

Scenario Snapshots

Please Note:

The following scenarios and possible answers are a part of the ESS171 ESS Site Management course. The possible answers are not exhaustive of the scenarios and are not intended to be for every potential response to these scenarios. These are just a sampling of possible answers to these particular scenarios.

Snapshot 1:

The ESSD receives a call from the Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) to advise that the municipal EOC has been activated to monitor a potential flood threat, and the ESSD is required to fill the ESS Branch Coordinator position and participate in some preparatory evacuation planning.

On arrival in the EOC, the ESSD learns that, in fact, some low lying farm lands are already seeing some flooding, and an Evacuation Alert has been issued to five homes that could be impacted within the next few hours. In consultation with the EOC Management Team, the ESSD decides to activate the ESS Plan and call out a few team members to set up and prepare to staff the Reception Centre in case it's needed on short notice.

The ESS team has only been activated for a Reception Centre response once in the past four years, but regularly exercises the ESS Plan. The team member who would normally be designated as RC Manager has just left on vacation, and their alternate recently moved away. The ESSD, who has now taken on the role of ESS Branch Coordinator in the EOC, decides to call on another senior team member who played the role of Operations Chief during the last exercise and seemed to demonstrate leadership potential. For the purposes of this scenario, you are the team member who is called.

It's 6:30 Friday evening at the beginning of spring break, and you receive a call from the ESS Branch Coordinator while sitting in a restaurant, about to have dinner with your family. The Coordinator explains the circumstances and asks if you're available immediately to act as the Reception Centre Manager and supervise the set up of the Reception Centre at Croak Creek Community Hall.

Question:

What are some personal factors that you might need to consider before confirming your availability?

Possible Answers:

- *Transportation (getting yourself to RC & getting family to wherever they're going)*
- *Other important plans for weekend/spring break*
- *Hours already worked today*
- *State of alertness, alcohol consumption, need for food*
- *Current health status*
- *Spouse/family support*

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Snapshot 2:

Once you confirm your availability, the ESS Branch Coordinator asks if you have a note pad ready, and provides the following briefing:

Your municipality (Croak Creek) has activated its EOC to monitor rising water levels along the Hopalong River resulting from a sudden heavy rainfall over the past few hours. In addition to the five homes on Evacuation Alert, an Evacuation Advisory has been issued to other homes in the area at risk, which consists of a small residential neighbourhood of about 50 houses, as well as the neighbouring First Nations community of approximately 350 people.

Municipal staff and First Nations authorities are on flood watch, and the River Forecast Centre is monitoring the gauges upstream. Water levels have risen dramatically over the past few hours, and are at the highest they've been in 12 years. The forecast indicates that rainfall should ease off by midnight; however, a new storm front is building which could hit the area within 12–24 hours, and with the riverbanks and surrounding land already saturated, there is significant potential for flooding.

The ESS Br Coordinator advises she has activated the team call-out system to determine availability of the remaining 15 team members. She will select two members to assist you with set up of the RC -- and staffing, if necessary -- and put the remainder on standby. The information collected will be passed on to the RC for staffing purposes.

The EOC will remain activated overnight. RC staffing needs will be reassessed in a few hours, or when more information becomes available. She then asks if you have any questions.

Question:

What questions would you want to ask the ESS Branch Coordinator at this point?

Possible Answers:

- *What is the Task number?*
- *Will the ESS Branch in the EOC be staffed overnight? If not, who do I report to?*
- *What is your contact info?*
- *Who will I be supervising? What is their contact info?*
- *How do I get in?*
- *Facility details? (e.g., alarm system, how to turn on heat after-hours, etc.)?*
- *Will the First Nations community be setting up their own RC, or do we need to plan for those evacuees, as well?*
- *How long do you expect us to stay? [e.g., a few hours, overnight?]*
- *When will I be relieved, and by whom?*
- *Where are the RC kits stored?*
- *Do I need to pick up any supplies (e.g., refreshments) on the way?*

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Snapshot 3:

After you've sorted things out with your family and are about to head over to the community hall, you receive another call from the ESS Branch Coordinator. She provides you with a number for the janitor, who will be available by cell phone to let you into the hall to set up. She also reminds you that there is an RC Kit on site, which includes a pre-established floor plan. She confirms the other two team members being deployed, who should be arriving at the community hall within the next 10 or 15 minutes:

