City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To:	Community Safety Committee	**Date:**	March 28, 2014
From:	Ted Townsend Senior manager, Corporate Communications	**File:**	
Re:	Emergency Information Plan		

Staff Recommendation

That the Emergency Information Plan, as required under the British Columbia Emergency Program Act, be approved.

Ted Townsend
Senior Manager, Corporate Communications
(4399)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

The British Columbia Emergency Program Act and the Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation state that *a local authority must, as part of the local Emergency Management Plan prepared by it under section 6 (2) of the Act",... "establish procedures by which those persons who may be harmed or who may suffer loss are notified of an emergency or impending disaster.*

In support of this requirement the Emergency Information Plan was adopted by Council in March 2007. Since that time, there have been extensive changes in communications best practises for emergencies, and this update was developed to ensure those changes are reflected in the City's emergency planning. The Emergency Information Plan is the guide for providing emergency information to those impacted by the disaster; internal communications to staff and key stakeholders; and to support media relations activities.

The Plan supports Council Term Goal 1:

> *To ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in, through the delivery of effective public safety services that are targeted to the City's specific needs and priorities.*

Analysis

Responses to emergencies of all sizes have demonstrated that one of the greatest demands is the need for information. During an emergency, the City is inundated with requests from the public and the media for information. Emergency responders also have a critical need for timely and accurate information to effectively direct resources and operations.

In recent years, the prevalence of the Internet and the advent of social media and mobile devices have further heightened the importance of information during an emergency. Information now moves instantaneously and can become viral in its reach. The public has information constantly at its fingertips through mobile devices. Important information can be shared and residents can be mobilized much more quickly. However, misinformation can also spread more easily and critical messaging can easily be lost in the tidal wave of information.

While the Emergency Information Plan is a living document that is constantly evolving, a thorough overhaul was required to ensure it reflected current best practises, as it has been seven years since the plan was reviewed and formally adopted by Council. The updated Plan:

- Creates a framework to address media relations, coordination and monitoring, internal communications and the provision of public information.

- Establishes an Emergency Information Team to coordinate messaging and delivery, including their roles and responsibilities.

- Provides for activation of an emergency call centre to handle increased call volume, and a media centre to coordinate media requests, as required.

- Incorporates the use of social media for information gathering and dissemination.

- Establishes guidelines for the verification, approval and dissemination of information.

- Provides templates for communications and reference materials.

- Establishes training requirements for designated staff.

<u>Next Steps</u>

To implement the updated plan, the next steps include:

- **Training** - Orientation and media training sessions will be held to provide staff with designated roles and responsibilities an understanding of the emergency information functions as established by the plan and skills for working with the media. Additional media training will be provided for those staff who may act as spokespersons in an emergency situation.

- **Emergency Call Centre Operational Guide** – An update of the Emergency Call Centre Operational Guide is underway to provide staff with activation procedures, equipment instructions and step-by-step procedures and tools for operating the call centre.

- **Emergency Media Centre Operational Guide** – Development of an Emergency Media Centre Operational Guide is underway to provide staff with activation procedures, equipment instructions and step-by-step procedures and tools for operating the Media Centre.

- **Exercises** – Additional drills, tabletop and functional exercises will be held to familiarize staff with their roles, provide them with hands-on experience and to test the Emergency Call Centre Operational Guide and equipment. It is anticipated an exercise will be held in conjunction with this year's BC Shakeout province-wide earthquake drill in October, in which elements of the Emergency Information Plan will be tested.

Financial Impact

None; All activities are funded within the existing budget.

Conclusion

The Emergency Information Plan represents a comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing the dissemination of information during emergencies and disasters and addresses Council's legislative requirements under the BC Emergency Program Act.

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Emergency Information Plan

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1. Plan Approval and Authority

1.1 Plan Approval

As per the provisions of the Emergency Program Act, the original City of Richmond Emergency Information Plan dated March 20, 2014 was adopted by Council by Resolution No. XX, as the method for providing emergency information to impacted individuals during an emergency or impending disaster.

1.2 Plan Authority

1.2.1 Legislative Requirements

The Emergency Information Plan has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Emergency Program Act (RSBC 1996) of British Columbia and the associated Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation (BC Reg. 380/95). The regulation stipulates that:

- "A local authority must, as part of the local emergency plan prepared by it under section 6 (2) of the Act, …establish procedures by which those persons who may be harmed or who may suffer loss are notified of an emergency or impending disaster."

This legislation also outlines that the local authority must:

- Prepare local emergency plans respecting preparation for, response to and recovery from the potential emergencies and disasters that could affect our jurisdiction.
- Establish and maintain an emergency management organization.
- Provide policy guidance and direction to the emergency management organization and procedures by which that guidance and direction is to be provided.
- Establish and maintain all emergency response staff assigned roles and responsibilities in the plan, including a training and exercise program.
- Coordinate the provision of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical services to victims of emergencies and disasters.
- Identify the procedures by which emergency resources can be obtained.
- Recommend to service providers the priorities for restoration of essential services not provided by the City.
- Require a periodic review and updating of the emergency plans.

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Local Legislation and Agreements

Richmond City Council has approved the bylaws and agreements relevant to corporate and departmental emergency management as outlined in the following table:

Document Number	Name	Date Approved by Council
Bylaw 7898	Emergency Management Organization Establishment	March 14, 2005
Bylaw 6797	Emergency Communications Services – authorizes membership in E-Comm	October 27, 1997
REDMS 135090	Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement	February 14, 2000
Bylaw 6553	Agreements – Mutual Aid Fire Fighting Services	November 14, 1995
	Municipal Police Unit Agreement	April 1, 2012
Bylaw 7435	Pollution Prevention & Cleanup Regulation Bylaw	February 10, 2003

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2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose and Scope

The Emergency Information Plan is designed to enhance emergency response and recovery efforts by outlining a strategy to provide prompt, coordinated and accurate information to all internal and external stakeholders in the event of an emergency or disaster. This plan is intended to be used by a core group of City of Richmond leaders, managers and staff, whose efforts must be coordinated on short notice, and conceivably under intense pressure.

Using the Emergency Information Plan as a guide, the City will assume lead responsibility for all communications for incidents which occur within the City of Richmond and for which the City has direct jurisdictional authority. Where an emergency or disaster occurs within the geographic limits of Richmond but is not within of the City's authority, the City will assume a supportive role, e.g. airplane crash on airport lands.

Implementation of the Emergency Information Plan is the responsibility of the Senior Information Officer, under the direction of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Director, as designated within the Emergency Management Plan. The Senior Manager, Corporate Communications is designated as the Senior Information Officer in the Emergency Management Plan.

The Emergency Information Plan is based on the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) standards and has adopted the response objectives, structure and functions prescribed. Specifically, the plan:

- Provides a framework to address:
  o Public notification and information
  o Media relations and coordination
  o Internal communications
  o Media monitoring
  o Social media
- Establishes an Emergency Information Team under the direction of the Senior Information Officer to coordinate and implement information gathering and communications to public, media and other key stakeholders.
- Assigns roles and responsibilities for the Emergency Information Team, key departments and response agencies.
- Establishes guidelines for verification, approval and dissemination of information.
- Introduces the concept of a Joint Information Centre to facilitate effective and coordinated messaging where multiple agencies, including the City, are involved.

The Emergency Information Plan is supported by a number of other documents, which includes operational guidelines for an Emergency Call Centre and Media Centre, contact lists, reference materials and templates for communications materials that may be used in an emergency situation.

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2.2 Assumptions

The Emergency Information Plan is based on the following assumptions:

1. Richmond City Hall will be functional and able to support the Emergency Operations Centre, Emergency Call Centre and Media Centre.

2. Communication tools and mechanisms will be sufficiently operable to support the delivery of public information, e.g. internet, website, PCs, wireless networks, phones and cell phones.

3. The Information Technology department and/or the Logistics Section of the Emergency Operations Centre will provide technical communications support.

4. External agencies identified in this plan will have the capacity to deliver public information pertaining to their areas of responsibility.

5. Staff or their appointed alternates with identified roles and responsibilities within this plan will be available to carry out their duties as described.

6. Staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities, and participate in training and exercises.

2.3 Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis

2.3.1 Hazard Identification

The City's Emergency Planning Committee has identified the most probable threats/hazards that could impact our community.

This list of hazards guides our emergency management efforts including public education programs, information provided on our website and pre-scripting key messages to the community for each of the hazards.

- Air crash
- CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives)
- Critical infrastructure failure
- Dangerous goods spills
- Earthquake
- Flooding
- Medical emergency (pandemic, epidemic)
- Severe weather

2.3.2 Demographics

The dynamic composition of Richmond's community poses some unique challenges for the dissemination of information to the public in an emergency. A variety of languages are spoken in Richmond. With many residents speaking various languages, the Emergency Operations Centre and Emergency Information Team need to be prepared to respond to this challenge. To address this issue, Section 4.5 of this plan provides a list of resources for translation services.

