

RURAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF  
RITCHOT

PUBLIC  
INFORMATION

Rural municipality of Ritchot  
Public information  
Duties  
&  
Check sheets

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Rural Municipality of Ritchot  
Duties of

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this plan is to:

- a)-ensure that, in any public emergency falling within the jurisdiction of the Rural Municipality of Ritchot, vital information is promptly communicated to the affected segments of the community and information of general public interest is broadly disseminated through the mass media.
- b)-ensure the rapid mobilization and deployment of the human and physical resources needed to carry out the above noted responsibilities.

### **Scope:**

This plan outlines the actions to be taken, the procedures to be followed, and the resources available to the Rural Municipality of Ritchot Emergency response authorities, to carry out their media and public information responsibilities during the alert and sustained phases of an emergency.

### **General Policy:**

#### a)-Pre-emergency period:

In normal times, when there is no indication or warning of any impending disaster or emergency, attention is given to reviewing and updating plans, procedures, lists, bulletins and message forms, stocks and information material, etc.

Public awareness of local risks and emergency plans, and of self-protection, is a top priority.

#### b)-Early warning period:

When a potential public emergency is detected in its early stages, even if the outcome is still uncertain, the public information officer may contact, review and adjust readiness plans in light of the particular situation at hand, and advise EMO accordingly.

No steps are taken at this stage to place staff on alert or to activate the public information facilities, but preparation is made to provide self-help and self protection information and general situation reports in response to public and media inquiries. If developments warrant, self protection information is actually promoted and disseminated through the media and other means.

c)-Pre-impact/alert phase:

When an emergency/disaster is certain and imminent, staff is placed on full alert and the media/inquiry centre shall be activated. Number of staff initially ordered to duty is determined by immediate and most pressing requirements. Steady information flow begins according to the following priorities:

- Life/saving/health preservation instructions
- Emergency status information
- Background information related to situation
- Other information requested by the media and the public.

d)-Full impact phase:

Full mobilisation of staff and media/inquiry centre with information flow reaching full pitch according to the above priorities. A decision is made whether to dispatch a Site information officer to the scene.

e)-Sustained Emergency and Wind-down phase:

Level of operations is adjusted (up or down) to the requirements of the situation, and information flow continues as above with growing emphasis on damage and casualties.

f)-Post emergency (recovery period):

The media inquiry centre has been stood down, with calls of inquiry being placed to Municipality staff who will continue to handle continuing information requirements, chiefly on the restoration and essential services and the provisions of assistance to victims.

## EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION TEAM:

Consists of Four positions:

1. Community Spokesperson
2. Public information officer.
3. Emergency Coordinator
4. Site information officer.

### COMMUNITY SPOKESPERSON

The Rural Municipality of Ritchot's emergency plan has designated the Mayor to hold the title of **Community Spokesperson**. In his/her absence the Mayor may designate an alternate to take on those duties. The Community spokespersons duties consist of the following:

### CHECKSHEET

- Ensure a Public Information Officer is appointed to the Emergency Operations centre.
- Ensure media/inquiry centre is established.
- Approve public information sheet, prepared by Public Information officer and distribute to staff of media/inquiry centre.
- Ensure council chambers prepared for daily news briefings, if required.
- Act as senior spokesperson for Municipality.
- Ensure communication with Council, Federal, Municipal, and volunteer agencies maintained.
- Ensure communication with Emergency Control Group maintained.
- Ensure communication with Emergency Coordinator maintained.
- Authorize all written/oral statements prepared by Public Information Officer.
- Authorize others to make statements to the media.
- If required, hold news briefings once a day.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

This position shall be assigned to persons who have completed the Emergency Public information course:

The role of Public information officer shall consist of the Mayor or designate. The Emergency Coordinator shall be trained in this field and maybe called upon to act as spokesperson when called upon.

### **Check sheet**

- Prepare media/inquiry centre.
- Prepare council chambers, for news conferences, if required.
- Prepare daily information sheet for media/inquiry centre and have approved by both Emergency Coordinator & Community Spokesperson.
- Maintain a position within emergency operations centre and prepare news release(s), as required.
- Present completed news releases to emergency coordinator for authorization.
- Present signed news release to community spokesperson for authorization.
- If required, schedule news conference establishing date/time/location.
- Fax out authorized news releases.
- Monitor news casts/print media and radio to verify accuracy of report.
- Maintain a log of events.
- Arrange for a media tour once site is safe.

## SITE INFORMATION OFFICER

This position shall be one of a dual responsibility dependant on the nature of the incident. In cases involving Police/Fire taking over incident command, they shall hold the title of **Site Information Officer**. In cases where the Emergency could last for a sustained period a site information officer may be dispatched to the scene. This person shall be Municipal Spokesperson or a designate who has received training in the **EMO-Emergency Public information course**.

### Check Sheet

- Attend to site as requested by either Emergency Coordinator, Public Information Officer, Community Spokesperson, Fire Chief or designate..
- Ensure Site commander knows your role/responsibility.
- Provide limited information, referring media to the Public Information Officer for details.
- If required, Conduct Newsrelease from site if authorized by Emergency coordinator.
- Keep Public Information Officer apprised of what media is present and what has been stated.
- Maintain a log of events and times (EMO8).

## **EMERGENCY COORDINATOR DUTIES**

### **Check Sheet**

- ❑ Ensure Public Information Officer has media/inquiry centre established.
- ❑ Ensure Public Information Officer has all relevant facts from Emergency Command Centre.
- ❑ Ensure accuracy of news release prepared by Public Information Officer.
- ❑ Review and authorize media releases of Public Information Officer.
- ❑ Assist Emergency Control Group decision making process.

### **ESSENTIAL PHONE/FAX NUMBERS**

For complete list of essential phone numbers of media refer to Phone/resource section of Emergency plan under:

“N” for Newspaper

“R” for Radio

“T” for Television.