

Appendix S—Legislation Related to NEPP

BC’s Good Samaritan Act—This law protects lay people from liability for inadvertently causing harm if the help they offer freely to others during an emergency is not obviously irresponsible under the circumstances. Off-duty professionals (for example, doctors) acting in roles for which they are formally trained or licensed may not be protected from liability.

Liability of Legal Entities—Most strata councils and property managers have responsibilities that are legally or contractually defined. They are usually advised not to risk additional liability by exceeding responsibilities—for example, by taking on projects such as neighbourhood emergency response. An informal team of volunteers is a good alternative. It could include some members of a strata council who are not acting in their capacity as strata officials. Some strata councils may offer funding but avoid being involved in planning and spending decisions.

Privacy Laws in BC—These laws apply to all organizations, a category that is hard to define. Assume that, even as an informal volunteer group, you fall under this category.

- Neighbours don’t have to give personal information to anyone except those authorized to collect it—for example, under strata bylaws or rental contracts. NEPP Leadership may likely not have access to personal information collected by authorized agents.
- If you plan a neighbourhood questionnaire or survey, consider who should be involved in gathering the information, which teams might use it, and where and in what forms it would be kept.
- If neighbours agree to provide information, abide by the spirit of the law: collect only what you really need to know; disclose it only to those who need to know; use it only for the stated purpose; keep it secure; and when it is of no further use, destroy it using a secure method.

Volunteer Health and Safety—Typically there are many health and safety hazards in a disaster area. Don’t put any volunteer at serious or unnecessary risk. Ensure teams are aware of risks and properly equipped for their tasks.

- Teams involved in area safety assessment, dwelling assessment, and household checks will need some or all of the following: protective clothing and sturdy footwear, proper equipment (for example, two-way radios, flashlights or headlamps, dust masks), and safety guidelines such as filing a plan and working in pairs.
- First aid teams will need a kit and manual, nitrile gloves, masks, supplies for handwashing and cleansing, etc.
- Shelter teams may need supplies for emergency sanitation.
- All volunteers are affected by the disaster even if they seem to be coping well. Consider a buddy system where volunteers watch for signs of fatigue and stress and encourage one another to take breaks and rehydrate. Volunteers may benefit from some written tips on maintaining their own emotional well-being while helping.