



2010

Sunshine Coast Emergency Program (SCEP) Annual Report

**Prepared by: Bill Elsner CEM
Emergency Program Coordinator**

Emergency management addresses six principal strategies: risk assessment, preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery and program evaluation. The Sunshine Coast is susceptible to many types of disasters and emergencies. The primary concerns are wildfire, dangerous goods, landslides, tidal surges and earthquakes. These events can have collateral effects sufficient to prompt the formal declaration of a local state of emergency.

A Planning Committee (SCRD) chaired by the Emergency Program Coordinator is composed of representatives of agencies having direct functional responsibilities during a major emergency. These agencies include but are not limited to; RCMP, Fire, BC Ambulance, BC Forest Service, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Ferries, School District 46 and BC Hydro. Additionally, a number of volunteer groups such as Emergency Social Services (ESS), Emergency Radio Communications, Search and Rescue (SAR) and Coast Guard Auxiliaries play a major role in our Emergency Program.

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This year the Emergency Program Coordinator was awarded the professional designation of Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) by the international Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

As you can see in the volunteer activity statistics at the end of this report, the residents of the Sunshine Coast are very well served by over 140 dedicated, committed and highly skilled un-paid professionals. *These men and women gave up a staggering 11,000 hours of their time to train for and respond to citizens in need.* The actual cost of these donated hours is \$.22 per hour or about \$1.60 per resident. From a public safety perspective there is no doubt lives are saved and made tolerable each year by the heroic actions of these selfless individuals.

On behalf of all the residents of the Sunshine Coast I would like to thank all the emergency services volunteers who serve us. You have our greatest support and appreciation.

Respectfully,

Bill Elsner, CEM
Emergency Program Coordinator
Sunshine Coast Emergency Program

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Public Awareness Presentations and Committees:

The following groups and activities pertain to public awareness, a cornerstone to Emergency Planning:

- Seniors Network Advisory Group committee (SNAG)
- Sunshine Coast Policing Committee (SCRD)
- Transportation Advisory Committee (SCRD)
- Joint Health and Safety Committee (SCRD)
- Emergency Preparedness Committee (Area A)
- Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Food Security Committee
- Osprey Apartment residents
- Roberts Creek Co-housing residents
- Elphinstone Community Association
- Town of Gibsons public presentation
- District of Sechelt council
- Powell River Regional District integrated planning presentation
- Emergency Preparedness Week activities including newspaper articles, mall displays and EOC training
- Frequent submissions to local media regarding public safety issues such as extreme weather precautions, fire smart initiatives, travel safety, storm surges and general preparedness
- Emergency preparedness information is routinely updated at www.scrd.ca

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Response Highlights

- Level one EOC activation during Chile mag 8.8 earthquake
- Landslides on waterfront properties in Davis Bay
- Storm surge response Davis Bay
- Heavy rainfall response Area E
- 4 ESS Level 1 responses for local Fire Departments

Operations and Planning

- Ongoing recruitment of volunteers for Search and Rescue, Emergency Social Services and Emergency Communications
- Maintain current contact information of all response personnel
- Chair monthly meetings of the Emergency Planning Committee
- Regular updates to Vital Services Directory
- Maintain and test emergency backup generators
- Regular tests and maintenance of VSAT satellite system
- Inspect and maintain emergency medical supplies including 200 Bed Emergency Hospital and Casualty Collection Units
- Inspection and repairs to Mobile Command Unit
- Provide advice and guidance to local authority staff on matters dealing with public safety
- Maintain Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in a state of readiness and functionality
- Frequent interviews with local media on emergency preparedness matters

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Grants and projects

- Applied for Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) funding of \$10,000. If successful, this 50/50 cost sharing grant program with the federal government will be used to conduct and evaluate a large scale emergency exercise.
- Coordinator applied for and received \$66,000.00 from UBCM for further wildfire mitigation projects.

Training and Exercising

- Coordinator attended a “GIS for Emergency Managers” workshop.
- Structural Protection Unit (SPU) training provided for all Coast Fire Departments. This training included setting up sprinkler units on structures before and during wildfires.
- Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) tabletop exercises. Conducted to train and challenge SCRDR staff that would be in the EOC during a disaster. The scenario chosen was an Urban Interface Wildfire.
- Joint Search and Rescue and Amateur Radio Emergency Service exercise.

