



# **FLOOD RECOVERY INFORMATION PACKAGE**



# **RETURNING HOME & CLEANING UP**

## Waste Haulers

Company	Website	Phone
<a href="http://www.emterra.ca">Emterra Environmental</a>	<a href="http://www.emterra.ca">www.emterra.ca</a>	604-795-7795
<a href="http://www.gflenv.com">GFL Environmental</a>	<a href="http://www.gflenv.com">www.gflenv.com</a>	604-529-4030
<a href="http://www.mapleleafdisposal.com">Maple Leaf Disposal</a>	<a href="http://www.mapleleafdisposal.com">www.mapleleafdisposal.com</a>	604-533-4993
<a href="http://www.mountainviewdisposal.ca">Mountain View Disposal Ltd.</a>	<a href="http://www.mountainviewdisposal.ca">www.mountainviewdisposal.ca</a>	604-793-8054
<a href="http://www.pioneerdisposal.com">Pioneer Disposal</a>	<a href="http://www.pioneerdisposal.com">www.pioneerdisposal.com</a>	1-844-646-6337
<a href="http://www.supersave.ca">Super Save Group</a>	<a href="http://www.supersave.ca">www.supersave.ca</a>	1-800-665-2800
<a href="http://www.urbanimpact.com">Urban Impact</a>	<a href="http://www.urbanimpact.com">www.urbanimpact.com</a>	604-273-0089
<a href="http://www.valleywaste.ca">Valley Waste</a>	<a href="http://www.valleywaste.ca">www.valleywaste.ca</a>	604-792-6070
<a href="http://www.wasteconnectionscanada.com">Waste Connections of Canada</a>	<a href="http://www.wasteconnectionscanada.com">www.wasteconnectionscanada.com</a>	250-548-8109
<a href="http://www.wm.com">Waste Management</a>	<a href="http://www.wm.com">www.wm.com</a>	1-877-852-7110

The waste haulers provided were derived from [Waste Wise](#). Please note that mention of any waste hauler does not constitute endorsement or recommendation of the hauler by the Fraser Valley Regional District.

### Managing mould and health risks

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Cleaning up after a flood can pose health risks. You may see or smell mould on clothing, drywall, furniture, cardboard boxes or books, but it may also be hidden under or behind items like carpet, cushions or walls.

Mould grows in wet and damp conditions. It's less likely to grow if your home and furnishings are dry within 48 hours after a flood. This will help prevent mould, which can continue to damage your home long after.

Pregnant people, children, older adults, pets and those with asthma, allergies or other health problems should not be in or near the area where the mould is being cleaned up.

Identify all mouldy items. Place and seal items in a plastic bag and dispose of it. It's important to wash your hands thoroughly after mould cleanup, as well as change your clothes.

If you rent your home, speak to your landlord about any moisture or mould problems. It may be the responsibility of the owner or landlord to address the problem. If you own a condo unit or workspace, be sure to consult with the strata council before taking any action.

Consider seeking professional assistance to identify the right corrective actions to be taken inside your home.

**TIP:** Before you start your cleanup activities, call your insurance representative or company. Most insurers have a 24-hour claims service. See **page 25** for more info.

### How to clean your home

Before you begin cleaning up, be sure to open all interior and exterior doors and windows, allowing air to flow freely through the space. Do not use fans if mould is present, as this can spread the mould to new areas.

Scrub all washable surfaces with a household bleach solution or unscented soap solution. These areas include window sills, concrete surfaces, hard surfaces and tiles. Dry the surfaces quickly.

#### Essential list of items for cleaning mould:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bucket	<input type="checkbox"/> Protective rubber gloves
<input type="checkbox"/> Stiff bristle brush	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof rubber boots
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning clothes	<input type="checkbox"/> Dish detergent
<input type="checkbox"/> Goggles	<input type="checkbox"/> Household bleach
<input type="checkbox"/> N-95 respirators, or ones that provide more protection, available at hardware stores. Be sure to read the directions for proper use.	

#### Cleaning solutions:

- A bleach solution is made up of 1-part bleach to 10-parts clean water.
- You can make a baking soda solution by adding a  $\frac{1}{4}$  tablespoon of baking soda to a spray bottle of warm water.
- A soap solution can be made by combining unscented detergent and warm water.



*Mould cannot be properly cleaned from many porous materials. Instead, dispose of materials that cannot be dried within 48 hours.*

### What to discard:

- Remove and discard flooring that has been soaked by flood water.
- Remove all wet drywall, going at least 30 cm above the flood water level.
- Dispose of all wet items that do not dry quickly, including:
  - insulation and drywall
  - carpets
  - particleboard furniture
  - mattresses and box springs
  - stuffed toys
  - paper and cardboard products
  - pillows and cushions
  - furniture coverings
  - perishable food, food or medicines packaged in cardboard or plastic

**NOTE:** Mould that comes back after cleaning is usually an indication that the source of moisture has not been removed. If this happens, always seek professional assistance.

**NOTE:** Painting or caulking over mouldy surfaces like drywall does NOT kill mould and does not stop it from growing back. If the mould is underneath the paint, the drywall will need to be removed and replaced.

# Flood electrical safety information

## What to do when on evacuation order

- Turn off the electrical main power switch only if the building is dry.
- Move portable electrical items to somewhere not at risk of flooding.
- Don't enter flooded basements or buildings that may have energized wires or appliances. Don't touch damp walls.
- If you're boating in a flooded area, avoid power lines and avoid boating when it's dark.

## ELECTRICITY SERVICE DURING AN EVACUATION

We try to keep power on for as long as possible in communities affected by evacuation orders and alerts. Power will only be disconnected when there's an immediate threat to BC Hydro infrastructure or if there's a safety concern for the public or emergency responders. Note: BC Hydro crews will be restricted from entering evacuated areas to restore power.

## What to do after you return home from an evacuation

- Remember that gas and electrical hazards may still exist long after flood waters recede.
- Contact a licensed contractor to inspect for any safety hazards and ensure it is safe for you and your family.
  - Electrical appliances or systems damaged by flooding can be dangerous if they're re-energized and used without being properly inspected by a licensed contractor.
  - Visit [technicalssafetybc.ca](http://technicalssafetybc.ca) to find a contractor in your area.
- Visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) for information on food safety following a flood.

If your power has been disconnected, follow the below steps to have it reconnected. There's no charge to have your service reconnected following an evacuation.

1. Contact a qualified electrical contractor to inspect your electrical equipment and appliances. Visit [technicalssafetybc.ca](http://technicalssafetybc.ca) to find a qualified electrical contractor in your area.
2. The contractor will conduct a safety assessment of your property and apply for a permit from Technical Safety BC. In some cases, if emergency repairs are required, these may be conducted prior to a permit being issued. See [Technical Safety BC's emergency repairs bulletin](#) or call Technical Safety BC at 1 866 566 7233 for more details.
3. Your contractor will advise BC Hydro when it's safe for your power to be reconnected.
4. We'll arrange to have a crew reconnect your power within 24 hours. This is dependent on our crews being able to safely access the area.

### CONTACTING BC HYDRO

Call 1 800 BCHYDRO  
(1 800 224 9376)

Monday to Friday:

7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday:

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed Sundays and  
holidays

## EVACUEE BILL HELP

BC Hydro waives charges for residential and small business customers while placed on an evacuation order that lasts five days or longer. We also offer flexible bill payment plans for when you're able to return home.

Visit [bchydro.com/evacueehelp](http://bchydro.com/evacueehelp) or call 1 800 BCHYDRO for more information.



## SEWAGE SYSTEMS AND FLOODING

### Safety, Sanitation, and Clean-up

[Private Sewage Systems](#)

[Municipal Systems](#)

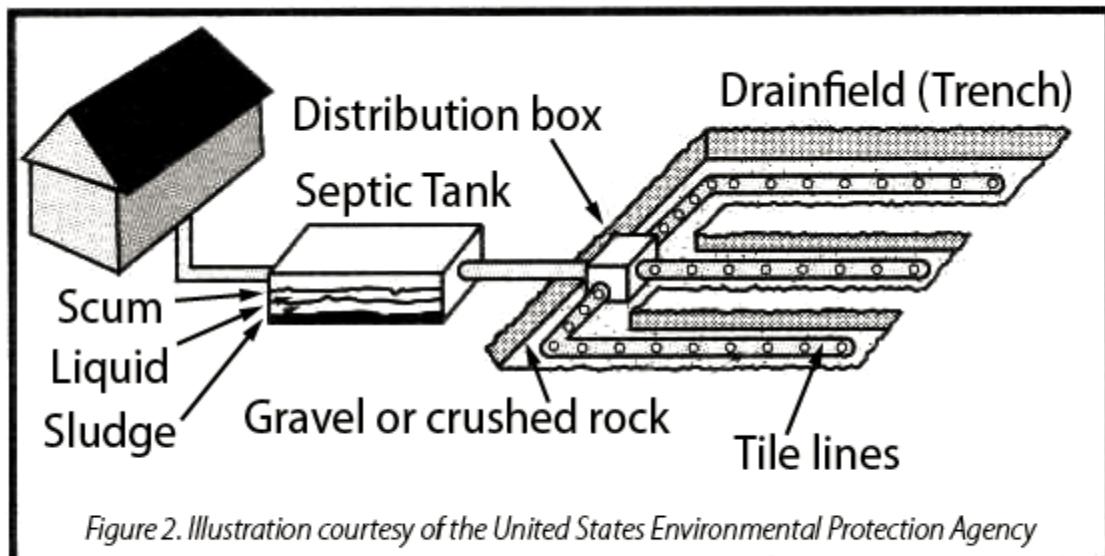
[Outhouses](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

### PRIVATE SEWAGE SYSTEMS

Flooding of a private sewage system can be a hazardous situation for homeowners. It may result in sewage backed-up into the home, contaminated drinking water, and lack of sanitation until the problem is fixed. This resource provides information about how to respond to and recover from emergency flooding of your system.

When flooding or saturated soil conditions persist, a private sewage system cannot function properly. Soil treatment systems for wastewater rely on aerobic (with oxygen) conditions to reduce the amounts of chemicals and living organisms (viruses, bacteria, and protozoa). When soil is saturated or flooded, those potentially hazardous materials can enter the groundwater and your drinking water supply.