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3. Concept of Operations

3.1 Activation

The EOC Director, Senior Information Officer or other members of the Emergency Operations Centre Management Group, as established in the Emergency Management Bylaw No. 7898, have the authority to activate this plan at any time.

When the EOC or key functions of this plan, such as the Emergency Call Centre, are activated, all **EOC members** will be immediately notified of details: if they are needed, location to report to, time to report, first steps, routes, parking, etc. Once this is done the **media, public and all employees** will be notified via news release, email, social media or other means.

EOC Activated

Emergency communications support may be required at the site(s) of the actual incident. An Incident Information Officer will be designated or assigned to provide this support. The Incident Information Officer will report directly to the Senior Information Officer who manages emergency communication needs for public, staff and media. Situation updates will be communicated between the Incident Commander and the EOC Director or Operations Section Chief.

Media support may also be required at official emergency reception centres or shelters if activated and an Incident Information Officer may be assigned to assist staff at those facilities.

EOC Not Activated

Activation of the Emergency Operations Centre may not be required in all emergencies. However, resources and procedures identified within the Emergency Management Plan and the Emergency Information Plan may be required to manage the situation. The Incident Commander will notify and keep Corporate Communications apprised of the situation, as needed. When notified, Corporate Communications will serve as the communications link between site operations and senior management.

3.2 Levels of Response

The Emergency Information Plan has three response levels. At the onset of the emergency, the Incident Commander, Senior Information Officer and/or EOC Director, will conduct a situation assessment and based on the scale of the emergency, and anticipated level of public concern and media interest, will determine to which of the three response levels this plan is to be activated.

Level 1 – Minor Incident

A minor incident is a small event that is limited to one site, a limited threat to public safety or the reputation of the community, elected officials, administration or emergency response personnel, and limited need for dissemination of information to staff and public.

If the incident is minor, the plan is activated to Level 1 and emergency communications are handled on-site by the Incident Information Officer as appointed by the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is responsible for all aspects of emergency communication in a Level 1 incident and may consult with Corporate Communications as required.

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Level 2 – Moderate Incident

A moderate incident may involve multiple sites and/or various agencies; demonstrating a greater level of public interest, need for public information, and internal and interagency coordination.

In a Level 2 activation, the Senior Manager, Corporate Communications (or designated alternate) assumes the role of Senior Information Officer, as per the BCERMS response model, and is responsible for all aspects of emergency communication. The Senior Information Officer activates the Emergency Information Team for support as required. This team consists of:

- Information Coordinator
- Emergency Call Centre Coordinator(s)
- Media Centre Coordinators
- Social Media Coordinator
- Incident Information Officer(s)
- Designated Spokesperson(s)
- Support staff for above

Activation of the Emergency Operations Centre is optional and is situation dependent. The Senior Information Officer, in conjunction with the EOC Director, will determine resources required to proactively and effectively manage communication. When the EOC is activated the EOC Director must approve all communications.

Level 3 – Major Incident

A major incident poses a significant threat to life. The level of public interest and demand for information is anticipated to be extremely high. All levels of political involvement are high and the City's performance or reputation may be in question.

A Level 3 response is considered a full activation of the Plan, where all functions are activated:

- Emergency Operations Centre
- Media Centre
- Social Media
- Media Monitoring
- Information Liaison
- Spokesperson(s)
- Emergency Call Centre
- Incident Information Officers
- Support staff for above

In a Level 3 activation, the Senior Information Officer coordinates all public information activities for review and approval by the EOC Director. The Liaison Officer at the EOC also supports the Senior Information Officer by liaising with local emergency agencies, and provincial and federal governments.

Examples of incidents that may require support, along with possible levels of response are shown in the table on the following page:

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Type of Incident	ACTIVATION LEVEL		
	Level 1 – Minor	Level 2 – Moderate	Level 3 – Major
EOC Activation	No EOC activation	Optional EOC activation	EOC activation
Criteria to consider	• Small event such as minor flooding • Single site • No threat to public safety • Little or no media interest • Minimal need for information amongst staff and public	• Medium sized event such as propane leak, major sink hole • Two or more sites • Several agencies involved • Limited evacuation • Increasing public and media interest	• Multiple incident sites • Regional disaster such as an earthquake, pandemic • Multiple injuries or fatalities • Multiple agencies involved • Large public and media response
Response measures	• Responding department can manage • Senior Information Officer works directly with responding department to address communication requirements • Internal, web, social media and media communications developed as needed	Optional activation of key functions: • Emergency Information Team • Media Centre • Emergency Call Centre • Social media • Media monitoring	All key functions activated: • Emergency Information Team • Media Centre • Emergency Call Centre • Social media • Media monitoring
Approval Level of all communications	All communications are coordinated by Corporate Communications and approved by lead member(s) of Senior Management Team and/or Chief Administrative Officer	EOC not activated: Coordinated Corporate Communications and approved by lead member(s) of Senior Management Team and/or Chief Administrative Officer EOC activated: Coordinated and approved by the **Senior Information Officer** and approved by the **EOC Director**	Coordinated and approved by the **Senior Information Officer** and approved by the **EOC Director**

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3.3 Emergency Information System

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ Internal/External│◄────►│     Emergency       │◄────►│   Web Master    │
│  Stakeholders    │      │ Operations Centre   │      │                 │
│                  │      │ Location: City Hall,│      │                 │
│                  │      │      M.2.004        │      │                 │
│                  │      │ Senior Information  │      │                 │
│                  │      │     Officer         │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│    Incident      │◄────►│    Media Centre     │◄────►│   Call Centre   │
│    Site(s)       │      │    Location:        │      │    Location:    │
│                  │      │ City Hall, M.1.002/ │      │ City Hall, T.6.132│
│                  │      │     1.003           │      │   604.247.4666  │
│                  │      │   604-247-4671      │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘

                                                       ┌─────────────────┐
                                                       │   Call Centre   │
                                                       │    Operators    │
                                                       └─────────────────┘

                         ┌─────────────────────┐
                         │   Media & Public    │
                         └─────────────────────┘
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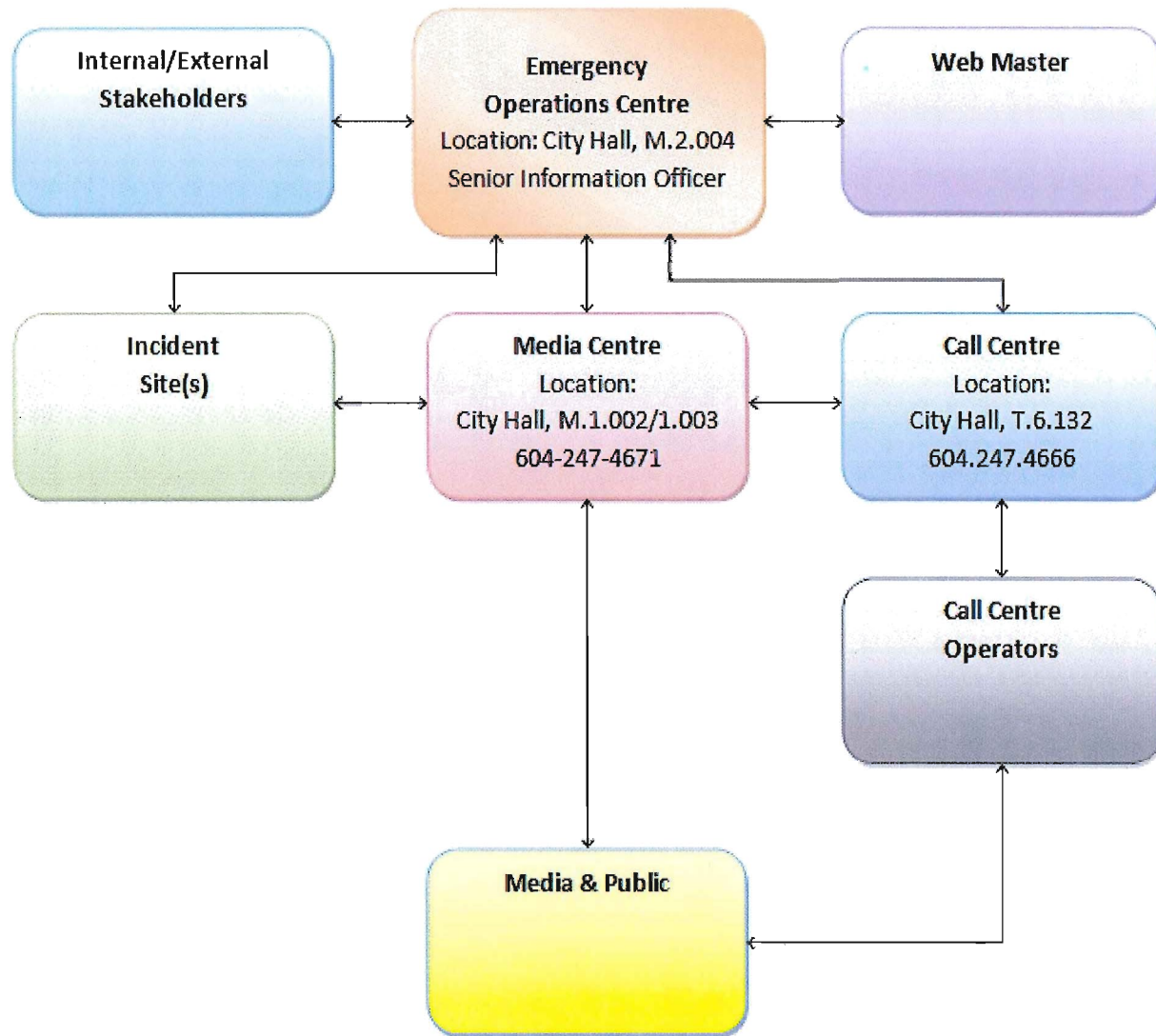
Site