- One team member (Joan) is very familiar to you as she has been actively involved on the team for about 7 years, and has taken almost all of the ESS training, other than the ESSD and Leadership courses. She is friendly, but fairly reserved, and generally fills the Documentation, Resource Acquisition, or Volunteer/Staff Management role during team exercises.
- The second team member (Jared) has only been on the team for six months, and does not have a designated role as yet, although he has completed the RC course and Registration and Referrals training, and is signed up for the next two courses being delivered in the area. He has also completed the Level One training and responded to two Level One house fires recently. He is very outgoing, coaches the local men's soccer team. His employment background is in Human Resources (HR) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS).

On arrival at the hall, you notice these two team members have already arrived, and are waiting at the door with the janitor.

Question:

On arrival at the RC, what are the RC Manager's initial priorities? How would you prioritize them?

Possible answers:

- *Establish communication link with ESS Branch Coordinator on arrival and advise when set up is complete*
- *Confirm Task number*
- *Ensure all team members sign in on PEP Task Registration sheet*
- *Quick briefing (to ensure everyone has been given the same initial information)*
- *Assign functions and set-up tasks*
- *Refer to function checklist(s)*
- *Locate RC kits and floor plan*
- *Set up Management work area*
- *Determine resource needs (including staffing)*
- *Begin position log; document actions taken to this point*
- *THEN, assist other team members with set up – if necessary, and if time allows*

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Snapshot 4:

After establishing contact with the ESS Branch Coordinator and confirming that Joan and Jared received the same briefing that you were given, you assign operational responsibilities, in the event there are evacuations this evening:

- As RC Manager, you will take responsibility for Information, Liaison and Planning Chief functions.
- Joan will act as Logistics Chief, as well as filling the Documentation role; she will also liaise with the EOC as Finance Chief in the event that any finance issues arise, and will assist with Registration and Referrals, if necessary.
- Jared will take the position of Operations Chief and act as Safety Officer, given his OHS experience, until such time as Operations requires his full attention.

While Joan and Jared begin setting up the RC, you finish your initial position log entries, and then help them finish up. You contact the ESS Branch Coordinator to report that the RC is now set up and ready to go, and request an updated briefing to share with your team.

The ESS Branch Coordinator tells you she has just been advised that the 5 homes that were on Alert, as well as 30 of the homes in the residential neighbourhood, are about to receive an Evacuation Order advising them to leave their homes within the next 2 hours. The Order requests that they report to the Reception Centre to register and, if needed, receive ESS assistance. The remaining homes that received an Evacuation Advisory earlier, including the First Nations community, are now being issued an Alert.

The First Nations representative in the EOC has indicated that, although they have five trained people available to provide ESS, the building designated as their Reception Centre is within the Alert area. The EOC Director and ESS Branch Coordinator have offered to provide services through the municipal Reception Centre, if needed.

Question:

1. *What is the ESS Response Level?*

Answer:

Level 2 -- but could quickly escalate to Level 3 if current Alerts become Orders.

Question:

2.a) *Based on the information provided, what are some potential questions to ask at the end of this briefing?*

2.b) *What immediate actions would you take following the briefing?*

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Snapshot 4 continued:

Potential Answers:

2.a)

- *What is the availability of resources – personnel, accommodation, suppliers. Have they been impacted?*
- *Have other local authorities/communities been impacted? This could affect availability of resources.*
- *Confirm number of residents affected (35 homes = how many evacuees?)*
- *Are the five ESS-trained First Nations volunteers available to help in the municipal RC?*
- *Will the First Nations community provide a contact person/representative to the RC if they are evacuated?*
- *Are any of the community ESS or First Nations volunteers impacted?*
- *Are there any special needs or considerations for either current or potential evacuees?*
- *Confirm what PEP will cover on Referrals – i.e. no clothing/incidentals with 2 hrs notice.*
- *What are the boundaries of the Evacuation Order?*
- *Are additional Orders anticipated in the next few hours, days? (Need for advanced planning)*
- *How long will it take for evacuees to arrive (i.e., how far away do they live)?*

2.b)

- *Request a copy of the Advisory, Alert, and Order to confirm what evacuees have been told (e.g., what to pack, where to go, what services to expect).*
- *Brief management team.*
- *Decide whether to use one stop or two stop model (in consultation with Ops).*
- *Confirm availability of resources*

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Snapshot 5:

When you receive the updated situation information from the ESS Branch Coordinator, you immediately brief the other two team members at the RC. You also decide to request three additional team members immediately, pending further assessment of staffing needs.

