NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EMERGENCY PLAN

April | 2024

Une version française de ce document est disponible.

Government of
Northwest Territories

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Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
Cree
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Tłı̨chǫ yatı k'è̀è̀. Dı wegodı newǫ dè, gots'o gonede.
Tłı̨chǫ
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Ɂerıhtł'ís Dëne Sųłıné yatı t'a huts'elkër xa beyáyatı theɂą ɂat'e, nuwe ts'ën yółtı.
Chipewyan
_____

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ı̨e zhatıé k'ę́ę́ edatł'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahłí.
South Slavey
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K'áhshó got'ı̨ne xǝdǝ k'é hederı ɂedı̨htl'é yerınıwę nídé dúle.
North Slavey
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Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.
Gwich'in
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Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun
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Inuktitut
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Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun
_____

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A Message from the Minister

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Emergency Plan (the Plan) has been developed by the NWT Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and a committee representing Government of the NWT (GNWT) departments and agencies, with input and collaboration from other key partners in emergency management from across the territory. The Plan has been developed under the authority of the NWT *Emergency Management Act* and provides the structure and guidelines on how the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and its partners including critical infrastructure providers work together to support Local Authorities and their Local Emergency Management Organizations and meet a collective responsibility in responding to emergencies. The goal is to ensure a prompt and coordinated response by the GNWT and its partners to territorial emergencies affecting all or parts of the NWT in the event Local Authorities require assistance and ensure the safety and security of residents and visitors.

The hazard environment in the NWT continues to evolve, primarily due to the effects of climate change. There is a need for continuous re-evaluation and improvement using lessons learned and best practices to ensure the territory and communities remain ready to meet the challenge of new or evolving hazards. To keep pace with these changes, the Plan is a living document that will be amended as necessary through a planning process that is managed by the NWT EMO and the Territorial Planning Committee (TPC) in collaboration with emergency management partners.

Emergency management and preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Individuals and families, businesses, Indigenous governments, communities, governments, the private sector and non-government organizations must all do their part to ensure the safety and security of people, property, critical infrastructure, the environment and economy. Through effective coordination and collaboration, the GNWT is committed to working with all levels of government and all partners to ensure the NWT is well prepared for any emergency that may come our way.

_____   _____
Honourable Vince McKay   Date
Minister
Municipal and Community Affairs

1. General

Terminology used in this document is technical and a number of acronyms have been used throughout. Readers are encouraged to reference the glossary in Appendix A for assistance.

1.1 Purpose

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Emergency Plan (the Plan) establishes a coordination and planning framework for emergencies that may affect all or part of the NWT. The Plan outlines how emergency management partners (all levels of government, critical infrastructure providers, non-government organizations, the private sector, and Indigenous governments) work together to respond to widespread, large scale and complex emergencies, which allows all emergency management partners to effectively engage, plan and prepare for such emergencies in advance.

1.2 Scope

The Plan applies to territorial emergencies and to national emergencies that impact the NWT. The Plan describes the coordination and planning emergency management framework for emergency management in the NWT, and the roles and responsibilities of departments and partners during emergencies. It includes:

- a description of the NWT emergency management system,

- a framework for relationships with other departments, governments, and non-government agencies in preparing for and responding to emergencies, and

- procedures for the coordination of responses to territorial emergencies and in supporting Local Authorities during emergencies where their capacity has been exceeded and assistance has been requested.

1.3 Authority

The Plan is issued under the authority of the Northwest Territories *Emergency Management Act* (the *Act*), section 8(5)(c).

1.4 Plan Administration

The Emergency Management Organization (EMO), established under the *Emergency Management Act*, is the custodian of the Plan and may issue procedural amendments and addenda as required.

The Plan will be reviewed annually and major amendments require Ministerial approval.

The Plan will be distributed to key partners and made publicly available.

1.5 Effective Date

This NWT Emergency Plan is effective April 18, 2024 and it replaces the NWT Emergency Plan - 2018.

2. NWT Emergency Management System

The NWT emergency management system is comprised of a series of escalating responsibilities from the "bottom-up", with the intent of resolving an emergency at the lowest possible level. During an emergency, each higher level of the response will monitor the situation and take the measures necessary to assist and support those immediately engaged in response, and prepare for direct involvement, should this be required.

The emergency management system includes those elements and entities required for effective emergency management, including legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks, emergency plans, and emergency management partners. Emergency management in the NWT begins with individual and private sector responsibilities for safety and security, and escalates to Local Authorities, regions, and the territorial government as capacity is exceeded, and further assistance is required.

2.1   Emergency Management Responsibilities

2.1.1 Individuals

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Every person residing in or visiting the NWT has a responsibility to themselves and their families to be prepared for emergencies. This includes:

- ***Having a household emergency plan*** Planning for emergencies ahead of time where possible including, identifying how to stay informed and connected with family and a location that they can evacuate to should they have to leave their home or community. This can include staying with family or friends, camping, or going to a cabin outside of the risk area. Household emergency plans should also include pets.

- ***Maintaining an emergency kit and grab-and-go bag*** These resources can be used if evacuation is required without much or any warning.

- ***Protecting property and obtaining insurance*** Individuals are responsible for the protection of their own property and should purchase insurance, where available. This includes home, tenant, property, and/or content insurance, as applicable. Should insurance not be available, individuals should maintain records of their attempts to get insurance, including documentation from insurance providers indicating that insurance was not available, or the cost estimate received for the insurance if no insurance could be obtained.

For individuals residing in unincorporated areas (i.e. cabins or homes in remote areas without an organized government), the GNWT may make attempts to notify residents of imminent risks in the area where possible and safe to do so. However, residents choosing to live in unincorporated areas are ultimately responsible for knowing the risks and having and executing a personal emergency plan.

2.1.2 Local Authorities

Community governments are the Local Authority for the purposes of the *Act*, and as such are responsible for the development and implementation of emergency plans to reasonably protect the general public and minimize property damage and loss during emergencies.

As per the *Act,* Local Authorities are defined as "municipal councils or an authority that the Minister recognizes as representative of the community for the purposes of the *Act".* Additionally, First Nations bands, Indigenous self-governments and First Nations on Reserve responsible for the delivery of municipal services in their communities are also recognized as Local Authorities.

In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Local Authority shall:
- establish and maintain a Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) to develop and implement emergency plans and other preparedness, response, and recovery measures for emergencies;
- appoint a local coordinator of the LEMO and establish the duties of the coordinator;
- prepare, or cause to be prepared, adopt, and maintain emergency plans and programs; and,
- provide copies of Community Emergency Plans or revisions to such plans to the Emergency Management Division through the Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO).
- the Local Authority may:
  - enter into agreements with, and make payments to, organizations for the provision of services in the development or implementation of emergency plans or programs, and
  - conduct or authorize the conduct of emergency operations outside of its boundaries.

Local Authorities are responsible for the safety and well-being of all of their residents, including vulnerable populations and are the lead for Community Emergency Plans which include evacuation and hosting (as well as associated procedures), and emergency related comunications about emergency events and evacuations to their residents. Additional information on evacuation and hosting can be found in [Annex A – Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines](#).

First Nations on Reserve
The federal department of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is responsible for supporting emergency management on First Nations on Reserve communities. To ensure emergency management services provided to First Nations on Reserve are comparable to those provided to other community governments in provinces and territories, ISC negotiates agreements with each province and territory to provide emergency management services in exchange for reimbursement of eligible expenses.

The GNWT has an agreement with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) on behalf of ISC to ensure First Nations on Reserve in the NWT (i.e. Kátł'odeeche First Nation and Salt River First Nation), have access to emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery programs consistent with programs delivered to all other NWT communities.

2.1.3 Indigenous Governments

Indigenous governments have access to a range of human resources, equipment and local and traditional knowledge that could assist with emergency management activities and/or they may wish to provide cultural supports to their members and/or supports that are beyond what the GNWT would provide.

Where an Indigenous government (Indigenous self-government or First Nation band) is the Local Authority responsible for delivery of municipal services, please refer to section 2.1.2 Local Authorities for specific emergency management responsibilities.

Where an Indigenous government is not the Local Authority responsible for delivery of municipal services and emergency management under the *Act*, they are encouraged to work with the Local Authority and participate as a member of the Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) to support community government emergency management activities. Indigenous government leaders will be briefed on emergencies, through the department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA), with EIA's representative at Territorial Emergency Management Organization (TEMO) briefing out and reporting in on issues of relevance.

Community governments should incorporate Indigenous governments capabilities and resources into Community Emergency Plans through established arrangements.

2.1.4 Non-Government Organizations

Non-government organizations (NGOs) includes the private sector, church or faith-based groups, service clubs, volunteer organizations, companies with work camps, equipment and supply resources, and other agencies with resources and services that could be utilized during emergenices.

NGOs can provide a wide range of skills, labour force, and equipment, and may also have extensive expertise and connections with vulnerable populations.

NGOs are responsible for the development and implementation of their own organizational business continuity and emergency plans, obtaining appropriate insurance and for the protection of property to minimize damage and loss during emergencies.

To ensure the most effective response to emergencies, all available community resources need to be considered as part of preparedness and response. Community governments should incorporate NGO and private sector capabilities and resources into Community Emergency Plans through established arrangements.

2.1.5 Departmental Emergency Responsibilities

GNWT departments and agencies are responsible for providing coordination and support for emergencies that fall within their specific departmental or agency mandates and for supporting territorial level responses in accordance with this Plan. This includes responsibility to:

- develop and maintain department emergency plans for emergencies that fall within their specific mandate;
- respond directly to emergencies that fall within the specific mandate of the department;
- develop and maintain business continuity plans to ensure continuity of vital business functions;
- support the Emergency Management Division with subject matter experts (SMEs) and staff reassignments to support response and recovery efforts;
- maintain a senior official and alternate as representatives on the REMOs, the Territorial Emergency Managent Organization (TEMO) and the TPC;
- support and participate in training initiatives and emergency management exercises to test and evaluate the Plan and improve the NWT emergency management system;
- support and participate in after action reviews and other system improvement initiatives as required after emergency events and exercises, and
- support NGOs and agencies funded through departmental budgets with planning and preparedness activities.

GNWT departments will support Local Authorities in the event of an evacuation where the Local Authority's capacity has been exceeded in whole or in part when responding to an emergency.

Department specific roles and responsibilities are identified in Appendix 2 – Department and Agency Specific Roles and Responsibilities.

Territorial Planning Committee
The Territorial Planning Committee (TPC) is created pursuant to section 8 of the *Act* and is the primary planning forum for government emergency preparedness. The TPC is a subcommittee of the TEMO and membership includes senior representation from all GNWT departments and agencies who also sit on TEMO. The TPC is Chaired by the Emergency Management Division (Head of the EMO). Subject to the approval of the Minister the TPC may:

- coordinate and lead emergency management planning for the GNWT and agencies;
- provide advice to the Minister in respect of emergency management planning, and
- develop and maintain territorial emergency plans.

The TPC shall:
- review territorial emergency plans annually, and
- exercise any other powers and perform any other duties as directed by the Minister.

2.1.6 Emergency Management Division

Pursuant to the *Act*, the Minister shall direct the Emergency Management Division to carry out those functions and responsibilities set out in the NWT Emergency Plan. The Division shall:

- administer the NWT Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and exercise powers and carry out duties as required by the *Act* and regulations;

- authorize or require the implementation of territorial emergency plans at any time the Division considers appropriate, and

- exercise any other powers and perform any other duties as directed by the Minister for the purposes of the *Act*.

2.1.7 Regional and Territorial Emergency Management Organizations

The EMO is established pursuant to the *Act*. It consists of the Territorial Emergency Management Organization (TEMO) situated within the MACA's Emergency Management Division and includes five Regional Emergency Management Organizations (REMOs) situated in MACA regional offices and led by MACA regional superintendents. The Emergency Management Division is responsible for the administration of the TEMO. TEMO leads the activities of the GNWT in relation to emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery and is the lead authority for the GNWT's emergency management program.

Pursuant to the section 6(4) of the *Act* the EMO, under the direction of the Minister, shall:

- lead the GNWT in the coordination of emergency management activities;
- support the emergency management activities of Local Authorities;
- coordinate or assist in the coordination of the response of the GNWT and agencies to an emergency, and
- exercise any other powers and perform any other duties as directed by the Minister for the purposes of the *Act*.

Pursuant to section 6(3) of the *Act*, the EMO, under the direction of the Minister, may:

- promote public awareness of matters related to emergency management;
- establish policies and programs respecting emergency management;
- conduct exercises and provide education and training related to emergency management;
- promote a common approach to emergency management, including the adoption of standards and best practices;
- review and recommend modifications to territorial and Local Authority emergency plans and programs;
- procure food, fuel, water, medicine, equipment, goods, materials and services of any nature or kind for the purposes of the *Act;*
- authorize, review, evaluate or approve surveys or studies of resources and facilities that may be used for the purposes of the *Act;*

- provide advice and assistance to Local Authorities in the development, implementation and maintenance of emergency programs and plans;
- make recommendations to the Minister respecting emergency management, including the creation and maintenance of emergency programs;
- authorize and require surveys or studies to identify and record actual or potential hazards, risks and vulnerabilities that could cause or exacerbate an emergency in all or part of the NWT, and
- advise the Minister on any matter concerning the *Act* or the regulations.

2.1.8 Federal Government

Should an emergency threaten to overwhelm the resources of the NWT or specialized equipment and expertise is required, there are agreements in place where the resources of the federal government and resources from other provinces and territories can be called upon to assist.

To facilitate coordination of federal assistance (including military) during an emergency, all GNWT requests for federal assistance in an emergency event are coordinated through the NWT EMO. Public Safety Canada (PSC) acts as the primary point of contact for receiving and processing requests for assistance through the Public Safety Prairies and NWT Regional Office.