The Incident Commander is responsible for the designation of an Incident Information Officer in consultation with the Senior Information Officer. The role of the Incident Information Officer(s) is to provide strategic communications support to the Incident Commander and first responders at the site; coordinate communications at the site, provide media briefings and tours at the site; and when activated, liaise with and coordinate key messages with the Emergency Operations Centre, through the Senior Information Officer.

Emergency Operations Centre

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is located at **City Hall** (6911 No. 3 Road) in the **2nd floor meeting room M.2.004**. It is imperative that information being provided during an emergency is coordinated to avoid conflicting messages and to ensure that the public is provided clear instructions, and accurate and timely information. The EOC supports the incident site(s) and serves as the central coordination point for all public information, media relations, and internal and external and inter-jurisdictional communications.

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Emergency Call Centre

The Emergency Call Centre is located at **City Hall** (6911 No. 3 Road) in the **6th floor computer training room**. The Emergency Call Centre is established to handle the increased call volume from the public and staff during an emergency or disaster.

The Emergency Call Centre will be staffed by employees dealing with the public on the frontlines. Emergency Call Centre procedures have been developed to provide call centre staff with instructions for activating the centre, handling public inquiries and tracking requests for information and service. Copies of the Emergency Call Centre Operational Guide are held by the designated Emergency Call Centre Coordinators and the Senior Information Officer and alternates.

Media Centre

The Media Centre is located at **City Hall** (6911 No. 3 Road) on the **1st floor of the Public Meeting Space** in **Rooms M.1.002 and M.1.003**. The media centre acts as a central gathering place to provide media with a functional working space and designated space to allow the City to provide the media and public with consistent, clear and timely communication through media conferences, briefings and interviews.

It is set up and managed by designated Media Centre Coordinators, as directed by the Senior Information Officer. The Media Centre takes media pressure off the EOC where strategic decisions are being made. Spokespersons and the Media Centre Coordinators will be briefed before attending the Media Centre. An Emergency Media Centre Operational Guide has been developed which includes instructions, checklists, forms and templates, procedures and equipment required to implement the operations of the centre. Copies of this Guide have been provided to designated Media Centre Coordinators, Senior Information Officer and designates.

Accessory equipment required to operate the Media Centre, along with a copy of the Emergency Media Centre Operational Guide are stored in the office of the Senior Manager, Corporate Communications on the 2nd floor of City Hall.

Offsite Media Centre

Depending on the nature and scope of an emergency, circumstances may dictate that media conferences or briefings be held outside of City Hall nearer the Incident Site or other locations. The Emergency Media Centre Operational Guide provides for this possibility and additional equipment has been set aside for this purpose and is stored at the same location as official Media Centre equipment.

Joint Information Centre

During very large-scale events with a high demand for information and where multiple agencies are involved, a Joint Information Centre (JIC) may be established, either virtually or physically by the lead agency. The JIC will serve as a clearinghouse for all emergency information to ensure accuracy, consistency and clarity in messaging.

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Information Officers from various organizations involved in the emergency can share and exchange critical emergency information, participate to create standardized emergency messaging, discuss concerns regarding discrepancies or gaps in emergency information, and participate in centralized media briefings, as required or appropriate.

The actual method of operating a JIC – physical or virtual – will be determined in each emergency situation based on the available resources, such as physical location, host agency or administrator for the function, and the needs, practicality and accessibility to participants.

The advantage of a JIC is that it ensures participants have the most current and accurate information about the overall event and any specific incidents, from the multiple perspectives of the various participants. For this reason, the primary objective of a JIC is the coordination of information, following a collaborative model, rather than the 'command and control' of information; ultimate authority to release or manage information ultimately comes back to the individual responsibilities of the various participating agencies.

3.4 Methods of Communication

Internal and external communications and media relations tools used to disseminate information, will include, but are not limited to:

- Web and social media postings
- News releases
- Public service announcements
- Backgrounders and FAQ sheets
- Video

Methods of delivery to be used include:

- City website and social media
- Email
- News conference, media briefings and interviews

Templates and sample news releases have been developed to support implementation of the Emergency Information Plan.

The following tools and services will also be used to support media relations activities and the operations of the Emergency Information Plan:

Internal Communications

Email, Intranet postings, phone or direct face-to-face communication provide the quickest and most effective ways to reach most staff. When communicating to staff about Emergency situations, priority should be given to briefing City Council, the Chief Administrative Officer and Senior Management Team on an as needed basis as determined by the EOC Director and Senior Information Officer.

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Priority should also be given to providing information to Front of House and Dispatch staff, along with Administration reception and Councillor's Office staff as these frontline staff are most likely to encounter questions and concerns from the general public and other staff. Direct communication by email, phone or in person are the best practises in this case.

Emergency Notification System

The City will be implementing an emergency public notification system. Once launched, this web and GIS based system will support the quick dissemination of information to segments of the community and notification of internal staff and volunteers, by broadcasting brief messages via the telephone, cell phone, pagers and email. Primary users of the system will include first response agencies and partners – Emergency Management Office, RCMP and Crime Watch, Richmond Health Services, Richmond Fire Rescue, and Public Works.

The capacity of the system is determined by the number of calls being made as well as the length of the message. Possible scenarios for usage include localized chemical spills, missing children alerts, crime watch notifications and boil water advisories.

As the City has only partial access to phone and email information of the public, citizens will have to enrol to ensure all their points of contact (phone, cell phones and email) are available to the City in case of emergency. As some citizens may not register, this system is considered complimentary to the other communication activities which will take place to help ensure comprehensive dissemination of information.

Corporate Website

The City's corporate website (www.richmond.ca) is an essential tool for providing information to all audiences. A regularly updated website can minimize the call volume for the emergency call centre and reduce the demand on the Emergency Information Team by providing key background information and directions, an archived or chronological listing of news releases and photo resources for the media. Pre-scripted messages are regularly updated and are ready for quick upload during an emergency.

In an emergency situation, existing website staff (as identified in the Emergency Information Plan) can provide assistance in posting emergency information. The Information Coordinator, as designated in the Emergency Information Plan, would assume the lead responsibility for website postings, if activated. In addition, a number of Corporate Communications staff and other City staff have the ability to post notices to the City website, including the home page.

Social Media Channels

Social media channels are playing an increasingly significant role in communicating the real time status of emergencies – from the victims' perspective, the emergency service providers' and also from the media. Social media tools are being used at an increasing rate by emergency responders to both gather and disseminate information during emergencies. The public and media rely on social media to receive timely information at a time when other forms of communications may be inaccessible. Social media may be the only easily accessible information source for people during power outages or when they are away from home due to evacuations or other circumstances.

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Social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr provide a means for people to share information and reach a worldwide audience instantaneously.

The importance of social media falls in both monitoring social media sites to see what people are saying about the emergency, as well as contributing relevant, accurate, timely information to the existing conversations. Because of the nature of social media content (real time, contributed by anyone and everyone, viral dissemination), errors in fact and information occur. Caution must be taken to ensure errors in fact and communication are not amplified. The City plays a huge role in providing accurate, timely information, and will be considered a credible source.

The degree to which the City will utilize social media tools will depend on both the scope of emergency and the resources available to allocate to these tools.

The City has developed a RichmondBCAlert Twitter account to support emergency communications. Emergency communications can also be distributed via the City's corporate Facebook page, our general Twitter account, and YouTube channel and/or affiliated social media channels. In the event it is deemed necessary/valuable, the City may implement additional social media channels, to compliment others noted in this plan. This plan designates a Social Media Coordinator and Social Media Assistant, who may be activated if required in an emergency. At all other times, social media emergency response will be co-managed by the Corporate Communications and Emergency Programs offices.

Corporate Intranet (Internal)

Internal communications is a priority. Keeping staff apprised of the situation can provide peace of mind, instil confidence, address questions from the public and help ensure staff are able to provide the continuity of the City's essential services.

