



ESS CONNECTIONS

National Municipal ESS Network (NMESSN)

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Group Lodging: Our New Reality

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Richmond, Vancouver and the North Shore ESS Teams are fortunate - within our three communities we have a fairly extensive collection of hotels that provide support to ESS. Over the years we have come to rely on these hotels each time our ESS teams are activated and this has always worked well for us.

However; with the Olympics soon upon us, Group Lodging will be our main source of accommodations in the event of an ESS activation, as hotel rooms throughout our three cities will be sold out. Rather than doing three different ESS Group Lodging plans we felt there would be a benefit in pooling our resources and develop a regional group lodging team from Vancouver, Richmond and the North Shore. We will work together to support each other during ESS activations. We felt we could offer more training, develop a stronger ESS team and provide the support the evacuees require by approaching this together.

We asked our ESS volunteers to see who would be willing to be part of our Regional ESS group. We reviewed their experience and previous ESS training and now have a group of 25 trained ESS volunteers who will lead our Group Lodging Team through the Olympics.

The Group Lodging team is set up similar to the Mobile Support Teams currently in place, throughout BC.

Each volunteer who has signed up has committed to travel within the three cities to assist when a group lodging activation is required. We have developed a call out system using the North Shores emergency notification system. Eight volunteer are assigned during each week who will receive the initial call when an activation occurs. If additional volunteers are needed we will activate the remainder of the group lodging team and then activate our local ESS Volunteers.

We have approached local churches and have been met with enthusiasm. If we can provide the cots, the blankets, and the volunteers, the churches will provide the space for group lodging. Our goal is to have three churches on the North Shore, six in Vancouver and two in Richmond to supplement existing arrangements with community centres.

To ensure our group lodging team is prepared we are having weekly meetings. At these meetings we are conducting tabletop exercises and bringing in guest speakers on a variety of topics such as the Salvation Army's experience with group lodging, Disaster Psychosocial needs, Mass Care in other parts of the world, and Health issues in Group Lodging.

We will also be providing training offered by the Canadian Red Cross. This new training program will build upon

the existing ESS Group Lodging course and BCERMS. It will not replace the current course, but will provide volunteers with more in depth, comprehensive and scenario based training. The program will culminate with a Group Lodging exercise, allowing the team to practice the recently learned skills.

Not only will the Group Lodging Team benefit our three communities during the Olympics, we are looking at ways we can continue as a regional team after the Olympics. Our three local teams all bring different strengths to ESS, have different outlooks on ESS and by working together we are gaining new information, changing our existing ESS plans and developing our ESS teams to be bigger and better to support the evacuees that need our assistance during an emergency or disaster.



This issue includes:

- 2010 Membership Form
- Article on the Canadian Veterinary Reserve
- Overview of the Nova Scotia ESS System
- Information on the Westcot 400—developed for those with

Nova Scotia ESS System

So, it's 3 o'clock in the morning and a large emergency has just happened near you! Maybe a huge apartment fire or a major flood? Ok, who responds when someone calls 911? I know, it's mainly fire, police or paramedics on the scene first. But what happens when the "first responders" get people out of harms way? Do you get called in on this and/or are you "mandated" to help as part of an emergency system in your area?

Well, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services' Emergency Social Services (ESS) section is part of a province-wide emergency preparedness network that plans for the unexpected. This may include preparing for natural disasters, such as major storms, hurricanes or floods, technological or environmental accidents such as chemical spills, power failures due to adverse weather conditions, major urban or forest fires. Indeed we also deal with infectious diseases/illnesses, such as the H1N1 virus that exists across the world as I write! We are working closely with the Department of Health as they are the lead in this situation.

The responsibility for emergency preparedness is dictated by the [Emergency Management Act of Nova Scotia](#) and the Regulations made under the Act, which is standard in most jurisdictions. That emergency network is organized and controlled under the [Emergency Management Office Nova Scotia](#) (EMO NS). Within the Emergency Management Act, every municipality in the province must also have an emergency response plan and a designated emergency management coordinator. Community Services is responsible for coordinating the province-wide Emergency Social Services component, in cooperation with EMO NS and each municipality in the province.

What is meant by "Emergency Social Services"?