Public Safety Canada
Under the federal *Emergency Management Act*, the Minister of Public Safety is the federal Minister responsible to coordinate the Government of Canada response to an emergency.

The Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP) is the all-hazards plan for a coordinated federal response to emergencies. Under the FERP, federal departments frequently manage emergencies or provide support to a province or territory for events related to their specific mandate, within their own authorities and without requiring coordination from Public Safety Canada (PSC). Examples include the GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change, , which has agreements in place to bring in outside wildfire fighting resources from other jurisdictions (administered by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre), and the Department of Health and Social Services, which has an agreement with Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada for the coordination and provision of healthcare professionals from across the country during emergencies.

When an emergency requires an integrated Government of Canada response, the PSC's Prairies and NWT Region coordinates the response on behalf of federal government institutions in the region. Federal, provincial and territorial representatives share pertinent information with the PSC Regional Office Federal Coordination Group and the Government Operations Centre in order to maintain situational awareness.

The National Emergency Response System (NERS) describes the process for a provincial or territorial request for federal emergency assistance. The PSC Regional Director for the Prairies and NWT region is the federal agent responsible to respond to requests for federal assistance by the NWT.

The NERS can also be used in instances where provinces or territories support a federal response to an emergency under federal jurisdiction. All GNWT support to federal departments and agencies will be provided in accordance with the provision of this plan.

Canadian Armed Forces

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is organized, equipped, and trained to defend Canada and, in cooperation with Canada's allies, protect and advance Canada's interests in the world community. While the CAF focuses on military tasks, the inherent flexibility of military units makes the CAF a potential source of assistance which may be called upon as a last resort to support Canadian civilian authorities during times of emergencies.

Joint Task Force (North) (JTFN) is responsible for Canadian Armed Forces operations and administration in northern Canada, namely the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. JTFN is headquartered in Yellowknife, NWT, and is part of Canadian Joint Operations Command.

2.2   Training and Exercises

MACA's Emergency Management Division will coordinate the delivery of a territorial emergency management training program sufficient to support the NWT emergency management system.

The Division will coordinate and participate in emergency management exercises to practice and improve the NWT emergency management system. These exercises may include community, Indigenous government, regional, territorial, federal, and partner organizations. At least one territorial level exercise will be held every three years. Exercise formats will include tabletop exercises, drills, and field training exercises.

The Division supports Local Authorities with their training and exercising through the provision of resources and facilitation of workshops.

2.3   Business Continuity

Business continuity planning is the creation of plans and arrangements to maintain the essential functions of an organization when directly affected by an emergency. GNWT departments and agencies, as well as NGOs and the private industry, are responsible to maintain their own Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) to ensure critical business functions continue at required levels during and after emergencies. The Emergency Management Division is not the lead for business continuity planning for the GNWT or for other agencies. This is because employers, including NGOs, are responsible to have an occupational health and safety program for their work site, which must include measures to respond to emergencies at the work site.

3. Comprehensive Emergency Management

Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) is an integrated approach to the management of emergencies that includes all phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery), for all types of emergencies and disasters, and for all levels of government and the private sector. The GNWT has adopted CEM to broaden the emergency management programming focus from preparedness and response to include mitigation and recovery.

CEM provides a basis for all territorial, provincial, and federal emergency management regimes in Canada and is outlined in "*An Emergency Management Framework for Canada*", a framework developed and agreed upon by federal, provincial and territorial governments. CEM guides the NWT to:

- **Establish emergency management programs that are based on risk analysis and cover all four phases of emergency management, and**
- **Develop a response system based on an incident command system that is supported by training and exercising.**

3.1 Prevention / Mitigation

Prevention and mitigation refer to actions intended to eliminate or reduce the impact of disasters to protect lives, property, the environment and reduce economic disruption. These actions are prompted by the potential risk of a hazard, rather than an imminent threat. The decision to prevent or mitigate a hazard is reached through the risk management process. Therefore, these decisions will be influenced by the scope, costs, political perspectives, past experiences, and other issues that contribute to risk management.

Prevention and mitigation include structural mitigation measures (e.g. construction of dykes, drainage system improvements, relocation of buildings, etc.) and non-mitigation measures (e.g. building codes, land-use planning, and purchase of insurance). It involves a wide range of projects and activities and many partners, including Local Authorities, GNWT departments and regional staff. The Emergency Management Division may work with Local Authorities to identify and support potential mitigation projects and facilitate access to federal mitigation programs.

3.2 Preparedness

Emergency preparedness consists of activities that take place before an incident that increase an individual, organization or a community government's readiness to respond. The degree of readiness reflects the risk assessment, the assignment of a responsibility to respond, and a commitment to put the plans, resources, and infrastructure in place to ensure an appropriate response capability.

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Preparedness increases the ability to respond effectively to hazard impacts and to mitigate some of the long-term effects. It involves planning, training and education, resource management, and exercising. It builds better coordination and cooperation between agencies and key partners.

A key to being prepared for emergencies is having an emergency plan in place. The Emergency Management Division acts as a resource by providing advice, contacts, and resource material to support the development of emergency plans. The Emergency Management Division assists Local Authorities by conducting community emergency planning and tabletop exercise workshops to develop and validate emergency plans.

3.3   Response

Response consists of the actions taken during or immediately after a disaster or emergency to manage its consequences. Emergency situations are dealt with first by individuals. If individuals become overwhelmed, they call upon first responders, such as emergency medical services, hospitals, fire departments and police. When an emergency exceeds the normal capacity of first responders, the Local Authority provides assistance. If the event exceeds the Local Authority's capacity and assistance is requested, the Regional and/or Territorial Emergency Management Organizations (REMOs and TEMO) will respond and provide assistance consistent with the NWT Emergency Plan.

3.4   Recovery

Recovery entails the measures taken to repair or restore conditions to an acceptable level after a disaster. It involves decisions and actions relative to assessing damage, restoring essential services, the return of evacuees, repairing and replacing property, resuming employment, restoring businesses, and repairing and rebuilding infrastructure. The process may take years and requires balancing the more immediate need to return a community to normalcy with the longer-term goal of reducing future vulnerability.

4. Territorial Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

The NWT's risk environment includes both natural and human caused hazards. MACA maintains an updated territory wide Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (HIRA) to inform communities and GNWT departments of hazards specific to their environment.

The NWT HIRA can help identify hazards that exist in the territory, both natural, technological, and human-induced; how frequently they might occur; how severe their impact may be on communities, critical infrastructure, property, and the environment, in the past, now, and in the future; and which hazards pose the greatest threat to communities.

Local Authorities must update their Community Emergency Plans annually. The information contained in the NWT HIRA can be used to support the development and updates to Emergency Plans, in the development of territorial or community disaster risk mitigation plans, to improve emergency response protocols and structures, and to guide the development of emergency response exercises, and training and awareness programs.

The HIRA is a critical part of the NWT emergency management program and is re-evaluated and updated as required.

Floods and wildfires are typically the highest risk hazards throughout the NWT. These hazards have frequently caused extensive damage to people, property, the environment, and the economy. Both hazards are also expected to increase in frequency, severity and duration due to climate change, causing more extensive damage in the future.

5. Emergency Communications

Clear communications by appropriate authorities are critical before, during and after an emergency. Well-conceived and effectively delivered emergency messages can protect property, facilitate response efforts, elicit cooperation, instill public confidence, and help families reunite.

All responding agencies have a responsibility for operational and public communications. Community Emergency Plans should outline the tools and tactics that Local Authorities will use to communicate with residents. Communications systems are essential for the success of emergency response and should be considered critical infrastructure prioritized for protection where possible.

Emergency related communications is undertaken in three phases: preparedness, response and recovery. The NWT Emergency Plan and Emergency Communications Protocol contemplate communications during the response phase. TEMO response phase communications functions will be activated depending on the EMO activation levels outlined in Section 6.5.2 and are further described in the Annex B - Emergency Communications Protocol.

5.1   Public Communications

Public communications are a critical and continuous process. Coordination is required to ensure consistency and accuracy, and communications must be timely, accurate, and easily understood by residents of the NWT. Local Authorities outline public communications protocols in their Community Emergency Plans. The Emergency Communications Protocol guides the GNWT emergency public communications activities.

5.2   Public Alerting

NWT Alert is part of Canada's national emergency alerting system and can deliver critical and potentially life-saving alerts to NWT residents through television, radio, and wireless devices. When required, TEMO members may use NWT Alert to advise and update the public on critical emergency information, including information on level of risk and instructions on protective measures when residents are impacted by emergencies.

One use of public alerts is when there is the possibility of an evacuation. See Annex A - Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines for information on the four public alert categories related to evacuations: Evacuation Notice, Evacuation Alert, Evacuation Order and All Clear.

5.3   Operational Communications

Operational communications are essential to the development of situational awareness necessary for the effective coordination of emergency operations. Timely and accurate communication must be maintained between all departments, all levels of government, and all response elements, dependent on the level of activation during a response.

Local Authorities should outline operational communications in Community Emergency Plans; the TEMO and REMO rely on standard operating procedures to outline operational communications between partners at their respective levels.

5.4   Backup Communications

In an emergency, effective telecommunications are critical to establish situational awareness, ensure the efficient exchange of information, coordinate response activities, exercise command and control, and provide for responder safety.

MACA maintains backup telecommunications equipment for the use of REMOs and TEMO to ensure redundancies in the event of communications outages (e.g. satellite internet and phones) as part of business continuity planning. Local Authorities, departments, agencies, NGOs, etc. are required to ensure their own sufficient back-up communications capability in the event of an emergency.

6. Responding to Emergencies

6.1   Emergency Response Priorities

Emergency response priorities help guide decision making on response activities. The following emergency response priorities are used within the NWT. The response priorities are listed in order of priority and should be used when developing operational plans and decision making.

Priorities in conducting emergency response operations are:

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

6.2   Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is an incident management tool. It applies a standardized and coordinated approach to managing emergencies that provides functional interoperability at all levels of emergency management. ICS breaks up tasks into functional areas of Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration. The ICS has been adopted as the response model for the purposes of the NWT Emergency Plan.

Under the ICS model, when a REMO or TEMO is activated in support of an ongoing emergency event, an Incident Management Team (IMT) is stood up to actively manage the response to the event. The size and makeup of the IMT is tailored to meet the specific needs of the emergency event. Other organizations may use ICS and stand up IMTs to address emergencies that fall within their mandate and their protocols may differ from those outlined in this plan.

Local Authorities are empowered to determine how they will manage events; LEMOs may choose to be consistent with the TEMO and use the ICS.
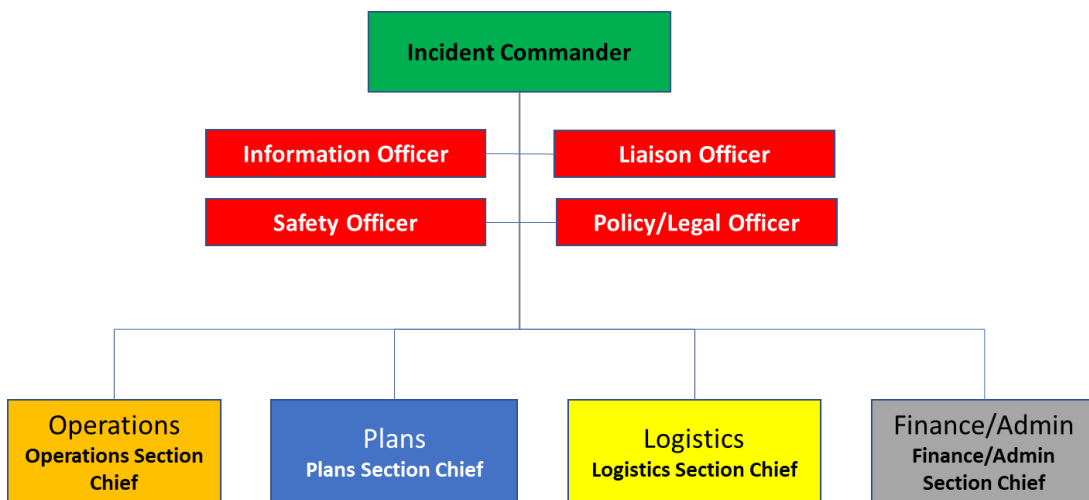
6.3 Emergency Operations Centres

Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) are the physical locations where an IMT comes together during an emergency to coordinate response and recovery actions and resources. EOCs can be virtual depending on the situation. Each of the five REMOs and the TEMO has an EOC with backup communications capabilities. GNWT departments, agencies and LEMOs may also have EOCs.

6.4 Response Structure

The following sections outline the agencies established to support responses to emergency events in the NWT that require Emergency Management Organization coordination.

The graphic below depicts that the vast majority of emergencies are handled at the individual and LEMO level and the structures in place in the event capacity is overwhelmed and assistance is required.
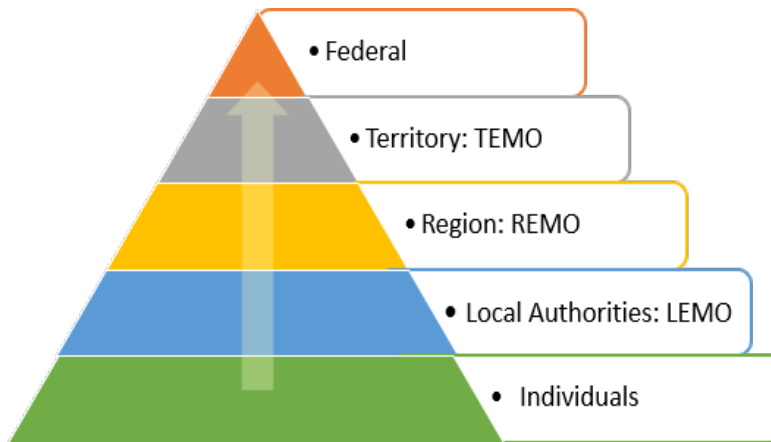
6.4.1 Local Emergency Management Organizations (LEMO)

Under section 10(2)(a) of the *Emergency Management Act*, the Local Authority is required to have a Local Emergency Management Organization. LEMOs are normally led by Senior Administrative Officers or Band Managers of community governments. LEMO membership should include Local Authority leadership and staff, critical service providers (e.g. health, power, law enforcement), community partners (e.g. schools, volunteer groups, businesses, NGOs), and Indigenous government representatives. Diverse membership can facilitate pooling of resources to increase capacity to respond.