The City's corporate intranet will be a primary tool used for internal communications to provide regular updates to our employees. In emergencies, the Senior Information Officer may also authorize use of an all send email to augment communications to staff.

Most City staff with access to the City's internal network can post on the intranet site. In emergency circumstances, there is the ability to create a highlighted posting at the top of the intranet home page for added prominence. Designated web staff are able to perform this function. In addition a number of Communications staff and Administration support staff have been provided with rights and training to post to the web site and to its home page.

The intranet is only accessible by those with a City email address; and through onsite work computers or off site via the City's VPN (assigned by request to a number of staff). This means that the intranet is most valuable during regular working hours when the majority of staff has access to real time and older posts. As such, additional employee communications will be required.

An Electronic Bulletin Board (Internal)

An electronic bulletin board is located outside at the City Works Yard and serves as a way of conveying messaging to employees who work out of this site. Most of these employees have outdoor jobs and have limited or no access to online mediums during the course their work day. Messaging on the bulletin board can be placed by contacting the Director, Public Works.

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Media Conferences / Media Briefings

Regular media conferences or briefings provide an important opportunity to get important messaging to the public and other stakeholders, through the broader audiences reached by media. It also provides an opportunity to provide media with updated facts key messaging and images.

Media conferences are generally considered more formal in nature with advanced notice and media kits may be prepared.

Media briefings are usually less formal in nature and may be held in the Media Centre or out in the field.

Both media conferences and briefings should be coordinated and:

- consider the best location for all who will be attending (e.g. spokespeople, the media);
- be planned with other jurisdiction agencies, in a multi-jurisdiction event, so each relevant spokesperson has the opportunity to get there and participate; and
- consider time for the media to arrive as well as holding it with the deadlines of the media outlets attending.

Depending upon the location of the media conference or briefing, additional equipment may be required for set-up. An inventory of support equipment and materials has been developed to support the staging of media conferences both within the designated Media Centre and at offsite locations.

Media Pool Coverage and Site Tours

In many emergencies, operational needs, privacy and other concerns will require that access to incident sites be controlled. However, providing media with access to an incident site can further support efforts to access important, accurate information. Media will strive to get images and information from as close to an incident as possible and may violate security boundaries and interfere with operations in attempting to get access. Failure to provide media access can also lead to misinformation and speculation being reported.

Media pool coverage is one strategy to meet the media's needs when there is limited space or security considerations. A camera crew and reporter(s) is assigned to cover a story or event on behalf of all media and will share video footage and other materials with them.

Where possible, site tours can be coordinated by the Incident Information Officer in coordination with the Site Safety Officer and the Incident Commander.

Facility Message Boards

A number of civic facilities have electronic or other message boards installed outside their buildings. These can be used to disseminate brief emergency messaging. As these signs are often located in high traffic, prominent locations they can be a useful tool to augment other communication efforts.

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Visual Communications

While most communications will be text-based, visual communications, including, photos, videos, maps and graphics can be powerful tools in communicating information about emergencies. Staff assigned to roles in the Emergency Information Plan have access to a variety of devices and programs that allow for capture of photos and videos, which may be then used to support communications to the public, media and other audiences and/or posted to the City's website or social media channels.

Short videos can be provided in a timely fashion and used to provide key information and/or direction to the public. Media conferences and briefings can be videotaped and posted online for information and archival purposes.

3.5 Communication Services

Translation Services

To ensure that crucial information reaches all segments of the community, information may need to be provided in different languages. Language and translation services including multilingual volunteers to support our Emergency Call Centre, and assistance with translation of public information materials may be provided by:

- The City's contracted professional translation services
- ESS Partners & Community Agencies
- The Society of Translators and Interpreters of BC – for referrals to certified translators and interpreters
- Sign Language interpreters
- Emergency Social Services Volunteers
- City of Richmond employees

Media Monitoring

Media monitoring is essential during a disaster to gain an understanding of perceptions and ensure that the information being released is accurate and consistent.

While the emergency call centre will provide some degree of media monitoring, the following resources can also be used to provide media monitoring services:

- **Infomart.ca** is Canada's largest provider of media monitoring, financial and corporate data, including more than 1,100 news and blog sources from coast to coast and internationally. The City's annual paid subscription provides one-stop shopping for timely, reliable, in-depth Canadian news and business information – full-text news from newspapers, magazines, broadcast media, the internet, social media and blogs, and access to archives.

The City receives daily ongoing monitoring of most English-language print, television and online media through Infomart for 10 designated users. This service provides the ability to receive daily reports tracking stories on pre-selected subjects or to search for current and archived stories on emerging issues with the ability to produce reports on specific issues, incidents and topics. The Emergency Operations Centre can access this service as necessary through the Senior Information Officer or designates and/or through the designated Law and Community Safety Department service user(s).

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- **Chinese Informedia** is a local public relations company specialized in the Canadian Chinese community and media, based in Vancouver. Chinese InforMedia assists the City to comprehensively understand and communicate with the Canadian Chinese community, and provides expertise in Chinese media relations and translation and interpretation services.

The City receives twice monthly summary digest reports on coverage of Richmond issues within the three regional Chinese-language dailies. Full translation and/or more timely reports are also available through this service, which is provided by Chinese InforMedia Services. The Emergency Operations Centre can access this service as necessary through the Senior Information Officer or designates and/or by contacting the service directly.

- **Google Alerts** is a free, automated Web search service offered by the search engine company Google. People can use it to select key words and search terms, the request Google to monitor the Internet for the words/terms and email results to them on a daily, or more frequent, basis.

- **SnagIt** is a software program that allows for screen capture of online information including website pages, or social media pages. As these pages can change rapidly during an emergency, ability to capture and print pages can be useful in gathering information during a developing emergency. Corporate Communications has SnagIt installed on two of its computers and this service can be accessed by the Senior Information Officer as required.

- **Television access (WinTV) through PC** is available on two desktop PCs in the Corporate Communications department on the 2nd floor in City Hall, as well as two laptops designated for the Senior Information Officer and staff within the EOC.

NOTE: A quiet room should be made available for an assigned person to monitor media via radio, television and internet. If possible, the room should be close in proximity to the EOC and have PC, TV and radio access (battery/AC operated – not solar.)

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Emergency Information Team

The following section provides detailed roles and responsibilities for key staff that form the emergency public information team as well as partner agencies with a role in disseminating public information during an emergency. This information is provided in the following formats:

- Emergency Management and Emergency Information Management charts illustrating the structure of key personnel during an emergency or disaster.
- Table summarizing Staff Roles & Responsibilities.
- Detailed descriptions of Roles & Responsibilities key personnel and agencies.
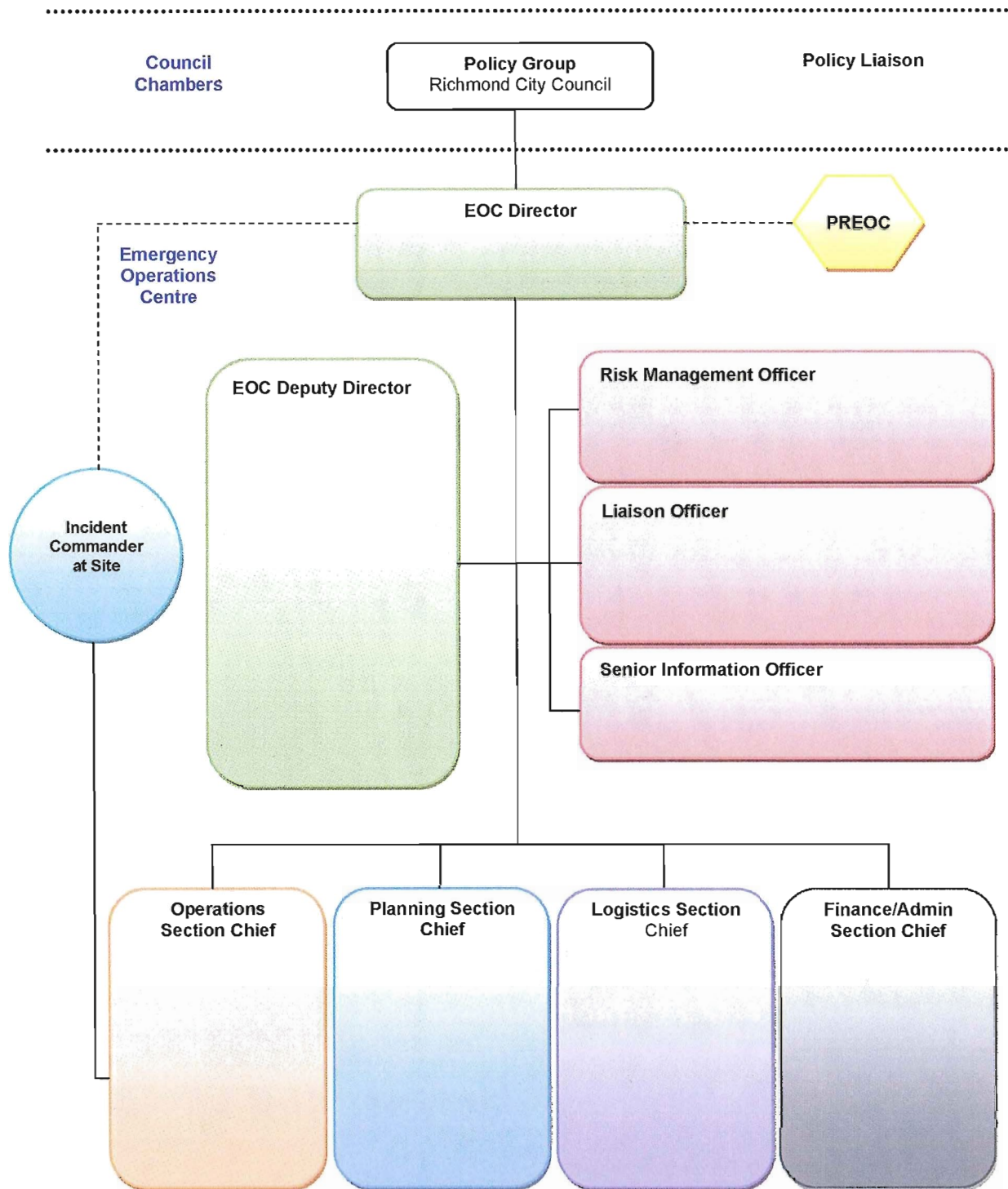
As outlined in the British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCERMS) guidelines, during major emergencies, regular City titles are not used. For consistency and ease of identification by and with other government and non-government agencies, BCERMS titles, as described in this section, are utilized. For Richmond-specific, customized roles, employees with particular skills and experience have been chosen. Full tables with titles and names of designated staff are maintained by Corporate Communications and Emergency Programs.