Before the new personnel arrive, you need to put together a Management Team Briefing and Action Plan for the next operational period. You begin with the Action Plan, as this will form a key component of the briefing.

Task:

1. Convert the “initial priorities” you identified in Snapshot #3 into **objectives**, and list them in order of priority on flip chart paper.

Sample Objectives:

1. Activate the Reception Centre
2. Establish availability of resources
3. Provide evacuees with essential needs

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Snapshot 5 continued:

Task:

2. Identify potential tasks/actions corresponding to your set of objectives for the first operational period.

Sample Tasks/Actions:

- 1a) Identify functions to be activated.
- 1b) Assign personnel to appropriate functions.
- 1c) Conduct staffing needs assessment.
- 1d) Request additional personnel, if needed.
- 2a) Establish procedures to access assistance of First Nations ESS volunteers.
- 2b) Contact suppliers (accommodation & restaurant first).
- 2c) Consult with ESS Branch Coordinator regarding potential mutual aid or other staffing support (e.g., ESS Support Orgs, MST, local authority staff).
- 3a) Provide refreshments to evacuees.
- 3b) Set-up information board/table.
- 3c) Establish numbering or queuing system.

Snapshot 6:

The Action Plan establishes a staffing needs assessment as one of your first priorities.

Task:

- 1. In your table groups, draft an RC org chart showing what functions you want to activate at this stage, and who will fill those functions, given current staffing (including the 3 new volunteers arriving shortly). Present to class and explain choices.
- 2. Based on the org chart, determine additional staffing needs, if any, to meet current objectives.

Sample Answers:

- a) Mgmt Staff: RC Manager, Info, and Safety – filled by RC Manager.
General Staff:
Ops: need Chief, Registration, Referrals, Meet & Greet – filled by Jared plus 2 of the new volunteers.
Planning: need Doc Unit and Situation Unit – Doc filled by R&R worker (for time being), Situation filled by RC Mgr.
Logistics: need Chief, Resource Acquisition, Volunteer/Staff Management, RC Support (food) – Joan plus 1 of the new volunteers.
Finance: not activated – RC Mgr responsible.
- b) Need Safety Officer, 2 more R&R workers, Doc Unit Supervisor, 1 more Logistics, possibly an IO.

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Snapshot 7:

Logistics (Joan) confirms that three volunteers are on their way to the RC. On the basis of your staffing needs assessment, you decide to submit an ESS Personnel Request to Logistics for another 6 ESS workers in order to process the evacuees more quickly. Joan ensures that the Volunteer/Staff Management area is set up to receive the incoming volunteers and continues to contact the remaining ESS team members. Jared prepares for the first evacuees, who could be arriving any time. You take a few moments to write your Management Team Briefing as two of the new volunteers will be filling management functions.

Task:

Using the list of briefing content items provided in the participant guide, and the information received up to this point, create an initial management team briefing (in point form).

Potential Answers:

*Key points for briefing: PEP Task #; number of people affected; number of evacuees expected at RC; current status (deteriorating/improving); worker or evacuee safety issues; resource availability; staffing allocations; any special needs identified; Mgmt team structure; reporting procedures; media management; action plan. Always remember to ask if there are any questions at the end of the briefing. Include additional details as time allows. **NOTE: Remind mgmt team to bring Status Reports to next briefing.***

Snapshot 8:

Logistics advises the RCM that only 2 more team members are available to respond immediately. One more could be available in a couple of hours, provided she can arrange child care. Another 3 team members live within the Alert area and are busy preparing to evacuate, but if that happens, they plan to report to the RC to register and offer their services. The remaining team members have not responded to the call-out.