6.4.2 Regional Emergency Management Organizations (REMO)

REMOs may be activated to monitor a risk situation, respond to a request for assistance from a Local Authority/LEMO or to support a territorial response to an emergency. REMO membership consists of GNWT departments and agencies and relevant outside agencies such as critical infrastructure or service providers. The Emergency Management Division, may assign an Incident Management Team (IMT) to direct incident operations coordinated in support of a LEMO. The REMO provides overall coordination of a regional response and timely support to communities needing assistance. In the case of wildfires, it is the GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) that would assign an IMT to a fire/fire complex, which would then handle the direct command of the incident.

Should the capacity of the REMO be exhausted, they may request assistance from another REMO or from the TEMO.

6.4.3 Territorial Emergency Management Organization (TEMO)

The TEMO may be activated to support the response to emergencies within the territory. TEMO membership consists of GNWT departments and agencies, relevant outside agencies such as critical infrastructure or service providers, and relevant agencies from outside the NWT such as PSC. The Emergency Management Division will establish an Incident Commander and assign an IMT to provide operational support and assist in providing situational awareness to TEMO members and senior GNWT officials. TEMO will coordinate overall territorial response, ensure communications with appropriate partners, provide regular situational reports, and coordinate the involvement of other departments and key partners.

Should the TEMO exhaust its capacity and require additional resources, the GNWT, via the NWT EMO, may request assistance from the Government of Canada or other provinces and territories under a mutual aid agreement.

6.4.4 Federal Government Operations

The Federal Government Operations Centre serves as the coordination centre for the federal response, providing regular situation reports as well as briefing and decision-making support materials for federal Ministers and Senior Officials.

Federal government institution-specific operations centres support their institutional roles and mandates and contribute to the integrated Government of Canada response through the Federal Government Operations Centre.

When an emergency requires an integrated Government of Canada response, the Public Safety Canada Regional Director coordinates the response on behalf of federal government institutions in the region. The Federal Coordination Centre, stood up by the Public Safety Canada Regional Office, coordinates the federal response during an emergency and the national Emergency Response System forms the basis for that coordination. The Federal Coordination Centre also becomes the single point of contact for the TEMO during a major response within the NWT.

6.5   Activation

6.5.1 Activation Authority

At the local level, when the Local Coordinator or any other LEMO member becomes aware of an imminent or actual emergency requiring a response, they will notify key LEMO members and activate the LEMO.

At the regional level, when deemed necessary, it is the responsibility of the REMO lead to activate the REMO and establish an IMT for the event. It is the responsibility of all REMO members to bring forward any concerns or events to the attention of the REMO lead. It is also the REMO lead's responsibility to demobilize and stand-down elements of the emergency response when no longer required.

At the territorial level, when deemed necessary, it is the responsibility of the Emergency Management Division to work with partners to activate the NWT Emergency Plan and establish an IMT for the event. It is the responsibility of all TEMO members to bring any concerns or events to the attention of the TEMO lead. It is the TEMO lead's responsibility to demobilize and stand-down elements of the emergency response when they are no longer required.

6.5.2 EMO Activation Levels

The TEMO and REMOs will monitor and respond to emergency incidents or potential incidents according to three levels of activation. The level of activation will depend on the severity of the incident and the appropriate type and level of staffing required to monitor and/or respond. Assistance and augmentation with surge staff from GNWT departments will be requested as circumstances dictate. The following activation levels will be used by the REMOs and TEMO:

Activation Level	Definition	Requirements
Monitoring	Active monitoring and sharing of information pertaining to a pending or potential emergency.	• Formalized IMT not required • No requirement for surge staff or other designated GNWT staff • Situation reporting not required • REMO/TEMO meetings only as required
Partial Activation	Information on the occurring, pending or potential emergency dictates a requirement for limited or targeted response including multi-agency coordination and reporting. E.g, supporting a Local Authority in responding to a small scale or localized emergency incident.	• Small IMT staffed by existing EMO staff within the Emergency Management Division or MACA regional Offices and a small amount of surge staff • Regular situation reporting and REMO/TEMO meetings.
Full Activation	Information on the occurring, pending or potential emergency dictates a requirement for a multi-agency and/or multi-jurisdictional large-scale response. E.g, emergencies that impact multiple Local Authorities and/or regions of the NWT	• Large IMT staffed by existing EMO staff within the Emergency Management Division or MACA Regional Offices and extensive surge staff • Regular situation reporting and REMO/TEMO meetings required. • Potential need for assistance from other jurisdictions or the Federal government.

6.6   Resourcing Regional and Territorial Incident Management Teams

All departments and agencies of the GNWT are required to support an emergency response by providing staff and resources in accordance with the Plan. Part of that support is a requirement to provide staff to work as part of IMTs established to manage events and to provide Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to support incident action planning.

6.6.1 Surge Staffing

Activation and staffing levels will vary depending on the scope and size of an event. While smaller events may only necessitate the activation of existing EMO staff within the Emergency Management Division, larger events may require augmentation from other GNWT departments, other provinces, the federal government or even other partner agencies.

To ensure resources are ready and available should an event occur, the Emergency Management Division maintains a list of GNWT surge staff who are trained in ICS roles and SMEs who can be called upon to provide temporary support to the IMT established for an event.

6.6.2 Subject Matter Experts

A SME is an expert in the field; someone who has specific knowledge concerning a subject. In the event of an emergency, SMEs will be called upon as required to share their expert knowledge, depending on the nature of the event. SMEs could be GNWT employees or could be from outside agencies or other levels of government. Examples include reaching out to a hydrologist during ice jamming, a climatologist during a wildfire to understand the implications of an upcoming wind event, or an Indigenous government about how to evacuate in a culturally safe fashion.

6.7   States of Emergency

Section 14 of the *Emergency Management Act* provides a provision to declare a State of Emergency, should an emergency exist, and additional powers are required to respond to the emergency by the Minister or Local Authority.

6.7.1 State of Local Emergency

If a Local Authority is satisfied that an emergency exists or may exist within the community, the local authority may, by motion or resolution, declare a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) to exist in all or part of the community. A declaration of a SOLE must identify the nature of the emergency and the area of the community in which it exists. On making a declaration, the Local Authority shall notify the population of the affected area and send a copy of the declaration immediately to the Emergency Management Division through the REMO.

Typically, a SOLE is declared if one or more of the powers outlined in the *Act* are required to affect a response to an emergency. A SOLE is not required for a Local Authority to request assistance from the REMO. In addition, a declaration does not provide the Local Authority with access to extra funding.

A SOLE or a renewal of a SOLE is effective for 7 days after it is made or upon termination by the Local Authority. The Local Authority may renew a SOLE, prior to its expiry, for up to an additional 7 days with approval from the Minister of MACA. The Minister may cancel a declaration of a state of local emergency or its renewal at any time the Minister considers appropriate.

All Local Authorities are equipped with forms and procedures to request approval of a renewal.

6.7.2 State of Emergency

If the Minister is satisfied that an emergency exists or may exist, the Minister may, by order, declare a territorial State of Emergency (SOE) in all or part of the NWT. The declaration of a SOE must identify the nature of the emergency and the area of the NWT in which it exists. On making a declaration, the Minister shall notify the population of the affected area, without delay, of the declaration and its contents.

Upon declaring a SOE, the Minister may, for the duration of the declaration, do any other act or thing to mitigate, respond to and recover from the effects of the emergency. Such an order is in effect for 14 days and may be renewed at any time before it expires.

The declaration of a SOE by the Minister in an area that is already affected by a declaration of a SOLE, results in the cancellation of the SOLE.

7. Requests for Assistance

A responding agency may issue a request for assistance to the next level of support when their resources and capacity to respond in whole or in part has been exhausted. For example, when an event impacts a large area involving more than one Local Authority or region, or is beyond the capacity of Local Authorities, they may request assistance from the REMO or TEMO.

Generally, requests for assistance should articulate what activity or effect the requesting agency is seeking help to achieve. While it is recognized that initial requests can often be informal when time is limited during a response, best efforts must be taken to ensure formal paperwork is completed.

7.1   Community Government Request for Assistance

The majority of emergencies are dealt with at the local level. Local Authorities are required to have emergency plans in place and enact them when an emergency event impacts the community. Direction and control of response operations is conducted by the LEMO and guided by the Local Authority's Community Emergency Plan. The REMO will be notified and provided a copy of the Community Emergency Plan, as well as situational awareness to monitor the situation for possible GNWT involvement should it be required.

Should the Local Authority's capacity to implement their Communitiy Emergency Plan be exhausted in whole or in part, they can request assistance from the REMO to provide support. While community response operations remain under the direction and control of the Local Authority, REMO coordinated support is directed and controlled by the REMO's lead as a designated Incident Commander.

Requests must originate from an authorized representative of the Local Authority making the request and is contingent on local resources being fully committed.

All Local Authorities are equipped with forms and procedures to formally issue a community government request for assistance to the REMO.

7.2   Regional Requests for Assistance

Where a REMO has exhausted regional capacity and resources in whole or in part, assistance can be sought from another REMO or the TEMO.

7.3   Interjurisdictional Assistance

In July 2009, the federal Minister Responsible for Emergency Management signed a Memorandum of Understanding with all provinces and territories on the provision of inter-jurisdictional emergency management assistance. The purpose of the Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) agreement is to promote and facilitate emergency management assistance between provinces and territories before, during, and after a major event.

The EMMA is supported by standard operating procedures (SOPs) that outline the process of requesting and receiving assistance from other provinces and territories.

When an impacted province or territory has activated their emergency management structure and has determined that additional resources and assistance will be required to adequately support emergency response efforts, the EMMA network can be accessed.

The TEMO Incident Commander will assess the need and issue requests for assistance to other jurisdictions through the EMMA network as appropriate.

Political engagement, outside of an emergency, with the federal government, provinces and territories will be coordinated through the department of EIA, and information will be shared through EIA's participation at TEMO.

7.4   Request for Federal Assistance

When an impacted province or territory has activated their emergency management structure and has determined that additional resources and assistance is required to adequately support emergency response efforts, the Request for Federal Assistance or Provision of Service processes are mechanisms available to access federal support.

The TEMO Incident Commander will assess the need and liaise with PSC regarding anticipated needs for support well ahead of formal requests.

Federal requests for assistance are contingent on the GNWT exhausting all capacity and must articulate the desired effect as opposed to listing assets being requested. This allows the Government of Canada to assess all federal department, agency and CAF resources to determine the best approach for support.

Inversely, when federal resources resident in the NWT are fully employed, the federal government may request assistance from the GNWT. Requests for regional assistance from a federal department resident in a particular region may be directed to the REMO of that region. Should the assistance involve more than one region or is a major emergency, requests come from PSC to the NWT EMO.

8. Recovering from Disasters

Emergencies or disasters can cause physical or psychological trauma, damage infrastructure, displace residents, disrupt services, and affect businesses, facilities, and community programs. The recovery phase of a disaster can begin during the response period and last for years. It can affect all facets of a community and include the winding down of response operations, rebuilding of damaged areas, and planning for when residents can safely return home.

The recovery phase must be managed in a way that maintains the needed level of government services while assisting the community to adjust to the post-disaster realities. An orderly transition to the recovery phase is required.

8.1   GNWT Disaster Assistance Policy

The GNWT may provide financial assistance to community governments, small businesses, and residents of the NWT who have suffered property damage as a result of a disaster.

The GNWT Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) is a government-funded assistance program that may be implemented by Executive Council after a widespread disaster to ensure essential community functioning and cover the essential basic need of residents and businesses. Disaster assistance is limited to essential items, the loss of which was neither preventable nor insurable. It is not an insurance program to recover all losses, and it provides assistance to restore eligible items to pre-disaster condition only.

The DAP is similar to disaster assistance programs established in other jurisdictions in Canada and is closely aligned with the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).

8.2   Federal Disaster Assistance

The Government of Canada has two programs which offer disaster assistance: the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA), which provides assistance to provincial and territorial governments, and the Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP), which applies to disaster response and recovery on First Nations reserves.

8.2.1 Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements

In the event of a large-scale natural disaster, the Government of Canada provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments through Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA). This program is administered by PSC.

When response and recovery costs exceed what individual provinces or territories could reasonably be expected to bear on their own, the DFAA provides the Government of Canada with a fair and equitable means of assisting provincial and territorial governments.

Through the DFAA, assistance is paid to the province or territory – not directly to affected individuals, small businesses, or communities. A request for reimbursement under the DFAA is processed following receipt of the required documentation of provincial/territorial expenditures and a review by federal auditors. This reimbursement process may take several years.

8.2.2 Emergency Management Assistance Program

The Government of Canada's Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) applies to disaster response and recovery on First Nations Reserves and helps First Nation Reserve communities access emergency assistance services. In the NWT, EMAP is applicable to the Kátł'odeeche First Nation (KFN) and Salt River First Nation reserves.

