco community may be able to provide.



SECTION 3: ECO COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Section 3.1 - Emergency Management Plan Contents

As a best practice an eco community should always have an emergency management plan in place and this plan should be regularly reviewed for updates to be prepared for any emergency that may arise. If an eco community is not yet established, the plan can be developed at the onset of community development building in the necessary supports and resources into the community from the onset.

Local governments who are involved in emergency management planning, often post their plans and resources online. These can be handy starting points for a local eco community to begin drafting their own emergency management plan.

The following sections are commonly found in emergency management plans for consideration in plans developed by an eco community:

1. Purpose and Scope of Plan
2. Authorities in Plan
3. Types of Emergencies Covered by Plan
4. Emergency Support Functions
5. Incident Command System / Roles and Responsibilities
6. Response Planning
7. Decision Making
8. Operational Procedures
9. Financial Considerations
10. Communications and Notifications
11. Recording Keeping, Reporting and After Incident Reporting
12. Demobilization Protocol
13. Emergency Management Plan Updates

Some emergency management plans also include Appendices with resources such as emergency management forms, tracking tables and guidance documents to support successful execution of the plan.



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Section 3.2 - How to Activate Your Community Emergency Plan

An eco communities emergency management support plan can typically be activated through several pathways. This may include through a trigger in the plan itself, through an existing memorandum of understanding that is triggered with a local neighbouring community, upon request from the eco community emergency management lead or by request of a local government in need - if no formal prior agreement is in place.

Regardless of how activation is triggered, one principle applies at all times - an eco community is an additional support system, and will defer to official emergency services such as medics, police and fire, if they are required and available.

As such, an eco community is not intended to be a substitutes for established emergency support services, but instead is intended to provide complementary supports. The services and supports provided will be defined by the resources and expertise available from the emergency response team on the eco community, in consultation with neighbouring communities.

The following table provides some sample triggers that may be applicable to activate your emergency management plan.

Sample Activation Triggers
A formal municipal request through the local Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or designated Emergency Management Coordinator ⁶
A provincial or municipal emergency alert (ie. severe weather, evacuation order, or widespread utility outage) reaching your community directly or via the local notification system ⁶
Walk-in demand, where local or regional community members arrive independently following displacement ⁵
Pre-identified thresholds set jointly with your local community partner in a pre-established agreement, such as temperatures below -20°C, declared road closures, or a formal municipal emergency declaration ⁵

Table 2: Sample Activation Triggers to Plan for In Advance

As part of activation planning, best practices include establishing forward arrangements to provide a walk-in intake system as emergencies arise, with clear external signage listing hours, services, accessibility features, and when to call emergency services instead. Some emergency planning processes in communities designate an intake coordinator to be the liaison with the public and neighbouring communities to provide an initial screen and point of contact to help manage the emergency at hand.⁶

There should also be consideration for the homeless in emergencies and how they can be provided with an opportunity for assistance from the eco community. Some eco communities already offer supports for the homeless, which could be planned for expansion during times of emergency.



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SECTION 4: PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORKS

Effective emergency management for an eco community depends on building strong, reciprocal relationships with local governments, neighbouring Indigenous communities, social services partners and peer networks⁹. The most successful communities formalize these structures before an emergency, not during one. This section guides you through building relationships step by step.

Section 4.1: Building Partnerships with Local Indigenous Communities

When building your partnerships framework, plan for meaningful engagement with any Indigenous communities whose territory your eco community is located on or adjacent to. Make this your first partnership conversation, if possible before the eco community is developed.

This is first and foremost a matter of genuine respect and will help to guide meaningful relationship-building, but may also be a matter of legal obligation where the duty to consult is concerned. Local Indigenous communities have a unique understanding of the local environment and their perspectives on protecting and maintaining the surrounding lands and waters are priceless.

Indigenous eco communities and their partners, such as Ekvñ-Yefolecv, demonstrate that integrating Indigenous governance structures, traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural programming into your emergency planning procedures creates more resilient, culturally grounded outcomes⁹.

It is advised to engage early and proactively with Indigenous communities, not only when required by law, and to ensure any formal partnership is underpinned by genuine respect and shared decision-making authority⁹.



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Section 4.2 - Building Partnerships with Local Governments

Begin by contacting your local governments emergency management department or liaison officer. In Ontario this can typically be a municipality's Emergency Management Program Coordinator. Ontario's *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* requires Ontario municipalities to maintain one, and they are your primary entry point for formalizing any emergency support role⁶.