Multiple staff have been designated for each role within the Emergency Information Plan. This planned redundancy provides alternates should the primary designates be unavailable in an emergency. It also provides for the ability to relieve staff, as required, during extended emergencies.
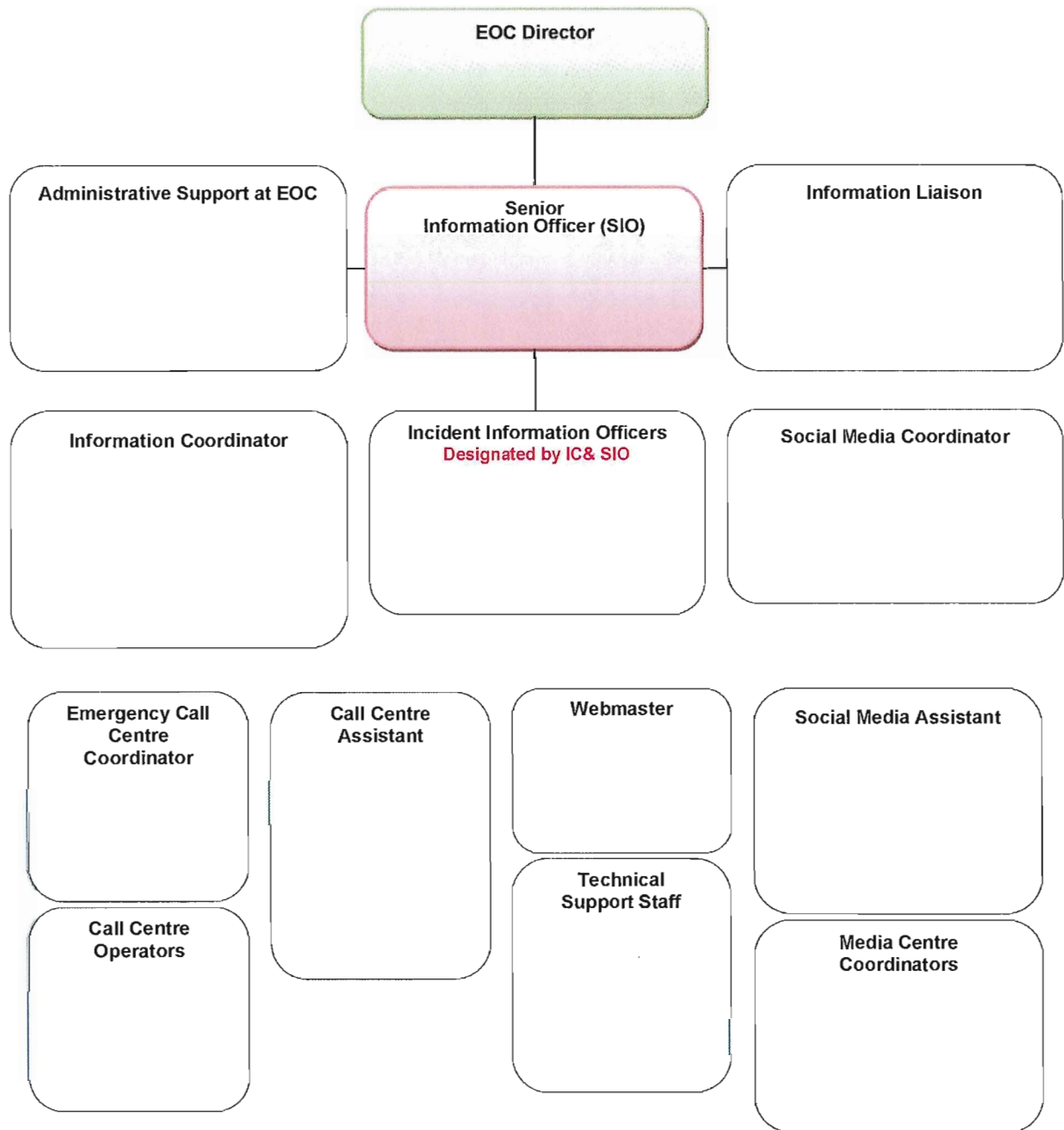
All staff designated with roles within the Emergency Information Plan are selected by the Senior Information Officer in consultation with Emergency Programs and the employees' managers. The Senior Information Officer works with Emergency Programs to ensure that designated staff receive training necessary to fulfil specified roles and responsibilities.

The Senior Information Officer will select or re-assign staff for designated roles as required due to personnel, organization or other changes in circumstances.

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4.1.1 EOC Organization Chart

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Council                    Policy Group                 Policy Liaison
Chambers                Richmond City Council

.............................................................................

                          EOC Director                    PREOC

Emergency
Operations
Centre

                      EOC Deputy Director        Risk Management Officer

Incident
Commander                                        Liaison Officer
at Site

                                                 Senior Information Officer

      Operations      Planning Section    Logistics Section    Finance/Admin
     Section Chief          Chief              Chief           Section Chief
```

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4.1.2 Emergency Information Organization Chart

```
                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │  EOC Director   │
                          └────────┬────────┘
                                   │
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌────────┴──────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Administrative        │──│     Senior        │──│ Information Liaison   │
│ Support at EOC        │  │ Information        │  │                      │
│                       │  │ Officer (SIO)     │  │                      │
└──────────────────────┘  └────────┬──────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
                                   │
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌────────┴──────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Information           │  │ Incident          │  │ Social Media         │
│ Coordinator           │  │ Information        │  │ Coordinator          │
│                       │  │ Officers           │  │                      │
│                       │  │ Designated by      │  │                      │
│                       │  │ IC& SIO            │  │                      │
└──────────────────────┘  └───────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
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Emergency Call Centre Coordinator	Call Centre Assistant	Webmaster	Social Media Assistant
Call Centre Operators		Technical Support Staff	Media Centre Coordinators

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4.1.3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

General responsibilities for staff assigned roles in the Emergency Information Plan are provided in the following table. Detailed procedures in the form of checklists for each of these positions are available in the Emergency Operations Centre Operational Guide and the Emergency Call Centre and Media Centre Operational Guides.

Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Primary Spokesperson & Policy Group	Mayor & Councillors	City Hall, Anderson Room	As Spokesperson(s): • Reassure the public by acting as spokespersons, as determined at the time of the incident by the EOC Director and Senior Information Officer. • Provide information regarding the City's overall response strategy and political issues via media interviews, news conferences and other public appearances.
EOC Director	See appendix	Emergency Operations Centre *Policy Group*	Direct, in consultation with the Senior Information Officer, the implementation of the Emergency Information Plan and designation of primary and technical spokespersons. Approve all public information materials. Liaise with Policy Group and/or elected officials.