EMAP provides funding to First Nations communities so they can build resiliency, prepare for natural hazards and respond to them using the 4 pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. EMAP aims to be flexible, culturally sensitive, responsive to the unique strengths and customs of First Nations communities, and adaptive to the evolving challenges resulting from emergency events.

The GNWT has an established agreement with CIRNAC on behalf of ISC to ensure First Nations on Reserve in the NWT (i.e. Kátł'odeeche First Nation and Salt River First Nation), have access to emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery programs consistent with programs delivered to all other NWT communities. These First Nations may also choose to work directly with CIRNAC and ISC on recovery activities on their reserves.

First Nations communities looking to apply for EMAP or for more information about the program can contact Indigenous Services Canada.

8.3   Emergency Financial Arrangements

8.3.1 Community Government Emergency Expenditures

Incremental operational expenses incurred by a community government in responding to and recovering from an emergency are the responsibility of the Local Authority. Should a disaster assistance program be applied to an emergency, these incremental costs may be eligible for reimbursement under that program. Detailed accounting records are needed to support the expenditures and facilitate a determination of eligibility for reimbursement under the disaster assistance program.

8.3.2 Departmental Emergency Expenditures

The GNWT does not allocate funds to departments specifically for emergency mitigation, planning, response or recovery. Departments are expected to absorb those costs from within their budgets unless an event necessitates a consolidated GNWT claim through the federal DFAA and/or EMAP. In these events and where the *Disaster Assistance Policy* is applied, MACA will coordinate a request for additional funding to cover response and recovery costs associated with emergency events through appropriate GNWT financial processes. Should MACA coordinate such a request for funding, they will provide specific coding, templates and guidance to participating departments, as and when required.

8.3.3 NWT EMO Emergency Expenditures

Before and during emergency response operations there may be a requirement for the immediate purchasing of materials and services not readily available within the GNWT. All emergency purchases will be made in accordance with the Financial Administration Manual (Section 705 Procurement).

Appendices

The following appendices are attached to this Plan:

- Appendix 1 - Glossary of Terms and Acronyms
  Provides a list of definitions for terms and acronyms used in this Plan.

- Appendix 2 - Departmental and Agency Specific Roles and Responsibilities
  Highlights the key roles and responsibilities of each GNWT department as they pertain to emergency management.

- Appendix 3 - Planning Guidance – Non-Government Organizations and the Private Sector
  Provides high level guidance to Local Authorities and GNWT departments on how to work with non-government organizations and private sector entities.

Annexes

The following annexes provide further guidance on critical operational aspects of emergency management in the NWT. Additional annexes may be developed over time as required.

- Annex A - Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines
  A Framework for the evacuation, hosting, and safe return of evacuees by the NWT emergency management system where a community evacuation is required.

- Annex B - Emergency Communications Protocol
  Outlines the roles, responsibilities, tools and tactics that will be applied to communicate to the public during the response phase of emergencies is the NWT.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Terms and Acronyms	Definition
AAR	**After Action Review** - a structured review or debrief process for analyzing what happened, why it happened, and how it can be done better by those involved in an emergency exercise or event.
Act	For the purposes of the NWT Emergency Plan, *Act* means the NWT *Emergency Management Act.*
Agency	A business or organization established to provide a particular service. For the purposes of the NWT Emergency Plan, agency includes all territorial and federal government departments, agencies and crown corporations and other public and private corporations or organizations having emergency responsibilities assigned under the authority of this Plan.
BCP	**Business Continuity Plans** – plans and arrangements to maintain the essential functions of an organization when directly affected by an emergency. These plans ensure critical business functions continue at required levels during and after emergencies.
CEM	**Comprehensive Emergency Management -** an integrated approach to the management of emergencies that includes all phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery), for all types of emergencies and disasters, and for all levels of government and the private sector.
DAP	**Disaster Assistance Policy** – a GNWT policy that guides the provision of financial assistance to community governments, small businesses, or residents of the NWT who have suffered damage as a result of a disaster.
DEOC	**Departmental Emergency Operations Centre** – an Emergency Operations Centre located within a GNWT department.
DFAA	**Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements** – a federal government program that provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments following large-scale natural disasters.
EM Division	The **Emergency Management Division** within the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.
Emergency	For the purposes of the NWT Emergency Plan, means a present or imminent event that is affecting or could affect the health, safety, or welfare of people, or is damaging or could damage property.
EMAP	**Emergency Management Assistance Program** – a federal government program that provides funding to First Nations communities
EMMA	**Emergency Management Mutual Aid Agreement –** an agreement by provinces and territories to provide assistance to each other during emergencies.
EOC	**Emergency Operations Centre –** the physical location where an organization comes together during an emergency to coordinate response and recovery actions and resources.

FERP	**Federal Emergency Response Plan** – a federal government plan designed to harmonize federal emergency response efforts with those of the provinces/territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector
GNWT	**Government of the Northwest Territories.**
GOC	**Government Operations Centre** – the federal government EOC that provides an all-hazards integrated federal emergency response to events of national interest.
Head of the Emergency Management Organization	For the purposes of the NWT *Emergency Management Act* and NWT Emergency Plan, MACA's Emergency Management Division represents the Head of the Emergency Management Organization.
HIRA	**Hazard Identification Risk Assessment** – a process used to identify and evaluate both existing and potential hazards.
ICS	**Incident Command System** - a standardized on site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure
IMT	**Incident Management Team** – under ICS, the team assigned to manage an incident and includes the Incident Commander, Command Staff (liaison, safety, and communications) and General Staff (operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration).
Local Authority	For the purposes of the *Emergency Management Act* means: • A municipal council, or • An authority that the Minister recognizes as representative of a community other than a municipality (i.e. Designated Authorities, Self-governments, and First Nations on Reserve responsible for the delivery of municipal services).
Minister	The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, responsible for Emergency Management.
NERS	**National Emergency Response System** – a component of Canada's emergency response management system that provides for the harmonization of joint federal, provincial, and territorial response to emergencies.
NGO	**Non-Government Organization –** an organization that functions independently of any government
NWT Alert	**NWT Alert** is part of Canada's national emergency alerting system and can deliver critical and potentially life-saving alerts to NWT residents through television, radio, and wireless devices.
NWT EMO	The **NWT Emergency Management Organization** consists of the TEMO resident in the Public Safety Division of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and REMOs resident in the five MACA regional offices.
REMO	**Regional Emergency Management Organization** - the regional portion of the NWT EMO, REMOs are resident in the five MACA regional offices. Members include senior representation from all GNWT departments and agencies and representation from emergency management partners (e.g. critical infrastructure providers).
REOC	**Regional Emergency Operations Centre** – an EOC used by a REMO for managing regional emergency operations and coordinating support to community emergencies.

SAO	**Senior Administrative Officer** – means the senior officer managing local government operations in a municipality incorporated under the *City, Towns and Villages Act,* the *Hamlets Act,* or the *Settlements Act,* or in an incorporated settlement, a community organization recognized by the Minister as representative of the population for the purposes of emergency preparedness, or a Band Council recognized under the *Indian Act.*
SOE	**State of Emergency** - A declaration relating to all or any part of the NWT, made by order of the Minister under the *Emergency Management Act*, at any time they are satisfied that an emergency exists or may exist.
SOLE	**State of Local Emergency** - A declaration by a community government under the *Emergency Management Act* relating to all or any part of the community, made by bylaw or resolution, at any time the local authority is satisfied that an emergency exists or may exist.
SOP	**Standard Operating Procedure** – established or prescribed methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situations.
SME	**Subject Matter Expert –** An expert in the field; someone who has specific knowledge concerning a subject.
TEOC	**Territorial Emergency Operations Centre** – the GNWT EOC for managing territorial emergency operations and coordinating support to regions and communities during emergencies.
TEMO	**Territorial Emergency Management Organization** - the territorial portion of the NWT EMO resident in the Public Safety Division of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Members include senior representation from all GNWT departments and agencies and representation from emergency management partners (e.g. critical infrastructure providers).
TPAS	**Territorial Public Alerting System** – the NWT alerting system to provide public alerts to NWT residents during emergencies and disasters and is part of the national public alerting system "Alert Ready".
TPC	**Territorial Planning Committee -** a subcommittee of the NWT Emergency Management Organization (TEMO) Membership includes senior representation from all GNWT departments and agencies who also sit on TEMO.

Appendix 2 – Department and Agency Specific Roles and Responsibilities

GNWT departments and agencies are responsible for providing coordination and support for emergencies that fall within their specific mandates and for supporting territorial responses in accordance with the NWT Emergency Plan.

Education, Culture and Employment

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible to:

- Provide for the evacuation of schools and the movement of students to safe areas as required.

- Provide an Emergency Allowance to eligible Income Support Program recipients when the Director, Income Security Programs determines it is needed to assist with meeting the immediate needs that are incurred during an emergency.

- Assist communities in meeting the needs of disaster victims by providing or arranging the use of school infrastructure during emergencies.

- Provide emergency French translation services.

- Provide support and coordination to procure emergency Indigenous languages translation services.

- If requested, support crisis response needs related to mental health and well-being of students in the JK-12 education system.

- If requested, provide for exemptions from writing large scale student assessments in the JK-12 education system.

- Provide for remote learning options for the JK-12 education system when necessary and appropriate.

Environment and Climate Change

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Environment and Climate Change is responsible to:

General

- In an unincorporated area (i.e. groups of cabins or homes in remote areas without an organized structure or representing government), ECC may make attempts to notify residents of imminent wildfire risks in the area where possible and safe to do so; however, residents choosing to live in unincorporated areas are ultimately responsible for knowing the risks and having and executing a personal emergency plan.

Environmental Protection and Waste Management and Regional Operations

- Coordinate GNWT response to hazardous substance release (spills) by providing expert advice and guidance on response, clean-up, inspection, investigation and enforcement activities related to spills.

- Provide technical personnel and advice to Local Authorities, REMOs/TEMO and other agencies respecting environmental protection matters.

- Provide situational awareness and damage assessment of suspected and/or confirmed contamination on air, water, and land use due to an environmental emergency.

- Provide estimated costs to conduct environmental assessments and remediation activities within areas of departmental interest.

- Provide advice and technical expertise on dangerous goods management and response.

- Provide advice and technical expertise for hazardous substances or wastes, including suspect substances.

- Provide situational awareness of air, water, and land pollution monitoring, reporting and clean-up activities.

Forest Management and Regional Operations

- Provide technical advice and guidance to individuals and communities in wildfire prevention and preparedness, including Community Wildfire Protection Plans and FireSmart initiatives for communities, homes and cabins.

- Lead agency wildfire prediction, monitoring and response.

- Provide situational awareness to LEMOs, REMOs, TEMO and communities on wildfire conditions, behavior, and risk, and recommend appropriate courses of action.

- Provide advice or assistance in acquiring wildfie fighting special firefighting and safety equipment and other specialized materials and supplies in support of emergency response operations.

Water Monitoring and Stewardship and Regional Operations

- Provide situational awareness to REMOs/TEMO and communities on flood conditions, behavior, and risk, and recommend appropriate courses of action.

- Maintain a response team and protocol to respond to incidents involving wildlife-human attacks.

- Provide meteorological and hydrological data and forecasts to the REMOs/TEMO during emergency operations.

- Provide technical assistance for groundwater, hydrology, and sewage problems during emergencies.

Wildlife Management and Regional Operations

- Provide technical personnel and advice to Local Authorities, REMOs/TEMO and other agencies respecting wildlife emergencies, risk, and impacts.

Regional Operations

- Provide personnel and resources to support remote area evacuations/notifications when required.

- Provide technical personnel and advice to REMOs/TEMO respecting land use matters during response and recovery activities.
- Provide situational awareness to REMOs/TEMO on land use and infrastructure in remote areas at increased risk.

Executive and Indigenous Affairs

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs is responsible to:

Cabinet Communications
- Where surge capacity is insufficient, support implementation of the Emergency Communications Protocol when required or requested by the TEMO.

Government Service Offices
- Help share information and can support other GNWT departments during emergencies at the community level.

Finance

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Finance is responsible to:

Human Resources
- Assist in the seconding of government employees to emergency response organizations and activities and provide advice on how it may affect terms and conditions of employment.
- Provide messaging to GNWT employees regarding employment requirements during emergencies and any related templates, processes and/or standards.

Procurement and Shared Services
- Provide emergency procurement services to support emergency response efforts (i.e., emergency relief supplies, space, office supplies and equipment, telecommunication, communications, and other emergency equipment).
- Support operational staff with emergency supplies/purchase guidance.

Geomatics
- Provide emergency geomatics services when requested by the TEMO.

Information Security
- Maintain situational awareness of cyber security threats and risks to assist with GNWT operations during emergencies.
- Command incident management (ransomware, theft, etc.) and incident handling (containment, recovery, lessons learned) activities across the government related to information security.

- Maintain GNWT policies, standards and guidance that GNWT employees, information technology employees and contracted service providers must comply to for secure operations (i.e. hospitals, health centres, correctional centres).

Technology Services Centre
- Provide priority technical services to the REMO/TEMO during emergencies.

Health and Social Services and Health and Social Services Authorities

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Health Authorities are responsible to:

Core HSS Activities to Support Emergency Response and Business Continuity
- Execute the department emergency response plan, which could include the evacuation of health facilities and the movement of patients to safe areas when required, amongst the actions outlined below.

- Carry out operational coordination of health care resources across sectors in order to meet the requirements of the emergency, in coordination with the REMO/TEMO and other departments and partners where required. The Chief Public Health Officer and the Minister of Health and Social Services have statutory authority over public health matters and resources.