There are a number of representatives from a local government that you will likely be working with in shared emergency management efforts. This will include collaborations with first responders such as police, fire and EMS as well as coordination on resourcing needs and shared communications efforts. If planned in a good way a local government and eco communities emergency management services can work to complement each other.

Local partnerships can share records of primary contacts, and backups, can establish a shared activation checklist both parties can use independently, can enable partner notification procedures for unexpected capacity changes, all documented in a resource-sharing agreement specifying what the eco community provides, what the local government may supplement, and the liability limits of each party⁵.



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Section 4.3 - By-Law Review and First Responder Familiarization

Before an eco community finalizes their emergency support role, they should confirm their land-use designation, occupancy permits, and local community by-laws permit the proposed temporary accommodation of non-residents and operation of a public-facing service facility⁶.

Communities should conduct this review early, in consultation with the applicable local planning department(s). Look to arrange a site familiarization visit by local fire and EMS service before any emergency plan activation. This should include covering access routes, utility shut-offs, facility capacity and on-call staff contacts⁶. Keep a record of this visit in your emergency binder and as required use lessons learned to support emergency management plan updates.

Section 4.4 - Peer Community Networks

Beyond the other noted relationships, connecting with peer intentional communities is a critical pillar of emergency resilience for your eco community. Affiliating with networks such as the Federation of Intentional Communities (FIC) provides access to shared knowledge, pooled resources, and mutual aid arrangements that complement, but do not replace, formal municipal partnership⁹.

Peer networks support your emergency management plan by enabling joint training, supplementing supplies and volunteers during large-scale events, and by providing financial resilience that reduces dependence on external funding during difficult activations⁹.





SECTION 5: FORMALIZING PARTNERSHIPS TOGETHER

Section 5.1 - Memorandum of Understanding and Tiered Support Model

The memorandizing of understanding or “MOU” between an eco community and its partnering local government is the foundational document that formalizes the emergency support relationship.

In Ontario, the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) MOU framework provides a recognized template for establishing co-operative relationships with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and boundaries⁵.

Not all communities will have the same capacity under an MOU, and that is expected. A tiered model allows for an eco community to start at a level that is genuinely achievable and grow over time as their infrastructure, staffing, and governance matures.

Section 5.2 - What to Include in Your MOU

When drafting an MOU between an eco community and a local government, consider including the following elements:

- The scope and nature of services the eco community agrees to provide at each activation tier;
- Conditions and procedures for activation and deactivation, including the contact chain;
- Liability and insurance arrangements covering community members, government staff, and members of the public;
- Privacy and confidentiality protections for both parties and the public;
- Duration, renewal, compensation and termination provisions; and
- Indigenous consultation requirements where your site intersects with Aboriginal or treaty rights under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 - seek legal guidance early if this applies to your community².

Section 5.3 - Choosing Your Tier

Use the comparison table below to identify which tier best reflects an eco communities current capacity, and consider planning towards higher tiers as a communities resources, knowledge and capacity develops. Intermediate arrangements are possible, however, consider using the tier model as a starting point, not a ceiling⁵.

Category	Light Tier - Service Point	Full Tier - On-site Hosting
Infrastructure	Existing community spaces adapted for public access	Dedicated sleeping, kitchen, intake, and sanitation areas
Staffing	1-3 trained community volunteers; local government liaison	Coordination team with formal social service supports or partnerships
Services	Water (drinking and showers), warming/cooling stations, charging points, supplies, referrals	Accommodations, meals and water, health connection, cultural programming, trauma and healing services
Duration	Hours to 1-2 days per activation	Days to weeks for protracted displacement
Formal Needs	Service point agreements, signage, service registration	MOU with local government, intake/safety protocols, joint exercises
Best Fit	Early-stage communities, scoped infrastructure and service needs	Established communities with energy resilience, stable food and water supplies, advanced expertise and governance capacity

Table 3: Light Tier vs Full Tier Comparison

Light Tier: Service Point Support

The Light Tier is designed for eco communities at earlier stages of development or with limited infrastructure, knowledge and/or service offerings. It facilitates meaningfully scoped participation in emergency management without taking on full hosting responsibilities⁶.



Each community will have its own unique offerings of services and supports which will be driven by internal capacity and emergency management needs of the neighbouring communities. Core services could include: water refill stations, warming and cooling centres, leveraging potential passive solar design and insulation rather than mechanical systems, device charging, basic supply distribution and informational referrals to other services⁹.

