



Pathways to Allied Emergency Management

Indigenous Governing Bodies
and Fraser Valley Regional
District Engagement



Tuckkwiowhum Village
Fraser Canyon, B.C.
Photo by InMist

Date of publication: January 2025

Version: 1.0

Authors/Credits:

Written by Stephanie Hooker and Tarina Colledge.

Edited and designed by The Beacon Design Collective Inc.



Contents

Introduction	5
About FVRD’s Emergency Management Service.	6
Our Shared Responsibility: Partners on the Landscape.	8
Updated Emergency Management Legislation	10
Incidents vs. emergencies/disasters	10
6 of 15 emergency powers where no engagement is required	11
9 of 15 emergency powers where engagement is required	11
Pathways to Consultation and Cooperation	12
FVRD communication pathways.	12
Pathways to which the FVRD and Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) have access	13
Complexities in developing pathways.	13
What Next?	15



Indigenous totem
Fraser Canyon, B.C.
Photo by InMist

INTRODUCTION



Mount Hope
Hope, B.C.
Photo by Barker, Boldfish Creative

The updated *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) in BC requires the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) to undertake efforts to deepen our awareness and understanding of Indigenous contexts through engagement with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) in all phases of emergency management.

The Act is complex, and incomplete, as it does not yet include clearly specified regulations. As a result, the FVRD and IGBs may face challenges in understanding and navigating the new legislation, collectively.

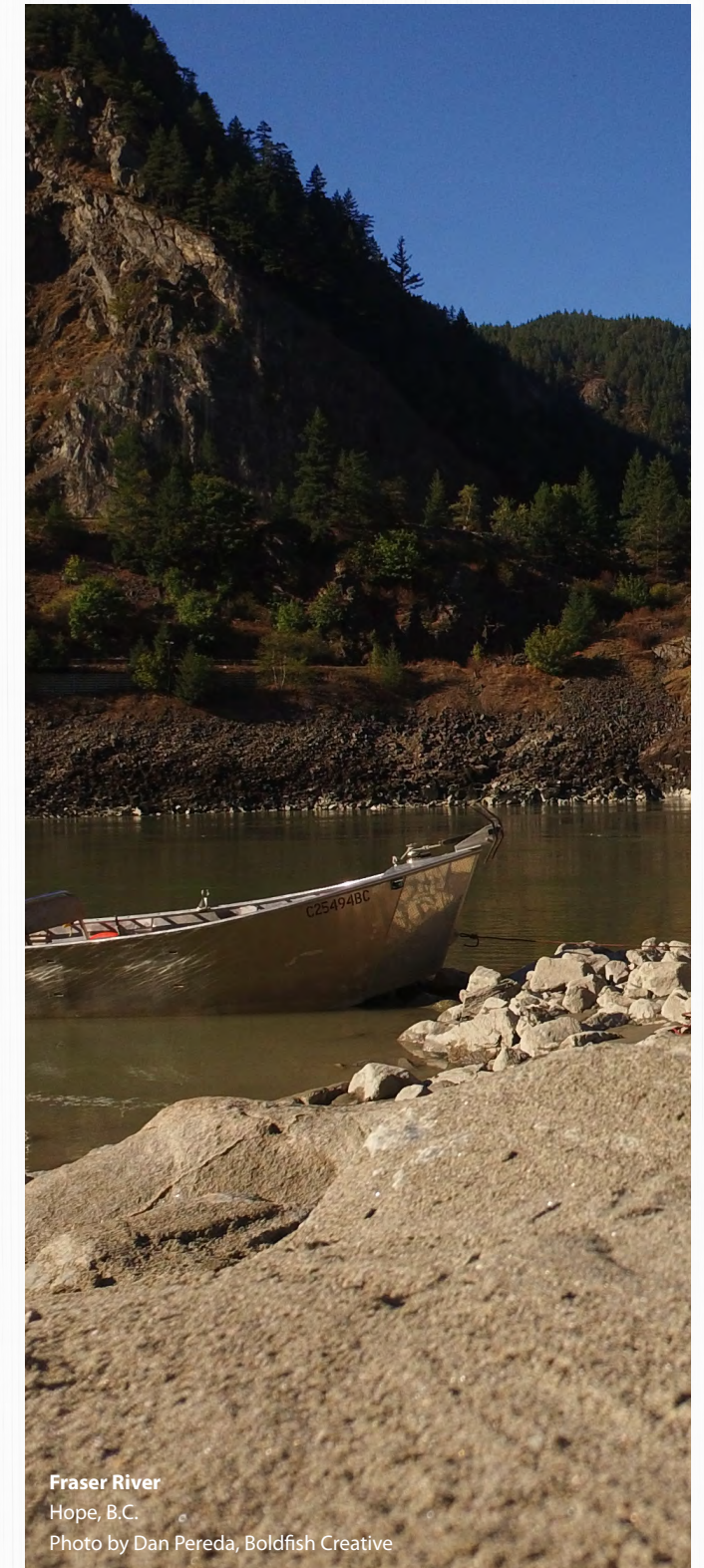
This information package aims to outline the FVRD Emergency Management Program and support collaboration with IGBs in operationalizing the new legislation. Also enclosed is a survey, and an invitation to in-person sessions to jointly explore jurisdictions, complexities, and shared interests. The survey is optional and can be completed either before or after participating in a collaboration session. All information shared with FVRD will be kept confidential and will not be made public.