### Schematic of a Drainfield



## Before flooding

If you are prepared when flooding occurs, your family can be safe and your system should survive. To prepare for a flood, you should:

- **Ensure all septic tanks are full of liquid.**

Avoid pumping your tanks in the high-water season; empty tanks are buoyant and may “pop” out of the ground during flooding.

- **Plug floor drains, if necessary, to keep sewage from backing up into the basement.**

Floodwaters may still enter the basement through cracks and seams, however.

## During flooding

- **Discontinue use of your private sewage system.**

If the soil is saturated and flooded, the wastewater will not be treated and will become a source of pollution. Conserve water as much as possible while the system restores itself and the water table falls. Use portable toilets, if possible, or use any large container with a tight-fitting lid for a temporary toilet. Line the container with a plastic bag. After each use, add chlorine bleach or disinfectant to stop odour and kill germs. If necessary, dispose of waste in a sanitary manner.

- **Shut off power to a sewage lift pump if you have one in the house or in a pump chamber (mound, in-ground pressure, at-grade systems).**

- **Prevent silt from entering septic systems that have pump chambers.**

When the pump chambers are flooded, silt may settle in the chambers and will clog the drain field, if it is not removed.

- **Remember that a well may become contaminated during a flood.**

Therefore, **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER**. Drink bottled water until you have tested your drinking water. If bottled water is unavailable and you have no alternative source, disinfect, or boil your water before drinking. [The Ministry of Health](#) has resources including disinfection instructions and information about getting your water tested.

- **Do not bathe or swim in floodwater.**

It may contain harmful organisms.



## After flooding

Contaminated flood waters can enter wells

- **Do not use the sewage system until water in the disposal field is lower than the water level around the house.**

- **If you suspect damage to your septic tank, have it professionally inspected and serviced, i.e., contact an authorized person. Please see the links provided at the end of this document for more information.**

Signs of damage include settling or the inability to accept water. Most septic tanks are not damaged by a flood since they are below ground and completely covered. However, sometimes septic tanks or flood chambers become filled with silt and debris, and must be professionally cleaned. If tile lines in the



disposal field are filled with silt, a new system may need to be installed in new trenches. Because septic tanks may contain dangerous gases, only trained specialists should repair them.

The Sewerage System Regulation requires an authorized person to for the construction (including repairs) and maintenance of a septic system.

- **Discard any items that are damaged by contaminated water and cannot be steam cleaned or adequately cleaned and disinfected.**
- **Do not pump water out of basements too quickly.**  
Exterior water pressure could collapse the walls.
- **If sewage has backed up into the basement, clean the area and disinfect the floor with a chlorine solution of one-half cup of chlorine bleach to 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of water.**
- **Do not open the septic tank for pumping while the soil is still saturated or flooded.**  
Mud and silt may enter the tank and end up in the drain field. Furthermore, pumping out a tank that is in saturated soil may cause it to "pop out" of the ground which may damage the inlet and outlet pipes. (Likewise, recently installed systems may "pop out" of the ground more readily than older systems because the soil has not had enough time to settle and compact.)
- **If the septic system backs up into the house, check the tank first for outlet blockage.**  
Flooding of the septic tank will have lifted the floating crust of fats and grease in the septic tank. Some of this scum may have floated and/or partially plugged the outlet tee. Clean up any floodwater in the house without dumping it into the sink or toilet and allow enough time for the water to recede. Floodwaters from the house that are passed through or pumped through the septic tank will cause higher flows through the system. This may cause solids to transfer from the septic tank to the drain field and will cause clogging.
- **Pump the septic system as soon as possible after the flood once the soil is no longer saturated or flooded.**  
Be sure to examine all electrical connections for damage and ensure they are dry and clean before restoring electricity. Be sure to pump both the tank and lift station (if you have one). This will remove silt and debris that may have washed into the system.
- **Do not compact soil over the soil absorption field by driving or operating equipment over the area.**  
Saturated soil is especially susceptible to compaction, which can reduce the soil absorption field's ability to treat wastewater and may lead to system failure.
- **Ensure the septic tanks manhole cover is secure and that inspection ports have not been blocked or damaged.**
- **Examine the vegetation over your septic tank and soil absorption field.**  
Repair erosion damage and sod and/or reseed as necessary to provide a vegetative cover.
- **Wash and rake aerobic plants, upflow filters, trickling filters and other media filters.**  
They have a tendency to clog due to mud and sediment.
- **Contact your local [health authority](#) for information about testing your drinking water if you are on a well or a private surface water system.**  
Do not drink the water until it has been tested and is safe.

## MUNICIPAL SEWER

If your home is connected to a municipal sewer, you will be notified when the system has been restored. Until the system has been restored, use portable toilets, if possible, or use any large container with a tight-fitting lid for a temporary toilet. Line the container with a plastic bag. After each use, add chlorine



bleach or disinfectant to stop odour and kill germs. If necessary, dispose of waste in a sanitary manner.

## OUTHOUSES

Ensure that the outhouse is still positioned over the pit. If the outhouse has been washed away, or collapsed, cover the open pit with sturdy boards to prevent accidents and the spread of disease. If water is in the pit, add 2 litres (2 quarts) of unscented liquid chlorine bleach every three to four days until the water disappears.

## AUTHORIZED PERSONS

Individuals working on private sewerage systems must be trained and qualified for this work. The following two regulatory bodies govern private sewerage systems professionals. Please contact these organizations for more information about locating a professional in your region.

### **Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC**

For questions about available practitioners.

**Phone:** 1.604.585.2788

Registrant directory:

<https://asttbc.org/>

### **Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists**

For questions about available professionals.

**Toll free:** 1.888.430.8035

Registrant directory:

<https://www.egbc.ca/>

# Water Well Disinfection

## Using the Simple Chlorination Method

### USING THE SIMPLE CHLORINATION METHOD

The Groundwater Protection Regulation (Regulation) requires a well driller to disinfect a water supply well promptly after it has been drilled, altered, developed, or rehabilitated. The Regulation also requires a well pump installer to disinfect a water supply well and well pump promptly after installing the pump in the well. Well disinfection is used to inactivate or control micro-organism populations in a well and the distribution system. A well owner may disinfect their own well; however, care should be exercised to ensure disinfection is effective and safe. There are several methods used to disinfect water wells including simple chlorination, shock chlorination or bulk displacement. This brochure describes the simple chlorination method. For wells that are hard to disinfect, consult a well driller or a well pump installer.

### ARE THERE THINGS I NEED TO DO BEFORE DISINFECTING MY WELL?

A well should be tested regularly for water quality. If coliforms or Escherichia coli (E. coli) are repeatedly detected in your well water, the first step to take to eliminate them is to look for the following:

- ▶ Are there any potential sewage contamination sources near the well, such as manure or compost piles or septic disposal fields?
- ▶ Does the ground slope promote drainage of surface water toward the well or ponding of water around the wellhead?
- ▶ Is the well cap missing, cracked or damaged? Does the well cap allow water or vermin to enter into the well?
- ▶ Is the well casing stickup less than 30 cm (1 ft) above the ground surface (see Figure 1) or the floor of the pump house? Can surface or standing water easily flood over the top of the well casing?

▶ Is there a space or gap between the well casing and the ground around the well (see Figure 2), thus indicating that the surface seal is missing or incomplete? Are there noticeable cracks in the surface seal around the well casing?

▶ Is the well finished below grade?

If you answered “**YES**” to any of the above questions, fix the problem before proceeding with disinfection. Otherwise the well will continue to be vulnerable to contamination.



**FIGURE 1** Well casing stickup less than 30 cm (1 ft) from the ground surface



**FIGURE 2** Well with gap between casing and ground – no surface seal

**NOTE:** A registered well driller or pump installer must be hired to repair or install a surface seal for a well, or to add casing to increase the well stickup.

### ARE THERE ANY SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE?

Chlorine is volatile so it is dangerous to work with in confined areas where vapours can accumulate such as in pump houses, well pits and crawl spaces. Caution should be used when working in these situations – WorkSafeBC rules for confined spaced entry must be followed.

Prepare the chlorine solution outside in a well-ventilated area and wear appropriate safety clothing and equipment to protect your eyes and skin from splashes and spills.

*If you have any concerns or need help with disinfecting your well contact a well driller or a well pump installer.*

## WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SIMPLE CHLORINATION METHOD?

Simple chlorination only inactivates or eliminates the micro-organisms present in the well, on the pumping equipment or in the distribution system. It will not kill bacteria in the aquifer beyond the immediate location of the well. If there is some external source of contamination, the problem will only be solved temporarily by disinfecting the well itself. A well must be protected from contamination through proper siting, construction and maintenance and by keeping drainage and foreign matter away from the area around the wellhead.

Nuisance bacteria such as iron-related or sulphate-reducing bacteria are often found in groundwater and water wells. If uncontrolled, these bacteria can colonize the intake area of a well. The colonies form a sticky, slimy substance called biofilm (see Figure 3 below), which can reduce well production and degrade water quality. Also, minerals in groundwater can settle out and accumulate on well screens over time. The simple chlorination method is not effective in penetrating or removing biofilm and mineral build-up. To prevent the accumulation of biofilm and minerals regular disinfection of the well is recommended in cases where bacteria have been detected.



**FIGURE 3** Biofilm on well wiring

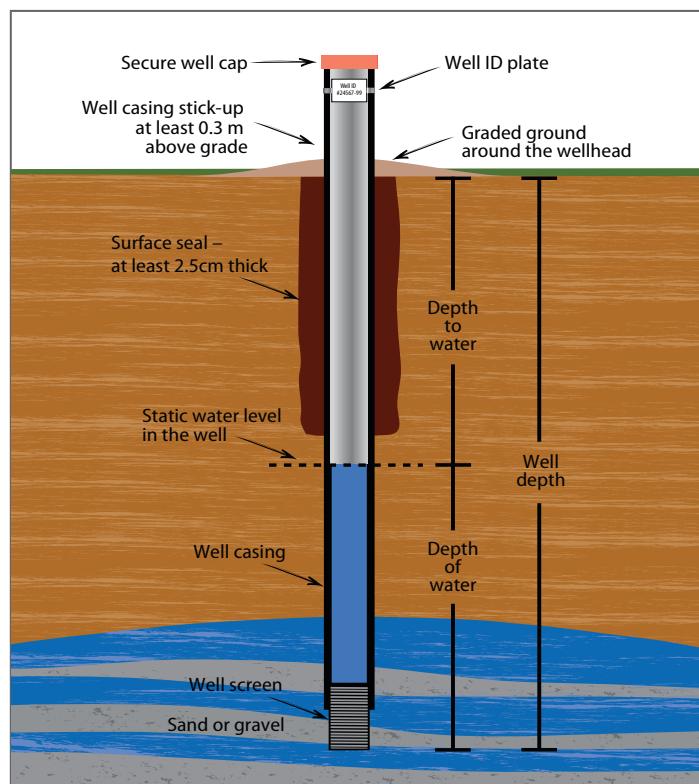
If the well has never or infrequently been disinfected or coliforms or E. coli continue to be detected in the water, hire a registered well driller or well pump installer to remove the pump and clean the casing and screen before repeating disinfection using the shock chlorination method.

## WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR DISINFECTING A WATER WELL?

### STEP 1 – BEFORE DISINFECTING THE WELL

Notify all users of the well not to drink the water or bathe in it while the strong solution of chlorine is present in the system and to store sufficient water for use during a 12-hour period.

Bypass or disconnect any carbon filters or water treatment devices before disinfecting. Carbon filters will remove the chlorine from the water – distribution pipes located past these filters will not be disinfected if the filters are not removed.



**FIGURE 4** Cross-section of well showing main features and measurements

### STEP 2 – DETERMINE THE VOLUME OF WATER IN THE WELL AND THE pH OF THE WELL WATER

The diameter and depth of the well and the static water level can be found on the driller's well construction report. If this information is not available, contact a registered well driller or well pump installer for help to take measurements. The depth of water = well depth – static water level (see Figure 4).

Test the pH of the well water. Ideally, the pH should be 7 or less. If it is above 7, add one litre of vinegar or citric acid to the well and re-test the pH in the well water before proceeding.

### STEP 3 – ADD CHLORINE SOLUTION TO THE WELL

Estimate the amount of domestic bleach (see Table 1) or chlorine tablets or powder (see Table 2) needed. Follow the recommended chlorination guidelines; over chlorination can have a negative effect on the disinfection process.

#### A. For wells without a pump (e.g., new well) using domestic bleach

Mix the volume of bleach needed with at least 45 litres (10 gallons) of water. Pour the solution into the well and leave it for approximately 12 hours. When the pump is installed, pump for at least one hour to remove the chlorine solution.

#### B. For wells with a pump using domestic bleach

Turn off power to the pump. Mix the volume of bleach needed with at least 45 litres (10 gallons) of water. Remove the well cap<sup>1</sup> and lift the wires out and pull to one side. Clean the cap to remove debris, dirt and oil and place in a clean container. Pour or siphon the chlorine solution into the well between the drop pipes (pipes that carry water from a pump in a well to the surface) or pour the solution directly into the well. Some wells have a sanitary seal (see Figure 5) with either an air vent or plug that can be removed to add the chlorine mixture – contact a registered well driller or well pump installer for assistance, if required.



**FIGURE 5** Well with sanitary seal type cap



**FIGURE 6** Well fitted with pitless adapter, cap has space for wiring

If possible, mix the water in the well by attaching a clean hose to a nearby water tap or hydrant, place the hose into the top of the well casing, and run the water from the hose, which is sourced from the well, back into the well.

**NOTE:** The power to the well pump will need to be turned back on. After mixing, let the water stand in the well for two hours before proceeding to the next step.

### C. For wells with a pump using chlorine tablets or powder

Dissolve the required weight of tablets or powder in warm water, remove the well cap, pour the solution into the well, mix if possible and let stand for two hours (see instructions above).

### STEP 4 – MOVE THE CHLORINATED WATER INTO THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Turn the well pump on. Open all taps, one at a time, including outside hose bibs and cold and hot water taps. Flush toilets and fill washing machines and dishwashers. Allow the water to run until a chlorine smell is detected from each faucet or there is a slippery feeling to the water, then turn off each tap. Open the valve or plug at the top of the pressure tank just before stopping the pump to allow the solution to contact the entire inside surface of the tank. Then close the valve or plug. Back flush any water softener devices and all water filters (except carbon filters). Replace carbon filters to avoid reintroducing bacteria into the system. Plumbing grit and solid mineral particles may form during disinfection and may clog faucet aerators, flush valves and equipment using filters. Faucet aerators may need to be removed if clogging occurs. If a strong chlorine odour is not present, return to step 3, add half the amount of chlorine used for the initial treatment to the well and repeat step 4.

Replace the well cap and leave the chlorine solution in the distribution system for at least 12 hours.

### STEP 5 – FLUSH THE CHLORINE OUT OF THE WELL AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Open an outside tap and run the chlorinated water from the well to an area where plants or aquatic areas won't be harmed. Do not run the water into your septic system as the chemicals and the amount of water required to flush the system may overload or damage the septic system. Do not drain the water into a stream, ditch or storm drain that connects with any fish-bearing streams.

When a chlorine smell is no longer present, run the indoor hot and cold water taps to flush out the hot water tank and plumbing (this small amount of chlorine will not harm the septic system). It may take as little as half an hour or as long as four days to completely remove the chlorine odour from the water system.

**DO NOT OVERPUMP THE WELL!** If the well is low-yielding or pumps silt or sand, slowly flush the well – watch the water coming from the hose to make sure there is no sediment in it. Over-pumping may worsen the sediment problem. It may be necessary to stop and start the pump if it is losing its prime.

**1 CAUTION:** Do not loosen or remove any of the bolts in the top of the sanitary well seal.

## STEP 6 – SAMPLE THE WELL WATER

A water sample should be collected for analysis one week after chlorination to verify the water is safe to use. Do not drink the water without boiling it until test results show it is safe to drink. Retest again one month after disinfection to ensure the water is potable.

**TABLE 1** *Volumes of domestic bleach\* needed for a 200 ppm chlorine solution.*

WELL DIAMETER		DOMESTIC BLEACH* (5-6%) NEEDED PER 3 M (10 FT) OF WATER		
inches	mm	metric	US gallons	other
4	100	100 mL	0.02	5 tbsp
5	130	150 mL	0.04	10 tbsp
6	150	200 mL	0.05	13 tbsp
8	200	360 mL	0.09	1.5 cups
10	250	560 mL	0.15	2.5 cups
12	300	808 mL	0.21	3.5 cups
24	610	3.3 L	0.9	14.6 cups
36	914	7.5 L	2.0	
48	1219	13.3 L	3.5	

**\*NOTE:** Domestic bleach has an expiry date and should be used before this date for effective disinfection. Purchase only the amount needed and use it all. Use only unscented plain domestic bleach without fabric softeners or other additives.

**TABLE 2** *Dry weight of chlorine tablets\* needed for a 200 ppm chlorine solution*

WELL DIAMETER		DRY WEIGHT OF CHLORINE TABLETS (65-75%) PER 3 M (10 FT) OF WATER	
inches	mm	oz	grams
4	100	0.3	9
5	130	0.5	15
6	150	0.7	20
8	200	1.3	36
10	250	2.0	57
12	300	2.9	82
24	610	11.9	337
36	914	26.7	758
48	1219	47.4	1347

**\*NOTE:** Make sure the chlorine tablets are for potable water, e.g. not for swimming pools or hot tubs.

## WHEN SHOULD A WELL BE DISINFECTED?

The simple chlorination method is used:

- ▶ following construction of a new well,
- ▶ following alteration of an existing well,
- ▶ following well pump installation, maintenance or repair, or
- ▶ when the well has tested positive for coliforms or E. coli.

The micro-organisms found in the soil at or near the well site can be picked up on drilling tools, pipes and well pumps during construction or servicing of a well. If disease-causing organisms are present they may be introduced into the well. Therefore, the Regulation requires that every well, after construction or repair, must be disinfected.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on whether the well water is safe to drink contact your local Health Authority: *look for listings online or in your local phone directory.*

The registers of well drillers and well pump installers in British Columbia can be found at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/groundwater-wells-aquifers/groundwater-wells/information-for-well-drillers-well-pump-installers>



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

Photos by Sylvia Kenny, Peter Epp and Greg Farley

# FLOODWATCH TIPS

## Disinfection of a Well After Flooding

***Please Note:***

This disinfection procedure involves the use of high concentrations of chlorine that could potentially damage some treatment devices. If you have a treatment device on your water supply, you may wish to consult with the manufacturer's recommendations or a qualified professional before carrying out this procedure.

If you do not feel comfortable carrying out the disinfection procedure yourself, please contact a qualified plumber or pump installer.

### STEPS FOR DISINFECTING YOUR WELL

1. Run the water from an outside hose or spigot until the water becomes clear or free of sediments.
2. Some wells have a sanitary seal with either an air vent or a plug that can be removed for the addition of bleach. (CAUTION: Do not remove any of the bolts in the top of a well seal). Pour unscented household bleach (5-6% chlorine) directly into the well. The chart provided on this information sheet outlines the amount of chlorine to add based on the diameter of the well or pipe and the depth of the water in the well or pipe.
3. After the bleach is added, run the water from an outside hose into the well casing until you smell the chlorine coming from the hose.
4. Turn on each cold water tap (including outside house bibs) allowing the water to run until a chlorine smell is detected from each faucet, then turn off each tap.
5. Leave the chlorinated water in the system from 12 to 24 hours. Do not drink, cook, bathe or wash with the water at this time. This water contains high concentrations of chlorine.
6. Once the time has elapsed, drain out the water until the chlorine odour disappears. Do not drain the water into a stream, ditch or storm drain which connects with any fish-bearing streams.

### SAMPLING

Before taking a water sample for bacteriological testing, please ensure the following have been completed:

- All necessary repairs to the well.
- The well has been flushed of any flood water.
- The well and attached plumbing fixtures have been properly disinfected.
- After thorough flushing, there should be no chlorine smell in the water.

*"It is recommended that you wait a few days after disinfection to test for bacteria"*



## FLOODWATCH TIPS

## Flood Information for Disinfection of a Well

If flooding was extensive and the groundwater was heavily contaminated, you may consider retesting your well again after a few weeks, as your well may be susceptible to recontamination.

