

WHO TAKES CARE OF THE EVACUEES?

When we read about a forest fire, flood, hazardous waste spill or another emergency or disaster that forces people to evacuate their homes, we often follow the story closely and with a sense of fascination. To some, this daily or in many cases hourly need to monitor the progress of the disaster and rescue work may seem like an unnatural curiosity. In fact, it is a very normal human response.

Though a disaster may not be happening in this town it may be affecting other people in our country, province or even in a neighbouring region, and we know there is a possibility that our community could go through a similar experience. As we follow the progress of the disaster and the people affected by it, we often wonder if our region would be as prepared to deal with a similar event. Local fire fighters, police and emergency responders are equipped to handle emergency and disaster situations, but what happens to those who have been evacuated? Is there a plan in place to help people who cannot return to their homes?

Fortunately, in British Columbia the answer is yes. Municipalities are required to develop an emergency plan for their community, and that includes a plan for Emergency Support Services. In the Regional District of Central Okanagan this has led to the creation of an ESS Team.

ESS is a province-wide, community based emergency response program that is responsible for taking care of the immediate needs of people affected by disaster. Working together with various community agencies, ESS volunteers help provide short-term (usually 72 hours) assistance to people displaced by emergencies or disasters. ESS volunteers provide food, clothing, shelter, and reunification with families or other loved ones, as well as other services required to preserve the well being of people in the community.

As we prepare for the dry days of summer, RDCO - ESS is offering a training session:

Let's be prepared

If you're new to Emergency Support Services, want to become involved or just want a refresher on the core of what we do ... here's a good place to start.

ESS 113-Registration & Referrals Training

Saturday, March 24, 2012
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Peachland Community Centre
4450 6th Street, Peachland, B.C.

Registration and Referrals describes the process for registering evacuees and for providing them with referrals for food, clothing, and lodging. It also covers basic interviewing skills. The course includes completion of the ESS File (Registration and Service Record) and Referral forms. **Please register by March 3/12.**

Lunch will be provided

To register, please contact ESS by e-mail at flavelle@shaw.ca