The Fraser Valley Regional District spans 13,361 km² and includes eight unincorporated electoral areas, six member municipalities, and 31 co-located First Nations. The FVRD provides emergency management services to 24+ hamlet-like communities containing nearly 6,500 properties, and serves the approximately 12,000 residents who live outside of First Nations reserve lands.

The FVRD Emergency Management Organization consists of a director, a manager, and two staff members, and is overseen by an executive committee and the FVRD Board. However, when called upon during emergencies, all FVRD staff contribute to emergency management functions.

The FVRD faces important limitations with respect to the response phase of emergency management. For instance, it does not have heavy equipment or a public works department, which limits its capabilities during emergencies and requires the FVRD to work with partners who do have such capabilities. Furthermore, large portions of FVRD electoral areas are not in an area served by volunteer fire departments, or the number of first responders may not be adequate or adequately trained for specific hazards. In such cases, the FVRD relies on other responders—such as the RCMP, BC Ambulance Service, Search and Rescue, BC Wildfire Service—and response may be delayed. Due to geographic or situational complexities, FVRD's emergency response efforts may be limited to issuing evacuation orders in some emergencies.

The FVRD's emergency management responsibilities may be limited to the services offered by the FVRD, in addition to situation-specific response works that have been supported via provincial response and recovery funding channels. These responsibilities do not extend to Crown land, member municipalities, or First Nations reserves, which have their own emergency management programs. The FVRD encourages collaboration and mutual assistance among all entities operating and planning for emergencies upon the landscape.



Fraser River
Hope, B.C.
Photo by Dan Pereda, Boldfish Creative

FVRD BOARD

BOARD

The FVRD Board is responsible for declaring, extending, and rescinding States of Local Emergency (SOLE); authorizing the use of emergency powers; approving plans and policies; ensuring sufficient budget and resources; and appointing the DEM.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EMEC)

EMEC provides strategic oversight and organizational support, periodic evaluations, and integration of the departments of the FVRD with the EM Program to ensure the organization, its staff, and volunteers are prepared to manage emergencies. The EMEC pre-approves program bylaws, plans, and policies before they advance to the Board. It comprises the CAO, CFO, DEM, and other members appointed by the CAO.

DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

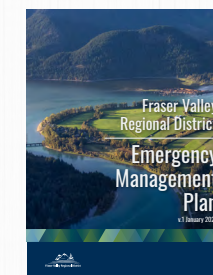
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (DEM)

The DEM oversees the EM Program. The DEM provides leadership and oversight, guides the EM Program and directs the development of plans and policies. The DEM will typically serve as an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Director during events, though others will serve in this EOC role as well. The DEM is appointed by the Board.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF

The Manager of Emergency Management administers and maintains the EM Program and oversees the staff team. Emergency Management staff implement the departmental work plans and project deliverables. The DEM and EM staff are situated within the FVRD's Planning & Development Department.



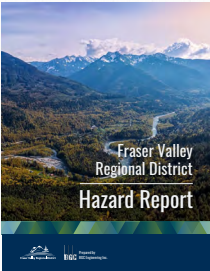
For more information on the FVRD's emergency management service, structure, and program, please [click here to review the 2024 Emergency Management Plan](#) or scan the QR code.



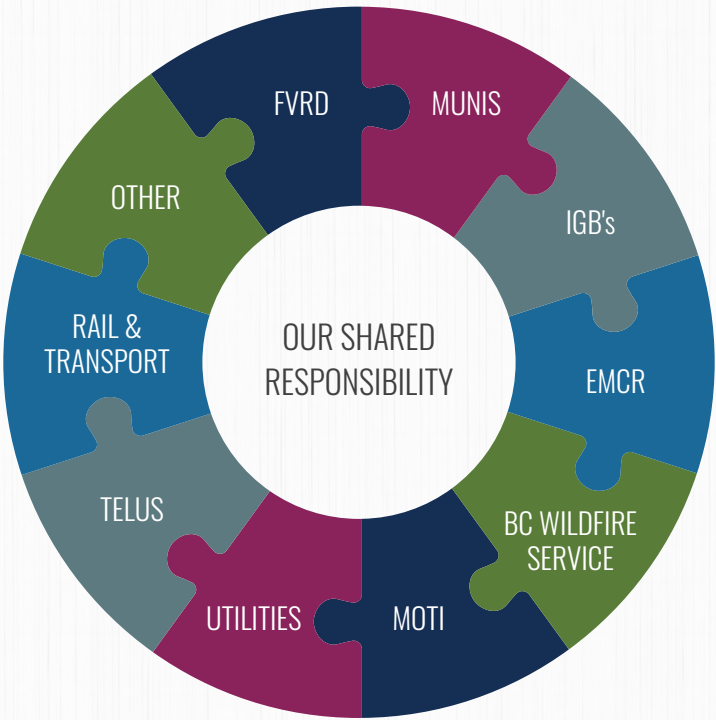
The FVRD is a vast and high-hazard landscape where climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of emergencies. Many residents live in rural settings with limited access to evacuee support amenities such as commercial services and temporary lodging. Concurrent hazard events may strain resources, and residents are advised they might not receive assistance for up to 14 days, which underscores the importance of individual preparedness and neighbours helping neighbours.

Emergencies can have cross-jurisdictional impacts requiring multi-agency coordination. The FVRD lacks jurisdiction over roads, waterways, many utilities, and most Crown lands, necessitating collaboration among various municipal and Indigenous governing bodies, provincial and federal agencies, and private entities. In a State of Local Emergency (SOLE), regional districts gain additional emergency powers, such as the power to order evacuations, restrict access, and use properties for emergency purposes. However, jurisdictional responsibilities remain with the original authorities. As such, while the FVRD isn't responsible for emergencies on Crown lands, it can exercise emergency powers there during a SOLE.

While Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) may not have jurisdiction over off-reserve lands, they may have off-reserve interests in both FVRD hamlets and on Crown land. In hamlets, these interests may include off-reserve members, properties, businesses, services, and shared infrastructure. On Crown land, interests may include watersheds, power projects, natural resources, and cultural sites. Crown land is also often traditional Indigenous territory, where First Nations may hold decision-making power.