When a "state of emergency" is declared in an area of Nova Scotia or at times when a large emergency happens requiring some aspects of Emergency Social Services, a reception centre(s) or shelter(s) can be set up for victims where any combination of the following services can be activated:

- emergency food
- emergency lodging
- emergency clothing

- registration of evacuees or those affected, including handling related enquiries
- personal services for those affected by a disaster
- reception centre/shelter management

There are designated department personnel assigned to coordinate these services. There is a full time Director of Emergency Social Services, (that's me), two alternate Directors, four Regional Emergency Social Services Coordinators, plus 13 Alternates, who have these responsibilities in addition to their regular duties.

We have a unique agreement with the Red Cross here in Nova Scotia. Under the terms of a written Agreement signed in April 2000, the [Canadian Red Cross](#) assists Community Services with province-wide preplanning, exercising and response in all areas of Emergency Social Services. The Department is still responsible for Emergency Social Services, but the Red Cross works directly under Community Services as the provider and agent of all six areas of the ESS system. The Red Cross partners with other community groups, such as the Salvation Army, St. John Ambulance, Feed NS, etc to assist them in various areas of emergency response. In times of emergency, first responders or EMO personnel call a 1-800 number to access Red Cross personal and services. They then organize reception centers and shelters staffed by their volunteers. They call in our staff on events over 10 units (could be 10 apts in one bldg) or 25 people. We would pay for all costs for transportation, such as gas for their vehicles, plus all food and other costs needed for the shelters/reception centers. We advised each Municipality in writing of this new arrangement and gave them the Red Cross' emergency number as well as non emergency Red Cross and my emergency team's numbers for planning purposes.

PEI is the only other province that has the Red Cross delivering all 6 parts of ESS. There are disadvantages and advantages in having the Red Cross do all ESS services, but we believe the positive benefits of having an agency deliver the service far outweighs any negatives. All Department of Community Services staff who knew about the ESS program came over to the provincial civil service between 1996 and 1998 when the Province took over all Municipal Social Services. The specific details of ESS were not addressed in this ex-

change agreement, so in getting a legal interpretation at that time, it was suggested "if no legislation or agreement to the contrary, those jurisdictions covering a service in times of non emergency should also handle those services in times of emergency." It took a few years for Red Cross to get organized and build their capacity to respond across Nova Scotia, but, with their present resources and agreements set with many community partners, they are in a position to be able to respond to hopefully all large emergencies or disasters that may happen. They continue to build partnerships and capacity and deal with the challenges that arise in each situation as they provide lessons to learn the next time disaster strikes!

For information on the Community Services Emergency Social Services program or to access copies of the Red Cross/DCS agreement, letter sent to the Municipalities, etc:

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Director of Emergency Social Services
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Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
PO Box 696
Halifax NS B3J 2T7
Phone: 902-424-8333,
Fax: 902-424-0502
[E-mail: webbjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:webbjm@gov.ns.ca)

Related information

- [Emergency Management Act of Nova Scotia](#)
- [Emergency Management Office Nova Scotia](#)
- [Public Safety Canada](#)
- [Canadian Red Cross](#)



Canadian Veterinary Reserve

Dr. Ben Weinberger

Together with 47 other Veterinarians from across Canada including the Yukon, I just completed a week's training in Ottawa presented by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to become a member of the Canadian Veterinary Reserve (CVR). This is a program of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) made possible with the financial assistance of the Government of Canada. The vision of the CVR is to be a nationally and internationally recognized emergency response partner and a competent resource that is available to be called upon in the event of large-scale animal disease outbreaks and civil emergencies affecting animal health and welfare.

In addition to training in the diagnosis and management of certain diseases, a large portion of our training involved our own personal preparedness to ensure that we as responders and our families are taken care of during an emergency. This included the proper use of personal protective equipment and a thorough understanding of the Incident Command System.

Over the last 3 years, 200 Canadian Veterinarians have been qualified as Reservists to assist in large-scale foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreaks such as Notifiable Avian Influenza and Foot and Mouth Disease. In addition to FAD, which has potentially huge social and economic

consequences, the CVMA is also working on training Veterinarians to respond to civil emergencies, those being weather related, geophysical or man-made.