The Logistics Chief also mentions that the RC Kit supplies were apparently not replenished after the last exercise, so there is a long list of office supplies needed immediately, as well as Referral forms and ESS File (registration) forms.

Question:

How would you address these staffing and supply needs, and who needs to be involved?

Potential Answers:

Personnel: RC resources exhausted – request needs to go up to EOC level – Logistics to RC Manager to ESS Br Coord (and possibly to EOC Logs).

Note: Discuss if it is appropriate for evacuated volunteers to be working in the RC – may depend on severity of event and the individual's reaction to it. May be better off being with family. Should consult Safety Officer.

Supplies: Follow same process.

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Snapshot 9:

The ESS Branch Coordinator reports that mutual aid from neighbouring communities is unlikely, as they, too, are monitoring and responding to this flood threat. The five First Nations volunteers are currently on Alert, so are not available at this time, but will go to the RC when/if their situations change.

In consultation with the PREOC, she has requested assistance from the Mobile Support Team – even though the local team might be able to get by with existing resources for now, this won't be the case if there are significantly more evacuations, or if the response continues 24/7 for more than a day or two. The PREOC will deploy 4 MST members immediately and put another 6 on alert. Two MST members who live within driving distance are expected in the next 5 hours; ETA for the other two, who are coming by air, is approximately 12 hours.

Task:

Based on the available staffing, adjust your org chart, if necessary. Discuss options for how you might use the MST when they arrive.

Potential Answers:

- *MST members might be used to perform **any** RC function.*
- *Could also be used to mentor/coach new Mgmt Team personnel, including RC/GL Manager.*
- *Could be beneficial to find out what their areas of strength are before confirming assignments – put them to best use in their area of expertise.*

Snapshot 10:

Given the number of volunteers and evacuees who will be occupying the facility, you have decided to assign a Safety Officer to address ongoing health and safety measures. The volunteer selected for this role has had some training in Critical Incident Stress Management interventions. She also has a current first aid certificate, but is not well-versed in the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health & Safety Regulation.

Question:

What are some possible strategies for ensuring all aspects of the Safety Officer's responsibilities are addressed?

Potential answers:

- *Look for expertise in other staff, e.g., Jared*
- *Refer to ESS Safety Program Guide*
- *Use checklists/forms provided*
- *Enlist facility staff for appropriate assistance*
- *Request support from EOC*

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Snapshot 11:

The Liaison Officer function has been activated primarily to serve as the point of contact for the MST when they arrive, and for the representative of the neighbouring First Nations ESS team.

However, the RC Manager has just been informed by the EOC that the Mayor will be visiting the Reception Centre in about an hour, accompanied by the EOC Director, to thank volunteers and to offer her support to the evacuees. The Liaison Officer has been asked to make the necessary arrangements, but isn't sure what this entails.

Question:

As Liaison Officer, how would you manage this task?

Potential answers:

- *Consult with EOC Liaison, and possibly EOC IO.*
- *Ask for contact information for person making the request (Mayor's staff) and determine their expectations: also advise regarding privacy of evacuees*
- *Consult/collaborate with RC IO, as Mayor may arrive with media.*
- *Ensure refreshments are available.*
- *Recommend to RCM that RC personnel be advised/briefed on visit and any basic protocols identified by the EOC or Mayor's staff (minimize surprises on both sides).*

Snapshot 12:

The Information Officer function has been activated primarily to ensure that the information board in the RC is kept updated, and to assist the EOC Information Officer with identifying and addressing information needs of the evacuees. Media is being managed by the EOC IO.

The management team has been notified that one of the Meet and Greet volunteers has received a complaint from an evacuee that a rather aggressive reporter is "laying in wait" just around the corner of the building to try and interview evacuees as they are leaving and entering the facility.

Question:

What are some strategies for dealing with this situation?

Potential answers:

- *Consider who is responsible or involved with this issue.*
- *RCM may want/need to discuss with ESS Br Coord.*
- *RCM or IO may consult with EOC IO.*
- *Depending on comfort levels and skills, RCM and/or IO may choose to negotiate with reporter*
- *Consider designating an area for media.*
- *May choose to involve security, if on-site, but not recommended as first course of action unless safety of evacuees or personnel is at immediate risk.*

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Snapshot 13:

As Planning Chief, one of your high-priority actions is to draft a Situation Report to forward to the EOC within the next 45 minutes.