Diameter of Well, or Pipe		Amount of Bleach (5-6% Chlorine) to use per Depth of Water in Well or Pipe	
Inches	Centimetres	Per 10 feet	Per 3 metres
2	5	1 tsp	5 mL
4	10	4 tsp	20 mL
6	15	10 tsp	50 mL
8	20	7 tbsp	100 mL
10	25	1/2 cup + 2 tbsp	150 mL
12	30	3/4 cup + 1 tbsp	200 mL
24	60	3 1/2 cups	800 mL
36	90	2 quarts	2.3 L
48	120	3 quarts	3.4 L
60	150	5 quarts	5.7 L
72	180	7 quarts	8.0 L
96	240	3 gallons	13.6 L

*Note: 1 cup = 16 tbsp = 48 tsp*

If you have any additional questions, please contact Fraser Health at 1-866-749-7900.



## **Building Permit for Restoration Works for Flood Damage**

Visit: <https://www.fvrd.ca/PermitSystem> and choose Alterations Building Permit.

If you already have a myFVRD profile, you can log in to complete your Alteration Building Permit application. If you do not have a myFVRD profile, you will need to create one.

Required Documents with your submission:

- [Owner's Acknowledgement of Responsibility](#)
- Architectural Drawings
- Structural Drawings
- Schedule B – Structural

Helpful Documents:

- [Letter of Authorization](#)
- [Architectural Drawing Information](#)
- [General Building Information Handout](#)
- [Good Neighbour Practices Handout](#)

For YouTube video: [Online Permit System Step-By-Step Guide](#)



# **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

## Help for evacuees

### BC Hydro bill help for British Columbians who are evacuated

We know that the last thing you're thinking about if have to evacuate your home or business is turning off lights, appliances and electronics. That's why we proactively monitor evacuation orders in the province and offer bill credits and payment plans for customers who are evacuated due to a natural disaster, like a wildfire, flood or landslide.

#### Bill credit & payment plans for evacuees

Residential and commercial customers who are affected by an evacuation order are eligible to receive a credit for the electricity consumed for the duration of the time they're out of their home, if the order is for five days or longer. We also offer flexible bill payment plans for when you're able to return home.

#### How the bill credit works

We proactively monitor evacuation orders year-round to identify those lasting at least five days. We'll then automatically apply a credit to your account for the electricity consumed during the period you're out of your home or business due to evacuation order. This credit applies to residential, small business (Small General Service rate), and irrigation customers.

You don't need to call to tell us about your evacuation. The credit will be automatically applied to your bill. Please note it may take several billing periods for the credit to appear.

If you have questions, please contact our customer service team at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376).

#### For customers who lose their home

#### How the bill credit is calculated

## Payment plans

If an evacuation order led you to pay your bill late, we'll waive the late payment charge. And if you need more time to pay, you can request a catch-up plan by calling our customer service team at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) or [set one up yourself in MyHydro](#).

## Determining if your power is on before returning home

Not all areas under an evacuation order experience power outages. Before you return home, you can check to see if your power is on two ways:

- Using your mobile device, [visit our outages list](#), scroll to the bottom of the page and select the address tile. Enter your home address in the search bar to see if there's currently an outage for your property.
- Call 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) and follow the prompts to identify your property and be provided with any outage information, or speak directly with an agent.

If you've returned home and the digital clocks aren't blinking, then you likely didn't have a power outage.

## Electricity use information is available in MyHydro

Your insurance company may request additional information about power outages in support of your insurance claim. Consider supporting your claim with individual electricity use data you have access to [online via your MyHydro account](#). If you don't have a MyHydro account, it only [takes a few minutes to sign up](#).

Please note that because some BC Hydro equipment may have been lost in the natural disaster, electricity use data may not be immediately available for all impacted customers. Also note that if your meter is manually read, data won't be available until we're able to read your meter.

## ACCOUNTS

[Billing & payments](#)[Moving](#)[Electrical connections](#)[Electricity rates & energy use](#)[Get help](#)[Help for evacuees](#)

## Safety information

- [Emergency evacuation planning](#)
- [Earthquakes, wildfires, and floods](#)

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## Corporate information

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### Customer resources

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## Disaster Financial Assistance – Info Sheet

*Excerpt from the Province of BC Website*

Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) is a program intended to help with recovery from uninsurable losses caused by a disaster that has resulted in extensive or widespread damage. If an event is authorized for DFA, eligible applicants may receive financial support for essential recovery needs.

It is available for individuals in the electoral areas of the Fraser Valley Regional District, City of Abbotsford, City of Chilliwack, District of Hope, Chawathil First Nation, Leq'á:mel First Nation, Matsqui First Nation, Semá:th First Nation, and Sts'ailes First Nation who were affected by overland flooding that occurred from **December 10 to 19, 2025**.

### Who Can Apply?

DFA is available to homeowners, residential tenants, charitable/non-profit organizations, landlords or small business owners, and farm owners that were **unable to obtain insurance to cover disaster-related losses**. Individuals impacted by the overland flooding that occurred.

By regulation, DFA is unable to compensate for losses for which insurance was reasonably and readily available. DFA will continue to assess each individual applicant by applying its existing legislative criteria in a fair and consistent way.

### How to Apply?

Applications must be submitted within 90 days of the disaster being authorized (April 13, 2026). Complete the application form through the [DFA application portal](http://www.dfa.gov.bc.ca) ([www.dfa.gov.bc.ca](http://www.dfa.gov.bc.ca)).

### Want to Learn More?

General DFA information, eligibility criteria, categories, and application information can be found by visiting [www.gov.bc.ca/DisasterFinancialAssistance](http://www.gov.bc.ca/DisasterFinancialAssistance).

Please forward further questions and inquiries to Emergency Management BC by calling 1-888-257-4777 or emailing [DFA.private@gov.bc.ca](mailto:DFA.private@gov.bc.ca). You may also contact the Fraser Valley Regional District at 604-702-5000 for assistance with the DFA application process.

## What to Know When Applying for DFA

- Financial assistance is provided for each accepted claim at 80% of the amount of total eligible damage less \$1,000, to a maximum of \$400,000.
- A homeowner or residential tenant must have occupied the property as their principal residence at the time of the event.
- Seasonal or recreational properties aren't eligible. If you are a landlord, you must apply and qualify as a small business owner.
- Landlords or small business owners, your business or rental must:
  - Be managed by the owner on a day-to-day basis.
  - Have grossed at least \$10,000 but less than \$2 million in revenue in the year immediately.
  - Employ fewer than 50 employees at one time.
  - Demonstrate that, without the claimed assistance, the future of the business could be placed in financial jeopardy. Financial jeopardy is defined as when the assistance payment to repair the damage would exceed 10% of the net income of the business.
- Farm owners must:
  - Be identified as a developing or established agricultural operation.
  - Be owned and operated by a person whose full-time employment is as a farmer.
  - Be the means by which the owner derives majority of their income.
  - Demonstrate that, without the claimed assistance, the future of the farm operation could be placed in financial jeopardy. Financial jeopardy is defined as when the assistance payment to repair the damage would exceed 10% of the net income of the business.
  - If the farm operation does not meet these criteria, you may still be able to apply under the small business category.



## Instructions

The Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program operates under the Emergency and Disaster Management Act and the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation which states in Section 8(1) “eligible costs” does not include costs of expenses (a) recoverable at law of for which insurance was reasonably and readily available.” **This form must be completed by applicants (Section 1) and their insurance brokers (Section 2)** to determine eligibility for Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). Completed forms must be uploaded with the DFA application.

### Section 1. To be completed by applicant

Applicant name(s) (first and last): \_\_\_\_\_

Damaged property address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of loss: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2. To be completed by licensed insurance broker or agent

Please provide the full name of the insurance company, policy number, and dates the policy was in effect for the damaged property for the date the loss was incurred.

Policy number: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of insurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy effective date: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of brokerage: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the insured property a principal residence (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of representative completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_

With reference to the policy in effect during at the time of the loss please indicate which of the following coverage(s) were purchased and/or available at the time this policy was purchased or renewed.

**Please list the dollar amount and include \$0 if no insurance was purchased or available for purchase.**

Optional coverage	Overland water / flood	Groundwater
Actual coverage limit purchased	\$ _____	\$ _____
Maximum coverage limit available	\$ _____	\$ _____

Electronic signature of representative completing the form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## Disaster Financial Assistance Insurance Form – Small Business, Farms and Charitable Organizations

### Instructions

The Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program operates under the Emergency and Disaster Management Act and the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation. Section 8(1) of the Regulation states: “eligible costs” does not include costs of expenses (a) recoverable at law of for which insurance was reasonably and readily available.”

**This form must be completed by applicants (Sections 1 and 3) and their insurance brokers (Sections 2 and 3)** to determine eligibility for Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). Completed forms must be uploaded with the DFA application.

### Section 1. To be completed by applicant

Applicant/business name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Damaged property address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of loss: \_\_\_\_\_

**Go to Section 3**

### Section 2. To be completed by licensed insurance broker or agent

Please provide the full name of the insurance company, policy number and dates the policy was in effect for the damaged property when the loss occurred.

Name of policy holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy number: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of insurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy effective date: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of brokerage: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of representative completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_

**Go to Section 3**

Electronic signature of representative who completed the form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## Disaster Financial Assistance Insurance Form – Small Business, Farms and Charitable Organizations

### Section 3. To be completed by the applicant and the broker

Instructions for the applicant:

Please list the business/farm/charitable organization's assets that were damaged during the disaster (e.g. flood) event in the Table below.

Instructions for the broker:

For the business/farm/charitable organization assets listed below, please indicate whether insurance for damages caused by the disaster event (e.g. overland flood) was available and purchased at the time the policy was purchased or renewed. Include the maximum amount of insurance available at the time of purchase / renewal (available coverage limit) as well as the actual amount of coverage purchased (policy limit). **Please list dollar amounts including \$0 if no insurance was available or purchased.** If no coverage limit, please write Unlimited.