- Ensure continuity of essential healthcare services.

- Provide and coordinate comprehensive assessments of the impact of emergencies on NWT health programs and services and child and family services, and the ability to continue providing essential health and child and family services across the NWT.

- Provide liaison with the Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response and the Center for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, Health Canada; the Public Health Agency of Canada; provincial counterparts; and other jurisdictions as potential sources for consultation and/or direct assistance.

- Determine the need for additional health care providers, equipment, and supplies during an emergency.

- Manage/redeploy health resources (people, supplies and equipment) as required by the emergency.

- Provide critical incident stress debriefing for individual victims and individual emergency response personnel.

- Liaise with private social service organizations (i.e. Canadian Red Cross) during an emergency and act as the link between them and the REMO/TEMO.

- Provide and coordinate comprehensive assessments of the impact of emergencies on NWT child and family services and the ability to continue providing essential child and family services to residents of the NWT.

Public Health Functions to Support Emergency Response

- Provide direction to public health officers, regional health officials, and public and private health care institutions with the identification, treatment, and control of all conditions related to public health.

- Provide direction with respect to the mitigation and response to health hazards to any individual or organization.

- Provide direction with respect to drinking water safety of domestic water supplies affected by the emergency.

- Provide advice on public health issues concerning the sanitary control, handling, and disposal of solid waste and other refuse during an emergency, consistent with all applicable laws.

- Provide direction on the handling and transportation of human remains that pose a public health risk.

- Provide support to technological assessment, toxicological analysis, and other technical supports to Local Authorities in emergencies, as required.

Emergency Social Services (whenLocal Authority capacity exceeded)

- Durring active emergencies, support the local authority with the delivery of essential social services, including the support for special assistance to meet unique human service demands.

- Per section 7.1 and 7.2, when required, assist NWT host communities in the delivery of emergency social services:
  - Offer solutions for temporary care for dependent elderly.
  - In consultation with the local authority, and in advance of a state of emergency, assist higher needs individuals in the community whose needs exceed the ability of the local authority to support;Provide guidance on functional assessments to identify individuals who are not physically suited to be billeted in group lodgings;
  - Provide guidance on identifying family units or foster family units who are not suited to billeting in group lodgings;
  - Provide or arrange for mental health assessments and supports;
  - Assist with the navigation of healthcare needs (e.g., filling prescriptions, missed HSS appointments, facilitating regular care disrupted by the emergency, sourcing physiotherapeutic aids, etc.)

- Per section 7.1 and 7.2, when required, assist NWT host communities in meeting the needs of disaster victims by providing or arranging for:
  - essential basic needs, which may include temporary lodging, food, clothing, incidentals such as hygiene and toiletries, and where required, emotional support, and health services
  - victim registration and inquiry services

Industry, Tourism and Investment

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is responsible to:

Tourism and Parks

- Evacuate and close Territorial Parks as required.

- In recognition that NWT Parks will not be designated as hosting sites for evacuees. Should the EMO deem it necessary to utilize any of the territorial parks or campgrounds, NWT Parks will work with the EMO to allow for their exclusive use by the EMO.

- In cases where evacuees opt to camp at an NWT Park instead of utilizing accommodations provided by the EMO or a Local Authority, they are welcome to reserve and pay for campsites in the usual manner.

Infrastructure

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Infrastructure is responsible to:

Asset Management (Electrical/Mechanical Safety, Infrastructure Operations, Design and Technical Services)

- Provide initial damage assessments and estimates of government owned and/or occupied buildings and Crown facilities.

- Coordinate the relocation of government offices and acquisition of new office space when necessary, during an emergency.

- Provide accommodation services for office and special purpose space needed for GNWT personnel during an emergency.

- Provide technical advice on electrical installations, pressure vessels and other mechanical installations which may affect the response to an emergency.

- Coordinate storage and redistribution of emergency supplies.

- Provide emergency postal/courier services.

- Provide engineering, architectural, project management, contract and administrative support to emergency response, recovery, and reconstruction projects.

Fuel Services

- Provide situational awareness to REMO/TEMO and communities on fuel supply issues related to emergencies, where data is available, and recommend appropriate courses of action.

- Provide technical advice on fuel availability and distribution issues during an emergency.

- Provide specialized equipment and technical personnel and advice on environmental emergencies related to fuel distribution and storage.

Transportation

- Assist with the movement of emergency response personnel and equipment to/from the affected areas as requested and where possible.

- Coordinate/contract transportation assets to evacuate affected persons from the risk area to a safe designated location.

- Provide transportation equipment and operators when requested and when available.

- Provide the use of airport facilities and services.

- Provide damage assessments of public transportation facilities.

- Provide/contract transportation of and/or arranging for the transportation of emergency materials and supplies.

- Authorize the closure or restricted use of airports, highways, roads, and ferries when required during emergencies.

- Provide situational awareness to REMO/TEMO and communities on highways and airports as it relates to impacts on the supply system during emergencies and recommend appropriate courses of action.

Justice

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Justice is responsible to:

- Coordinate requests for the redeployment or temporary increase in strength of the Territorial Police Service.

- Providing technical advice on law enforcement to the REMO/TEMO.

- Provide Emergeny Management Division and TEMO with dedicated legal counsel advice and support.

- Ensure the safety, protection and security of persons in custody within correctional centres and coordinate evacuations if required.

Coroner's Office

- Enact and coordinate the Mass Fatality Plan when required.

- Provide coroner services as required during emergencies.

- Provide advice on aspects of the identification, processing, storage, movement, and disposition of the deceased.

Municipal and Community Affairs

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is responsible to:

Emergency Management Division

- Provide assistance to Local Authorities when emergencies become too large or complex for them to manage by providing coordination and support to the affected community.

- Provide public alerting services when requested.

- Provide situational awareness to GNWT departments and partner agencies during emergency events.

- Activate an Incident Management Team to support, manage and/or respond to complex emergency events that do not fall within the mandate of another department, where a local authority's capacity has been exceeded and assistance is requested.

- Coordinate disaster assistance to communities and residents who have been impacted by widespread disaster.

- Activate Pathfinder position as temporary support staff for recovery events.

Community Operations

- Provide guidance and support to communities on maintaining essential services (i.e. water/sewer) during emergency events.

Housing NWT

In addition to the common roles and responsibilities of all government departments and agencies identified in section 2.1.5 Housing NWT is responsible to:

- Support the provision of shelter and accommodation for evacuated people who cannot return to their homes for some time due to the nature of the emergency or impact, when required.

- Provide advice to assist in the determination of appropriate options for longer-term emergency housing, when needed.

Appendix 3 – Planning Guidance - Non-Government Organizations and the Private Sector

General

There are a number of non-government organizations (NGOs) and private sector corporations with a presence in NWT communities that can contribute considerably to emergency preparedness and response. It is critical that Community Governments consider and plan for supports to vulnerable people in the event of an emergency and/or evacuation.

Under the NWT *Emergency Management Act*, Local Authorities are the lead on local emergency plans responsible for the safety and well-being of all of their residents, including vulnerable populations.

Local Emergency Management Organizations (LEMOs) need to work with partners to identify vulnerable populations and incorporate plans for vulnerable populations into their Community Emergency Plans and execute those Plans when required. The NWT Emergency Plan assigns responsibility for providing support to vulnerable persons in an evacuation to LEMOs.

Guidelines

Local Authorities may enter into arrangements with Indigenous governments, NGOs and private sector corporations to obtain their services for emergency preparedness and response. These arrangements should indicate the type of services provided, procedures for provision of services and limitations on employment if necessary. The procedures for initiating the service support in an emergency should be reflected in Community Emergency Plans.

Non-Government Organizations

NGOs, including volunteer groups, must be assigned to an appropriate emergency response agency to ensure coordination of preparedness, callout, and employment during response activities.

Volunteers need to be registered with Local Authorities to be protected under the *Worker's Compensation Act*. Registration should occur during preparedness activities in order to ensure coverage during training. Registration information should include the volunteer's name, health number (or other identifying element) and the general skill/employment for which they are registered. The deployment of registered volunteers during an emergency or for emergency training should be recorded, including dates and times.

As employers, NGOs are responsible to have an occupational health and safety program for their work site, which must include measures to respond to emergencies at the work site.

Private Sector Corporations

Many communities have private sector corporations who are able to contribute to emergency preparedness and response. Some also manage resources considered critical infrastructure in communities that may require additional coordination and prioritization during emergencies to ensure critical functions and services are maintained, including support for the needs of first responders. Key private sector corporations in the NWT include communications providers, power suppliers, transportation companies, oil and gas development and mining and resource development companies.

These corporations need to be included in the emergency planning, preparedness, and response process by Local Authorities. Community planners need to negotiate suitable arrangements in support of emergency plans specific to the availability and presence of public sector capabilities. While some of these arrangements will be mutually beneficial, as in the case of critical infrastructure availability, some related to extraordinary services, may require contractual arrangements.
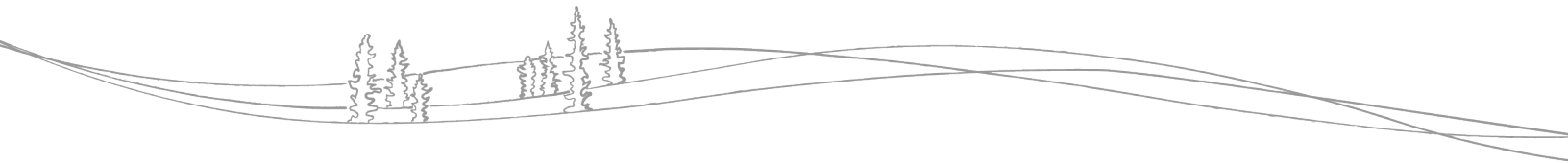
NWT Emergency Plan

Annex A - Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines

Government of
Northwest Territories

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.
English
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Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.
French
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Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
Cree
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Tłı̨chǫ yatı k'è̀è̀. Dı wegodı newǫ dè, gots'o gonede.
Tłı̨chǫ
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Ɂerıhtł'ís Dëne Sųłıné yatı t'a huts'elkër xa beyáyatı theɂą ɂat'e, nuwe ts'ën yółtı.
Chipewyan
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South Slavey
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K'áhshó got'ı̨ne xǝdǝ k'é hederı ɂedı̨htl'é yerınıwę nídé dúle.
North Slavey
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Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.
Gwich'in
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Inuvialuktun
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Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun
_____

Indigenous Languages:

Request_Indigenous _Languages@gov.nt.ca

French:
867-767-9348
866-561-1664 Toll Free

Table of Contents

1.   Introduction

The Department of Municipal and Comminity Affairs (MACA) maintains an updated territory wide [Hazard Identification Risk Assessment](#) (HIRA) to inform communities and GNWT departments of hazards specific to their environment. The top hazards in the Northwest Territories (NWT) are floods and wildfires/interface fires, both of which could require evacuation of all or part of a community.

The evacuation of a community or any area impacted by an emergency is a very serious undertaking. Evacuating residents, while ensuring their safety, can impact their well-being. Evacuations require detailed planning and a high degree of cooperation and coordination between partners to ensure the safety and security of residents and reduce the impact of an event.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines is to establish a framework for the evacuation, hosting, and safe return of evacuees by the Northwest Territories emergency management system where a community evacuation is required.

This includes:

- warning of the potential need to evacuate and preparations;
- evacuation of persons from hazard areas;
- hosting of evacuees during the evacuation period; and,
- safe return of evacuees.

1.2 Scope

The Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines provides general a detailed description of how the GNWT supports Local Authorities with evacuations and hosting when their capacity has been exceeded, including how the decision to evacuate is made and how evacuations are conducted. It includes:

- A description of the expected roles and responsibilities of individuals, Local Authorities, and when requested, other levels of government in the NWT as well as Indigenous Governments (IGs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and the private sector with regards to evacuations and hosting;
- The different types and categories of evacuations and related communications tools;
- The description of operations and considerations required to carry out and sustain an evacuation, including hosting; and,
- A summary of how the Regional and Territorial Emergency Management Organizations will support Local Authorities if their capacity has been exceeded.

1.3 Authority

The authority to evacuate a community or area of the NWT is contained in the NWT *Emergency Management Act (the Act)*. Under a state of local emergency, a Local Authority may do any act or thing to mitigate, respond to and recover from the effects of the emergency.

Upon declaring a state of emergency, and under section 17(1)(h) of the *Act*, the Minister responsible for emergency management may, for the duration of a declaration, cause the evacuation of persons and the removal of personal property and animals from any area within the NWT that is or may be affected by the emergency.

Departments with responsibility for specific emergencies that fall within their mandate have a critical responsibility to advise on the level of risk associated with those emergencies and recommend an evacuation when warranted.

For more information about states of local emergency refer to section 6.7 States of Emergency in the NWT Emergency Management Plan or see section 18 of the *Act*.

1.4 Guiding Principles

The following are a list of principles that should be used to guide the evacuation and hosting of evacuees in the NWT:

1) **Evacuate Only When Necessary:** Evacuations should only occur when necessary, and when safe to do so, and such decisions should involve consultation with subject matter experts and be risk-based. Due to the fact that all communities in the NWT can experience prolonged wildfire smoke, evacuations due to wildfire smoke are not a sustainable approach; clean air shelters are a best practice for Community Emergency Plans. Evacuations of individuals due to smoke impacts are done on a case-by-case basis in consultation with healthcare professionals.

2) **Meet Essential Basic Needs:** Evacuees who cannot make their own arrangements throughout the evacuation period should be provided with the essential basic needs throughout the evacuation period, which may include temporary lodging, food, incidentals such as hygiene and toiletries, and where required, emotional support, and health services.