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Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Senior Information Officer		**Emergency Operations Centre** *EOC Director*	Create and manage all internal and external communications, including interviews and news conferences, intranet and website, social media postings, backgrounders, news releases, etc.
			Provide briefings and information to Council, Senior Management Team and other key staff as needed.
			Work with other response agencies that have a need to release information to the media about the emergency.
			Notify, activate and lead the Emergency Information Team.
			Serve as a central coordination point for all information issuances, media relations, internal and inter-jurisdictional coordination.
			Ensure that the public within the affected area receive accurate, timely and relevant information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information.
			Ensure Call Centre is established for the public to access information and advice as required. Provide timely and accurate messaging sheets to ensure confirmed and approved information.
			Coordinate news releases with officials representing other affected emergency response agencies.
			Source or develop photos, videos and other visual images to support Communications activities.
			Ensure media and social media are monitored for critical information in support of response activities.
			Develop format for news conferences and media briefings.
			Work with the Emergency Management Office to ensure this plan is maintained, as per Section 7 of this plan, including staff training & exercises.

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Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Information Coordinator		**Emergency Operations Centre** *Senior Information Officer*	Serves as the link between the Senior Information Officer and the Emergency Information Team.
			Assist Senior Information Officer with information gathering, media monitoring, and dissemination of information to key stakeholders.
			As directed, coordinate media interviews, news conferences, create and disseminate approved communication materials.
			Assist the Senior Information Officer as the central coordination point for all public information issuances, media relations, internal and inter-jurisdictional communication.
			Assist with research, writing, approval and distribution of public information materials, including fact sheets, web notices, backgrounders, news releases, and news conferences.
			Source or develop photos, videos and other visual images to support Communications activities.
			Liaise with other members of the Emergency Information Team.
			Support the Senior Information Officer by maintaining records and logs, managing incoming calls and supervise administrative support.
Administrative Support		**Emergency Operations Centre** *Senior Information Officer*	Support the Senior Information Officer by maintaining records and logs, managing incoming calls.
			Support the Emergency Information Team at the EOC with the preparation of communication materials and forms, and the dissemination of information, as directed by the Senior Information Officer.
			Assist the Senior Information Officer in managing media inquires, including receiving and logging media calls and emails and providing information to Senior Information Officer for response.
Information Liaison		**Emergency Operations Centre** *Senior Information Officer*	Support Senior Information Officer in providing updates to Mayor and Council, Senior Management Team and other key stakeholders and assist in responding to questions from those stakeholders.
			Together with the EOC Liaison Officer, coordinate information with other agency information officers.

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Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Social Media Coordinator		**Emergency Operations Centre** *Senior Information Officer*	Coordinates dissemination of approved information via the City's social media channels as directed by the Senior Information Officer.
			Coordinates utilization of social media channels for crowd sourcing from public and media.
			Monitors social media channels as an information source and briefs the Senior Information Officer on pertinent information.
			Seeks to disseminate social media postings through partner, media and general social media channels.
Social Media Assistant		**Emergency Operations Centre** *Social Media Coordinator*	Assists the Social Media Coordinator in dissemination of approved information via the City's social media channels as directed by the Senior Information Officer.
			Supports utilization of social media channels for crowd sourcing from public and media.
			Monitors social media channels as an information source and briefs the Senior Information Officer on pertinent information.
			Seeks to disseminate social media postings through partner, media and general social media channels.
Emergency Call Centre Coordinator		**Emergency Call Centre** **City Hall, 6th floor Computer Training Room** *Senior Information Officer*	Staffs, sets up and manages the Emergency Call Centre.
			Responds to, researches and re-directs calls from the public.
			Liaises with the Senior Information Officer and Information Coordinator at the EOC to ensure consistency of messaging, reporting inconsistencies in media and issues arising from public's calls.
			Work with the Emergency Management Office to ensure Emergency Call Centre staff and volunteers receive ongoing training, maintain the callout list and participate in regular exercises.
Call Centre Assistant		**Emergency Call Centre** **City Hall, 6th floor Computer Training Room** *Call Centre Coordinator*	Assist the Call Centre Coordinator with the set up and operations of the call centre.
			Provide support to call centre operators.

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Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Media Centre Coordinator		**Media Centre City Hall, Rm 1.003** *Senior Information Officer*	Staff, set up and co-ordinate the Media Centre.
			Provide overall media relations support by ensuring pertinent information is distributed to internal and external audiences.
			Receive and accredit media personnel at the Media Centre, where appropriate.
			Work in conjunction with Senior Information Officer and Emergency Call Centre Coordinator to tend to the logistical and briefing needs of the media and spokespersons.
			Coordinate the setup of on-site news conferences.
			Work with the logistics section of the EOC to address any technological needs.
			Assist the Senior Information Officer in managing media inquiries, including receiving and logging media calls and emails and providing information to Senior Information Officer for response.
			Videotape media conferences and briefings for online posting and archival purposes.
			Work with Emergency Management Office to ensure Media Centre staff receive ongoing training, maintains the callout list and participate in regular exercises.
Technical Support		*Senior Information Officer or EOC Logistics Section*	Assist with the set up of telephone and fax lines in the Call Centre and Media Centre.
			Provide ongoing technical support.
			Provide regular reports on the call centre volume, length of calls, time in queue, etc.
Webmaster		**Media Centre City Hall Rm 2.004** *Media Centre Coordinator*	Post approved news releases, backgrounders, FAQ on City's website and intranet as quickly as possible.
			At the direction of the Senior Information Officer, ensure pertinent information, such as news releases, scheduling of news conferences, etc. is available at the Media Centre, on the City's web site, as well as the corporate intranet.
			Work with logistics section at the EOC to address any technological needs.

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Emergency Position	Regular Position	Reporting to	Tasks
Incident Commander	Determined by the Incident and Responding Agency(s)	Site	Designate Incident Information Officer(s), as required. Manage the site response to media requests and demand for public information. Ensure consistency with key messages and strategies established by the Senior Information Officer. Act as a Technical Spokesperson as determined by EOC Director and Senior Information Officer.
Incident Information Officer(s)	Designated by Incident Commander and/or Senior Information Officer	Site *Incident Commander/ Senior Information Officer*	Provide overall media relations support to first responders at the incident site. Logging media relations interactions at the site and reporting this information to the Senior Information Officer. Direct media questions to Senior Information Officer that they are unable or unqualified to answer. Work with Incident commander to gather photos and video from the site to support Communications and operational needs. Coordinate media tours on site. Information Officer(s) designated in this plan may also be augmented by trained communications staff from Richmond Fire Rescue, RCMP, Emergency Social Services and other partner agencies as appropriate.

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5. Communications Strategy

5.1 Emergency Information Commitment

We care about our citizens, our community, our economic landscape and our environment. Our communications will be conducted in a manner that is:

- SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **R**elevant, **T**imely)
- Transparent
- Compassionate and understanding
- Coordinated and integrated

While communicating before, during, and after emergencies or disasters, we will remain honest and accessible to all stakeholders – always sensitive to their needs.

5.2 Media Relations Policy

Media provide an effective method of quickly disseminating information during an emergency. Information will be provided to media in a timely fashion through news releases, social media, media conferences, briefings and interviews. In a major emergency we may activate a Media Centre to serve as a central point for media conferences and briefings.

The Emergency Information team will support media relations activities as follows:

- Develop strategies for managing issues that have or may arise
- Manage, coordinate and prioritize requests for media interviews (i.e.: local media are often the best first story tellers as they are usually the most accurate – they know the city.)
- Deliver key messages and provide updates to the media
- Schedule media interviews and news briefings with spokesperson/area experts
- Work with response agencies that have a need to release information to the media about the emergency – research their position, what they are saying and how joint communication efforts can be managed
- Brief and prepare spokespersons for media interviews/briefings
- Prepare and distribute key messages and communication pieces. (e.g.: fact sheets, media advisories, news releases)

Media Spokespeople

The Mayor and Councillors will be the City's primary spokespersons during an emergency.

Corporate Communications and Emergency Programs will work with senior staff to keep Mayor and Councillors informed and to coordinate media activities related to the emergency. In an emergency situation it will be important for Mayor and Councillors to be continually briefed in order to ensure that all information provided to the public is current and accurate.

When the Emergency Operations Centre is activated, additional media relations activities may be required to support the City's emergency response. In general, media interviews are to be conducted by designated spokespersons, in accordance with BCERMS standards.

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Depending on the emergency and level of response required, the Incident Commander(s), EOC Director and Senior Information Officer will appoint a senior, credible person available to act as the official spokesperson for the City's emergency operations. The official spokesperson (or designate) will be the designated Staff representative to speak:

- On the community's overall emergency response and recovery efforts.
- Strategic operational decisions and policy issues.

The Incident Commander, in conjunction with the Senior Information Officer, will assign key operational personnel to provide technical support to the spokesperson and speak about matters within their area of expertise. These personnel may provide interviews to the media on strategic operational decisions or policy issues if authorized by the Incident Commander/EOC Director or Senior Information Officer.