**Please fill in coverages that are applicable for the specific event (e.g. overland flood). Please add extra rows and continue on next page as needed.**

Property	Available coverage limit (please state maximum limit available)	Policy limit purchased
Building(s)	\$	\$
Stock	\$	\$
Equipment	\$	\$
Tenant improvements	\$	\$
Other (leave blank if not applicable)	\$	\$

# Disaster Financial Assistance

## Guidelines for Private Sector

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Home owners  
Residential tenants  
Small business owners  
Farm owners  
Charitable organizations



Ministry of  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) administers the provincial Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide applicants with information on the Disaster Financial Assistance program and assist them in applying for DFA.

Further information may be obtained from:

Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness  
PO Box 9201 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9J1

Phone: 1-888-257-4777 Toll Free  
Fax: 250 952-5542

E-mail: [DFA.Private@gov.bc.ca](mailto:DFA.Private@gov.bc.ca)  
Website: [www.gov.bc.ca/disasterfinancialassistance](http://www.gov.bc.ca/disasterfinancialassistance)

### ***What is Disaster Financial Assistance?***

When British Columbia has declared an event eligible for Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA), the program can provide financial assistance to help eligible individuals and communities recover from catastrophic events, which have resulted in uninsurable property and infrastructure damage.

The legal authority for DFA is found in Section 20 of the *Emergency Program Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, and the ensuing Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation, B.C. Reg 124/95 (the Regulation).

Disclaimer: In the event of a discrepancy between these guidelines and the Regulation, the Regulation shall apply.

DFA is available to qualified applicants for DFA authorized events.

The application deadline is 90 days after the DFA authorization date. Please check our [website](#) or call 1-888-257-4777 to verify the deadline applicable to your specific uninsurable flooding event. EMCR cannot accept applications received after the deadline.

## **2.0 GENERAL APPLICANT INFORMATION**

### ***2.1 Who can apply?***

There are five categories of applications for the private sector:

- Home owners
- Residential tenants
- Small business owners
- Farm owners
- Charitable organizations

Applicants may submit an application in more than one category, e.g., home owner and farm owner, if circumstances are warranted.

### ***2.2 Limits on assistance for private sector claims***

- a. The amount of financial assistance provided for each accepted claim is 80 percent of the amount of the total eligible damage that exceeds \$1,000 to a maximum claim of \$400,000.

### ***2.3 General terms and conditions***

- a. The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) will complete a title search for all properties for which a claim is made and if restrictive covenants are found, they shall apply.
- b. Claims may not exceed the estimate of costs required to restore an item or facility to its immediate pre-disaster condition. When items such as furniture, fixtures or appliances are to be replaced, only the value of basic models of such items will be allowed as replacements. When there is a choice between repair or replacement, the amount of assistance will be based on the least cost option. Claims for the cost of repairing a structure to pre-disaster condition will include the cost of repairing it to a condition that meets the prevailing building code.
- c. Applicants may receive assistance for the reconstruction of private property in a disaster-prone area on one occasion without further requirements. A second claim for the same structure may be accepted but applicants will be advised that there is an expectation that they will undertake measures to prevent or limit future damage. A third claim for the same structure may not be accepted if the owner cannot show that all corrective or preventive actions reasonably possible to avoid a recurrence of the damage or destruction were taken. If applicants are located in an area where prevention is not possible, they will be advised whether future assistance will be available to them.
- d. When a structure has been destroyed/damaged beyond repair, assistance will be based only on the loss of the structure as determined by the BC Assessment Authority property assessment. No assistance is available for the loss of use or benefit of the land.

- e. When a structure has been damaged/destroyed, compensation will be based on the cost of repair or the BC Assessment Authority assessed value, at the time of the event, whichever is less.
- f. If an eligible structure is damaged or destroyed in a disaster, and if the director determines that retaining the structure constitutes a potential threat to life or safety, assistance will be based on either the cost to relocate and repair the structure or the cost of the BC Assessment Authority assessed value, whichever is less. No assistance will be given to cover the cost of the damaged land or the cost of land purchased for the purpose of relocating the structure.
- g. When civil litigation to recover losses is initiated or intended, assistance may be withheld pending the outcome of court proceedings, or the applicant may be required to declare that they will refund any monies awarded or settled as a result of the legal action. Failure to disclose impending litigation may be considered fraud.

## **2.4 Appeals**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

This section describes the DFA appeal process. If DFA has been authorized for an event, an applicant may be entitled to appeal a decision that EMCR has made regarding their eligibility for or the amount of DFA that was determined to be provided in accordance with Sections 21 and 22 of the *Emergency Program Act*.

### **2.4.2 Appeal to the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) director**

When the applicant receives written notice of EMCR's initial determination regarding a claim, the applicant is advised of the appeal procedure. The applicant is allowed *60 days* from the date of receipt of the initial determination to deliver a written notice of appeal to the director of PEP.

The notice of appeal should state whether the applicant is appealing their eligibility for DFA or the amount of DFA.

If a written notice of appeal is not received by the director within the 60-day period, the applicant may not appeal the determination.

If an appeal is received within the 60-day period, the director may, after conducting a review, confirm or overturn DFA eligibility; or confirm, increase or decrease the amount of the DFA, and must inform the appellant of the decision in writing.

A decision by the director is final and conclusive and is not open to question or review in a court on any grounds.

### **2.4.3 Variations on amount of Disaster Financial Assistance**

If the director, as a result of the appeal, determines that the appellant is entitled to a lesser amount of DFA, the appellant must repay the overpaid DFA amount

of assistance promptly within 60 days after being informed of the director's decision.

If, as a result of an appeal, the appellant is determined to be entitled to DFA in an amount that is greater than what was previously determined, the government must promptly provide the appellant the additional amount of DFA decided by the director.

## ***2.5 General information applicable to all categories***

### **2.5.1 Claimable items**

- a. Structural repair or replacement of an eligible structure, including:
  - i. foundations, footings, seals, slab floors, pilings, structural walls and attached garages,
  - ii. framing, roofing, doors, windows, materials, wall coverings, mouldings, fixtures and finishings,
  - iii. filling and levelling to restore essential access,
  - iv. wells, pumps, septic or sewer connections, water connections, electrical servicing, and space and water heating equipment and gas connections,
  - v. retaining walls that form part of the eligible structure or that are essential to sustain land that is immediately adjacent to and critical to the eligible structure, and
  - vi. existing protective works designed to protect banks from erosion.
- b. Cleanup and disinfect:
  - i. casual labour, including the owner, at the British Columbia minimum hourly rate, up to a maximum of 100 person-hours, unless EMCR authorizes additional labour up to a maximum established amount, and
  - ii. commercial services and rentals, provided those services and rentals are not on a continuing basis and conform to rates listed in the BC Equipment Rental Rate Guide, copies of which are held by evaluators.

## 2.5.2 Non-claimable items

Assistance will not be provided for costs in relation to the following:

- a. cost of restoring or replacing items that were insured or insurable,
- b. contents located in basements, crawl spaces or similar low-lying storage areas, unless these areas are being used as essential living areas for home owners,
- c. contents such as jacuzzis, hot tubs, spas, patios, pools, fences, garden tools or decorative landscaping,
- d. contents such as jewellery, collectibles, artwork, antiques, silverware, furs, decorative items, money and securities, books and printed matter,
- e. drainage that was inadequate due to lack of maintenance,
- f. income loss including personal, farm or business operation income/opportunity,
- g. insurable damage that is a direct result of internal sewer or storm back up,
- h. insurable vehicles, equipment and vessels such as automobiles, recreation vehicles, motor homes, motorcycles, boats, planes, snowmobiles,
- i. land value loss due to damage, unless essential to the farm or business operation and then only for the lesser of the cost to restore the damaged land to pre-disaster condition or the assessed value of the damaged portion of the land,
- j. land, eroded or damaged except for essential access routes,
- k. illegal encroachments on or improvements of land for the purpose of damage reduction,
- l. materials for construction in storage or available for construction purposes, unless these are business or farm inventory,
- m. materials such as chemicals, preservatives, fuels and other like items unless these are business inventory,
- n. materials such as pet supplies, pens, corrals, feeds, outfitting, saddlery or beekeeping equipment and supplies, unless essential to a farm or business operation,
- o. recreational items including fishing, hunting, camping or other sports equipment, camera, dark-room or audio-visual equipment, games, toys, and lawn furniture, unless essential to or inventory of a business operation,
- p. recreational or seasonal structures, their contents, and associated roads or bridges,
- q. roads on private land, except for essential access to fields and outbuildings for a farm or small business operation,
- r. structures such as church property or private recreational facilities unless, in the case of church property, the property constitutes a facility essential to the secular needs of the community or in the case of a recreational facility, the facility is essential for a charitable organization,
- s. structures such as garages or carports that are detached or semi-detached and their contents,
- t. structures such as outbuildings and their contents unless essential to the operation of the business or farm,
- u. structures such as unoccupied homes or premises under construction (to be considered occupied, there must be a valid certificate of occupation), and
- v. structures such as wharves, docks, floats, jetties and other foreshore/backshore improvements.

## **3.0 INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO HOME OWNERS/RESIDENTIAL TENANTS**

### ***3.1 Eligibility***

A home owner or residential tenant applicant must be the registered titleholder, lessee, or renter of the affected property, which must be, on a day-to-day basis, their principal residence.

The following definitions apply for determining eligibility for home owner/residential tenant claims:

- **Principal residence** is defined as a residence occupied by the applicant as their primary home and where the majority of their personal effects are located. To be eligible as a home owner, the applicant must have received, or been eligible to receive, the Home Owner's Grant for the affected residence in the year in which the disaster occurred, and must be listed as the registered owner on the current certificate of title.
- A **tenant** is defined as a person(s) who occupies a residence in exchange for a monthly fee but who is not the registered owner of the property. A tenant may claim for the damage or loss of personal effects that were in their principal residence and were owned by, and required for, the tenant or any of the other permanent residents of the structure. The owner of the structure may claim for structural damage under the small business category but must qualify as a "small business owner," as defined under the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation, to receive assistance.

#### ***3.1.1 Principal residence – land title in business name***

In situations where the land title for a home owner applicant's principal residence is in the name of the applicant's business, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the home is the applicant's principal residence. Additionally, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the applicant is a corporate interest holder in the business that holds the title to the home.

#### ***3.2 Limitations on losses covered***

The following limitations apply to claims by home owners/tenants:

- a. Only items to replace or restore the necessities of life will be considered.
- b. Items claimed as necessities will be restricted in number to the needs of permanent occupants only.

