## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

[Organization Name] is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all employees and any visitors to its workplace. As such, [Organization Name] has developed the following policy to guide its employees and managers in the event of emergency situations in British Columbia. Preparing for emergencies is a critical part of our health and safety commitment.

DEFINITIONS

An “emergency” is a situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, a disease or other health risk, an accident, or an act whether intentional or otherwise.

Some common types of emergencies include:

* Fires or explosions
* Medical emergencies
* Severe weather and earthquakes
* Major power failures
* Hazardous material spills

POLICY

To ensure that in the event of an emergency, all [Organization Name]’s employees are prepared for their roles and responsibilities, the following plans must be followed. These emergency plans are necessary to:

* Keep employees, visitors, and first responders free from any further injuries;
* Succeed in managing life-threatening situations;
* As much as possible, minimizing any damage to equipment, machinery, tools, and any part of the environment; and
* Ensuring a return to work as safely as possible.

In the event of any workplace injuries of any kind, [Organization Name] will follow the appropriate reporting requirements, as per British Columbia’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, and/or the Collective Agreement, as applicable.

The following four major elements have been considered for this Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy:

1. Prevention (use of the policies and procedures to follow to avoid or minimize any emergencies),
2. Preparation (the actions and procedures to take to ensure that [Organization Name] and its employees are ready to effectively respond),
3. Response (the actions to be taken in the event of an emergency), and
4. Recovery (how employees and supervisors can return to normal business operations).

Planning

At [Organization Name], supervisors must have a plan for responding to emergencies that could reasonably be expected to arise that includes:

* Assessing any risks or hazards to the workplace,
* Developing specifics for the emergency response plan,
* Implementing the plan (including communicating and training the plan to employees),
* Testing the plan by holding drills on an annual basis, at minimum; and
* Improving or modifying the plan as additional information becomes available.

The organization will ensure it has:

* Up-to-date emergency contact information for all employees, including supervisors,
* A schedule which outlines who will be on shift so that they may be checked off in the event of an evacuation, and
* A list of emergency names and contacts (e.g., poison control, etc.) that is kept in the main office.

Fire or Explosion Preparedness

At [Organization Name], there is an alarm that will be triggered in the event of a fire. (Remove if not applicable)

In the event of a fire:

* Employees are to evacuate, following the below evacuation procedures,
* The fire must be reported, and the information must include:
	+ Who is reporting the fire,
	+ What has happened (to the best of the person’s knowledge),
	+ Where it has happened (Insert address),
	+ If there are any injuries, and
	+ Whether there are others who may be in the path of the fire.

**Evacuation Procedures**

In the event the fire alarm sounds, or there is an emergency situation that requires evacuation, [Organization Name] employees must remain calm and proceed in an orderly fashion.

Employees are to proceed down the stairs – the elevator is never to be used in the event of an emergency – and through the closest door. In the event the closest door is blocked or unavailable, employees are to proceed to another exit. Once employees are out of the building, employees are to proceed to the **designated meeting spot** so that everyone can be counted. The supervisor will have a copy of the schedule to ensure that all employees are accounted for.

Medical Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, employees are reminded that the organization has first aid kits. In addition, the employees who are first aid trained are posted on the bulletin board.

If an employee comes across a medical emergency, they are directed to call for help (911) immediately. They also need to survey the area around the injured person to ensure that there are not any hazards that could affect their own safety before moving towards the injured person.

If the employee is first aid trained, they should follow the instructions provided during their first aid training in assessing the person, the environment, and the need for additional support. If the situation requires it, be prepared to provide aid for life-threatening situations, including bleeding, loss of a pulse, or loss of breathing.

A reminder to employees that all emergency numbers can be accessed on the bulletin board.

Employees are to provide assistance to first responders as they arrive, including by noting anything that could help the injured party, and providing any information requested by the first responders.

After the medical emergency has passed, the employee will be requested to provide a statement outlining what occurred, which may help in preventing any further occurrences. The employee is to provide the statement to their supervisor.

Severe Weather and Earthquake Preparedness

[Organization Name] is committed to ensuring the safety of all employees during severe weather or seismic activity by aligning emergency response protocol with British Columbia’s emergency management guidance. The following protocol outlines immediate steps to take in the event of a weather warning or earthquake, and will be reviewed and practiced annually, at minimum.

In the event of a weather warning (e.g., severe storm), [Organization Name] will monitor alerts from Environment Canada and local authorities and notify employees of any necessary emergency actions.

The following are general guidelines in the event of an earthquake. As needed, [Organization Name] will develop its own site-specific procedures for employees. These procedures will be communicated to employees and they will be trained on them.