3) **Ensure Fiscal Responsibility**: Cost-effective strategies should be implemented to ensure fiscal responsibility.

4) **Maintain Family and Community Unity**: Family units together at the time of an evacuation, should be kept together during an evacuation whenever possible. Where hosting capacity allows, all evacuees from a community should be hosted together to maintain community cohesion, support the well being of evacuees, and facilitate support services.

5) **Honour Cultural Ties:** Wherever possible, evacuees will be hosted in a community with close family and cultural ties in order to reduce stress and provide additional support networks to assist evacuees in coping with the impacts of the emergency and the temporary relocation.

2.   Roles and Responsibilities

Section 12 of the *Act* requires Local Authorities to have emergency plans in place, and best practice dictates this includes plans for evacuation and the hosting of evacuees. Hosting plans should include agreements with other communities, Indigenous Governments (IGs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and other agencies to provide for hosting locations and supports, as required.

The NWT Emergency Plan identifies a requirement for the GNWT to have plans and programs to deal with emergencies and through the Regional and Territorial Emergency Management Organizations, to assist Local Authorities in emergency response operations when community government capacity is exceeded, and assistance is requested. Response operations may include the evacuation of persons and property, and hosting of evacuees. The following is a description of roles and responsibilities under the community evacuation and hosting process:

2.1 Individuals

As part of individual responsibilities outlined in section 2.1.1 of the NWT Emergency Plan, individuals have the responsibility to plan for evacuations. This includes obtaining relevant insurance, identifying a location that they can evacuate to should they have to leave their home or community, and preparing an emergency kit and grab-and-go bag.

2.2 Local Authorities

As per the definitions included in the Act, Local Authorities are defined as "municipal councils or an authority that the Minister recognizes as representative of the community for the purposes of the *Act*". Additionally, First Nations bands, Indigenous Governments and First Nations on Reserve who are responsible for the delivery of municipal services are also recognized as Local Authorities.

As part of Local Authorities' responsibilities outlined in section 2.1.2 of the NWT Emergency Plan, Local Authorities are the lead for community evacuation and hosting and are responsible for developing and maintaining community emergency plans which include evacuation and hosting procedures. This includes:

- Maintaining awareness of changing risk levels to the community;
- Working with the Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) and other regional officials to identify a need to evacuate;
- When required declare a "state of local emergency" (SOLE) as per Section 18 of the *Act*;
- Provide sufficient warning to residents of the need to evacuate and instructions on what is required of them;

- Identify priority groups and provide for the staging of evacuees, including local transportation;
- Register all evacuees (including identifying the unique needs of vulnerable individuals so that where possible appropriate resources can be made available at the hosting facility in advance);
- Ensure plans with host communities are in place to support evacuated residents. If there are existing hosting agreements, activate hosting agreements;
- Work with partners as required to carry out evacuations;
- Once evacuated, provide regular situational updates to evacuated residents and address their concerns;
- Prior to giving the all clear for evacuees to return, ensure community is safe to return through a community safety assessment and repatriate according to the community re-entry plan;
- Maintain records of decisions and costs associated with the evacuation; and,
- If requesting assistance for evacuation or hosting supports from the GNWT due to capacity being exhausted, issue request for assistance to the REMO.

As per section 22 of the *Act,* Local Authorities are empowered to enter into agreements and make payments for the provision of services in the implementation of local emergency plans or programs, this includes the provision of evacuation and hosting supports.

2.3 Indigenous Governments

Where an Indigenous Government or an organization is not the Local Authority responsible for delivery of municipal services and emergency management under the *Act,* they are encouraged to work with the Local Authority and form part of the Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) to support community emergency management activities which can include supporting with elements of evacuation and hosting activities.

2.4 Non-Government Organizations and the Private Sector

As part of NGO and the Private Sector responsibilities outlined in section 2.1.4 of the NWT Emergency Plan, NGOs and the private sector have the responsibility to plan for evacuation and hosting scenarios.

Local Authorities should incorporate NGOs and private sector corporations' capabilities and resources into community emergency plans through established agreements as LEMO members to support community emergency management activities which can include supporting with elements of evacuation and hosting activities.

2.5. Departmental Emergency Responsibilities

GNWT departmental responsibilities are detailed Appendix 2 of the in the NWT Emergency Plan.

2.5.1 NWT Emergency Management Organizations

As part of NWT EMO responsibilities outlined in section 2.1.7 in of the NWT Emergency Plan, REMOs and TEMO have the responsibility to plan for evacuation and hosting scenarios where a Local Authority's capacity has been exceeded in whole or in part and they have requested assistance. REMOs and TEMO work to support the evacuation of communities and hosting of evacuees when community government capacity is exceeded, and assistance is requested. This includes with activities outlined in sections 6 and 7 of the NWT Emergency Plan.

3.   Types of Evacuations

Depending on the nature of the emergency, different types of evacuations may be necessary to ensure public safety. There may be times when there may be little to no advance notice of a need to evacuate. Urgent evacuations of people at risk from emergency situations must be affected immediately to save lives and protect public safety. In most emergencies there is some indication and warning that an evacuation will be required.

3.1 Partial Community

A partial community evacuation requires only at-risk population of a community to evacuate in the event of an emergency. A partial community evacuation does not typically require a host community as the portion of the community not under an evacuation order can act as host.

3.2 Community-Wide

A community-wide evacuation requires an entire community to evacuate in the case of an emergency. A community-wide evacuation will require one or more host communities for evacuees.

3.3 Unincorporated Areas

Unincorporated areas are groups of cabins and homes in remote areas without an organized structure or municipal government. Residents choosing to live in unincorporated areas are responsible for knowing the risks, having a plan which includes evacuation, plans for where they will stay if displaced, and executing their plan if required. While the GNWT may make attempts to notify residents in unincorporated areas of risks, the ultimate responsibility rests with the resident.

3.4 Private Industry and Commercial Sites

In the case of evacuations involving private operations, such as mining operations or fly-in lodges, those entities are responsible for coordinating and bearing the cost of evacuation.

4. Planning for Evacuations and Hosting

Evacuations are designed to temporarily remove populations at risk while emergency management officials deal with the emergency and once the risk is reduced, repatriate the population. Hosting arrangements for evacuees including shelter arrangements are temporary and are meant to provide for the essential basic needs of evacuees who do not have alternative arrangements for the duration of the evacuation period.

When planning for evacuations and hosting, Local Authorities, REMOs and TEMO should be mindful of the following considerations which may be unique to the NWT and its residents:

1) **Limited Resources and Capacity**: Given the importance and immediate nature of evacuations, the limited resources available and remote and isolated nature of most NWT communities, all resources available including the private sector must be considered to ensure a timely and effective evacuation. Every effort must be made to optimize use of resources and expedite the evacuation.

2) **Remote Communities:** Given the remote nature of many communities in the NWT, evacuations may be delayed and hosting may require additional planning or resources to ensure that residents are safely removed from the risk area and provided for during the evacuation as necessary.

3) **Evacuation Duration:** Historically, evacuation durations in the NWT have varied significantly ranging from a number of days to several weeks.

4) **Sheltering in Place:** Given the remote and isolated nature of many NWT communities, weather and wildfire smoke impacts on highways and airports, communities should plan for the possibility that an evacuation may be delayed or only partially possible depending on the circumstances. Residents may need to be sheltered in a safe area of the community and/or in a shelter that can withstand the potential impacts of the emergency and accommmodate the population at risk.

5) **Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations**: During an evacuation it is unlikely the whole population at risk can be moved at the same time. Priorities must be set to allow for the effective staging and movement of evacuees from the community or area at risk. Local EMOs need to work with partners to identify vulnerable populations and incorporate plans for vulnerable populations into their Community Emergency Plans, and execute the community emergency plan when required. The designation of evacuees into the different priority groups is normally determined by a Local Authority with the assistance of its LEMO representatives (e.g. health authority staff and applicable Indigenous Governments and NGOs) and is normally included as part of the community emergency plan. Recommended priority groups include:

A. Special Populations: Distinct groups that share a common circumstance, needs and conditions that require special consideration and attention during evacuations. The two special populations in some NWT communities are:

- Patients, clients and residents of NWT HSS System Facilities: Individuals who are residents of NWT Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities and in-patients in NWT HSS System facilities may require special support and transportation, and placement in similar facilities. Evacuation of these facilities are governed by the specific facility evacuation plans and the NWT Health and Social Services system; however, they may also require use of facilities and other resources utilized during a community evacuation.

- Correctional facility populations: Individuals residing in corrections facilities require special security and transportation arrangements. Evacuation of corrections facilities are governed by the facility evacuation plan and the Department of Justice; however, may require the use of facilities and resources utilized during a community evacuation.

B. Vulnerable populations: Part of the vulnerable population (individuals requiring additional supports including persons with disabilities or persons with complex social support requirements), may require additional supports (including medical attendants, caregivers or family) during an evacuation.

C. All remaining residents and visitors in the community.

5. Evacuation Operations

When an evacuation is required, the Local Authority must take the lead and assume total responsibility for warning, preparing, evacuating the area at risk, activation of hosting plans and ensuring the safe return of residents. If Local Authority capacity is exceeded assistance can be requested from the REMO for one or more of the following activities. While community operations remain under the direction and control of the Local Authority, supports provided are directed and controlled by the supporting REMO or TEMO lead.

Where a Local Authority requests assistance with evacuation operations it will be critical to provide detailed information on how many residents must be evacuated and some of the supports they may need during the evacuation process.

5.1 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments refer to an ongoing process of determining the level of risk facing a community so that appropriate action(s) can be taken to protect life, property, critical infrastructure, the environment and the economy. A real-time risk assessment helps inform the decision to evacuate, the timing of evacuations, prioritization of resources, when it is safe to return, etc. The assessment must come from the subject matter expert in the area of concern, be informed by up-to-date information and be shared with those who may be involved in the potential evacuation. Local knowledge is important for informing the real-time risk assessment process as knowledge keepers often have specific information on risks to their community and the region that should be considered. GNWT departments (Incident Commanders and Subject Matter Experts) are responsible for assessing the risk for the types of emergencies which fall within their specific mandates.

5.2 Triggering Evacuation Orders

The decision to issue an Evacuation Order is made by the Local Authority and should be based on advice from subject matters experts' risk assessments. Where risk is such that there is potential for impacts to life safety, under a State of Territorial Emergency the TEMO may issue an Evacuation Order for any part of the Northwest Territories.

5.3 Evacuation Communications

Local Authorities are responsible for conducting public communications relating to evacuations; typically, public communications protocols are outlined in the community emergency plan. The use of common terminology when communicating evacuation information can promote understanding and reduce confusion and contribute to an effective evacuation. The NWT follows best practice and has adopted terminology and definitions used in many other jurisdictions in Canada, see Annex B – Emergency Communications Protocol of the NWT Emergency Plan. These definitions apply to both partial and community-wide evacuations. When communicating the need to prepare for evacuation, to evacuate and when directing residents to return to their community, the Local Authority should make use of the following communications tools. Evacuation Orders are normally issued by the Local Authority, TEMO would only issue an Evacuation Order for community if risk warranted.

It is important to remember that emergency circumstances may not allow for a sequential, escalating level of communication. For example, an Evacuation Order could be issued without either an Evacuation Notice or Evacuation Alert being issued previously. Alternatively, an emergency may result in an Evacuation Alert being issued but may be resolved without a need for an Evacuation Order.

5.3.1 Evacuation Notice

An Evacuation Notice is *for information only and is an advisory* that an emergency event, such as a wildfire, is currently in an area and may present an increased risk to a community and could endanger life and/or property.

5.3.2 Evacuation Alert

An Evacuation Alert is issued to advise residents of the potential for loss of life or property from an emergency event and to be *prepared to evacuate on short notice*. Officials need to make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible.

5.3.3 Evacuation Order

An Evacuation Order is issued to *advise of the need to evacuate the area* due to imminent danger. An Evacuation Order can be issued with or without declaring a state of emergency; however, can only be enforced if a state of emergency is declared.

5.3.4 All Clear

When the emergency which necessitated the evacuation is under control and the hazard area is declared safe (habitable), a retraction of the Evacuation Order should be implemented. An All Clear notice is issued when *it is safe for residents and visitors to return to a community*.

NWT Alert is a tool that can help deliver critical and potentially life-saving alerts to NWT residents through television, radio, and wireless devices. Local Authorities can work with the REMO to develop an agreement and templates for issuing public communications via NWT Alert; once in place the Local Authority may request, via the REMO, to use the system when the following criteria have been met:

- The event is currently taking place;
- The event can affect the decisions people need to make as the situation has the potential to affect protection of their property and/or the environment; and,
- Life safety is under immediate threat and time is critical.

5.4 Transportation

Where the REMO is requested to support with transportation of evacuees from the risk area to the evacuation centre where an evacuation is imminent or underway, supports will be deployed as available. Bus and aircraft availability may be limited and are subject to mandatory restrictions (eg. driver and pilot mandatory rest periods) which may impact response time.

6.   Hosting Operations

Hosting arrangements for evacuees including shelter arrangements are temporary and not meant to provide permanent accommodations. Evacuation centres and accommodations arrangements will be shut down when the evacuation order is rescinded.

During evacuation events, while many evacuees will stay with family and friends, some will require support and services during the evacuation period. Planning to receive and host evacuees is an essential part of a community's emergency plan as an influx of evacuees to a host community can be considered an emergency like any other. The Local Authority in the host community must be prepared to provide those services required to preserve the wellbeing of people affected by an emergency.