### **3.3 Claimable items**

The items listed below are claimable, provided they meet the "General Terms and Conditions" outlined in Section 2.3 and the "Limitations" above. The list of claimable items is not all-inclusive, also see Section 2.5.

- a. Repair to or replacement of eligible personal effects, including:
  - i. kitchen/dining room a stove, refrigerator, table and chairs, electrical appliances, table service and kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies and equipment, drapes and curtains, and floor coverings,
  - ii. living room hide-a-bed or chesterfield and/or loveseat, chairs, tables, lamps, floor coverings, drapes and curtains, a television, and a radio or a stereo system,
  - iii. bedroom bedding, bedroom suites, box springs and mattresses, lamps, floor coverings, drapes and curtains,
  - iv. bathroom floor coverings, curtains, towels and toiletries,
  - v. laundry room a washer, a dryer, an iron, an ironing board, laundry supplies, curtains and floor coverings,
  - vi. miscellaneous clothing, household tools, prescription medicines, a sewing machine, a vacuum cleaner, a telephone, a mirror, a freezer, freezer food and root vegetables stored in a root cellar, and
  - vii. specialized clothing, tools or equipment that are required for the applicant's current trade or profession and are essential for the applicant's ability, at the time of the claim, to earn the applicant's livelihood.

## **4.0 INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS**

### ***4.1 Eligibility***

To qualify as an eligible small business

- the business must be managed by the owner on a day-to-day basis,
- the gross revenues for the business must be greater than \$10,000 but less than \$2 million in the year immediately preceding the disaster
- the business must employ less than 50 employees at any one time, and
- the owner must demonstrate that, without the claimed assistance, the future of the business could be placed in financial jeopardy. Financial jeopardy is defined as when the assistance payment to repair the damage would exceed 10 percent of the net income of the business.

### ***4.2 Limitations on losses covered***

The following limitations apply to small business owner claims:

- a. Only uninsurable items essential to the operation of the business will be considered.
- b. A commercial tenant that occupies rented or leased space in exchange for a monthly fee, but who is not the registered owner of the property, may not claim for structural repair to or replacement of business structures. The owner of the structure may claim for structural damage but would have to qualify on their own under the small business category to receive assistance.
- c. Loss of wages or business operation income or loss of business opportunity is not eligible.

### ***4.3 Claimable items***

The items listed below are claimable, provided they meet the "General Terms and Conditions" outlined in Section 2.3 and the "Limitations" above. The list of claimable items is not all-inclusive, also see Section 2.5.

- a. Structural repair to or replacement of eligible business structures, including:
  - i. parking areas, pumps, services and connections, and space and water heating equipment.
- b. Repair to or replacement of eligible business materials, including:
  - i. books and papers required to carry out the business,
  - ii. tools and equipment essential to the business,
  - iii. business furnishings, and
  - iv. inventory at replacement cost.

## **5.0 INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

### ***5.1 Eligibility***

To qualify as an eligible charitable organization applicant, it must be a not-for-profit *charitable* organization that:

- in the opinion of the Minister, provides a benefit or service to the community at large,
- has been in existence for at least 12 months, and
- is registered under the British Columbia Society Act.

### ***5.2 Limitations on Losses Covered***

The following limitations apply to charitable organization claims:

- a. Only items essential to the operation of the charitable organization.
- b. The charitable organization that occupies donated, rented or leased space in exchange for a monthly fee, but who is not the registered owner of the property, may not claim for structural repair to or replacement of occupied structures. The owner of the structure may claim for structural damage but would have to qualify on their own, under the appropriate claim category, to receive assistance.

### ***5.3 Claimable items***

The items listed below are claimable, provided they meet the "General Terms and Conditions" outlined in Section 2.3 and the "Limitations" above. The list of claimable items is not all-inclusive, also see Section 2.5.

- a. Structural repair to or replacement of eligible charitable or volunteer structures, including:
  - i. outbuildings essential to the operation of the organization.
- b. Repair to or replacement of eligible charitable or volunteer materials, including:
  - i. business books, papers, tools, equipment, and furnishings essential to the operation of the organization, and
  - ii. inventory for sale, at replacement cost.

## **6.0 INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO FARM OWNERS**

### ***6.1 Eligibility***

To qualify as an eligible farm:

- the farm operation must be identified in the current assessment of the BC Assessment Authority as a developing or established agricultural operation,
- the farm operation must be owned and operated by a person whose full-time employment or livelihood is made as a farmer,
- the farm operation must be the means by which the owner(s) derives the majority of that person's income, based on gross income from all sources,
- the owner must demonstrate that, without the claimed assistance, the future of the farm operation could be placed in financial jeopardy. Financial jeopardy is defined as when the assistance payment to repair the damage would be greater than 10 percent of the net income of the farm operation,
- a farmer that farms leased land in exchange for a monthly fee, but who is not the registered owner of the land, may not claim for damage to the leased land. The owner of the land may claim for damage but would have to qualify on their own under the small business category to receive assistance, and
- if a farm operation is incorporated, the small business eligibility criteria will also apply.

### ***6.2 Limitations on losses covered***

**The following limitations apply to farm owner claims:**

- a. Only items essential to the operation of the farm will be considered.
- b. Assistance is restricted to actual uninsurable property and or damage to land that was in production or being left fallow in accordance with good farming practices. Loss of income due to loss of production or market is not eligible.
- c. Generally, crops are not eligible for DFA because B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Food has established programs such as Production Insurance and AgriStability to assist farmers.

### ***6.3 Claimable items***

The items listed below are claimable, provided they meet the "General Terms and Conditions" outlined in Section 2.3 and the "Limitations" above. The list of claimable items is not all-inclusive, also see Section 2.5.

- a. Structural repair to or replacement of eligible farm structures, including:

- i. filling and levelling to restore essential access to fields and outbuildings,
- ii. parking areas, pumps, services and connections and space and water heating equipment essential to farm operations, and
- iii. fences on working farms where livestock is kept, excluding ornamental fences.

b. Repair to or replacement of eligible farm materials including:

- i. harvested crops for which insurance was not available in British Columbia and for which no other government financial aid or program exists,
- ii. farm machinery that was not insurable,
- iii. bedding, pesticides, mulch, feed, seed and product losses including fertilizers, biocides, hormones and supplements essential to farm operations, and
- iv. livestock and poultry essential to farm operations.

c. Cleanup and disinfect:

- i. restoration of farmland to a workable condition, including, without limitation, removal of debris, replacement of topsoil, restoration of fertility by manure or commercial fertilizer and land levelling where land gouging or surface erosion has occurred, provided that the cost of restoration does not exceed the previous assessed value of the land unit being restored and that the land was, before the occurrence of the disaster, in production or was being left fallow in accordance with good farming practices, and
- ii. use of own equipment, excluding depreciation costs, at rates listed in the BC Equipment Rental Rate Guide plus fuel and lubricants not included in the rates listed in that guide.



# **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**



Guidebook for

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# WELLBEING IN RECOVERY



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

In Canada, emergencies and disasters ranging from individual house fires, health emergencies, power outages and floods to wildfires and hurricanes can occur, and in the most extreme cases, cause significant and widespread disruption to routines, social supports, etc. Individuals, families, and communities can be impacted with little warning, causing a great deal of heartache and suffering.

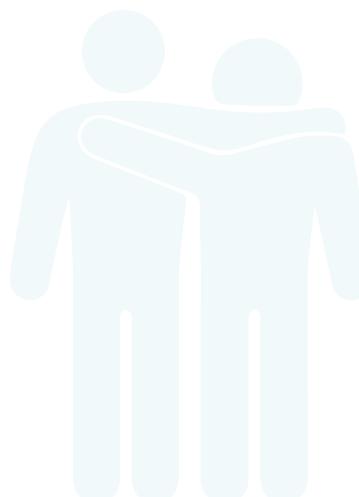
When affected by an emergency, a person may experience a range of thoughts, feelings and behaviour that can be intense, confusing and frightening. These are expected reactions to an extraordinary situation.

Most people recover after emergencies by drawing on their own resources, capacities, strengths and the support of others; most will gradually rebuild their lives and achieve a sense of wellbeing again. Some people will continue to feel overwhelmed, be unable to shake the feelings of despair or have signs of more serious psychological problems. It's important to know the difference between an expected reaction to a stressful or potentially traumatic event and the signs that indicate you should seek additional assistance.

This booklet is for adults and is designed to help you understand the reactions you – or someone you know – may be experiencing.

It contains practical advice, numbers to call and websites to visit if you need extra information or support.

Following an emergency, it's important to remember that you are not alone and that help is available.



# EXPECTED REACTIONS TO AN EXTRAORDINARY EVENT

When a person experiences a stressful or traumatic event such as an emergency, it can have a profound impact on the person's psychological wellbeing. People may experience many different emotional and physical reactions which can vary in severity depending on their personal situation and the degree of loss the person may have experienced.

## **Common reactions experienced during and following a major or prolonged emergency can include:**

- feelings of fear, sadness or anger;
- feeling overwhelmed;
- feeling numb, detached or withdrawn;
- difficulty with focusing attention and concentration;
- difficulty planning ahead;
- tearfulness;
- unwanted and recurring memories or bad dreams related to the event;
- sleep problems
- constant questioning – “What if I had done x, y or z, instead?” and “What will happen now?”
- ‘replaying’ the event and inventing different outcomes in order to be prepared should it happen again.

Some people also react by not feeling anything at all, by having difficulties in making decisions or by isolating themselves from others. Some people increase their intake of alcohol or other substances to escape the pain they are feeling.

These reactions can be quite strong and are often at their worst early on in the emergency. In most cases, they fade over the following weeks, although the person may experience them from time to time for a much longer period. However, if at any time these reactions seriously affect a person's ability to participate in day-to-day activities at home or once back at work, it's important to discuss it with a health professional.

## **Guilt**

An emergency can result in loss which leaves some people with feelings of guilt. Guilt can be common after disasters and health emergencies and can become a problem if these feelings are extreme or prolonged. Guilt can also get in the way of asking for help (e.g., “Others need it more than I do”).

