



Bella Coola Emergency Response Plan

HAZARD ANNEX – Infrastructure Failure

Central Coast Regional District

*Updated by Frontier Resource Management Ltd
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HAZARD ANNEX – INFRASTRUCTURE FAILURE

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1 Introduction

Critical and important infrastructure in the Bella Coola Valley include electrical power, telephone and water utilities as well as highway transportation corridor. Important facilities include the hospital, CCRD and Nuxalk administration offices, RCMP station, harbour and schools. Failure of these infrastructures can come as a result of severe weather, fire, flood, landslide, earthquake and tsunami.

Power outage occurs frequently in the Bella Coola valley but most of the time it is only for a short duration. However, prolonged power outage can have dire consequences for the community, particularly during winter months. Telephone contact with the outside world is vulnerable to long term failure as there is only one telephone link all the way to Williams Lake and if the fiber optic cable goes down it may take extended time to repair it. There are also a number of water districts in the valley, but if any one of them were to become unusable, there are other options for people to access water for basic needs. Extended closure of Hwy 20 could cause challenges for the community as virtually all supplies are delivered by this route.

Except for an emergency closure of the hospital, closure of the other facilities will likely not necessitate a community emergency response. The hospital has an emergency response plan that includes partial or full closure and patient evacuation. It is expected that each of the other important service providers also have their own contingency plans for relocation should their facility become unavailable/unusable.

2 Power Outage Emergency Response

Power outage during winter can evolve into a community emergency as many homes rely on electricity to help heat their homes, even those that use firewood as the main source of heat.

2.1 Preparation

BC Hydro has two sources of power – Clayton Falls hydro station and a diesel generation plant. Should one of these go down, there is a second option to provide power. In winter though, when water levels are down, the Clayton Falls station has reduced capacity.

Public awareness programs will be promoted to provide homeowners with information regarding self-help advice for power failures to minimize associated problems. People should be encouraged to have alternate power options like generators and back-up battery systems. As well as alternate sources of heat and cooking options.

The Bella Coola General Hospital is equipped with emergency power generation capability and will continue to function providing fuel resources are provided.

2.2 Notification

Predicted cases of prolonged power outages should be reported by BC Hydro to the local emergency program coordinator or EMBC. In response, the EEC will determine the potential consequences and decide if an EOC is required to respond to the situation.

Announcement of the EOC location will be made by as many methods as possible as per Section 3 Communication Plan. Battery powered radios and word of mouth/runners will be the most effective. Neighbourhood Emergency Teams (NET) if established would be invaluable in power outage response.

2.3 Accommodations

ESS will arrange temporary accommodations if required.

Larger, buildings such as schools and hotels rely on electricity to provide building heat. That means residents who may be required to evacuate homes due to a power outage will potentially not have the option for attending local hotels for assistance. In such instances ESS personnel will be forced to rely on smaller hospitality providers along with local area residences to provide accommodations for displaced persons.

2.4 Transportation

ESS will work to provide transportation for residents unable to transport themselves to ESS facilities should the need to leave their homes.

Options include:

- Local bus service
- School busses
- Government agencies with available vehicles
- Interior Roads Ltd

Where power outages occur in conjunction with extremely cold temperatures or heavy snowfall events, it can also be assumed that transportation may be difficult or even restricted in some parts of the valley

2.5 Protection of property

The EOC will attempt to assist residents with freeze-protection of private property by providing contact information of local tradespersons as available. A request for trades assistance may be broadcast on the emergency network if required.

3 Telephone Interruption

Long term disruption of telephone service will require use of alternate means of communication with the outside world. Available options include:

- Satellite phones
- Government radio repeaters – RCMP, MFLNRO, DFO
- Satellite internet connections
- HAM radio

Central Coast Communication Society is also working on establishing alternate back-up internet connection.

4 Potable Water Utility

There are 4 separate water districts in the valley – Bella Coola, 4 Mile, Hagensborg and Smith Subdivision. If anyone of these were to fail, there are alternate water sources at the main tributary creeks throughout the valley but people would have to collect water in temporary tanks on their own. Assistance would need to be provided for the elderly and those without transportation to deliver water jugs and tanks.

5 Hwy 20 Closure

Long term closure of Hwy 20 will likely be in event of flooding, fire or landslide. An earthquake could damage bridges and a tsunami could wash away access to the harbour. Depending on the location of the road closure the whole valley could be cut off from access to the outside world, which would disrupt delivery of supplies or the lower part of the valley could be cut off thus preventing upper valley residents access to the hospital and other key services like banking.

5.1 Condition Monitoring

Interior Roads Ltd is responsible to monitor highway conditions. During severe weather conditions, the intensity of patrols is increased. CCRD EC should be notified as soon as possible if there is potential for highway closure or highway becomes un-passable.

5.2 Traffic Control

RCMP, MOTI and Interior Roads Ltd are responsible to set up traffic control points at safe locations.

5.3 Alternate Supply Options

If Hwy 20 is closed the alternate option for delivery of supplies is by ferry or barge. Upon determination that a road closure will be for an extended period of time, the main food and supply providers should be contacted to initiate alternate delivery mechanisms. Without replenishment, basic perishable goods like milk and produce will run out in about a weeks time. Outside suppliers will need to be notified of new ferry or barge transport schedules and loading locations. Marine transport providers include:

- BC Ferries
- North Arm Marine barging
- Shearwater Marine barging

For critical items, delivery by air, usually Pacific Coastal, may be necessary. Bella Coola Hospital has procedures in place to access medical supplies and pharmaceuticals in case usual supply delivery is disrupted.