



First Nations  
**FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT  
BOARD**

# **EMERGENCY PLANNING GUIDE**

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*This **Emergency Planning Guide** is a tool to support First Nations governments as they consider the emergency planning needs of their individual communities.*

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This guide is not an Emergency Plan and should not be used as a substitute for an Emergency Plan. The content in this guide is provided for general purposes only and does not constitute legal or other professional advice or an opinion of any kind.

*The First Nations Financial Management Board* (the “FMB”) is an Indigenous not-for-profit organization that provides tools and training to support First Nations governments in managing their money and property.

**For more information:**

Please visit: [www.fnfmb.com](http://www.fnfmb.com) or contact us at:  
1-877 925-6665 or [mail@fnfmb.com](mailto:mail@fnfmb.com).



## WHY DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY PLAN?

Emergency planning is an important part of FMB's FMS Standards. Planning supports a First Nation government's future by identifying major emergencies that could happen suddenly or unexpectedly.



The objective of emergency planning is to be prepared for these potential emergencies, even if they never occur.

Emergency planning can highlight an organization's weaknesses and give it time to identify risks before sudden or unexpected circumstances occur. Since emergencies will eventually happen, planning ahead is necessary. Lack of planning can lead to chaos, loss, and a worst-case scenario in the event of an emergency.

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During an emergency, a First Nation government will need to act quickly to make decisions. If there is a well thought out emergency plan in place, and trained personnel who know what to do during an emergency, the First Nation has a better chance of responding effectively to the situation.

## WHAT DO THE FMB STANDARDS SAY ABOUT EMERGENCY PLANNING?

The FMS Standards state that Council must establish and implement an emergency plan. This plan is used in any emergency situation that could be considered an emergency and may significantly impact the cash flow of the First Nation.

This plan:

- includes rules for fires, floods, and other environmental risks such as landslides or toxic spills
- is suitable for the size, risk, and impact of possible emergencies



- needs regular emergency drills
- must keep all contact lists up-to-date
- must explain and send the plan to all people who may be involved or impacted
- must be reviewed once a year

## WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER IN AN EMERGENCY PLAN?

**An emergency plan should consider the following:**

- 1. What situations can become emergencies and how to prepare**
- 2. What to do during an emergency**
- 3. What to do when things return to “normal”**



## PLANNING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Whether a First Nation is starting a plan from scratch or improving on an existing plan, these questions below can support discussions and planning as your First Nation considers the future.



### Do you have an Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plan (the plans)?

- ✓ Have the plans been reviewed, approved and updated annually?
- ✓ Were priorities established and agreed upon, such as which programs and services that will continue operating?
- ✓ Were processes considered with regards to evacuations, such as assisting the elders and persons with disabilities?
- ✓ Has the level/state of emergency been addressed and levels in which to invoke and end the plans?
- ✓ Who has been identified with the plans to invoke a state of emergency?
- ✓ Has there been a risk assessment completed, to answer the “what-if” questions?
- ✓ Are the plans documented and easily accessible?
- ✓ Do the plans support your Financial Administration Law?
- ✓ Is everyone within the organization aware of and familiar with the plans?
- ✓ Are external sources aware of and familiar with the plans, such as hotel owners, neighbouring First Nations, neighbouring municipalities, and funders?
- ✓ Has training been provided on the plan/s?
- ✓ Has there been practice runs completed?

### Have you considered what should go into the plans?

- ✓ Have you included a list of emergency contact information and is the list current?
- ✓ If a committee is considered, have the Emergency Team Members been identified, as well as the Team Leader?
- ✓ Are all persons identified in the plans aware of their responsibilities, their job descriptions been updated (if required), and do they understand the additional responsibilities?

- ✓ Have agreements with Partners been completed and/or updated, such as fire protection being provided by municipalities?
- ✓ Do members of Chief and Council have access to technology/computer hardware to enable them to continue to meet, conduct business, and make decisions, if they are not able to meet in person?
- ✓ Do employees have access to technology/computer hardware to enable them to continue to provide essential services and deliver programming, if they are not able to do so in person?
- ✓ Is there a process to track assets, if Chief, Council, and all employees require computer hardware?
- ✓ Have you assessed your current available technology to verify if work can be completed remotely and meetings can be completed virtually? Is there an associated training plan to work within your current available technology?
- ✓ Have authorization levels/limits been agreed upon?
- ✓ Have modified work schedules been addressed, if needed?

