

# Emergency Planning in the City of Vancouver

## **The Emergency Operations Centre**

The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) co-ordinates and manages the overall response to a major emergency or disaster, with the exception of field operations whose roles and responsibilities are defined in the departmental plans. This is the place where designated managers come together to co-ordinate all responding City department and other agency activity, set priorities for those activities to take place, and set policy. It is also where the status of the City's resource availability and damage assessment is tracked as various City departments and other agencies respond to the emergent situation.

The EOC provides a location for centralized emergency management which is necessary for a co-ordinated response. It provides a focal point for authority and information flow, and allows for direct inter-action between responding agencies. During a major emergency or disaster the EOC facilitates a co-ordinated response to the event, provides the expertise and knowledge to support City departments, and plans for the organized recovery from the event. Communication with the EOC is made through its dispatch and communications section, from and to the field directly or through departmental operations centres if they exist.

## **Policy Section (EOC)**

The Policy Section is comprised of members of the Emergency Management Committee, namely the City Manager, the Chief Constable, the General Manager of Engineering Services, the General Manager of Fire and Rescue Services, the General Manager of the Park Board and the Medical Health Officer of the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board, who are responsible for the overall management of the major emergency or disaster. This group provides support to the response effort and provides forward planning for the 24, 48 and 72 hours immediately following the event. The Policy Section will develop policies and, as necessitated by the emergent situation, will discuss the economic, political, legal and social implications that may arise from the major emergency or disaster and impact on the response and/or recovery efforts.

## **Emergency Social Services**

Under the umbrella of the Vancouver Park Board, the (ESS) Emergency Social Services Program has the responsibility of providing necessary food, clothing and shelter to residents affected by an emergency or disaster. To do so efficiently, the ESS Co-ordinator must work closely with agencies such as the Red Cross, Victim Services, the Salvation Army and other relief services. Park Board facilities will be used in most cases as Reception Centres or Shelters and Park Board staff will provide the management of these emergency facilities. The program is heavily dependant on trained volunteers in the community. ESS and PDA volunteers can assist evacuees for up to 72 hours after a disaster pending approval from the Provincial Emergency Program.

## **Personal Disaster Assistance Program**

The Vancouver Personal Disaster Assistance Program is a volunteer based service co-ordinated by the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Emergency Social Services (ESS) team. The program will provide lodging, meals, clothing and other resources to fire evacuees in Vancouver. PDA teams work in 2 teams of 7 volunteers supervised by the ESS Co-ordinator. Each team is

on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for one month, then the pager is handed off to the next team. Volunteers will assist evacuees at the scene of the fire, and get them placed in hotels that have a pre-existing agreement with the program. Follow up over the next 3 days is done with the evacuees to ensure that all their needs are met and that they have contacted resources to help them relocate if necessary.

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) will cover approved costs over a 72 hour period, and the PDA captain has the authority to contact PEP and request a billing number.

### **Role of the Park Board in the City Emergency Plan**

- To provide buildings and facilities for use as a Reception Centre(s) or shelters
- To provide the management of the Reception Centre/Shelters
- To provide services, utilities and repair to enable the facilities to be available
- To co-ordinate the City Emergency Social Services team and resources at an ESS headquarters
- To act in support of a City-wide first response, and subsequent recovery in a disaster
- To recover normal operations of the Park Board

### **Responsibilities of the Park Board**

- To maintain a current inventory of facilities available and a call-out list of staff who can gain access
- To develop a procedure for repair and maintenance of each facility in an emergency response situation
- To recruit individuals and agencies to perform the functions of the Emergency Social Services Headquarters
- To maintain an inventory of equipment and personnel to be available to the City in a disaster situation
- To staff the City Emergency Operations Centre as required
- To open and maintain a Departmental Command Centre at Evans Service Yard or a suitable alternate site and to co-ordinate response and recovery operations with the City EOC