Generally, in the event of an earthquake or strong tremor if employees are still in the building, they would adhere to the following guidelines:

**Immediately Drop, Cover and Hold On:**

* + **Drop** to your hands and knees. This position prevents you from falling but allows you to move if necessary.
	+ **Cover** your head and neck with your arm and take shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture to protect yourself from falling objects. If there is no furniture nearby, crawl to the nearest interior corner or wall while continuing to protect your head and neck.
	+ **Hold On** to your shelter, covering your head and neck until the shaking stops. Count to at least 60 before getting up. This gives loose objects time to settle.
	+ If you’re inside, stay inside - do not run outdoors or to other rooms
	+ Avoid windows and unsecured furniture or equipment.
	+ **If you are in a wheelchair**, Lock, Cover and Hold On:
		- lock your wheels and cover your head and neck with your arms or available materials.
	+ **If you are in a high-rise building:** Avoid elevators and be prepared for fire alarms or sprinkler systems to activate.
	+ **If you are driving:** Pull over, stop, and set the handbrake in a safe area away from overpasses, bridges, power lines, or trees. Stay in the vehicle until the shaking ends.
	+ **If you are outside:** Move to a clear, open area away from buildings, power lines, signs, and trees. Do not run.
	+ **If you are near the shore or on the beach:** After the shaking stops, immediately evacuate to high ground. Don’t wait for officials to issue a tsunami warning. Walk quickly, rather than drive, to avoid traffic, debris and other hazards.

**When the shaking stops:**

* Wait at least 60 seconds before moving to allow objects to settle.
* Remain calm and cautiously check your surroundings for hazards such as unstable furniture, broken glass, fires, gas leaks, or damaged electrical wiring.
* Expect aftershocks and repeat Drop, Cover and Hold On if necessary.
* Do not call 911 to report an earthquake. Only call 911 for serious medical emergencies or injuries.
* Follow all instructions from your supervisor, or local authorities/emergency personnel if they are on-site.
* If your work area is severely damaged and it is unsafe to remain, take any emergency provisions you may have immediately available and evacuate to somewhere safer.
* If your work area is damaged but safe to stay in, shelter-in-place and use your emergency provisions, if any are immediately available.

**If an evacuation is required:**

* Employees must follow the directions of the designated emergency captain or supervisor.
* Use stairs only - never elevators.
* Remain at a safe distance from buildings, trees, streetlights, and overhead wires. Cover your head while moving if needed.

**Earthquake Early Warning Alerts**

Although earthquakes cannot be predicted, the Canadian Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) system is designed to detect an earthquake within seconds of its occurrence and provide advance warning before strong shaking arrives. Employees of [Organization Name] are expected to take immediate protective action when an alert is received.

Key information for employees:

* If you feel the ground shaking, do not wait for an alert. Immediately Drop, Cover and Hold On.
* EEW alerts are issued only for earthquakes that are expected to cause potentially harmful shaking. Events that generate minimal shaking will not trigger an alert.
* It is possible for some individuals to receive the alert while others do not. Factors such as relying on Wi-Fi only or being in areas with poor signal reception (e.g., underground parking garages) may affect delivery.
* EEW alerts are not part of an app and do not require sign-up. Alerts are automatically issued through the National Public Alerting System to compatible cell phones, as well as through television and radio.

 **Earthquake Hazard Mitigation in the Workplace**

Before an earthquake occurs, [Organization Name] will take steps to reduce the risk of injury and damage within the workplace. Violent shaking can cause furniture, equipment, and heavy items to fall, shift, or become airborne.

To ensure workplace safety and mitigate hazards as best as possible, [Organization Name] will (modify as necessary):

* Secure tall, free-standing furniture (e.g., bookcases, cabinets, shelving) to wall studs using appropriate brackets or moulding
* Avoid placing framed pictures, mirrors, or unsecured objects above desks, workstations, or sitting areas
* Install push or pull latches on storage cabinet doors to prevent them from swinging open during shaking
* Use proper strapping and fasteners to secure large appliances and equipment such as refrigerators, freezers, or printers
* Ensure water heaters are firmly anchored to the wall. If applicable, only licensed professionals will install flexible gas lines
* Educate employees on how to safely shut off the workplace’s water, electricity, and gas (if applicable). Only licensed gas contractors are permitted to restore gas service if it is shut off

**Additional Preparedness Measures:**

* The employer and supervisors will be responsible for determining if the workplace is located in an earthquake hazard zone. If it is, regular work site inspections must be conducted to make sure the workplace is physically prepared. For example, items/materials/shelves/racks should be secured so they do not fall or fly off ledges.
* Emergency kits containing first aid items and other supplies may be provided in the workplace, specifically [Insert locations].
* An Earthquake Emergency Response plan will be developed by [Organization Name], communicated to staff, and practiced, at minimum, annually.
* Employees in workplaces in earthquake zones will be strongly encouraged to participate in the annual Great British Columbia ShakeOut drill.
* All employees should be aware of and respond appropriately to Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) alerts issued through the National Public Alerting System. If an alert is received or shaking is felt, immediately Drop, Cover and Hold On - **do not wait for an alert to take action**.

