

News Release



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Emergency Management Cowichan provides enhanced service to residents

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and its member municipalities have established Emergency Management Cowichan (EMC), an enhanced regional service to modernize the oversight and delivery of emergency preparedness planning, incident response and recovery support services within the Cowichan region.

In partnership with the City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, and the Towns of Lake Cowichan and Ladysmith, the CVRD is introducing a new name for their existing shared regional emergency management service.

“Emergency Management Cowichan marks the beginning of an emergency management modernization journey for Cowichan region,” said Danielle Myles Wilson, CAO of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “Incorporating a centralized approach and oversight to the work of responding to incidents like flooding, wildfires and landslides will bring greater certainty, consistency and efficiency to the staffing and resourcing of our Regional Emergency Operations Centre when these situations occur in the future.”

With the realities of climate change emerging, Cowichan residents are now facing the potentially annual impacts of atmospheric rivers, heat domes, wildfires, extreme cold and drought. Building on an existing agreement between the CVRD and its member municipalities, Emergency Management Cowichan is poised to grow into an inclusive disaster resilience and climate adaptation organization supporting all Cowichan residents.

“Emergency Management Cowichan seeks to continue the long tradition of Cowichan communities working together in challenging times,” said Ryan Wainwright, Manager of Emergency Management Cowichan. “This strengthened, centralized approach to emergency preparedness, response and recovery will ultimately equip our region with a reliable, highly trained network of organizations and people, capable of providing a more resilient response to the hazards that face our region.”

The First Nations of the region, on whose unceded territory Emergency Management Cowichan is grateful to operate, have millennia of experience living with and adapting to natural hazards. As EMC develops as an organization, its goal will also be to work in partnership with First Nations to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into all aspects of emergency management for the sustainable future of the Cowichan region.

“With the creation of Emergency Management Cowichan, our goal is to strengthen and extend existing emergency management relationships,” said Aaron Stone, Chair of the Board for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “As EMC evolves, we hope that it will result in new emergency management collaboration with Indigenous communities in support of reconciliation and increased resiliency for all Cowichan residents.”

The newly defined Emergency Management Cowichan will become a familiar sight for residents of the Cowichan going forward, and represents the first step in a process towards supporting disaster resiliency for residents in all corners of the vast geography of the region.

“Disasters do not recognize jurisdictional boundaries, and a regional approach to emergency management means a more fortified, strategic response to deliver services as soon as they are required,” said Ted Swabey, CAO of the District of North Cowichan. “We are excited to partner with the CVRD and the other Cowichan municipalities to evolve this important aspect of regional services and ensure we are preparing for the current and future needs of our region.”

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