



Village of Queen Charlotte

VILLAGE VOICE

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK
MAY 1-7, 2011**



April 2011

Message from the Mayor

The first week in May recognizes Emergency Preparedness and in their honour I would like to tell you a little about our team. Each year we institute table top exercises for different possible occurrences and last month we had a real time event.

On March 11th my phone rang in the middle of the night with the message that our QC Emergency Preparedness Committee had been notified of a tsunami advisory by the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) and our tsunami response plan was now in effect. The PEP advisory stated that they believed a low level tsunami had been generated that could impact marinas or create strong currents and that we should evacuate those in living in the harbour or below the normal high tide mark.

On my way into the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at our town office, I stopped at Social Services (at the health clinic) and could see all was up and running, the harbour had been notified and Diane's team was there to assist anyone needing evacuation and a place to stay. Our town's staff (CAO Bill Beamish, Sandra Brown and Public Works Superintendent Ben Greenough) manned the EOC with our Chief, Larry Duke and RCMP Sgt Knapton. The EOC is the centre for Logistics, Information, Risk management, Fire and Police. Health is handled through the hospital.

We each have a role in an emergency, including you and your family. This newsletter describes our roles and necessary safety information while it is still fresh in our minds. It also lists what supplies you need to be self reliant until assistance arrives. We are in a remote and isolated area and we will need to be

prepared to care for ourselves and our neighbors. Islanders are tough and self sufficient and we are working together to be ready in an emergency.

Mayor

The mayor's role is to declare a state of local emergency when it is needed. That act allows for a formal request for outside support/resources from the Provincial and the Federal governments and for the town to be reimbursed for monies spent in the emergency. The mayor also provides direction for communications and public information and acts as the spokesperson, providing updates to the community and to the outside world. The Village Administrator, the EOC Director and the Director of the Provincial Emergency Program and the elected officials work closely together.

Police

RCMP are responsible to coordinate movement and evacuation operations. They alert and notify the public of the impending or existing emergency, coordinate law enforcement, traffic control, as well as all ground and inland waters search and rescue operations.

-Carol Kulesha, Mayor

Coming Events:

Official Community Plan:

Public Information

Wednesday

April 27th, 5-9pm

Saturday

May 7th, 1-5pm

EA Ross Room

Council Meetings

Monday

April 18th

May 2nd

May 16th

@ 7:30pm



Enter our contest for a chance to win a prize! If you find the "humorous admission" in one of the articles, phone it in and we'll enter your name in the draw to win a special emergency preparedness prize!



British Columbia is at risk

It's important you know about tsunamis and how to protect yourself. A tsunami could strike the BC coast at any time.



Prepare for Tsunamis in coastal British Columbia



If you are near the ocean and you feel a large earthquake, you should go inland or to higher ground immediately. If a tsunami were to be generated close to British Columbia, waves could reach shore within a few minutes and there would not be enough time for officials to issue a warning.

Emergency Preparedness

Queen Charlotte is within the Provincial Emergency Program's Northwest Region which covers 34% of BC's landmass, but has the smallest population with approximately 100,000 people. There are twenty-two local authorities in the region – three regional districts, eighteen municipalities and the Nisga'a Lisims Government – and thirty-six First Nations governments under federal jurisdiction. The Regional Manager is Maurie Hurst who is located in Terrace.

The *Queen Charlotte Emergency Measures Bylaw* was adopted by Council on June 19, 2006. This Bylaw authorizes the establishment of a local emergency management organization and a program to prepare for, respond to and recover from local emergencies and disasters. Under this bylaw Council is responsible to appoint an Emergency Coordinator, and an Emergency Management Committee that is responsible to plan and implement emergency response measures for the community.

In 2006, Queen Charlotte council appointed Larry Duke, Chief of the Queen Charlotte Volunteer Fire Department as the Emergency Coordinator. At present, the Emergency Planning Committee consists of the following organizations and groups in our community:

- Queen Charlotte Volunteer Fire Department
- BC Ambulance Service
- RCMP
- Northern Health
- Emergency Social Services
- Village of Queen Charlotte

Our Emergency Measures Committee works closely with similar Committees in the Village of Skidegate and in Sandspit and close coordination with these communities is a key element in our local Emergency Response and Recovery Plan.

-Bill Beamish, CAO



Emergency Social Services

The Queen Charlotte Emergency Social Services (ESS) is a volunteer group that provides a reception centre in case of a disaster in our community or other communities on the islands if required.

The most common ESS activations are Level 1 events affecting a single family or a small number of individuals at one location. ESS provides short-term

assistance to British Columbians who are forced to leave their homes.

ESS is an important part of our community emergency management organization. It consists of registered local volunteers (7) working together to provide for the immediate needs of people evacuated from their homes due to emergencies such as flooding, chemical spills, fire or earthquakes. These

essential services include food, clothing, lodging, registration and family reunification, emotional support and other specialized services.

If anyone is interested in joining the ESS volunteer group, please call 250 559 8246 after working hours or on weekends.

-Dianne Forrest, ESS



NEVER go to the coast to watch a tsunami.

A tsunami moves faster than a person can run.

Understanding the Terminology

Terms that are used during dissemination of earthquake and tsunami information include:

Tsunami Warning: *This is the highest and most serious level of tsunami notification.* Warnings are issued when there is imminent threat of a tsunami or confirmation of a tsunami wave. When communities are issued a warning, local emergency plans should be activated and public safety actions taken. Such actions are likely to include the immediate evacuation of at-risk coastal areas and restricting access to emergency response routes and coastal beaches. Warnings are updated as conditions change.

