

**EMERGENCY PLAN FOR PARK BOARD COMMISSIONERS**



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## **PLAN AT A GLANCE**

This plan outlines the role of the Park Board Commissioners in the immediate response stage of a major emergency or disaster. Emergency response staff and senior City staff will co-ordinate the response effort.

Medium and even large emergencies are handled routinely by trained emergency response staff and no special action would be expected on the part of the Commissioners. Special action, such as emergency resolutions, usually on the part of City Council, would only be sought in a major disaster – an emergency which significantly disrupts critical services and has a widespread impact on the community.

Immediately following a disaster, the Commissioners should assure the safety and well-being of their families and loved ones. Services are likely to be disrupted. Await instructions and information from the Chairperson or General Manager. A formal briefing will be arranged as soon as possible. If telephones are not working and the Commissioners are needed, a “runner” will be sent to their homes or instructions will be broadcast on CBC (AM) radio.

The City Manager is the Director of Emergency Response and Recovery and will provide regular briefings to the Mayor and Council. The Park Board General Manager is a member of the Policy Group, responsible for the co-ordination of the response and recovery from any disaster. Park Board staff, along with the General Manager will be at the City of Vancouver Emergency Operations Centre providing support as required during an emergency situation. The General Manager or alternate will provide briefings and updates to the Park Board Commissioners on the status of the emergency response and the impact on Park Board property and operation.

The Commissioners' role in the short-term response phase of a disaster is a relatively limited one. The long-term recovery issues will be considered by the Board for many months, or even years following the disaster.

## INTRODUCTION

This Plan is part of the City Emergency Plan. The objective of the City's emergency plan is to assist victims, restore services, provide accurate information, mitigate damage, and facilitate a return to normal as quickly as possible.

Large emergencies and disasters have a response phase and a recovery phase. The response phase is relatively short. Depending on the type of emergency, it may last only a few hours or a few days. The recovery phase, by contrast, can extend to weeks, months, or even years after the event.

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to the Commissioners as to what would be expected from them in the immediate response phase of a major emergency or disaster. As recovery begins, the Commissioners would resume a broader role and begin addressing issues associated with the resumption of normal City and Park Board services.

In the response phase of an emergency, the structure of operations, so far as reasonably possible, mirrors the day-to-day structure of the City.

- Operational staff respond to the emergency situation in the field. Police, Fire, Engineering, Permits and Licences, and Parks departments will all have field staff responding in accordance with established priorities and procedures.
- Senior management staff provide overall direction and support to the field response effort from the City's Emergency Operations Centre in the E-Comm facility. This support includes tracking costs, locating and allocating required equipment and resources, opening and co-ordinating emergency shelters, providing information and warnings to the public, and co-ordinating external assistance.
- The Mayor and Council, as the seat of local government, support the response effort by providing regulatory support and authority as needed for response activities. The Mayor and Council would, as required, authorize the implementation of extraordinary emergency policies and participate in communications with the public and with senior levels of government.

## **WHAT LEVEL OF EMERGENCY DOES THIS PLAN ADDRESS?**

Medium and even large emergencies in the City are handled routinely by trained emergency personnel. Large fires, multiple vehicle accidents, chemical explosions, civil unrest, and infrastructure failures are all examples of situations where City emergency personnel respond as they are trained to do. Depending on the size of the event and the level of co-ordination required, the City's Emergency Operations Centre may be activated either on a full or partial basis so that senior staff can provide support, co-ordination, and public information. Normally these events would not require special action on the part of the Mayor and Council or Park Board Commissioners. Commissioners would be briefed in a timely way and be provided with information through the Park Board General Manager.

This plan is aimed at the larger emergency or disaster which may disrupt City and other critical services and have a significant, widespread impact on the community. Examples include a major earthquake or an incident requiring large-scale evacuation such as a major chemical accident, large fire or widespread flooding. In those situations the City may be required to exercise extraordinary powers, to halt or modify the conduct of normal city business, to seek relief and assistance from senior levels of government, and to relocate City Hall.