Question:

1. Where will you find the necessary information for the Situation Report?
2. What could you do if Documentation has not been recording the necessary stats?

*Sit Rep is a priority and must be completed – look for other ways of quickly gathering info. For instance, Ops or Logistics should be able to estimate the number of hotel rooms or billets that have been assigned; GL should have a tally of the number of residents. Depending on the demographics, a guesstimate of the “average” number of Referrals issued to an “average” family size could be used to estimate costs. The approximate number of evacuees could be estimated based on the number of completed ESS Files (i.e. “family units). **Be sure to indicate in the Sit Rep if figures are only estimates.***

Snapshot 14:

The Planning Chief is just starting to work on the advanced planning issues, and has asked the management team for their input.

Question:

Based in the information available to this point, what are some potential policy or procedure-related issues, significant resource needs, and any other key issues that are likely to affect RC operations in the next 24-72 hours?

Potential answers:

- Consider possible situational changes for the RC now that evacuations are occurring, such as increased media/political interest, security issues, parking and traffic issues.
- Assess availability of commercial lodging in the event there are further evacuations, and recommend contingency plans, e.g., using suppliers outside the jurisdiction, or requesting/suggesting activation of a group lodging.
- Confirm availability of additional personnel resources.
- Plan for any potential special needs associated with the neighbourhoods under Advisory or Alert, such as First Nations, seniors.

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Snapshot 15:

The storm front has finally passed through the area, and no new storms are anticipated. Water levels are subsiding and residents have been told by local authorities that they can return home – including the 40 families whose homes have sustained significant flood damage.

The EOC Branch Coordinator tells the RC Manager to demobilize the RC immediately, as the ESS response has ended and no further Referrals can be issued.

Questions:

1. As RCM, how would you proceed?
2. What general or function-specific actions do the management team need to take prior to, and upon, demobilization?

Potential Answers:

Note: This is a good opportunity to reinforce the importance of a proper demobilization, as well as the role of ESS in the **transition** to recovery – basically, to ensure that evacuees are aware, and able to access, the available recovery resources. Don't assume someone else is taking care of it.

1. ASK QUESTIONS!

- What information have evacuees been given about accessing recovery assistance?
- What resources are available to them?
- Are there plans for an information meeting to be held with affected residents?
- What if some of the homes are uninhabitable?
- What services can be provided to those residents with health problems that may prevent them from returning to their flood-damaged homes right now?

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Snapshot 15 continued:

Potential Answers:

2. All:

- Complete demobilization checklist
- Review position log for outstanding actions. If none, make notation in log to close it out. If yes, advise RCM or designate and make note of same in log.
- Pack up your work space and ensure all functions reporting to you pack up their areas.
- Complete Exit Interview and ensure everyone reporting to you does so, as well.
- Deliver all documentation and records to Planning (Documentation).

RC/GL Manager:

- Ensure exit interviews take place (**including** RC/GL Manager).
- Oversee pack-up of RC.

Safety Officer:

- Check that Documentation has passed on security of documents to EOC or other appropriate personnel.
- Ensure that any off-site personnel have been advised of demobilization and arrangements made for Exit Interview(s).

Liaison:

- Ensure all external agencies with personnel working on-site are advised of demobilization process and provided with contact info for any follow up or questions.

Information:

- Post notice on RC/GL door to advise of closure and provide contact info for EPC.

Operations:

- Ensure all Referrals and ESS File forms are returned to Documentation, including those that are unused or voided

Planning:

- Secure documentation and ensure delivery to appropriate location (to be determined by local authority)
- ESS Files and Referral copies should go to PREOC once any follow-up is complete (e.g., if there is still a possibility of extension of ESS, hold files until ESS response has completely ended).

Logistics:

- Ensure that all personnel are signed out and confirm they have appropriate transportation arrangements for their return home (particularly out-of-area volunteers such as MST or mutual support volunteers)

Finance:

- Ensure all financial records are secured – either through Documentation Unit or EOC Finance