Tsunami Advisory: *The second highest level of tsunami alert.* Advisories are issued due to the threat of a tsunami that has the potential to produce strong currents dangerous to those in or near the water. Significant inundation is not expected for areas under Advisory but coastal regions prone to damage due to strong currents may be at risk. Appropriate actions by emergency management personnel may include closing beaches and evacuating harbours and marinas. Additionally, local officials may opt to move boats out of harbours to deep waters, if there is time to safely do so.

Tsunami Watch : This is notification based on early seismic information that provides advanced alerting to areas that could be impacted if a tsunami has been generated. When communities are issued a Watch, local emergency plans should be activated, and

local authorities should prepare for possible evacuation in the event that their area is upgraded to a Warning.

Tsunami Information Message: This is awareness notification. Tsunami information messages may be issued based only on preliminary seismic information without confirmation of a tsunami wave. These types of messages are issued as a means of providing advance alert to areas that could be impacted by a tsunami.

Tsunami Cancellation Message: This cancellation message is issued when a Warning or Watch message has been issued but where damaging waves have NOT been generated.

Tsunami All Clear Message: This is issued when a tsunami has been generated and the threat of further tsunami is over. This message is to advise stakeholders that the tsunami event is over and no further waves are expected.



For Additional Info:

The British Columbia Tsunami Warning and Alerting Plan, as well as other all-hazard preparedness and awareness information, is on the PEP website at: <http://www.pep.bc.ca>

PEP maintains a toll-free message line with emergency preparedness information, at: 1-888-811-6233

Basic items you will need to survive for 72 hours:

- **Water** - at least two litres of water per person per day (including small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order)
- **Food** - that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars, dried foods and food and water for pets (replace the food and water once a year)
- **Manual can opener**
- **Flashlight and batteries**
- **Candles and matches or lighter** (remember to place candles in sturdy containers and to put them out before going to sleep)
- **Battery-powered or wind-up radio** (and extra batteries)
- **First Aid Kit**
- **Special items such as prescription medications, infant formula and equipment for people with disabilities**
- **Extra keys** for your car and house
- **Some cash** in smaller bills, such as \$10 bills (travellers cheques are also useful) and change for pay phones
- **A copy of your emergency plan including contact information**

Recommended additional supplies:

It is always a good idea to have extra supplies on hand. Here are some recommendations:

- A change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- Sleeping bag or warm (foil) blanket for each household member
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Garbage bags for personal sanitation
- Toilet paper and other personal care supplies
- Safety gloves
- Fins, mask & wetsuit
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, fasteners, work gloves)
- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel (follow manufacturer's directions and store properly)
- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning



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Councillor Gladys Noddin
Councillor Kris Olsen
Councillor Leslie Johnson

Chief Administrative Officer-
Bill Beamish
Chief Financial Officer-
Debra Uliana
Superintendent of Public Works-
Ben Greenough

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.QUEENCHARLOTTE.CA



Community Volunteers

The Village would like to thank all of the wonderful volunteers who help make this community a safer, richer and more diverse place to live. If you wish to volunteer your time during this years Hospital Day please call Sharon at 250 559 8558



Fire Department

The Queen Charlotte Volunteer Fire Department has been providing fire protection to our community since it was established in 1968. At that time, the handful of volunteers responded to emergencies in a 1941 International fire truck (donated by the Sandspit Airport) utilizing a handful of tools and none of the safety equipment seen today. During the first few years the fire hall was no more that a garage in the basement of the old community hall. There have been many volunteers over the years, who have met every Tuesday night at 7:30 to practice and respond to emergency calls, day and night.

There are currently 16 regular firefighters, 6 auxiliary firefighters and 4 people that make up our dispatch team. Our dispatch team is also backed up by the staff at Charlotte Island Tire and the Queen Charlotte Hospital. Each year, the Department logs approximately 1500 cumulative hours of training on Tuesday nights, weekends or as required for specialized training.

The majority of the emergency calls we respond to are fire related. We also respond to motor vehicle incidents performing auto extrication and rescue operations, urban interface wild fires and public evacuation. There are, of course, the numerous miscellaneous calls that the Department responds to, such as gas leaks, sinking boats and "my dog is stuck in a culvert". We do not provide medical emergency response as you may see in many urban fire departments but we do respond to calls from BC Ambulance to

assist with patient transport and/or extrication.

We are very fortunate on Haida Gwaii to have the Gwaii Trust Society and community members and businesses whose grants and donations have made it possible to purchase basic gear and specialized equipment such as our thermal imaging camera. Our main apparatus includes two engines that can carry 750 and 1400 gallons of water and a rescue truck that carries the bulk of our firefighting equipment.

The Fire Department is successful because it is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds and occupations. You don't need to have any firefighting experience to join. Men and women who are 19 years of age and older, are of good character, in good health and able to make a full commitment to our training requirements are welcome.

Our Department owes a lot to its volunteers, especially Edith and Allan Bell who have been on the Department since its inception in 1968 with Allan as a firefighter and eventually Fire Chief and Edith managing the finances. After retiring from direct involvement with Department operations they continued to support the Department as dispatchers, retiring this month on April 3rd. Next time you see them, help us thank Edith and Allan for their 43 years of dedicated service to the Department and our community!

-Larry Duke, Fire Chief