

# **Alberni Valley Emergency Program**

## **Emergency Support Services (ESS)**

### **Volunteer Information Package**

*Stronger Together*



**Prepare**

**Respond**

**Recover**



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## What is ESS?

Emergency Support Services (ESS) is a community-based emergency response program designed to preserve the physical, emotional and mental well-being of those affected by an emergency or disaster. ESS provides the temporary (generally up to 72 hours) delivery of resources and services to provide the support needed to help evacuees re-establish themselves as quickly as possible.

Whether the scope of an emergency is a small scale event (ie house fire) or a large disaster (ie earthquake), the goal of ESS remains the same:

- ◆ To assist people meet their basic survival needs including food, clothing, accommodation and emotional support;
- ◆ To help evacuees remain independent and self-sufficient;
- ◆ To provide people affected by the disaster with accurate, relevant and up-to-date information;
- ◆ To reunite families separated by the disaster;
- ◆ To assist with recovery and the help people re-establish themselves as quickly possible after a disaster;

## Why is ESS Important?

At the heart of emergency management is the ESS program and its volunteers. ESS responders provide critical services to people who are displaced from their homes during an emergency. They offer guidance, resources, services, information and compassion to help preserve an evacuee's physical and mental well-being. Communities with strong, robust ESS teams are more resilient, have more stability and are more capable of making a full and swift recovery.

## What Services are Provided by the AV ESS Team?

ESS provides temporary resources and services to those who have been displaced from their home due to an emergency. With this support, evacuees can begin to plan their next steps to a full recovery.

ESS provides temporary primary services including:

- ◆ Food
- ◆ Shelter
- ◆ Clothing
- ◆ Family Reunification

ESS may also provide specialized services such as:

- ◆ Pet Services
- ◆ Updates & Information
- ◆ Child Services
- ◆ Emotional Support
- ◆ Transportation Services
- ◆ Multicultural Services
- ◆ Volunteer Services
- ◆ First Aid



**ESS Response Activation Levels**

Emergencies have varying degrees of scope, impact and complexity. The severity of an emergency will initiate the appropriate activation response. There are three ESS activation levels:

<b>Level 1 (small event)</b>	<b>Level 2 (moderate event)</b>	<b>Level 3 (large or complex event)</b>
A localized event, small in scope.	A significant emergency, larger in scope.	A major, complex disaster that has a significant impact on the majority of the community and a large-scale evacuation is required.
An incident involving 1 or 2 families and affects less than 12 people.	An incident involving multiple families or neighbourhood and affects more than 12 people.	Involves a large number of evacuees and generally impacts multiple neighbourhoods and jurisdictions.
Services are provided at the incident site.	Services are delivered either on site or in a Reception Centre.	Multiple reception centres and/or group lodging facilities will likely be required.
ie. House fire, flooding	ie. Apartment fire, power outage	ie. earthquake, tsunami, interface fire

Note: No activation is required when individuals can address their own needs by accessing an existing insurance policy or relying on friends and family to provide support and assistance.

**About ESS Team and Volunteers**

Volunteers are the backbone of ESS and they are absolutely vital to a successful program. The ESS Team is a community-based emergency program comprised almost solely of volunteers and supported by the local government and Emergency Management BC (EMBC). Members of the ESS team are dedicated, enthusiastic, caring and passionate volunteers who are committed to helping community residents in the event of a disaster. ESS volunteers are eager to be involved, support the community and help others in their time of need. Their mission is to uphold the physical, mental and emotional well-being of evacuees through the temporary delivery of resources and services.

**Required Skills, Experiences and Qualifications**

Volunteers are not expected to have any specific training, skills or experiences prior to joining the ESS team. Training opportunities will be provided and volunteers will gain experience as part of the program. Required qualifications include:

- ◆ Minimum of 16 years of age
- ◆ Have a valid BC Driver’s License
- ◆ Successful completion of a Police Information Check (PIC) and a Vulnerable Sector search as part of the application process

### **What do ESS Volunteers Do?**

ESS volunteers have a variety of roles and responsibilities and there are many ways to contribute to the team. As part of the ESS team, volunteers will:

- ◆ Attend monthly meetings
- ◆ Participate in exercises and training opportunities when possible
- ◆ Take required courses, qualifications or certification
- ◆ Respond to emergencies and provide services to evacuees when ESS is requested
- ◆ Set up and help operate reception centres and group lodging facilities
- ◆ Recruit and train other volunteers
- ◆ Maintain service agreements, facility survey forms and contact lists
- ◆ Prepare for and attend public engagement campaigns, community events & other promotional opportunities to increase awareness, enhance education and recruit volunteers
- ◆ Be community leaders, educators and representatives of ESS

### **Is this Volunteer Opportunity Right for You? Characteristics of a Successful ESS Volunteer**

Building a strong team will result in the effective delivery of efficient services. ESS teams should be comprised of members who are resilient, adaptable, trained, available and diverse in their skills.