For more information on hazards in the FVRD, please [click here to review our 2023 Hazard Report](#) or scan the QR code.



Tuckkwiowhum Village
Fraser Canyon, B.C.
Photo by InMist

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) regulates FVRD during emergencies. While Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) aren't directly regulated by the EDMA, the Act requires regional districts to engage with IGB's when using emergency powers related to land-based actions during a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) or a declared local recovery period. Out of 15 emergency powers, nine require IGB engagement.

Engagement requirements apply in all phases of emergency management; however, during emergencies when emergency powers are being used, there are more specific engagement requirements. These do not apply during incidents, where site incident commanders operate independently and not under the EDMA, and the use of SOLE powers is not applicable. First Nations continue to manage emergencies on reserve lands and are recognized as decision-makers in their traditional territories.

INCIDENTS VS. EMERGENCIES/DISASTERS

Incidents are isolated events involving a specific hazard that responders are able to stabilize quickly and independently. Emergencies are incidents that responders cannot stabilize quickly and require additional support through extraordinary powers. In emergencies, regional districts may declare a SOLE to provide support and exercise emergency powers for public safety and infrastructure protection. Engagement requirements under the EDMA apply only to emergencies. FVRD aims to collaborate and better understand IGB priorities and interests, recognizing that different entities may perceive threats differently. Expectations related to the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* are specific to EDMA. There are other statutes that regulate fire services, police services, ambulance services, etc. Response agencies are not governed by EDMA for incidents and it would be unreasonable to expect the same level of engagement from response agencies during incident management.

Incident example:

A wildfire starts on Crown land near an FVRD hamlet. Local fire services and BC Wildfire Service respond, and power is shut off to prevent further damage. Site incident commanders operate independently and can conduct tactical evacuations without declaring a SOLE. The incident does not require the FVRD Emergency Management department's support. There is no expectation of communication with the FVRD or IGBs.

Emergency example:

A wildfire starts on Crown land, adjacent to an FVRD hamlet. Local fire services and BC Wildfire Service respond. There is a need for the local government to provide Emergency Operations Centre support to the incident site for evacuations and area restrictions. The FVRD declares a SOLE to enact emergency powers, some of which require engagement with IGBs. Note that the FVRD Emergency Management department only has communication with first responders through the E-Comm 9-1-1 relay when there is no cell service.



Actions requiring emergency powers can still be taken by the FVRD without engagement if there is:

- » Imminent risk of loss of life
- » Imminent risk of injury to individuals or animals
- » Immediate risk of significant loss or damage to property

6 OF 15 EMERGENCY POWERS WHERE NO ENGAGEMENT IS REQUIRED

Description of Power	During SOLE	During Recovery
Identify essential goods, services, property, or facilities and, in relation to those things, do any of the following:		
» Establish price controls.	✓	✓
» Ration or provide for their distribution or use.		
» Provide for their restoration.		
Authorize a qualified person to provide a service or give assistance.	✓	✓
Require a qualified person to provide a service or give assistance.	✓	–
Provide for the provision and maintenance of necessities.	✓	✓
Require structures to be assessed for damage.	✓	✓
Control or prohibit business activities.	✓	✓

9 OF 15 EMERGENCY POWERS WHERE ENGAGEMENT IS REQUIRED

Description of Power	During SOLE	During Recovery
Appropriate, use, or control the use of goods.	✓	✓
Use or control the use of land.	✓	✓
Authorize entry into structures or onto land to take emergency measures.	✓	✓
Prohibit entry into structures or onto land by any person.	✓	✓
Authorize or require alterations, removal, or demolition of trees, crops, structures, or landscapes.	✓	✓
Authorize or require the construction, alteration, removal, or demolition of works.	✓	✓
Require the evacuation of persons or authorize the evacuation of persons or animals.	✓	–
Authorize the removal of goods.	✓	–
Control or prohibit travel.	✓	✓

The FVRD is exploring how to proceed with its relationships with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs). We recognize that as regulations unfold, we may also gain more clarity.