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Emergency Social Services (ESS)

Emergency Social Services volunteers provide short- term support (up to 72 hours), to preserve the emotional and physical well-being of individuals who are evacuated from their homes during an emergency.

The goals of ESS are to:

- Help people plan for emergencies
- Respond to emergencies when they occur
- Assist in the recovery from disasters

During a disaster, trained ESS volunteers provide:

- Food, clothing and shelter
- Registration of names and addresses to re-unify families
- Financial assistance through government programs
- Care for pets
- Information, support and comfort to those affected

Another component of ESS is the Emergency Social Services Level 1 team that works with Fire Departments and Police to assist individuals in smaller emergencies. Several new members have joined and received training in how to deliver ESS L-1. We now have teams in place in all areas of the coast. This year they responded to 4 ESS Level 1 cases and assisted 8 people with food, shelter and clothing.

The third component of ESS is the Animal Disaster Response group. Their mandate is to educate pet and animal owners about preparing for disasters. During a disaster they provide assistance and care to animals.

Our SCEP ESS team meets monthly where they train and participate in exercises that test and strengthen their skills. We have 34 ESS volunteers, coming from all walks of life and new volunteers are always welcome. Training is extensive and free!

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Search and Rescue (SAR)

Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue volunteers are mandated to provide land based and inland water search and rescue services under direction from the RCMP. They are often called on to provide mutual aid response to other communities. As well, they can be tasked by fire departments and SCEP to provide assistance wherever it is needed.

This year SCSAR responded to 6 callouts for lost persons, medical assists and body recovery. Five were on the Sunshine Coast and 1 was a mutual aid response off the coast. The mutual aid call was a multi-day response on the longest search in BC history.

A concerted recruitment effort this year resulted in 14 new members. Members meet for weekly training to hone their skills and to check over equipment. Training consisted of Helicopter Hover Exit, First Aid, Ground SAR and Rope Rescue. Two members became certified as Search Managers after 4 days of training and completing a practicum.

SCSAR volunteers continue to work toward completion on the interior of the new SAR hall. Annual operating costs include: rope replacement, liability insurance, phones and pagers.

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Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) Units

The 3 volunteer CCGA units provide marine rescue under the direction of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC). They are also available to provide emergency marine transport to the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) and Search and Rescue (SAR).

Unit 61 in Pender Harbour continues to outfit their new vessel.

Unit 14 in Gibsons spent \$11,000.00 on engine repairs.

Unit 12 in Halfmoon Bay purchased a rigid hulled inflatable boat (RIB) for rescue use in Sechelt Inlet.

Amateur Emergency Radio Service (ARES)

The ARES volunteers consist of licensed amateur radio operators (HAMS) who provide a reliable mode of back up communication when the telephone system fails. As well, they host a weekly emergency radio net check in and keep all radio equipment in a state of operational readiness. This year they upgraded repeaters in Gibsons and Sechelt with a third planned for Pender Harbour.

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Volunteer Activity:

Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 14

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|---------------------|------------|
| Response | 50 hours |
| Rescues | 17 persons |
| Training/exercising | 2116 hours |
| Members | 23 |
| Property saved | \$226,200 |
| SCRD Grant | \$ 5,000 |

Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 61

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Response | 90 hours |
| Rescues | 38 persons |
| Training/exercising | 1715 hours |
| Members | 21 |
| Property saved | \$284,000 |
| SCRD Grant | \$ 5,000 |

Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 12

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Response | 54 hours |
| Rescues | 23 persons |
| Training/exercising | 1928 hours |
| Members | 21 |
| Property saved | \$163,000 |
| SCRD Grant | \$ 5,000 |

Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Response | 357 hours |
| Rescues | 5 persons |
| Training/exercising | 2718 hours |
| Members | 34 |
| SCRD Grant | \$ 19,000 |

Emergency Social Services

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Response | 4 |
| Assisted | 8 persons |
| Training/exercising | 1224 hours |
| Members | 34 |
| SCRD Budget | \$ 5,000 |

Emergency Communications

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Training | 1803 hours |
| Members | 8 |
| SCRD Budget | \$ 5,000 |