# DEALING WITH THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF EMERGENCIES

Following an emergency, it's important to find ways to regain a sense of safety and control. People often need to have access to a safe and secure environment, to find out what happened to family members and friends and to have access to relevant services. There are steps you can take to make the situation more manageable for you and your loved ones.

## Helping yourself

### → **Spend time connecting with family and friends.**

Spending time connecting with close friends and loved ones is critical following an emergency, whether you're able to do so in person or virtually. Ensure that you have regular contact with people whom you trust and who support you. Ask for practical help and support when you need it – people often want to help and appreciate knowing what you need.

### → **Try to get back to a routine.**

This is very important, particularly if you have children. It can be hard at first because life may be chaotic, but try to think of ways you can re-establish a routine as soon as possible – for example, eat at the same time you would normally eat each day.

### → **Try to be healthy.**

Although your life might be disrupted right now, do what you can to eat a balanced diet and get some regular exercise – go for a walk! Evidence shows regular exercise can improve one's mood. Looking after your body will help you gain the strength you will need to get through this challenging time. Also, try to balance exercise with regular rest, relaxation and adequate sleep.

### → **Take time out.**

Do things that you enjoy and find a new enjoyable activity if needed. This sounds simple, but often after an emergency enjoyable activities become low priority. It's important, despite it all, to take part in enjoyable activities. You may find it useful to use the worksheet at the back of this booklet to help plan some enjoyable activities.

### → **Limit the amount of media coverage you watch, listen to, or read.**

While getting information is important, watching or listening to news bulletins too frequently can cause distress.

→ **Write down your worries.**

You may find it helpful to write down your worries and concerns and use the problem-solving worksheet at the back of this booklet to identify some practical steps you can take to address those issues. Identify the specific feelings you are experiencing and the concern/worry that may be underlying each of these feelings.

→ **Express your feelings.**

For some people, writing about their experience can be helpful, particularly if they find it difficult to talk about it. Although some distress is normal during this process, if you find writing down your experience too distressing or overwhelming, don't continue. There are many other ways to express your feelings that you may find helpful, such as drawing, painting, playing music, making collages etc.

→ **Accept help when it's offered.**

When emergencies occur, they often affect people who have never before had a reason to access government or crisis support services. Getting help can be uncomfortable for some people who are not used to asking for or accepting assistance. However, there is no reason not to accept the kindness of others now – you would help them if the situation was reversed.

→ **Don't expect to have the answers.**

When something unexpected happens, there are no guarantees about how the future will turn out. It is normal to feel unsure and confused.

→ **Connect with others.**

Grief, loss and shock, sadness and stress, can make you feel like isolating yourself from others. It may be helpful to remember that many people are feeling the same as you and will share your journey of recovery. Shutting yourself off from others is unlikely to make the situation any better.

→ **Have a plan for anniversaries or other triggering events, like holidays.**

Throughout the year, anniversaries and holidays may trigger strong emotional responses, especially if media coverage is significant. You may find these periods of time difficult, so it can be helpful to have a plan. Limit your exposure to media coverage, schedule moments with relaxing and enjoyable activities, and make sure you have people to support you.

→ **Plan for the future.**

Emergencies will happen. When you are ready, you can use your experience to be more prepared should you ever be involved in an emergency again. The Red Cross has useful information available at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) to help you prepare. You can also make a plan with Public Safety Canada's *Get Prepared step-by-step online guide*. Available online [www.getprepared.gc.ca/](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/)

**There may be a temptation to cope with trauma after an emergency by engaging in unhelpful activities that are likely to get in the way of your recovery from the event.**

→ **Using alcohol or other substances to cope**

Although these may make you feel better in the short term, overuse or prolonged use of alcohol or drugs can cause serious problems for you and your loved ones.

→ **Keeping yourself busy and working too much**

Keeping busy is good up to a point, but throwing yourself into work or other activities as a way of avoiding painful feelings can be unhelpful in the long term.

→ **Engaging in stressful family or work situations**

Sometimes these are hard to avoid, but, whenever possible, try to reduce stressful interactions between you, your loved ones and friends.

→ **Withdrawing from family and friends**

It's okay to allow yourself some time on your own if you need it, but try not to spend too much time alone.

→ **Stopping yourself from doing things that you enjoy**

Sometimes, after emergencies, people feel they should not enjoy themselves in the midst of so much suffering. That doesn't help anyone – it's good for you and others to try to participate regularly in enjoyable, and sometimes adapted, activities.

→ **Avoid talking about what happened**

Not everyone is ready to talk at the same time, but most people find that it's very helpful to talk to someone they can trust about what happened and how they are coping.

→ **Taking risks or making major life decisions**

Often, after experiencing an emergency or trauma, people take unnecessary risks or make significant decisions about relationships, accommodation or work. This is not a good time to be making those decisions – take your time.

# WHEN THE REACTION OR DISTRESS DOESN'T SETTLE

While it is normal for people who have experienced a emergency to go through a range of emotional reactions, for some people the distress persists and they may be at risk of developing a mental health problem, such as:

- depression
- prolonged or complicated grief
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- other anxiety disorders
- problems with alcohol and/or drugs.

People who have experienced deeply upsetting things, may take a long time to adjust to these changes and regain a sense of normality.

There are signs to look for in yourself and in others to indicate that what you are experiencing may be beyond a normal reaction.

## Warning signs

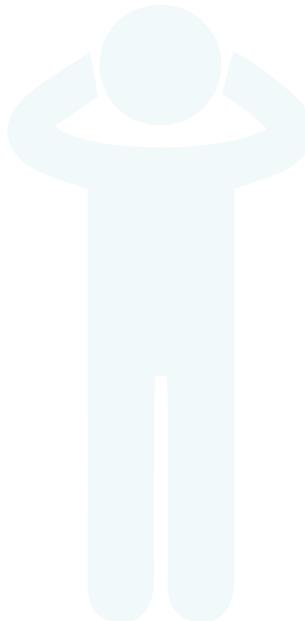
If you or someone you know experiences any of the following symptoms at any time, seek professional help:

- If the distress feels extreme or interferes with the person's ability to participate in day-to-day activities
- Feeling overwhelming fear for no obvious reason
- Panic symptoms: increased heart rate, breathlessness, shakiness, dizziness and a sudden urge to go to the toilet
- Avoiding things that bring back memories of what happened to the point where day-to-day tasks cannot be carried out
- Excessive guilt about things that were or weren't said or done
- Loss of hope or interest in the future
- Thoughts of ending one's life or self-harming.

**As a general rule, it's a good idea to seek help if you think that you are not coping. You should speak to a health professional if:**

- your problems seem too severe
- the emotional reactions are lasting too long
- you're finding it difficult to engage in day-to-day activities or get along with family and friends.

Many people find that one or more visits to a counsellor, spiritual leader, health professional or psychologist greatly assists their recovery. Making the decision to access professional assistance if you need it is a wise choice that can often help you to regain emotional strength and resilience.



# HOW FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN HELP

## → **Give them a break.**

Recognise that the person has just been through an extremely stressful event. He/she will need time and space to acknowledge the extent of the losses. You can help by doing practical things, like picking up groceries, etc. It's important to remember that people may need support from friends and family members for a considerable amount of time.

## → **Be sensitive.**

If people have escaped with minimal damage to their property and/or health, it's not helpful to say: "Well, at least you still have your house/life/health." They have been through a distressing event and it may make the person feel worse to be singled out as "the lucky one" when friends and neighbours have suffered greater losses.

## → **Choose your news.**

It can be tempting to obsess over news coverage, but too much exposure can be upsetting – particularly for teenagers and children. If the images are distressing the person, turn the TV off and do something else.

## → **Talk it through.**

Try not to gloss over or downplay what happened and do not discourage the person from talking about what they have been through. Offer the person a shoulder to cry on and a sympathetic ear. On the flip-side, it's also important not to press the person to remember or describe the event, or talk about feelings if he/she isn't ready. Sometimes, people say things that are meant to be helpful, but instead the comments just leave the person feeling more isolated and misunderstood. For example, it's not helpful to say: "You just need to get on with your life" or "I know how you feel."

## → **Get help.**

If the symptoms are persisting or causing significant distress, encourage the person to seek extra support from others, such as your health professional, spiritual leaders, psychologists, social workers, support organizations and/or mental health organizations.

## → **Keep it simple.**

Remember that providing support doesn't have to be complicated. It often involves simple gestures connecting, including virtually, to play games, laugh, or share a meal.

## → **Take care of yourself.**

It can be very trying looking after someone else and sometimes, we forget to look after ourselves. Be aware of your own health – physical and mental. If you're feeling run down or stressed, talk to a doctor and seek support from others.

## THE SILVER LINING

It may help to know that the vast majority of people going through emergencies recover by drawing on personal strengths and the love and support of family members, friends, neighbours and the wider community. Often, we can see adaptive coping and other positive outcomes from these experiences. Many people who have lived through an emergency develop new skills and view themselves and their families in a more positive light, place less importance on material possessions, develop closer bonds with their community and feel a sense of pride in their recovery.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Canadian Mental Health Association:** For links to support and resources in your area.

**Canadian Psychological Association:** For links to important information and psychologists in your area.

**Canadian Association of Social Workers:** To find a social worker in your area.  
1-855-729-CASW (2279)

**Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association:** To find a certified (registered) counsellor in your area.

**2-1-1:** Call 211 for community-based health and social services.

**Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868

**Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention:** For links to crisis centres in your province or territory.

**First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** 1-855-242-3310

**Public Health Agency of Canada:** For additional supportive resources and links to your provincial and territorial health ministry.

**Public Safety Canada:** For more information and links to provincial and territorial emergency management.

# WORKSHEET 1: CHOOSING ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

After an emergency, people often stop doing things that used to be enjoyable, rewarding or personally meaningful. It's hard to remember to take time for yourself, but taking the time to engage in pleasant activities is important.

There are so many tasks people must carry out following an emergency. Trying to take care of all the details while you may be coping with difficult feelings can quickly drain your emotional and physical energy. By taking care of yourself, eventually you will not only feel better, you will be able to do all of those day-to-day things that must be done.