City of Richmond staff with an emergency response or recovery role may agree to be interviewed by the media provided they only speak about matters within their area of responsibility and that they have the approval of the Incident Commander, Senior Information Officer or EOC Director. These personnel should only speak to the media on strategic operational decisions, policy issues or issues related to their specific duties with regard to the emergency (i.e., if an employee is sandbagging, they can talk to the media about how they sandbag.)

Preparing Spokespersons for a Media Interview

When possible and appropriate, the Senior Information Officer and designates will prepare designated spokespersons for media interviews and briefings as follows:

- Situation update
- Needs of reporter(s) – story angle, type of reporter, reporter's attitude, questions likely to be asked, other organizations or people the reporter will be interviewing
- Public attitudes (general public, stakeholder organizations, special interest groups)
- Potential questions or issues that might come up
- Key messages
- Sensitive or confidential issues
- Interview or briefing logistics (time, location, format and time limit)

When working with the media in an official capacity:

Always:

- Seek advice and support from the Senior Information Officer when desired or when in doubt about how to respond
- Agree to be interviewed only if you personally want to do it – follow the framework of the media relations' policy to determine if you are authorized
- Respect the principal of security, the judicial process and laws governing the disclosure of information

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Avoid:

- Responding to media inquiries that fall outside your personal experience or expertise, unless otherwise approved by the Senior Information Officer or designate
- Undermining the safety of response personnel or the success of response and recovery operations
- Speculating about events, incidents, issues or future policy decisions
- Offering personal opinions
- Discussing advice given to superiors

5.3 Audiences

Open lines of communication will be established with internal and external audiences, which may vary depending on the type and severity of the emergency.

A selection of primary stakeholders from both internal and external audiences is listed below. Specific information needs and modes of dissemination for each identified group are outlined in the Specific Stakeholder Information Needs table on the following page.

Internal Audiences

- Emergency management operations group
- First responders
- Mayor and Councillors
- Senior management team
- Front of House, Dispatch Staff, Administration reception and Councillor's office staff
- City staff
- City of Richmond volunteers

External Audiences

- People directly impacted by the emergency
- General public
- Media
- Neighbouring communities
- Emergency response and recovery stakeholders (i.e., industry, Canadian Red Cross, regional health authority, school board(s), airport authority, Public Safety Canada, Emergency Management BC, other provincial/federal agencies)
- Family members of City staff
- Special interest groups

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Specific Stakeholder Information Needs

Audience	Objective	Information Needs	Methods of Dissemination	Tools/Samples
EOC Director, Mayor and Council	To ensure high-level understanding of events and consistency in messaging.	• Potential issues • Potential media and public interest • Media and public activities • Communications strategies and key messages	• Telephone • Cell phones/ Smart phones • Individual and group briefings • Email • Text • Satellite phones • UHF/VHF radio	• Status reports • Roles and responsibilities • Key messages • Speaking notes • Collateral materials for media/public briefings • News releases • Media monitoring reports
Stakeholder Information Officers (i.e., police, industry, government, or spokespersons)	To ensure consistency in communications across stakeholder agencies.	• City of Richmond's role/responsibility in the emergency • Potential issues that may impact their organization/clients • Potential media and public interest • City of Richmond's key messages communications strategies • Potential joint communications strategies • Immediate or potential support/action required	• Email • Telephone • Cell phones/Smart phones • Text • Website • Individual and group briefings • EOC attendance	• Government information centres • Conference calls • Group e-mails • News releases • Status reports
City Staff	To ensure staff know what to do and where to go during an emergency.	• Impact on staff • Actions staff must take • Support required • Impact on operations • Employee Information Line	• Intranet • Email • Telephone • Cell phone/Smart phones • Face-to-face • Website/Social media • Call Centre • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Employee/family information line • Emergency Notification System • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• Staff bulletins • Staff information sessions • Intranet information • Emails • News releases

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Audience	Objective	Information Needs	Methods of Dissemination	Tools/Samples
Family members of City staff	Assurance that staff members are accounted for and cared for. Family needs being met while staff member is working.	• Impact on their family member • Actions they should take • Reassurances on issues with regard to safety and well being of staff members and others who have been impacted	• Website • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Call Centre • Employee/family information line • Emergency Notification System	• Status updates on events • Employee lounge with phones and computers • News releases
People directly impacted	Assurance that City is properly addressing the situation and public feel that they are receiving up-to-date information on issues and services.	• How they can get help • How they can help themselves • Safety precautions to take	• Website • Social media • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Call Centre • Reception Centres • Emergency Notification System • City facility message boards • Telephone calls, email, • Door-to-door • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• Response updates • Evacuation notices • Disaster response routes • Reception centres • Advisories, safety tips • Shelter-in-place • Disaster financial assistance • Critical incident stress information
Family of people directly impacted	To make people aware of ways to connect with family members.	• Status of family member • How family members can be contacted • Actions they should take • Reassurances on issues with regard to the safety and well being	• Website • Social media • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Call Centre • Reception Centres • City facility message boards • Emergency Notification System • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• Location and purpose of Reception Centres • News releases

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Audience	Objective	Information Needs	Methods of Dissemination	Tools/Samples
Media	Timely, accurate forthcoming messages. Media gathered at Media Centre allows for efficient consistent messaging.	• Access to appropriate spokespersons • Safety precautions/actions the public needs to take • How their information, interviews and picture needs will be met • Location of Media Centre	• Media Releases, advisories • Media Centre • Face-to-face (media conference, briefings, interviews) • Website • Social media • Email • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• News releases • Media advisories • Media/press conferences • Fact sheets • Photos and video • Tweets and Facebook postings
General public	Assurance that City of Richmond is properly addressing the situation and public feel that they are receiving up-to-date information on issues and services.	• Safety precautions/actions the public needs to take • How they can volunteer to help • If donations are being accepted where and specifically what type of donations are needed	• Website • Social media • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Call Centre • City facility message boards • Emergency Notification System • Door-to-door • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• News releases: website and social media • Messages: • Stay away from the area impacted • Stay off the phone • Disaster response routes – keep roads and phone lines available for emergency use • Stay tuned to local media for further information.
Emergency Management BC	General update, early identification of concerns regarding response approach.	• Required status reports • Copies of all news releases	• Telephone • Cell phones/Smart phones • Email • Satellite phone • Emergency radio	• EOC status updates • News releases
Businesses in Richmond	Business has the tools required to recover as quickly as possible.	• Recovery issues, i.e., how to locate engineers for building safety issues • How to get rapid issuances of permits for recovery • Care of employees	• Website (Business Recovery Guide) • Media Reports – print, radio & television • Social media • Emergency Notification System • City facility message boards • Telephone/email • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• News releases, website and social media • Messages • How to apply for Disaster Financial Assistance • Critical Incident Stress Information

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Audience	Objective	Information Needs	Methods of Dissemination	Tools/Samples
EComm/ 911 Dispatchers	Accurate information is being conveyed to callers.	• Current information on events for consistent and accurate messaging to callers	• Fax • Email • Telephone • Satellite phone	• Status reports • News releases • Fact sheets
City of Richmond Dispatch, Call Centre Staff	Accurate information is being conveyed to callers.	• Current information on events for consistent and accurate messaging to callers	• Email • Telephone • Face to face • Intranet • Website • Social media • Satellite phone • Uniform Signage/notices/info posted in public areas	• Status reports • News releases • Fact sheets

5.4 Key Messages

Messages that are conveyed to the public in an emergency must be simple and brief, addressing:

- What happened
- What are we doing about it
- What changes will we make to ensure that it does not happen again

Initial Hours

Early in the emergency, as people are struggling to gather information there may be little solid information to provide to the public about what happened and why. While initial information may not be 100 per cent accurate or quickly verifiable, it is critical that communications DO NOT STOP at this time of uncertainty.

There will be intense pressure from the media and other stakeholders to provide comment during this period. If information is not forthcoming, reporters and the public will fill the void (including real time via social media) with what could be rumour and speculation. This could be more damaging than the actual incident, and difficult to correct.

It is critical that an initial communication is provided to the public, media and other key stakeholders as soon as possible, even if many details are not yet known or confirmed.

The initial communications should state:

- An incident has occurred
- Type, location and time of incident
- Public safety status
- Actions being taken to manage the emergency
- Instructions to the public
- How and when further information will be available
- Where to go for further information

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Early messages may lack specific details, but can still provide the public and media with comment, some direction and focus on one or more of the BCERMS/City communication goals – setting the stage for areas of future information.

Key Messages

Key messaging should reinforce actions with regard to priorities in emergency management, and the BC Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) Goals:

1. Provide for the safety and health of all responders
2. Save lives
3. Reduce suffering
4. Protect public health
5. Protect government infrastructure
6. Protect property
7. Protect the environment
8. Reduce economic and social losses

General Messaging

General messages should include:

- City of Richmond's objectives and priorities
- Facts about what went well (think responders)
- Benefits (think public)
- Facts that refute negatives
- Facts that support the story

As required, develop and incorporate additional messages that:

- Support what is being done to manage the emergency
- Support what was done in advance of the emergency to reduce its occurrence and impact
- Reassure the public and help reduce their emotional reaction to the emergency
- Deliver public safety information
- Help emergency response personnel perform their job responsibilities.