We know that the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) is optional for Non-Treaty IGB's, and want to better understand which IGBs are contemplating the use of the EDMA locally. Concerns exist about the potential degradation of relationships due to differing interpretations and expectations of the Act.

Despite these challenges, the FVRD and IGBs share overlapping interests, citizenry, and responsibilities. Disasters do not know governing or administrative boundaries, and the FVRD seeks to improve collaboration by:

- » Understanding each other's emergency management structures and capacities
- » Identifying IGB expectations for engagement
- » Establishing 24/7 communication pathways for use during emergencies
- » Creating mutual support and interagency cooperation pathways
- » Developing a collective understanding of when to activate these pathways

FVRD COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

1. FVRD uses Alertable to issue emergency notifications. [Register](#) to receive notifications via text, phone, email, or mobile app.
2. Situation updates may be posted on the FVRD website at www.fvrd.ca.
3. Evacuation alert and order areas are listed on the [FVRD Emergency Status Map](#).
4. 24/7 EM Duty Officer phone line (number listed on the [Cedar Network](#)). First Nations that already have arrangements with E-COMM for fire dispatch can request the FVRD EM Duty Officer be contacted or request the number from E-COMM fire dispatch.
5. FVRD Reception, including an after-hours call-taking service: 604-702-5000.
6. When the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) activates, it may also activate a public line: 778-704-0400.



7. When the EOC activates, a liaison officer may be activated for outreach.
8. Government-to-government protocols between the FVRD Board and IGB.
9. The FVRD Indigenous Relations department.
10. The [Cedar Network](#).

PATHWAYS TO WHICH THE FVRD AND INDIGENOUS GOVERNING BODIES (IGBS) HAVE ACCESS

1. The Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre public reporting line 1-800-663-3456 to be connected with the local government duty line
2. Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR)/Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) coordination of calls, resource requests, and expense authorization requests
3. EMCR processes for requesting/granting special access to restricted areas
4. The FVRD can delegate its authority during a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) to other entities and/or create mutual aid agreements
5. Unified Command under the Incident Command Structure
6. BC Common Operating Picture (access can be requested through EMCR)
7. Joint after-action reviews (AARs) or mutual participation in each other's AAR and/or post-event debriefs



If there are gaps in existing pathways, the FVRD hopes to explore additional pathways for consultation and cooperation by hosting in-person sessions.

COMPLEXITIES IN DEVELOPING PATHWAYS

Local governments must adhere to the EDMA, but IGBs do not. The FVRD may face multiple impacted sites during emergencies, while IGBs may deal with fewer impacted sites on reserve lands but have broader interests on the FVRD landscape. It is essential that developed pathways recognize complexities and keep pace with emergency response and recovery needs. Key complexities include:

- » Regional districts have emergency management processes with EMCR.
- » IGBs have emergency management processes with EMCR, ISC, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS), etc., and may have responsibility for housing, health, and education that regional districts do not.
- » The FVRD and IGBs both face capacity challenges.
- » There are shared resource challenges in rural and remote areas.



Indigenous totem
Fraser Canyon, B.C.
Photo by InMist

WHAT NEXT?



Winter miscellaneous
Hope, B.C.
Photo by Ali Hardwood, Boldfish Creative

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA)* introduces substantial changes to emergency management and is currently incomplete, which can lead to confusion. To enhance mutual understanding and create effective engagement pathways, we invite you to do the following:

- » Share this information package with your Chief & Council, and Emergency Management staff/team.
- » Complete the attached survey.
- » Attend our in-person session to identify and discuss uncertainties together.
- » Contact Tarina Colledge, Manager of Emergency Management, at emergencyinfo@fvrd.ca or 604-702-5072.



FVRD.ca

Head office: 1-45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, BC

Call: 604-702-5000 or toll-free at 1-800-528-0061