

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: April 23, 2025
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Shawn Johnston, Executive Director of HR and
Arlen Valade, Manager Occupational Safety & Wellness
SUBJECT: Emergency Preparedness in NLPS

Background

The district runs a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness strategy across all our schools and facilities. The goal of this strategy is to ensure the safety of our students and employees in the event of an emergency that impacts one or more sites.

Emergency preparedness includes ensuring our sites have supplies and knowledge to deal with an event as it happens, and the aftermath.

Emergency preparedness is the joint responsibility between the Safety Office and the supervisor at each site; for us mostly principals. The safety office coordinates plans, training, drills, and communications on emergency preparedness. The site supervisors are responsible for ensuring preparedness at their site, and leading students and staff through drills and actual emergencies.

Discussion

The elements of our Emergency Preparedness strategy are: planning, organizing information and supplies, training, running drills, and debriefing and revising from drills and emergencies.

We plan and practice for the big types of emergencies we could face, such as earthquakes and fires. However, that emergency preparedness is transferable to other types of emergencies such as windstorms, ice storms, flooding, that have similar impacts. These larger scale emergencies are typically ones that could impact individual schools, district wide, and beyond our district, and we incorporate those factors into the planning.

We also plan for more localized emergencies, with shelter in place, hold and secure, and lockdown planning and drills. This emergency preparedness keeps us ready for any type of emergency facing a site or several sites located close together. In the past we've seen this emergency preparedness used for bears and cougars in an area, and for threats or concerns of violent behaviour.

The work of emergency preparedness is ongoing and continually evolving as we incorporate new information and approaches available to us to keep our students and employees as prepared and safe as possible. Some of the specific actions the district undertakes for emergency preparedness are:

Local Safety Committees and Regular Drills

Each school has its safety committee which develops that school's School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). This work is supported by the Safety Department.

Additionally, each school conducts a minimum of 6 fire drills throughout the year, and all schools participate in events such as the great shakeout. We do 2 district wide earthquake drills per year. These drills familiarize and normalize the process of evacuating a school when needed.

Prioritized Post-Earthquake Response (PPR) system

The PPR is a seismic system designed to identify how safe each of our buildings are for re-entry after an earthquake. In the event of an earthquake our PPR system would be set up in a safe place and each school would connect via radio to communicate their situation and get information on the safety of their buildings. The Safety Department runs full PPR drills twice each year. NLPS is the first school district to have a PPR system, and our first drill was the Great ShakeOUT in 2021.

School Supplies

Schools each have emergency supplies that are kept in safe places that will be accessible in the event of an earthquake. The supplies include: food and water, first aid and search & rescue supplies, shelter supplies, student comfort packs, student release information and supplies, and communications equipment.

First Aid Attendants

The Safety Department regularly facilitates first aid training for employees to ensure our schools always have adequate first aid coverage.

Connection with Partner Groups

The Safety Department regularly works with partner groups such as VIU, City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Regional Hospital, Nanaimo Search & Rescue, Regional District of Nanaimo, Safety contacts at other school districts, and others. Several of these groups have attended our PPR drills to view and provide feedback on our process.