Where a Local Authority requests assistance from the GNWT with hosting of evacuees it will be critical to provide detailed information on how many residents must be evacuated, how many do not have their own arrangements and require accommodations supports, and some of the supports they may need during the evacuation period.
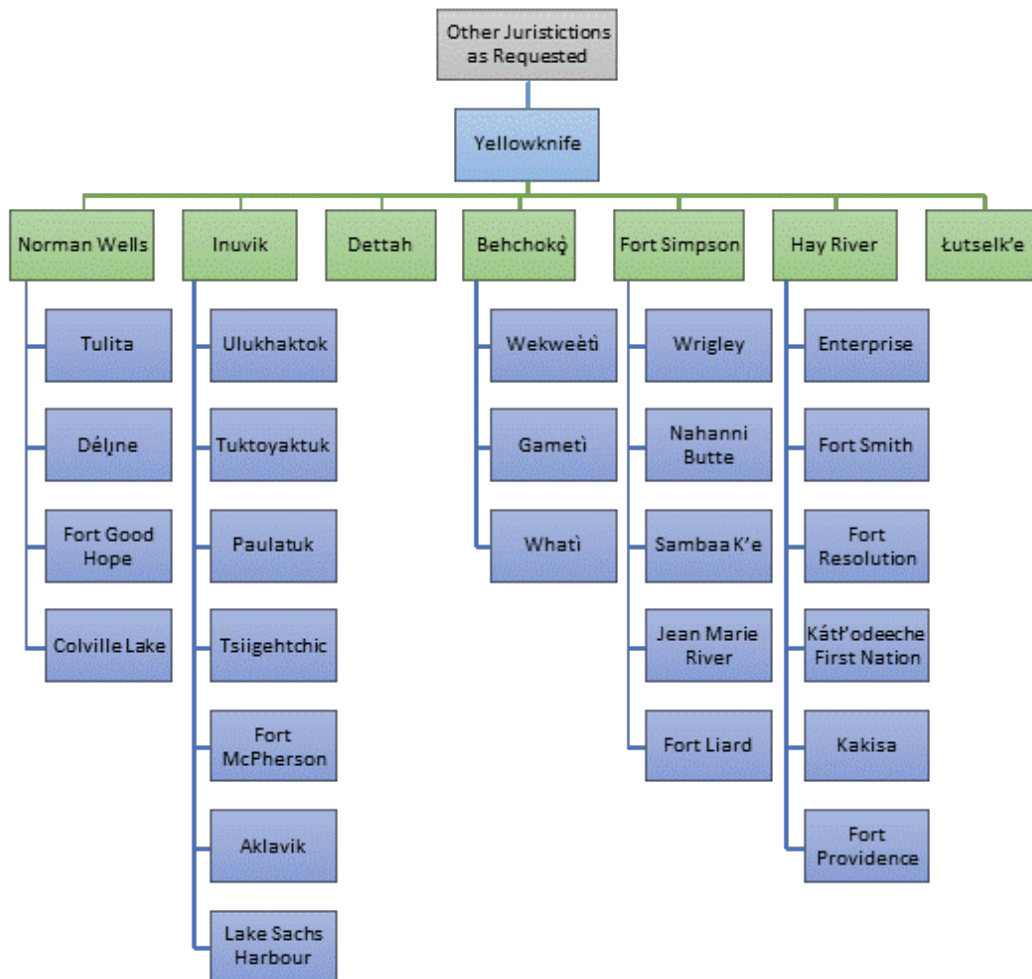
6.1 Hosting Location Selection

Careful consideration must be given in selecting a host location (e.g. cultural camp) or community (communities) to ensure evacuees are safe from the impacts of the emergency (e.g. is not at risk of evacuation itself), the host community is prepared and not at risk of secondary impacts (e.g. is not at risk of being overwhelmed by demands placed on the community by acting as host) and evacuees are provided adequate care and support (e.g. a sound hosting plan is in place).

Local Authorities are empowered and encouraged to enter into agreements with other communities or agencies for hosting supports; however, they are encouraged to consult with the REMO in selecting a host community or communities.

The following factors need to be considered when selecting and supporting a host community:

- Host locations should be within the NWT where possible;
- Preference is to host evacuees in a regional centre with family ties and culturally similar surroundings;
- Host communities have limited capacity;
- Emergencies often impact transportation routes, communities can be cut off due to highway or airport closures; and,
- Communities at increased risk of an emergency should not be used to host evacuees as the emergency may lead to further evacuation.

Where the REMO is requested to support with finding a hosting location, the REMO will work with TEMO and Local Authorities to determine the best location. Typically, host communities are as outlined in the diagram on the following page; however, this may change based on a number of factors including Local Authority hosting plans and agreements, current risk environment, and impacts to host community capacity.

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Tulita	Ulukhaktok		Wekweètì	Wrigley	Enterprise	
Délı̨ne	Tuktoyaktuk		Gametì	Nahanni Butte	Fort Smith	
Fort Good Hope	Paulatuk		Whatì	Sambaa K'e	Fort Resolution	
Colville Lake	Tsiigehtchic			Jean Marie River	Kátł'odeeche First Nation	
	Fort McPherson			Fort Liard	Kakisa	
	Aklavik				Fort Providence	
	Lake Sachs Harbour					

Where NWT hosting capacity is exceeded, the TEMO has a process to request hosting assistance from other jurisdictions through the Emergency Management Mutual Aid Agreement.

6.2 Registration

Where a Local Authority's capacity has been exhausted and REMO has been requested to support with registration of evacuees upon arrival at the evacuation centre, a registration booth will be set up where staff members will support evacuees with the registration process. Data collected will be available to the Local Authority of the evacuated community, while summary data (eg. total number of evacuees, number of evacuees requiring food services, number of evacuees requiring accommodations, etc.) will be shared with emergency management partners to inform planning for supports.

6.3 Accommodations

Where a Local Authority's capacity has been exhausted and REMO has been requested to assist with accommodations supports for evacuees, commercial and congregate lodging will be considered as options.

Commercial accommodations will be used where adequate commercial lodging is available. Where commercial accommodations are limited, priority will be given to evacuees in the following order:

1) Evacuees deemed unsuitable for congregate lodging and cot sleeping via the process outlined below in section 6.4;
2) Elders and families with small children; and,
3) Other.

Where a Local Authority's capacity has been exhausted and REMO has been requested to assist with accommodations supports for evacuees, the GNWT will not tolerate behaviour that creates an unsafe environment for staff or evacuees at an evacuation centre. Disrespectful or disruptive behavior may result in eviction from the evacuation centre and/or accommodations. If evicted, evacuees will be responsible for making their own arrangements for accommodations.

Evacuees that are staying in GNWT provided accommodations are solely responsible for any damage or theft of the property that is caused by deliberate, negligent, or reckless acts by themselves or anyone on the premises at their request or under their care. In cases where evacuees opt to camp at an NWT Park instead of utilizing accommodations provided, they are welcome to reserve and pay for campsites in the usual manner.

6.4 Evacuee Accommodations and Prioritization

During evacuations there may be availability constraints for commercial lodging. Where the Local Authority capacity has been exceeded and REMO is supporting, an accommodation prioritization may be conducted to identify evacuee suitability for lodging type and to prioritize the allocation commercial accommodations.

When necessary, prioritization for accommodation types should be addressed at an evacuation centre, and evacuees can request consideration for alternate accommodations during the registration process. Prioritization outside of group lodging is not necessary for the majority of evacuees and the allocation of alternate accommodations does not typically require the involvement of a health professional. Where complex needs are confirmed, Health and Social Services will provide assistance.

Assessing suitability for group lodging and cot sleeping should involve consideration of various factors:

1) *Health and Medical Needs*: Information from evacuee regarding any health conditions that may require specific accommodations or medical attention. These would typically be identified prior to the evacuation, as part of the pre-evacuation registration process, and would be reflected in supports the individual requires in their home environment.

2) *Mobility and Accessibility*: The person's mobility level and whether the group lodging facilities are suitably accessible and whether fall risks associated with transferring to or from a cot are apparent.

3) *Special Considerations*: Information from or about evacuee regarding applicable unique circumstances related to safety, family dynamics and vulnerabilities, that may be incompatible with group lodging.

6.5 Feeding

As per established processes set out in the Community Emergency Plan, where a Local Authority's capacity has been exhausted and the REMO has been requested to support with feeding of evacuees throughout the evacuation period, three basic meals per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner) will be provided for evacuees.

Meals will be made available at designated times at designated locations; a notice board will be posted in the evacuation centre location with these details as details may vary from event to event.

6.6 Hosting Equipment

The REMOs and TEMO maintain stockpiles of hosting equipment including cots, blankets and comfort care kits in strategic locations throughout the Territory. Where the REMO is requested to support with provision of hosting equipment, equipment from a stockpile may be deployed.

Equipment that is loaned out is the responsibility of the requesting Local Authority who is accountable for returning the equipment in the condition it was received. Failure to do so will result in the Local Authority being charged for the replacement of the equipment.

7.   Repatriation and Re-Entry

Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring a community is safe and functional before welcoming residents home and for coordinating the repatriation of evacuees. While the trigger for re-entry will be different for each community and each type of disaster, re-entry should only occur when the LEMO determines that it is safe to return and issues an All Clear notice.

If Local Authority capacity is exceeded assistance can be requested from the REMO for one or more of the following activities.

7.1 Scan of Damages

A preliminary damage assessment will be done to get an estimate of damages for the whole disaster area. During this stage access should be restricted to agencies and private service providers with key roles in scanning the damage. It is the responsibility of each local authority to determine the minimum level of service required prior to permitting re-entry to the community.

7.2 Restoration of Services

The restoration of services required in a community in order to enable safe, sustainable living to an acceptable level. This new level of service is not likely to be at the same level that services were before the evacuation, it may take time to restore services to pre-evacuation levels.

7.3 Community Re-entry

If a community was completely evacuated, it may be advisable to begin the return of evacuees with staff that are required to restart essential services and assess the readiness of the community to receive other returning evacuees; designation of essential services and related personnel is the responsibility of the Local Authority. This may involve the coordination of an advance team that is given sufficient time and resources to return the community to a safe condition. Since the degree of damage will likely vary within the affected area, it might be beneficial to initiate a phased re-entry process. As geographic areas are declared safe for re-entry, evacuees will be able to return.

Detailed planning for the movement of evacuees from a host community back to their home community must be done in advance of the All Clear notice being issued. A reception point in the home community and local transportation may be required to coordinate the return of individuals to their homes.

During the return of evacuees to a community a number of activities may overlap and/or take place concurrently. The majority of residents and visitor who self-evacuated will return as soon as they hear an All Clear notice has been announced. At the same time those who were hosted in evacuation centres will be transported back to the community.

8. Cost Recovery

Detailed records of all evacuation related expenses and decisions must be maintained by all partners and reconciled during or shortly after the demobilization process. This includes detailed activity logs and records of decisions of all activity related to the response.

8.1 Local Authority Costs

Expenses related to evacuation and hosting activities are the responsibility of the Local Authority. Should the *Disaster Assistance Policy* be applied to the incident, evacuation and hosting expenses are an eligible category as part of a community claim. Where a local authority is requested to act as host community by the Regional or Territorial EMO, costs associated with hosting as outlined in 8.2 below will be eligible for reimbursement regardless of the application of the *Disaster Assistance Policy*. Alternatively, MACA has a Community Government Hosting Evacuees Grant provides financial assistance to eligible community governments that host evacuees outside of a designated Evacuation/Reception Centre.

8.2 GNWT Reimbursement of Local Authority Costs

Where a Local Authority has coordinated evacuation and/or hosting support for evacuees in the event of an evacuation based on appropriate risk-assessments, the GNWT may reimburse Local Authorities for their eligible evacuation and/or hosting costs provided backup documentation (e.g. timesheets, contracts, proof of payment, etc.) is made available and the need is justified for the following cost categories:

- Overtime costs for community employees providing essential evacuation or hosting supports (i.e., effecting an evacuation, transporting evacuees, setting up cots, registration, operating the evacuation centre);
- Salaries for casual staff hired specifically to assist with the emergency;
- Transportation services to evacuate the risk area;
- Food services established for the evacuation centre up to a maximum of the approved meal allowance rates (rates mirror established GNWT meal allowance rates as per the GNWT Financial Administration Manual)
- Laundry services established for the evacuation centre;
- Janitorial services established for the evacuation centre;
- Security services established for the evacuation centre;
- Purchase of essential items (soap, toilet paper, personal hygiene items, infant care items, etc.) for evacuees;
- Accommodations costs. (Where commercial accommodations are limited they should be prioritized for evacuees that are not suitable for congregate lodging and cot sleeping.) Commercial accommodations may be reimbursed at a rate as established in the GNWT Standing Offer Agreement for Commercial Accomodations and,
- Contract related costs associated with the provision of the above-mentioned activities.

Local Authorities are encouraged to reach out to the Department of MACA when developing hosting plans to verify eligibility prior to an emergency event.

All Local Authorities must demonstrate that undertook best efforts to adhere to the principles outlined in Section 1.4.

The following are examples of expenses that are *not* eligible for reimbursement by the GNWT:

- Regular staff salaries and honorarium;
- Gift cards or cash allowances;
- Non-essential items including clothing and electronics;
- Cultural and recreational items and activities; and,
- Costs associated with damages to commercial accommodations, facilities and equipment.

8.3 GNWT Financial Support for Evacuees

The GNWT may also provide financial support directly to evacuees who make their own arrangements for accommodations and feeding throughout the evacuation period.