These types of services would ideally be established through a formal MOU with the local government. To initiate partnership opportunities consider setting up a meeting with your local government's Emergency Management Office. Suggest registering your eco community site address with the local community you hope to support and install clear external signage at the community to build further awareness and supports of what the eco community has to offer⁶.

Full Tier: On-Site Hosting

At the Full Tier, an eco community takes on a comprehensive hosting role. It could accommodate individuals or groups over extended periods with a broader suite of supports. This tier requires greater infrastructure, staffing capacity, and formal coordination with local government and social service partners⁵.

Full tier services include short- or medium-term accommodation, meals drawing from the eco community food systems and stored provisions, connections to health and mental health services through pre-established referral pathways, and cultural programming where applicable⁹.

Before an eco community's first Full Tier activation, it is recommended the community should have a documented operations manual, an updated staff and volunteer contact list, and signed agreements with at least one local government and ideally complementary social services partner(s) in place⁵.



Section 5.4 - Pre-Activation Checklist

Regardless of your tier, ensure the following are in place before your first emergency management activation:

- Signed agreement(s) with your local government⁵ and partnerships in place with local service providers (as needed);
- Establish and maintain current emergency management team contact list and volunteer roster on file for others on the team to view⁵.
- Register site details with the local Emergency Management Office, ensure to continue to share current contact details⁶;
- Post clear and up to date external resource signs visible from the road;
- Establish a designated intake coordinator with a confirmed backup;
- Establish supply stores for team (water, food, hygiene items, blankets) sufficient for a 72-hour activation without re-supply;
- Complete site familiarization visit with local fire and EMS services⁶;
- Document and test communication protocol with the local government and any applicable service partners⁶; and
- Indigenous engagement complete, provide ongoing opportunities for Indigenous input as plans and partnerships are updated²;

As part of Seeds for Eco Communities 2024 research findings, eco communities that maintain a clear, explicitly stated unifying vision are the most resilient⁹. This shared vision guides eco communities as a close knit team, enabling them to provide reliable service and supports in emergency situations.

It is acknowledged that building and sustaining the variety of partnerships outlined in this chapter takes time. However, it is time that is well spent. Eco communities that invest in early and meaningful partnerships and plans before an emergency arrives are more prepared, trusted, and ready to serve when it matters the most.

SECTION 6: RESOURCING AND LOGISTICS PLANNING

With proper planning, eco communities can be ready to respond to emergencies on little to no notice. This is achieved through proactive training of community members, stockpiling of resources, and planning support services in anticipation of a wide range of scenarios.

This section provides an overview of the types of resources and logistical planning required to properly support delivery of emergency support services. Planning in advance as much as possible will provide a good foundation for efficient deployment of resources, while providing the details required to support responsible documentation.

During emergencies, resources are often required to be deployed rapidly and in some cases with poor planning, this could create significant expenditures. It is important to document and reassess resource use throughout an emergency, to seek opportunities for strategic efficiencies without compromising safety. It is also important to clearly establish who is responsible for which expenditures when an eco community is supporting a local government with their emergency management needs. Roles and expenditure plans should be clearly documented in emergency management plans and agreements with local governments.





Section 6.1 - Supplies

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter, as discussed in Section 2, is the ability to provide shelter to many people on limited notice. The exact number of people will vary based on the capabilities of the eco community and the local population requesting support.

The number of people who can be safely hosted should be predetermined for stockpiling of the following provisions:

1. *Bedding* - store enough sleeping bags, pillows, and mattresses or cots for as many people as you can safely support, plus a few extra. It is important that they are stored away from dust, pests, or contaminants, so that they do not need to be cleaned when they are brought out. They should be thoroughly cleaned before being returned to storage, and retired from use if damaged. Ideally, these items should be made of environmentally friendly materials, however, durability and washability are also important considerations.
2. *Toiletries* - Individuals who stay overnight may not be able to bring their own toiletries, so you should have stockpiles of toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, soap, toilet paper, and menstrual products. You should also have available common first aid items and over the counter medications such as painkillers, antihistamines and supplements. Medication should only be administered by trained professionals. Enough toiletries should be stockpiled to support your full capacity for at least three nights. While this may seem excessive, most of these items are non-perishable and may be kept until they are needed. Products which are approaching their best-before date without being used may be donated to members of the eco community or those in need in the broader community. It is important to replenish stocks of toiletries immediately following their use, as these items are typically not reusable.

