



Emergency Social Services Information

What is Emergency Social Services (ESS)?

In communities where an Evacuation Order has been issued by the Local Authority or First Nations Chief and Council, any person who is forced from his or her home because of an emergency, or who is stranded or unable to reach home as a consequence of an emergency may be eligible for ESS assistance. ESS assistance is available to aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, resident on or off reserve.

For more information on ESS contact any of the following:

Provincial Emergency Program

1-800-663-3456

www.pep.bc.ca

First Nations Emergency Services Society

1-888-822-3388

www.fness.bc.ca

First Nations Social Development Society

1-800-991-7099

www.fnsds.org

What can a person do to prepare for an evacuation?

Attached is information for those who may be faced with an Evacuation Order.

What should a person do if their community is given an Evacuation Order?

They should evacuate and go to the designated local Emergency Social Services (ESS) Reception Centre and register for ESS assistance. For information regarding which Reception Centres are currently open, please contact: 1-800-311-7044.

Once registered, Emergency Social Services will assist people who need emergency assistance and do not have sufficient personal resources (e.g., insurance, family or friends) or access to those resources due to an emergency. Even if you do not require emergency assistance, it is strongly advised that you still register. There may be friends and family members who may want to know that you are safe and away from the disaster area.



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What if a person has not registered but has relocated to a friend's home in another city?

You can still register by calling 1-800-350-6070. The Red Cross is maintaining the Central Registry and Inquiry Bureau for ESS. If you require ESS assistance, you will be directed to the nearest ESS Reception Centre. If that is not possible, you will be directed to a toll-free number to request assistance locally.

What Emergency Social Services are available?

ESS assistance is intended to meet the immediate basic needs of evacuees include food, lodging, clothing, transportation and incidentals.

How long is ESS assistance available?

Under most circumstances ESS assistance is available for 72 hours from the time an emergency or Evacuation Order has been declared. If necessary, PEP may extend the period of assistance beyond 72 hours. Therefore, it is important to keep in contact with the local ESS Reception Centre since they will have the most up-to-date information. To continue to receive ESS assistance, you will need to return to the Reception Centre when your current assistance ends.

What happens when eligibility for ESS assistance ends?

The majority of evacuees will be able to return to their homes when the Evacuation Order is lifted. INAC is currently in discussions with the province and our federal counterparts on plans for people who may be displaced from their communities for a longer term. In the event that you are not be able to return to your homes due to loss of home, lack of power, water, etc., further information will be provided by INAC through the ESS Reception Centres.

What is Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) doing?

INAC takes the health and safety of First Nations and their members very seriously and is working with our partners on a number of fronts as a result of the flood threat we face in British Columbia.

As in past years, the Government of Canada, through INAC and Public Safety Canada (PSC), is working with the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) and the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) to coordinate preventive measures as well as the necessary emergency response should it be required.



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A roster of INAC staff has also been identified and if required will be deployed across the province to provide support for specific emergency response activities including ESS Reception Centres.

How do I locate family or friends who have been evacuated?

You can call 1-888-350-6070 (Red Cross) to confirm whether they have reported to a reception centre. Red Cross volunteers will search for the requested person and forward your message to them. The line is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to midnight.

How will Social Assistance benefits be administered for communities impacted by an Evacuation Order?

INAC will be monitoring the situation. Additional details will be provided by INAC to the affected administering authorities once the impact of the emergency has been determined.

What is the relationship between Emergency Social Services (ESS) and the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP)? What is INAC's role?

PEP is a program under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. It is responsible for the provincial government's overall emergency management program, including the ESS Program. The ESS Program operates within the overall emergency management framework established by the province. ESS volunteers work alongside local governments to ensure the well-being of people affected by emergencies or disasters. INAC will be working with PEP and local ESS teams to ensure that on-reserve resident services are available, First Nation concerns are addressed regardless of residency, information is shared and distributed, and efforts are coordinated.

Who should Band Social Development Workers contact if there are additional questions?

Please contact the First Nations Social Development Resource Centre at 1-800-991-7099. The Resource Centre is working in close contact with INAC and will monitor, record and report calls received. This information will assist INAC in assessing the requirements for individuals and families impacted by the floods and evacuations.