The guiding principles are that Reservists are part of a single, unified reserve, trained and available to respond rapidly, supporting existing resources and acting both as a national and international reserve. Developing the civil emergencies component of the CVR is a much more complicated task as currently there is no existing model in Canada that addresses the medical needs of animals in disasters and civil emergencies are provincial/territorial domain with no federal mandate such as that which exists in the United States (PETS Act).

The CVMA is actively working with many stakeholders, provincial and territorial emergency management agencies and federal departments (Public Safety Canada, Public Health Agency) and hope to have a long-term commitment to the civil emergency component of the CVR in 2010 with a pilot workshop in March of that year. I have been asked to liaise between the CVMA and activities in BC and will provide updates to ESSA.

I have also been working with the British Columbia Veterinary Medical Association (BCVMA) to include Emergency Pet Prepar-

edness as part of their mandate. The primary mandate would be to establish an Emergency Preparedness Plan for the companion animals of BC. This would include educational materials for both Veterinarians and the public, liaising with national, provincial and local government agencies to ensure that pets are included in their emergency plans and to act in a Public Relations role for pet-related emergencies. I am hoping that council will have time to discuss this at their next meeting in November. If approved, a committee chair will be appointed and appropriate members selected from the BCVMA membership.

It is great to see so many people committed to training and volunteering their time and energy to ensure our 4-legged friends remain safe.



The Westcot 400: A Strategy to Help Meet the Independence Needs of At-Risk Populations in a Group Lodging Setting

The Victoria Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) recently purchased specialized cots, the Westcot 400, as part of our strategy to better meet the needs of evacuated residents who have physical and mobility limitations. These specialized cots augment our current stockpile of military and Coleman cots.

The Westcot 400 is designed and manufactured by Integrity Medical Solutions, a company based out of the southern United States. The inventor of the Westcot, Mike Weston, developed the cots in response to his experience working in mass emergency shelters in Florida. Mr. Weston formerly worked as the Director of Disaster Planning Operations for Florida state's Department of Elder Affairs. Standard military style cots are low to ground, can tip easily, and present

challenges to people with mobility or physical constraints. The Westcot's are constructed with a wider bed base (32" x 80"), 2 inch high density foam antibacterial waterproof mattress, heavy duty leg locks, reinforced decking, and foot and head elevation devices. These features allow an evacuee in a wheelchair to self transfer from wheelchair to cot without requiring assistance from others. This allows an evacuee to have greater independence within the shelter facility and fits within C-MIST Function Need Framework planning.

Prior to purchasing the cots, IMS sent VEMA two sample cots. We consulted with our local Victoria Disability Resource Centre, where staff and volunteer members with differing mobility limitations tested the cots for us. Without

assistance, all three were able to smoothly and comfortably transfer from their assistive mobility devices onto the cot. As awareness grows around the importance of planning for at-risk populations, it is encouraging to see the new innovations and products that are being developed to assist those who are most at-risk to a disaster.

For more information on the Westcot 400 please go to: www.ims4beds.com.

For more information on the Functional Need Framework- C-MIST please go to: <http://www.bccpd.bc.ca/projects/emergency.htm>

2010 National Municipal ESS Network Application

Purchase your NMESSN membership by filling out the form below and sending in with your payment (cheques should be made out to ESSA)

COMMUNITY:	
CONTACT PERSON:	
EMAIL:	
PHONE:	
ADDRESS:	
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED:	
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP	\$125 ANNUALLY
<i>Municipal ESS</i>	This membership entitles general members to participate on monthly conference calls including agendas and minutes, receipt of quarterly newsletters, and access to information-sharing website and resources.
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP	\$100 ANNUALLY
<i>Emergency Response Agencies & other levels of Government</i>	This membership entitles associate members to participate in quarterly conference calls, receive quarterly newsletters, have an opportunity to speak to the network about their agency (via conference call), and access the information-sharing website and resources.
SPONSOR MEMBERSHIP	\$500 ANNUALLY
<i>Same as Associate Member- ship but includes the oppor- tunity to promote your organization/agency</i>	This membership entitles the sponsor member to the benefits included with the Associate level membership PLUS includes opportunities to promote their organization and/or agency through the distribution of their information & brochures at any in-person meetings and on the information-sharing website and resources.
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	\$50 ANNUALLY
<i>Students studying Emer- gency Management & ESS</i>	This membership entitles the student member to full general membership benefits.



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