Please see the GNWT Department of Finance for what assistance may be provided to evacuees.
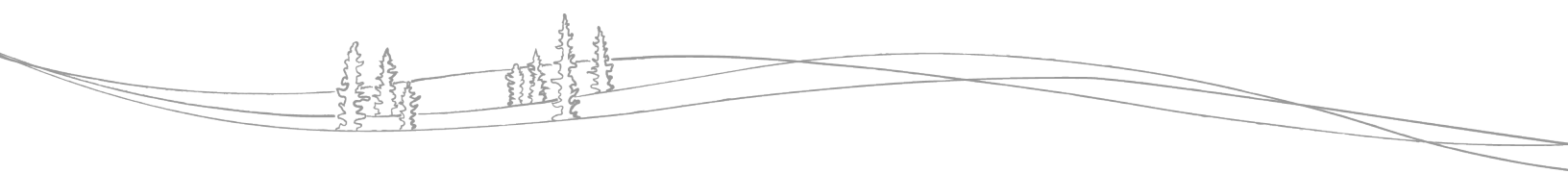
NWT Emergency Plan
Annex B - Emergency Communications Protocol

Government of
Northwest Territories

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

———————————

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

———————————

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

———————————

Tłįchǫ yatı k' èè. Dı wegodı newǫ dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłįchǫ

———————————

Ɂerıhtł'ís Dëne Sųłıné yatı t'a huts'elkër xa beyáyatı theɂą ɂat'e, nuwe ts'ën yółtı.

Chipewyan

———————————

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ı̨e zhatıé k'ę́ę́ edatł'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahłí.

South Slavey

———————————

K'áhshó got'ı̨ne xǝdǝ k'é hederı ɂedı̨htl'é yerınıwę nídé dúle.

North Slavey

———————————

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.

Gwich'in

———————————

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

———————————

ᐋᑦᑯᐊ ᑎᑎᖅᑲᐃᑦ ᐱᔪᒪᒍᐱᑦ ᐃᓄᒃᑎᑐᖅᓯᒪᓗᓃᒃ, ᐅᕗᑎᓐᓄᑦ ᐅᖃᓚᕿᓇᖅᑑᑎᑦ.

Inuktitut

———————————

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

———————————

Indigenous Languages:

Request_Indigenous_Languages@gov.nt.ca

French:
867-767-9348
866-561-1664 Toll Free

Table of Contents

Purpose

As outlined in Section 5 of the Northwest Territories (NWT) Emergency Plan, emergency communications activities are undertaken in three phases: preparedness, response, and recovery. This Emergency Communications Protocol (Protocol) outlines the roles, responsibilities, tools, and tactics that will be utilized to communicate to the public when the Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) and/or Territorial Emergency Management Organization (TEMO) is activated, and during the response phase only. Implementation of the Protocol will be dependent on the different levels of activation at the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and as described in this Protocol. If a Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) is activated and responding to an emergency event without the need for REMO assistance, this protocol may not be utilized as LEMO communications are guided by Community Emergency Plans.

It is important to consider that while this Protocol outlines how the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) plans to communicate during a response event, it should not be treated as a one-size-fits-all approach to planning during an emergency. As the landscape of emergencies changes and as the level of severity of each event will vary, so too should the communications activities in order to ensure that the safety of the public remains paramount, and that confidence is built into any emergency management response.

While this Emergency Communications Protocol exists as its own Annex, it should not be read in isolation of the overall NWT Emergency Plan. This is because accurate information can only be communicated if the full NWT Emergency Plan is understood.

Authority

The Protocol is issued under the authority of the NWT Emergency Management Plan, which obtains its authority under the *Emergency Management Act* (the Act). This Protocol is also pursuant to the principles, definitions and authorities described in the GNWT Communications Policy (2017).

Emergency Communications Principles

When this Protocol is being implemented, it is expected that the following principles are adhered to throughout the emergency response activity:

- Communications will be timely, clear and accurate so that residents can make informed choices and cooperate in responding to the risk and emergency.

- First responder and public safety remain top priority and all communications materials will reflect that. Messaging to those considered at the most significant life safety risk will be given priority.

- Communications messages and tactics will speak with one clear voice and present a consistent message, especially when multiple departments or agencies are activated to respond to an emergency. (e.g., external communications done by designated spokespersons and/or technical staff)

- Messaging will be non-political and will pertain to public safety messaging and the emergency operations of the EMO.

- The GNWT will continually detect and correct messaging to prevent the spread of misinformation and reassure the public.

- Consistent and varied information channels should be used to ensure the public knows how and where to find information throughout an emergency and from one emergency to the next.

- The effective delivery of French language and Indigenous language services will be implemented wherever significant demand requires according to the GNWT Standards for French Language Communications and Services, as well as the Indigenous Languages Communication Guidelines.

Incident Management Team - Information Section

As outlined in section 6.4 of the NWT Emergency Plan, the REMO and/or TEMO may be activated to support the response to emergencies within the territory. Incident Commander (IC) and an Incident Management Team (IMT) may be established when a community government, as lead, has exhausted their capacity and requested assistance from REMO/TEMO. When activated, situation reports will be provided to REMO members, TEMO members and senior GNWT officials. TEMO will coordinate the overall territorial response, ensure communications with appropriate partners, provide regular situational reports, and coordinate the involvement of other departments and key stakeholders.

When an IMT is activated, it follows the Incident Command System (ICS) to provide for functional interoperability to manage the emergency. One of the functional areas that is activated is the Information Section, which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Protocol. The size and makeup of the Information Section will follow the level of activation of the IMT and will be tailored to meet the specific information needs of the emergency event as outlined below (see *Levels of Activation* table).

While it is expected that the Information Section staff will be embedded within the IMT and have full-time responsibilities associated with the implementation of the Protocol, staff are able to work remotely where resources permit and to the extent possible.

Joint Information Committee

Once an Information Section is activated and the Protocol is implemented, a Joint Information Committee (JIC) with membership from relevant departments, agencies and affected LEMO may be struck. The purpose of the JIC will be one of information sharing and ensuring a coordinated approach in public communications messaging by all parties and in the implementation of the

Protocol. It is the responsibility of the Information Section Chief to establish this committee when needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Information Officer will have responsibility for all communications duties for the IMT and is responsible for activating additional positions / delegating specific responsibilities as required by the incident. When the Information Officer identifies the need to expand, an Information Section is created and the duties assigned to the Information Officer will be assigned to the Information Section Chief, with those responsibilities delegated as the response requires as per the roles defined below.

Within this model, departments and agencies are expected to implement their own communications tactics based on their own business continuity needs during an emergency.

Information Section Chief/Information Officer

- Responsible for the development and release of incident-related information to the media and public.
- When activated by the IC, lead incident communications.
- Coordinate surge capacity for the Information Officer function.
- Determine from the IC if there are any limits on information release, in consultation with the IC.
- Assess incident complexity and potential public interest.
- Ensure that emergency communications are coordinated, comprehensive, and timely.
- Participate in regular check-ins and briefings.
- Engage in public environment monitoring.
- Serve as the media point of contact, manage media requests, and coordinate interviews and press conferences.
- Coordinate with departments as required to prepare communications materials.
- Develop material for use in media briefings.
- Obtain IC approval of media releases.
- Evaluate the need for and as necessary recommend the establishment of a Joint Information Centre to coordinate and disseminate accurate, accessible, and timely incident-related information.
- Maintain current Incident Information summaries and/or displays on the incident and provide information on the status of the incident to assigned personnel.
- Advise IC on all public information matters and issues/concerns.
- Coordinate emergency public information and warnings.
- Monitor and utilize social media as approved by the IC.

Assistant Information Officer - Translation

- Translation services (French/English), including after-hours and 24/7 support during all activations.
- Translation of all public-facing communications developed and provided by the Information Section Chief.

Assistant Information Officer - Spokesperson

- Serves as the media point of contact.
- Manages media requests.
- Coordinates interviews and technical briefings.

Assistant Information Officer - Strategic Lead

- Coordinates the Joint Information Committee.
- Collaborates with the Press Secretary on Key Messages, as necessary, noting the Press Secretary does not have a formal role in the ICS structure.
- Directs tactical communications materials to digital and social functions.
- Ensuring consistency in messaging across all levels.

Assistant Information Officer - Digital/Web Officer

- Coordinates all digital/web communication tactics generated by the IMT.
- Monitoring and responses to inquiries received in web channels where capacity exists.

Assistant Information Officer - Social Media Officer

- Coordinates all social media communications tactics generated by the IMT.
- Monitoring and responses to social media interactions where capacity exists.

Levels of Activation

As outlined in the NWT Emergency Plan, an IMT may be activated to support the response to emergencies within the territory. It will coordinate the overall regional/territorial response, ensure communications with appropriate partners, provide regular situational reports, and coordinate the involvement of other departments and stakeholders.

During the response phase, communications needs will be activated by the Information Section Chief/Information Officer dependent on the incident requirements and the three levels of activation of the EMO as outlined in section 6.5.2 of the NWT Emergency Plan: monitoring, partial activation, or full activation. Similar to the EMO's activation, the communications needs, and level of staffing required to monitor and/or respond will vary depending on the severity of the incident.

While the scale and approach to communications functions is flexible and based on need as determined by the Information Section Chief, the table below outlines the typical communications needs and approaches required for various IMT activation levels.

	Monitoring	Partial Activation	Full Activation
Activation Criteria	• Low key/small audience • Emergency is potential or pending • IMT not required • Situation report not required • Information Section not activated • Joint Information Committee not activated	• Large but specific audience needs information • Emergency is imminent or occurring • Small IMT activated • Regular Situation reports needed • Information Section activated • Joint Information Committee may or may not be activated	• Multi agency or multi jurisdiction audience/ significant information sharing demand • Emergency is occurring • Large IMT activated • Regular Situation reports required • Information Section activated • Joint Information Committee activated
Communications Approach	• Responsive/as needed	• Average	• Aggressive/ significant territorial demand
Communications functions needed	• MACA Communications Officer as per regular duties	• Information Chief activated • Additional functions activated as needed; most often web and social media support functions	• Typically requires all functions activated
Communications Surge Staff	• Not Activated	• Partial Activation	• Full Activation

Resourcing the Activation Levels

The GNWT communications community (made up of staff from across all GNWT departments) are required to support the Protocol's implementation and staff the Information Section of the IMT as requested by the TEMO. While activation levels may vary as noted above, resourcing the communications function to the level of activation is critical. Doing it correctly will ensure the safety of all persons impacted and effectively build trust and credibility with residents.

To ensure resources are ready and available for an emergency, the Emergency Management Division will maintain a roster of staff who are trained in specific communications roles and can be called upon to provide temporary support to the IMT and associated Information Section established for an event. Note that the roster will also identify the level of ICS training that each

person has undertaken. For those who have undertaken such training, placement into either the Information Officer or Information Chief role will be recommended.

To ensure 24-hour coverage where required, adequate rest periods, and opportunities for overlap during shift changes requires a minimum of three staff for each IMT-Information Section position when activated.

Communications Planning and Implementation

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), through the Emergency Management Division, is responsible for identifying its overall communications needs when it comes to responding to an emergency. To this end, MACA will have established communications-related planning documents approved in advance that will serve as the driver for the essential communications messaging and tactics that will be undertaken when the IMT is activated. These planning documents will be shared with the Information Section communications staff at the onset of any designation.

Audiences

There are two types of audiences in an emergency – the affected public within the circle of the emergency, and the public immediately outside the circle of emergency.

Affected public within the circle of risk or emergency
People who are directly impacted by a pending or occurring emergency have direct and urgent information requirements. Timely and accurate information should be provided to the public on a timely basis and through predictable channels. The public should be advised about what has occurred, what the risks are, what is being done to remedy the situation, and any instructions that they need to follow to assure their safety.

Communications to the affected public in circumstances requiring evacuation are outside the scope of this communications protocol. Section 5.3 of the Evacuation and Hosting Guidelines detail the approach to communications surrounding evacuation.

Public immediately outside the circle of risk or emergency
While not directly affected by the risk threat or emergency, this audience may be unsure how/if they are affected or whether they are at risk. They may also have family or loved ones within the circle of risk or emergency.

Timely and accurate information should be provided to the public through predictable channels. The public should be advised about what has occurred, what the risks are, what is being done to remedy the situation, and how they can access information on the situation status of the impacted community.

Communications Channels and Tactics

At a minimum, the following communications channels and tactics will be undertaken by Information Officer and/or section staff:

- Participate in IMT Strategy and Planning meetings, participate in TEMO meetings, flag communications needs, and take action as required, and/or directed by the Incident Commander.
- Attend JIC meetings and provide regular incident updates, taking notes and sharing information back to TEMO as needed.
- Provide departmental updates through the regular GNWT public safety bulletin in response to the emergency and include information from EMO.
- Production of communications products, as needed, including but not limited to:
    - Public Safety Notices, Alerts, Orders, and All Clear messages
    - Media Advisories
    - Public Safety Announcements and News Releases
    - Advertisements
    - Web and social media content
- Monitor and respond to questions and requests received through social and digital channels where capacity exists.
- Respond to media requests, participate in interviews, coordinate technical briefings, and in many cases, attend the briefings.

No matter the channel or tactic used, members of the public should be encouraged and conditioned to refer a central Public Safety Notices webpage on the GNWT website as well as the GNWT social media accounts as the main source of timely and factual information during an emergency.

Responsibility for planning and implementing tactics will be assigned based on the experience of staff designated to the Information Section at the outset of each emergency where an IMT is activated. Approvals of any products or messaging will need to go through the Information Section Chief who will then seek approval from the Incident Commander, as appropriate.

Once approved, the materials must be translated into French to be released at the same time as English for public consumption. Having translation staff embedded in the Information Section allows for real-time translation and limited delay in communicating information to the public. Where possible, translation of materials in the Indigenous languages should also be undertaken.

Review and Practice

Please refer to section 1.4 Plan Administration of the NWT Emergency Plan for the details regarding the administration and review of this Protocol.