Tsunami Preparedness and Response

Although tsunamis are rare events, coastal regions, particularly along British Columbia’s west coast, are at risk. Tsunamis can arrive within minutes following a strong earthquake, and waves may continue for several hours. [Organization Name] is committed to ensuring employees understand the risks and the appropriate actions to take before, during and after a tsunami event.

Please note that these are general guidelines in the event of a tsunami. [Organization Name] will educate and train its employees on site-specific procedures.

**Before a Tsunami**

* Know Where to Go:
	+ Employees working in or visiting coastal areas must familiarize themselves with local tsunami evacuation routes and designated high ground locations. If no official evacuation maps exist for the area, practice routes that go inland and uphill, as far away from the coast as possible.
	+ Never go to the coast to watch a tsunami.
	+ Never approach the shoreline if the water begins to recede. This may be a warning sign of an approaching wave.
	+ A tsunami travels faster than a person can run. Always move to high ground immediately.
* Know Your Zone:
	+ British Columbia’s coastal communities are divided into five tsunami notification zones. Each includes islands and inlets within that region. [Organization Name] will identify the zone the workplace is located in. This knowledge is essential to understanding tsunami alerts and evacuation instructions.
* Understand Tsunami Alerts:
	+ [Organization Name] will provide training and resources to help employees recognize and respond to tsunami alerts, including warnings, advisories and watches.
	+ Employees are expected to follow official instructions and workplace emergency protocols without delay.

**During a Tsunami**

* + Drop, Cover, and Hold On – Then Move to Higher Ground
	+ In many cases, particularly in remote areas, there may be no official warning before a tsunami arrives.
	+ If you feel a strong earthquake, immediately Drop, Cover and Hold On.
	+ Once the shaking stops, move to higher ground without waiting for official notification.
	+ If you see a sudden rise or fall in ocean water or hear a loud roaring sound (similar to a jet engine), evacuate to high ground immediately.
	+ Once at a safe location, remain there. Tsunami waves can last for several hours, and the first wave is not always the most dangerous. Wait for the official “All Clear” before returning to low-lying areas.

**After a Tsunami-Next Steps**

* + Once local authorities issue the “All Clear,” follow instructions from emergency officials, your First Nation, or local government.
	+ Reception centres may be activated to provide support, including food, shelter, and first aid. Employees should report any injuries, damages, or hazards to [Organization Name] management as soon as it is safe to do so.

Major Power Outage Preparedness

At [Organization Name], major power outages could occur. During an outage, the supervisor will phone the utility company to verify whether the outage is widespread. Employees are to safely gather together in the lobby during the power outage.

Employees are to ensure that there are not any persons in the elevators, and that no one attempts to use the elevators. In the event of a medical emergency during an outage, the supervisor will direct employees as needed to provide space for emergency services. 911 is only to be called if an emergency is life-threatening; emergency services will be overwhelmed in the event of a power outage.

As instructed, employees may be required to unplug their computers and other electrical appliances to guard against surges when the power returns. The doors to the refrigerators must be kept closed.

Hazardous Material Spill Preparedness

At [Organization Name], all WHMIS procedures are followed to prevent any leaks, spills, or damage due to hazardous materials. However, as accidents may occur, [Organization Name] will follow the below steps to ensure the safety of all employees and visitors to the workplace.

When a spill occurs,

1. The first step is for employees to communicate that there is a spill to others in the area.
	1. As required, the supervisor may commence evacuation procedures.
2. If evacuation procedures are not required, the next step will be to control the spill by closing the container or righting what spilled over.
	1. Note: [Organization Name] has PPE available in the event of a spill; employees may access it from their supervisor.
3. The next step is to contain the hazard by ensuring that it does not spill over into any other places (this could include spreading sand, kitty litter, etc.), to prevent any open paths for the liquid.
	1. If the employee cleaning up the spill must leave the area for any reason, they are instructed to block off the area where the spill occurred with the use of caution tape or caution cones or any other method to prevent access.
4. The next step is to clean the spill and check for damages. If any cleaning materials come in contact with a hazardous substance, they should be disposed of immediately, unless they can be safely disinfected. [Organization Name] will follow all applicable WHMIS procedures and will never instruct employees to perform clean-up work that goes against the stated instructions on the SDS sheet. Employees are to verify which chemicals may be used to clean up spills, prior to their use.
	1. In the event of damage to property, [Organization Name] will ensure that the area continues to be blocked off until the appropriate repairs can be made.