### **Have you considered the financial impacts and what aspects of financial controls should go into the plans?**

- ✓ Have you considered back-ups of financial information and servers? Will it be on-site or off-site? How are the back-ups going to be kept secure? Is there a plan to continue back-ups while in an emergency state?
- ✓ Whether you have considered on-site or off-site back-up plan, are there testing procedures to ensure the back-ups will work in the event of an emergency?
- ✓ Have payment processes been considered and will payments still be able to be made to employees, members, and vendors through electronic payments or cheques?
- ✓ Have reporting requirements been considered, such as separate tracking for emergency expenses and being able to report on programming to Council, employees, and funders?
- ✓ Have reimbursable expense processes and criteria been considered, such as documentation, approval, and recording?
- ✓ Is there a documented process for approvals to still occur, while still ensuring there are proper segregation of duties?
- ✓ Is there a documented process for keeping records secure, if working off-site is the only option?

### **Is there a communication plan incorporated into the plans?**

- ✓ Has the communication process been included, whether it is communicating to internal parties or external parties?
- ✓ Has the person or persons been identified to communicate the plans?
- ✓ Has a person or persons been identified to communicate to the media?
- ✓ How will you ensure that up-to-date information remains reliable?



- ✓ Have you assessed your current available technology to verify if it allows for communication strategies to be completed virtually and who will you assign to administer social media, if this is the choice of virtual communication?
- ✓ Has the way of communicating been addressed, such as door-to-door, telephone calls, radio, social media, etc.?
- ✓ Has there been a schedule drafted for Chief, Council, and Chief Administrative Officer to provide regular communications?

## WHAT TO DO DURING AN EMERGENCY

The following questions can support discussions and planning around what to do when an unexpected emergency situation happens.



### Has an Emergency and the level of Emergency been declared?

- ✓ Has the Emergency Team lead been notified of the Emergency?
- ✓ Have Chief and Council been notified of the Emergency?
- ✓ Have the community members been notified and advised what to do or what not to do?

### Have the plans been distributed to all persons affected?

- ✓ Has the team leader invoked the plan?
- ✓ Has the list of emergency contact information been made readily available?
- ✓ Have everybody in the plans been notified?

### Are the plans being monitored and followed?

- ✓ Has the communication plan been enacted?
- ✓ Has the process been implemented for the business continuity plan component?
- ✓ Are payment processes communicated and implemented?
- ✓ Have you sourced out all funding opportunities (grants/reimbursable)?
- ✓ Are reimbursable expense processes communicated and implemented?
- ✓ Is there an open line of communication between the Nation, Partners, Funders, other levels of Government?

- ✓ Have community members been notified of assistance, if any, available to them?
- ✓ Has program availability and continuity been communicated to community members

## WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS RETURN TO NORMAL

It is important to plan not only for an emergency, but to plan for what happens when the emergency is over.

### Have the plans considered what needs to happen when things back to normal?

- ✓ Was the emergency contact information up-to-date, easy to use, and accessible – require updates?
- ✓ Does another risk assessment need to be completed for any items not originally assessed?
- ✓ Have you submitted all required documentation to receive funding?
- ✓ Have you recorded a receivable for any outstanding funding?
- ✓ Have you filed any insurance claims, if required?
- ✓ Have the plans been updated to reflect anything that may have been missed in the planning stage?
- ✓ Have you reported to C&C and the Community on the Financial Impact of the Emergency on the community and what it will mean for the community going forward.
- ✓ Have you thanked everyone, including yourself, who helped during the Emergency (for example: Appreciation Dinner)?

## OTHER RESOURCES

FMB Webinar – “Living by your FAL during COVID-19

[https://youtu.be/\\_V5OH7TAavI](https://youtu.be/_V5OH7TAavI)

Contact our Capacity Development Team: [cd\\_team@fnfmb.com](mailto:cd_team@fnfmb.com)







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