In those situations, the Mayor and Council may be asked to convene emergency meetings to endorse extraordinary actions or to implement emergency measures such as curfews, travel restrictions, price controls, the acquisition of private property, or the rationing of scarce supplies. It may be asked to declare a state of local emergency and to officially request external aid and assistance. The Mayor may be asked to assist in the communication of vital public messages.

## **IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A DISASTER**

Immediately following a major emergency, Commissioners should assure the safety and well-being of their families and loved ones. The Park Board Chairperson will be contacted and briefed on the event by the General Manager or another senior staff member as soon as possible. The Chairperson will in turn brief other Park Board members and, in due course, convene a meeting to obtain a formal briefing. If telephones are not working and the Commissioners are needed, a "runner" will be sent to their homes or instructions will be broadcast on CBC (AM) radio.

## **COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE DISASTER**

The Office of the City Clerk, Communications Division, is responsible for co-ordinating emergency public information through the Emergency Operations Centre and through a public call centre (in the research and development stage). The Park Board Manager of Public Affairs has a major role in the Emergency Public Information Centre, helping to draft news releases and instructions to City residents. Any Park Board communications with the public will be handled by this section with approval from the Policy Group.

## **DO I HAVE A ROLE AT THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE?**

No. The Emergency Operations Centre is designed so that operational staff can quickly address the immediate exigencies of the response. There is no direct role for the Commissioners at the Emergency Operations Centre. At the request of the Mayor, there may be a need for the Park Board Chairperson to attend at the Emergency Operations Centre to participate in media briefings, depending on the circumstances.

The response phase of an emergency is relatively short. Within days or weeks the response phase shifts to the recovery phase, which may last for many months, or even years. As the emergency moves to the recovery stage, City services will begin to resume. The focus will shift to City Hall and Park Board Offices as the Emergency Operations Centre begins to wind down. The Commissioners will be expected to assume a broader role as we begin to address issues associated with how Park Board services are resumed, how priorities for service are established and the format in which services are delivered to meet unusual community circumstances and needs.

## **FROM WHERE WILL WE OPERATE?**

If required, the Chairperson or General Manager will call a meeting of the Board. The primary location to meet will be the Beach Avenue Board Room, with the Main Branch of the Public Library as an alternate location. This facility is situated at 350 West Georgia Street. We must be operational for the larger, long term role regarding issues associated with the recovery of the City. Regular briefings and computer updates will provide the Commissioners with timely information on the response effort. The Manager of Public Affairs will provide the Commissioners with up-to-date reports on the status of public information and public inquiries.

## **HOW WILL I GET TO THE BEACH AVENUE OFFICES OR OUR ALTERNATE SITE?**

In a major disaster such as an earthquake roads and bridges may be impassable. Throughout the Region the priority of the response personnel will be to re-open designated "Disaster Response Routes". These routes are signed and, in an emergency, will be open to emergency response personnel and equipment only. If the Commissioners are required in the immediate hours following a disaster they may utilize the signed Disaster Response Routes to get to the Park Board office or alternate facility, by displaying their Disaster Response Route decals in their vehicles. The three routes in the City of Vancouver are:

- From the University of British Columbia along Westbrook Crescent to Marine Drive, along 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Highway 1A.
- From Highway 7A along Boundary Road, to the south terminus of Boundary Road (at the North Arm of the Fraser River).
- From Highway 1A west to Broadway Avenue, east to Renfrew Street, north to Highway 7A

## **HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Each City Department and related Board is responsible for its own emergency planning and several departments have dedicated emergency planners for that purpose. The Park Board's overall emergency planning is co-ordinated through the Emergency Social Services at E-Comm. Any questions you may have can be answered by the General Manager, Susan Mundick, (604 257-8448) or the ESS Co-ordinator Janine Aussem (604 215-4779). Both can be contacted through the City e-mail system as well. More information may be obtained through the City's intranet system, 'CityLink', by searching under 'Emergency Preparedness'.