3. *Clothing* - you should be able to provide warm sweaters and sleepwear to your guests. Waterproof and weather friendly clothes should be considered for your climate. You should store enough to provide for your full capacity plus a few extra. It is important that these items are kept clean in storage, so that they do not have to be cleaned when they are brought out. They should be thoroughly cleaned before they are returned to storage, or they can be offered to the guests as items to keep. Items of clothing should be donated and replaced every 5-10 years. Ideally, clothing will be handmade by members of the community or reused clothing that is no longer in use.

Food

Stockpiles of food help those who have to stay overnight, as well as anyone affected by an emergency with limited access to food. Food should be non-perishable, and may include but is not limited to:

- Canned/jarred foods such as vegetables, fruits, beans, meat and sauces
- Freeze dried meals and snacks
- Frozen meals and snacks
- Dry foods like pasta and oatmeal which can be stored for a long time
- Powdered dairy or alternative milks, or those which have added preservatives for a long shelf life
- If in season - fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs and/or meat products can be harvested from the eco community gardens and pastures



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Best-before date checks should occur on a regular basis to ensure supplies are current and not expired. Enough food should be stored to feed the maximum capacity of people for at least three days.

It is also important for the eco community to have dishes and cutlery, typically the eco community center will have an abundance of these resources. Ideally, these will be reusable, in which case the shared community center is typically designated responsible for storing them in a sanitary manner and cleaning them thoroughly after each use.

Water

It is important to have multiple drinking water sources and bottle-filling stations which are accessible to those in need from the neighbouring community. They could also be provided with access to clean running water in the kitchen, washrooms and showers, if available. Bottled water should be stored as a back up and last resort, but it should not be relied upon unless issues emerge with the eco communities water supply.

Other Considerations

It is important to have multiple first aid kits, as well as an AED on site in the eco community, especially when providing longer term housing supports. Communities should have multiple, clearly marked fire extinguishers, as well as smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors which are regularly checked and tested. Finally, it is important to recognize that not only the eco community and neighbouring residents need support. Ensuring your immediate emergency response team and volunteers have accessible information and resources to support them through the emergency is essential, this may include offering trauma counselling, if needed.

It is also important to keep close tabs on the amount, type and condition of resources you have on hand and where they are being stored.

Section 6.2 - Team and Community Training

The following training courses will be useful for some or all eco community members, especially those who will be active members on the emergency response team:

1. **First Aid** - up-to-date Standard First Aid with CPR-C and AED. A portion of the emergency response team should be trained to a higher level. Depending on their specific responsibilities, this may include Remote First Aid, SafeTalk training, National Lifeguard, or other certifications.
2. **Sensitivity Training** - a specific module should be designed by the founders of the eco community to meet the unique needs of its community. Sensitivity training should be informed by diverse perspectives and Indigenous knowledge to help those in crisis who may rely on the eco community for a variety of purposes. This training should be required for all members of the emergency response team.
3. **Indigenous Cultural Training** - local Indigenous communities are critical partners in emergency management efforts. To ensure members of the emergency management team are respectful and knowledgeable when engaging with local Indigenous communities, cultural training is recommended for all emergency team members. Ideally this training is delivered by the communities who are involved in the local emergency management efforts.



4. **Emergency Action Training** - scenario planning for different types of emergencies should be undertaken, establishing clear roles, tasks and timelines to get a sense of how many resources will be required for each scenario. All members of the emergency management team should undergo regular training to prepare for large-scale emergencies in which the eco community must mobilize its key resources against planned scenarios. This training will be unique to every individual eco community based on its capabilities and the supports a neighbouring jurisdiction is looking to partner on.

5. **Counselling License** - this is formal educational training and cannot be provided by the community alone. It is important that counsellors on the emergency management team who are available to provide trauma and healing support, are licensed therapists who understand the nuances of mental health care.

Section 6.3 - Funding Partnerships

Emergency management assistance is one way in which an eco community can serve a local government. In return, through partnership agreements such as MOUs and procurements, eco communities can receive compensation for the services they provide.

This could include a basic retainer fee that can provide a steady continuous revenue stream for an eco community from a local government. There would also be expenditure agreements in place to reimburse the eco community for costs incurred under the partnership during the emergency. This could include compensation for resources such as food, energy and trauma response supports.

In closing..... there are so many opportunities for eco communities to better equipped themselves and their surrounding neighbours during times of emergency. We hope this guide helped to spark some ideas and interest in this space. Please like, comment and share with others who may benefit.



SECTION 7: REFERENCES

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