## Some activities to consider, as allowed:

INDOOR ACTIVITIES	OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON)	COMMUNITY REBUILDING ACTIVITIES
Reading	Going for a walk	Calling a friend	Fixing up a park, playground
Drawing/painting	Playing a sport	Lunch with a friend	Doing something as a tribute
Listening to music	Visiting a park	Contacting family	Cleaning a neighbour's yard
Watching a movie	Walking a dog	Meeting new people	Helping in a fundraiser
Writing in a journal	Gardening	Learning a new hobby	Minding a friend's children
Computer time (games, internet)	Swimming	Emailing, texting, blogging, chatting online	Helping to repair a community building

This list is intended to give you ideas about things that you might enjoy doing. You do not need to stick to the things on the list. Take some time to pick some activities you want to try or consider a few that are not included on this list. It's helpful to pick at least one activity you can do by yourself or with someone else, virtually or in person, depending on the guidance of public authorities. Think about activities that you have enjoyed or found meaningful in the past.

## STEP 1: REVIEW THE ACTIVITY LIST

→ Create a list of at least five activities that you want to try. Think about some of the things that worked in the past to make you feel better.

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## STEP 2: PICK AN ACTIVITY TO DO

→ You may pick more than one, but at least pick one. Find a day and a time when you can engage in this activity over the next week. Write it in on the calendar below.

MONDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
TUESDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
WEDNESDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
THURSDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
FRIDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
SATURDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
SUNDAY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## STEP 3: MAKE A PLAN

Take a few minutes to think about what you need to do to make sure that you will be able to do the activity that you have chosen. Review the questions below and make them part of your plan.

→ Do you want or need to ask someone to do this activity with you? Is it something you can do virtually?

→ Do you need anything to help you do this activity (e.g. sports equipment)?

→ How will you handle any feelings you might have that may make it difficult for you to engage in the activity? (Some of these feelings might include grief or loss, lack of energy, or guilt about doing an enjoyable activity when there are other important tasks you need to complete.)

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## WORKSHEET 2: PROBLEM SOLVING

This worksheet will help you to break down problems into more manageable pieces, help you to prioritise problems and decide the best action to take.

### STEP 1: DEFINE THE PROBLEM

→ What is the problem I want to work on first?

If you need to narrow down which problem to focus on first, it can help to ask yourself:

- Which problem is really bothering me the most?
- Is there one that I really need to deal with sooner than the others?
- Is there one that is getting worse? Is there a problem that I feel most comfortable working on first?

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→ Take a minute to ask yourself these questions about the problem:

- a. Is it happening to me/Is it between me and someone else?      yes / no
- b. Is it happening to someone else?      yes / no
- c. Is it happening between two or more other people?      yes / no

(If you circled 'yes' to a, this is likely to be a good problem for you to work on. If you circled 'yes' to b or c, this may not be a problem that you can fix. This may be a situation for someone else to work on.)

### STEP 2: SET THE GOAL

- What do I hope to see happen if the problem gets resolved?
- What would a successful outcome to this problem look like to me?

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Sometimes, a problem can be too big to tackle all at once. Ask yourself:

→ What pieces or steps could I break the problem into to make it more manageable?

## STEP 3: BRAINSTORMING

→ What are some possible solutions to the problem?

(Don't judge your ideas. Write down any solution that comes to mind, even those solutions that may not have worked in the past or that sound unrealistic).

## STEP 4: EVALUATE AND CHOOSE THE BEST SOLUTIONS

→ What are the best solutions from your brainstorming list?

It may be helpful to ask the opinion of someone you trust.

## STEP 5: **MAKE IT HAPPEN**

→ Which action steps will I commit to in the next several days?

## THE CANADIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

Visit [redcross.ca](http://redcross.ca) for more information on how to contact your local Red Cross office.



## THE DISASTER PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICE: PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID TELEPHONE SUPPORT

### Need to talk with Someone?

It is normal to feel stressed when faced with difficult situations. Many people find that it can be helpful to speak to someone who understands what they are going through. The Disaster Psychosocial Program (DPS) offers *psychological first aid* if you need to talk to someone about how you are feeling.

### What is the Disaster Psychosocial Program?

The **Disaster Psychosocial Program** is a service of the Provincial Health Services Authority that supports communities when they are affected by emergencies and disasters. This is not a regular service but is temporarily 'activated' to provide psychosocial support when communities are affected by events such as flooding or wildfires. It consists of mental health professionals or paraprofessionals who volunteer their time during disasters or similar events.

### What is Psychological First Aid?

Psychological First Aid is not counselling or therapy. It is a brief telephone call to provide individuals with information and strategies to help them cope with the stress associated with a disaster. Psychological First Aid is designed to help people who usually cope well with daily life but may be feeling overwhelmed during a very difficult and stressful time. It is a practical tool for you to use.

### What to Expect

The DPS volunteer who speaks with you will not keep notes on the content of your conversation. The DPS program will not be keeping a record of your name or contact details.

If you do not answer, the volunteer will leave a brief message for you, and your name will remain at the top of the "active list" so that another volunteer can call you later during that day or next morning.

### Emergency Care and Crisis Situations

The volunteers do not provide emergency mental health services. If you are or a person you care about is in crisis, we will refer you to another service to help you. If you are experiencing an immediate crisis, please call a crisis line:

Toll free: 1-866-661-3311 or 1-800-784-2433 Youth/Adult or TTY: 1-866-872-0113 or Senior's Distress: 604-872-1234 or call 911.

## HOW TO ACCESS PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

- A DPS volunteer is available for you to speak with between 9AM and 8PM. The phone number is 604-314-2532.
- You can also request support by writing to [dpsprogram@phsa.ca](mailto:dpsprogram@phsa.ca) and requesting a telephone support call.
- Please leave a number where you can be reached and advise if you do not want a message left for you.
- If the volunteer is unable to reach you they will leave a brief message and will call again later.
- The volunteer will try to reach you within 72 hours of your initial request. This service is only provided after a disaster or other emergency.

## CONCERN OR COMPLAINTS

We care about how you are supported. Please contact the DPS program office at [dpsprogram@phsa.ca](mailto:dpsprogram@phsa.ca) and we will follow up with your concern or complaint.

## 211 British Columbia

*Excerpt from 211 BC Website*

### Stress and Mental Well-being

Through 310Mental Health Support, the Crisis Line Association of BC (CLABC) offers 24-hour emotional support, information on appropriate referral options, and a wide range of support relating to mental health concerns. Call 310-6789 (no area code required).

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) offers [mental health tips](#) for you and your family on coping with a natural disaster emergency.

[BounceBack](#) is a free skill-building program from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) designed to help adults and youth 13+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress, or worry.

# Coping through a natural disaster emergency

## mental health tips for you and your family

Having to flee your home, leave animals or possessions behind and relocating can cause distress, fear and anxiety for you and your loved ones. Remember that these are some of the most stressful events one can experience. Whether you are coping with fire, flood, earthquake or an other emergency dealing with your physical safety, here are some proven tips to help you cope with the mental stress of a natural disaster.

### Take care of the basics

Try to eat well and get enough sleep. Sleep and nutrition are more important than ever.

### Be kind to yourself

Set realistic expectations and be patient with yourself and others.

### Give and accept support

Expect to feel angry, sad, confused or just numb—and talk to others about it.



### Get back to your daily routine

Doing things as simple as brushing your teeth can help restore a sense of safety and control.



### Take a break

Take breaks from disaster news coverage and from thinking and talking about the events.

**Check in on older people around you.** Coping may be more difficult for older adults living alone, those with mental health problems or with few social supports. Reaching out to connect with them can be a big help.

[more tips >](#)

### When to seek more help

Most people, if given support, will recover almost completely from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience within a few weeks. However, some will need more help to heal. It's important to watch for the following signs and contact a medical professional if they last more than 2 to 4 weeks:

- Trouble with sleeping and eating
- Feeling depressed or hopeless, showing low energy or crying often
- Being anxious and fearful
- Trouble focusing on daily activities
- Recurring thoughts or nightmares about the event
- Avoiding activities or places that are reminders of the event

### If you are struggling right now

BC's Mental Health Support Line is open to talk you through the problem, 24 hours a day at 310-6789 (no area code). This service is provided by the Distress Line Network of BC.

### About the Canadian Mental Health Association

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is the most established, most extensive community mental health organization in Canada. Through a presence in hundreds of neighbourhoods across every province, CMHA provides advocacy and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience, and enable all Canadians to flourish and thrive.



Canadian Mental Health Association  
British Columbia  
*Mental health for all*

[www.cmha.bc.ca](http://www.cmha.bc.ca)

# Helping Younger Children Ages 5 and younger

Provide concrete explanations

For example: "The wind broke a tree branch, and it fell on an electrical line. That's why the lights don't work."

Let them know there are good people helping

Encourage them to help if they can, or send thank you letters to those who helped.

Expect a return to younger behaviours

Typical responses can include crying, whimpering, trembling and clinging. They may also show younger behaviours such as thumb-sucking, bedwetting and fear of darkness. Let them know this is okay.



Reassure them that you will keep them safe

Find ways to protect them from further harm and exposure to upsetting images. Avoid too much disaster news.

# Helping Older Children Ages 6 to 11

Ask them what they understand and how they feel about it

Fears are often based on misinformation.

Allow them to ask questions

But try not to focus on it too long—focus on the present instead. It's okay to say if you don't know.

Try to keep a regular routine with activities, meals and bedtime

Allow kids to play with friends. Routine can be very reassuring.

Allow them to make decisions and feel in control

It's even more important to give them choices on what to wear, eat, etc.

Allow them to cry or be angry

You may also notice withdrawal, disruptive behaviour, or inability to pay attention. Nightmares, irrational fears or outbursts of anger are also common after trauma. Let them know it's normal to feel upset.



Be honest with your feelings so they know it's ok to express theirs

Spend extra time with them. Tell them it can take time to overcome loss or trauma.

# Helping Adolescents Ages 12 to 17

Acknowledge their feelings

They may experience flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance, depression, substance use and anti-social behaviour. Ask how you can support them.

Encourage them to help in the community

Community spirit and rebuilding can be very uplifting, and can help them feel useful rather than helpless.

Ensure that they are patient with themselves and others

Disaster recovery can be a long, slow process.



Some may be more vulnerable

The impact of a traumatic event is likely to be greatest if they previously have been the victim of abuse or trauma, or have had a mental health problem. Be prepared to offer extra support.