Examples and topics of key messaging include:

- **Empathy**
  A message of empathy for the impact the emergency has on people or the environment. This does not mean taking/assigning responsibility for the incident – we are showing our compassion toward those who have been impacted.

- **Priorities**
  "The community's first priority is saving lives and public safety" (if appropriate include other relevant priorities such as minimizing damage to the environment".)

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"We are working with partner response agencies to manage the emergency and minimize its impact on people, (environment) and our community"

- **What We Are Doing**

  What is being done to manage the situation?

  "Richmond has an emergency response system in place and our full response team has been called into service"

  (As the emergency progresses, you can start adding details of what is being done to protect the public safety and interest.)

- **When We Will Get Back to You / More information**

  If the emergency is likely to continue over a long period of time, commit to regular media updates, and then honour that commitment

  "New information will be released when it becomes available"

  "Updates will also be posted on our website at www.richmond.ca, and information lines have been established as follows:

  Public: 604-247-4666

  Media: 604-247-4671

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6. External Agencies

Federal Government

Unless federal departments or areas under federal jurisdiction are impacted by the event, the federal government will generally not be releasing specific information pertaining to the event.

When federal resources are activated, much like the provincial government, they will assess their impact and communication with the next level of government to provide assistance as requested.

The emergency public communications role of the federal government may include:

- The release of information about impacted federal departments/ services and public safety messaging for areas under federal jurisdiction;
- The release of information about the federal government's support to the province and disaster funding assistance.

The federal government would be involved in an emergency in the following circumstances:

- The provincial government requests federal support or resources;
- The federal government is implementing the national support plan;
- A federal department is the lead agency and may require resources from other federal departments;
- Federal assets have been or may be impacted by the emergency in which business recovery/continuity efforts need to be implemented.

Public Safety Canada coordinates with and supports federal departments, international and other levels of government, first responders, community groups, and the private sector.

If the federal government is the lead during an emergency, a federal department/agency is designated as the organization within whose jurisdiction the emergency falls (i.e. CFIA – Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Avian Flu). In this role, the department/agency leads communications efforts related to the emergency.

Public Safety Canada's national headquarters in Ottawa coordinates and initiates decision-making across various federal departments through the Government Operations Centre (GOC), which operates 24/7. Public Affairs headquarters delivers communications during an emergency and also deploys additional capacity to the local level. At the regional level, Public Safety Canada provides site support fostering cooperation and information flow between federal departments and with the Province.

Provincial Government and Emergency Management BC

- Within the Province of British Columbia, government communication is handled through the Public Affairs Bureau (PAB), which ensures that information about programs and services is accessible to British Columbians. The Bureau also has the responsibility for leading and coordinating communications with internal and external stakeholders.

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- Public Affairs Bureau Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (T.E.A.M.S) members usually staff the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) or Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) information functions, but in smaller, short-lived or quickly escalating incidents, program staff or contractors may staff these functions. Responsibilities and reporting structure are consistent regardless of the person in the position.
- When the provincial emergency management structure is activated, Information Officers within the PECC or PREOC report to the Director within the applicable coordination/operations centre. If a provincial T.E.A.M.S. Information Officer were providing support at a local authority EOC they would report to the EOC Director. Likewise, if they were at the site they would report to the Incident Commander.
- When the PREOC is activated to a higher level, deployed provincial T.E.A.M.S. Information Officers (IOs) will work in a coordinated manner with spokespeople and information officers in other involved agencies and levels of government to support their counterparts at the local authority level.
- The British Columbia Crisis Communications Strategy for Major Provincial Emergencies is used to guide the activities of provincial Information Officers. The strategy is an all-hazards approach, which outlines procedures and best practices in activating public information units within the BCERMS structure.
- Depending on their place within the structure, provincial information officers will ensure appropriate information is provided to the public and media, which may include:
  o Upon request, supporting local authority in gaining information to provide timely, accurate public safety information, which could include such things as weather forecasts, stream conditions, provincial highway and road status
  o Informing the public, media, local governments and stakeholders as to what measures the Province has in place to assist communities including roles and responsibilities of Emergency Social Services
  o The status of any activated public information services including the Central Registration and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) which provides family reunification services
  o Information about emergency management structure and operational protocols in emergency situations
  o Provide media, public and stakeholders with regular updates/overview on regional or provincial situation through appropriate spokesperson(s) and arrange media, news conference and VIP tours as directed

Local Response Agencies

During emergencies, the City works closely with local response agencies, such as RCMP, BC Ambulance Service, Richmond Health Services and the Medical Health Officer, Richmond School Board, Vancouver International Airport and the Canadian Coast Guard.

In an emergency, these agencies will:

- Provide information updates to the City's EOC, pertaining to their response efforts, resources and strategies.
- Provide information to the public pertaining to their area of expertise and within their jurisdiction

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- Work with the City's Senior Information Officer to coordinate communications strategies and participate in a Joint Information Centre, where appropriate

Liaising with Other Departments and Agencies

The Appendices section provides a general outline as to the types of incidents for which specific City departments, as well as external agencies, may be required to support the Emergency Information Team.

The EOC Director and the Senior Information Officer will designate the technical spokesperson(s) for the City.

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7. Plan Maintenance

The Senior Manager, Corporate Communications is responsible for the following:

General Maintenance

- Review the Emergency Information Plan every six months to update, as a minimum, the Communications Directory, facility and resource information.
- Review the Emergency Information Plan following the activation of any part of the plan to incorporate recommendations.
- Working with the Emergency Management Office to coordinate and facilitate training and exercises for staff identified in this plan.
- Maintain equipment to be used in the response.

Additions and Modifications

Establish supporting documents or annexes, such as notification procedures or an operations manual, as necessary.

Update contact list and resource documents on a regular basis to ensure currency.

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8. Training and Exercises

As required under the Emergency Program Act, municipalities are mandated to regularly exercise their emergency plans and procedures. The Emergency Management Office coordinates, as part of its mandate, an annual training and exercise schedule.

The Emergency Programs and Corporate Communications offices will work together to provide the following training for the Emergency Information Team. This training will be supported by various exercises, including drills to test call centre equipment and activation procedures; tabletop exercises to maintain staff familiarity with their roles and responsibilities; and full-scale or functional exercises to provide hands-on experience.

Emergency Information Plan Training Matrix

M = Mandatory   R = Recommended   F = Facilitate O = Optional

Course	Senior Information Officer	Incident Information Officers	Information Liaison and Coordinator	Call Centre Staff	Media Centre Staff	Administrative Support Staff	Social Media Coordinator and Assistant
Emergency Information Plan Orientation & Introductory Media Training An overview of the City's Emergency Management Plan, and Emergency Information Plan, including risk assessment, roles and responsibilities, and concept of operations. Also provides an overview of how to work with the media, and develop news releases and other communication tools.	F/M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Incident Command System Orientation (100) Principles and organization of ICS, basic terminology and an overview of common responsibilities.	M	M	M	M	M	M	
Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Level 1 Introduction of EOC functions, operations, information flow, applying BCERMS to the EOC environment.	M		M			M	
EOC Level 2 Essentials Enables participants to perform their roles and responsibilities in the EOC.	M						
Media Training Basic (1/2 day session) Provides skills for handling media inquiries for staff who play a role in coordinating media requests.	M	M			M		
Advanced Media Training (full day session) Intended for spokespersons that will be interviewed by the media.	M						
Emergency Call Centre Training Call centre activation, operational procedures as well as tips for handling public inquiries in an emergency.	F/M		O	M			M
Media Centre Orientation Media centre activation, operational procedures as well as tips for handling media inquiries in centre.	F/M	O	O		M		

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9. Glossary

9.1 Emergency Management Terms

BCERMS – British Columbia Emergency Response Management System

The British Columbia Emergency Response Management System is a comprehensive management structure scheme that ensures a coordinated and organized provincial response and recovery to any and all emergency incidents. The broad spectrum of components of BCERMS includes operations and control management, qualifications, technology, training and publications.

EOC – Emergency Operations Centre

A pre-designated facility established by a local authority, jurisdiction or agency to coordinate the site response and support in an emergency.

ESS – Emergency Social Services

Emergency Social Services are those services that are provided short term (generally 72 hours) to preserve the emotional and physical well being of evacuees and response workers in emergency situations.

ICS – Incident Command System

A standardized at-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. BC's emergency management structure is based on this system.

Emergency Management BC

Emergency Management BC is part of the Ministry of Justice and is mandated to coordinate the province's integrated emergency responses and assistance to communities in an emergency.

PREOC – Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre

An Emergency Operations Centre established and operated at the regional level by provincial agencies to coordinate provincial emergency response efforts.

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