Typically, ESS responders possess the following traits:

- ◆ Enjoys helping others and the community at large
- ◆ Has concern and compassion for people affected by disaster
- ◆ Wants to make a difference to ensure the safety and well-being of fellow citizens
- ◆ Possesses effective communication skills
- ◆ Has good judgement and decision-making skills
- ◆ Is available and can respond on short notice to an emergency
- ◆ Enjoys working as part of a team and works well with others
- ◆ Is in good health
- ◆ Has a willingness to learn and develop
- ◆ Committed and passionate about serving the community
- ◆ Is adaptable
- ◆ Likes an adventure

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## **Time Commitment**

The time commitment is minimal but we do ask volunteers to be an active participant on our team. Regular monthly commitments are approximately 2 hours per month with varying additional time for training, exercises and emergency response call-outs. We value the time and energy our volunteers contribute to serve our community. ESS team members focus their time in three ways - preparing, training (courses & exercises) and responding:

- ◆ Monthly meetings – the team will meet once a month for 1.5 hours to prepare and review important aspects of the ESS program.
- ◆ Training – members are required to take basic ESS courses provided by the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC). Courses are free with minimal time commitment and most are available online.
- ◆ Exercises and Drills – once or twice a year, volunteers will participate in planned exercises for training and development purposes.
- ◆ ESS Response - time commitments will vary depending on the number of call-outs and the complexity of the emergency. Volunteer response times will vary based on availability.

## **Why Volunteer? Benefits to Becoming an AV ESS Team Member**

Being a member of the AV ESS team is a wonderful opportunity to be a part of a team, make a difference, feel valued and learn new skills. Volunteering can bring a wealth of fulfilment and satisfaction. Benefits include:

- ◆ Learn and develop new skills
- ◆ Receive free training and education
- ◆ Gain valuable experience and contacts in the field of emergency management
- ◆ Meet new people and expand your network
- ◆ Be a part of a team that is making a difference in our community
- ◆ Improve your emergency preparedness
- ◆ Opportunity to travel and assist other communities in the province during a disaster (optional)
- ◆ Knowing you are helping community residents in their time of need and you are making a difference in someone's life
- ◆ Make a valuable contribution

## **Training & Development Opportunities**

Previous experience and training is not required to become a member of the AV ESS Team. Registered volunteers will have access to free training opportunities to develop skills, increase knowledge and build confidence. Emergency Management BC is committed to ensure all volunteers receive effective and applicable training. Attaining the proper training and education will include participation in annual exercises and the completion of coursework.

Volunteers will receive courses through the Justice Institute of British Columbia, free of charge. Basic training includes:

Course Title	Course Description	Delivery Methods
<b>EMRG-1600 Introduction to ESS</b>	Learn the basic concepts and structure of Emergency Support Services (ESS) in BC. Assess your readiness to be an ESS volunteer, and explore the duties of an ESS responder.	Online 3 hours
<b>EMRG-1615 Registration and Referrals</b>	Registration and Referrals describes the process for registering evacuees and for providing them with referrals for food, clothing, and lodging. It also covers basic interviewing skills. The course includes completion of the ESS File (Registration and Service Record) and Referral forms.	In-person or Online 7 hours
<b>EMRG-1610 Introduction to Reception Centres</b>	Learn about the basic functions of a reception centre during emergencies. This course covers the fundamentals for ESS responders who may be called upon to work in, or support the activities at a reception centre.	Online 3.5 hours
<b>EMRG-1607 Level One ESS</b>	This course supports the community Level One ESS function by providing basic training to new Level One ESS responders.	Online 5 hours
<b>EMRG-1200 Incident Command Level 100</b>	Learn a proven incident site management system for emergencies and be introduced to an effective system for command, control, and coordination of response at an emergency site. The Incident Command System (ICS) is recognized as a flexible and scalable all-hazards system, which provides a common response framework suitable to any size of event. Gain a basic understanding of the Incident Command System, its organization, principles, basic structure and common responsibilities.	Online 7 hours
<b>EMRG-1612 Introduction to Group Lodging</b>	Learn how to adapt facilities to shelter style accommodation for people displaced from their homes during a disaster. This course covers the fundamentals for ESS responders who may be called upon to work in or support the activities at a group lodging facility.	Online 3.5 hours
<b>Evacuee Registration &amp; Assistance (ERA) tool</b>	Learn about the Evacuee Registration & Assistance (ERA) tool. This digital tool allows evacuee to self-register, responders to enter registration and referrals digitally, and suppliers to submit invoices and receipts online through any web browser.	Online 2 hours

## What Liability Insurance is Provided to Volunteers?

Registered Emergency Management BC (EMBC) volunteers have three levels of liability protection:

1. The Emergency Program Act provides exemption from civil volunteers (unless grossly negligent) for all measures relating to emergencies and disasters.
2. \$2 million provincial liability insurance that covers all provincial volunteers.
3. The Good Samaritan Act ensures that a volunteer providing emergency aid to someone is not liable for injury or death (unless grossly negligent).

### How Do I Get More Information?

It is important you make an informed decision and if you have further questions or require more information, we encourage you to contact us:

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District  
3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni BC  
Phone: 250 720-2700  
Email: mailbox@acrd.bc.ca

### I'm Interested! How Do I Apply?

Join the ESS Team and help make a difference! The application process is easy. Just follow these 5 simple steps:

- ◆ **Step 1: Application Form** – complete the Application Form and submit it to the ACRD office
- ◆ **Step 2: Interview** – complete an interview with the Emergency Support Services Director
- ◆ **Step 3: Reference Check** – provide references
- ◆ **Step 4: Police Information Check & Vulnerable Sector Search** – successful completion is mandatory
- ◆ **Step 5: Documentation** – complete required forms such as Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy and Photography Waiver.

Please note: we strongly encourage a minimum of a one-year commitment to the program. Successful applicants are asked to attend monthly team meetings, participate in exercises, take the basic training and respond to emergency call-outs when required.

### Welcome to the Team!

Thank you for your interest in this program. We are always pleased to have new team members! Emergency Management is an exhilarating field and it is an area of growth in our province. We are excited for your participation and are grateful for your participation. We look forward to working with you!

