



EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT

What has the Emergency Services Unit worked on over the last quarter?

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Emergency Services (ES) Unit, working with Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) Emergency Management Directorate (EMD), is anticipating the development of a sustainable 5-year funding agreement to support its work. It is expected that this new agreement will be secured within the second quarter of fiscal year 2020 and will extend through the next four consecutive fiscal years to 2025.

Under the leadership of National Chief Perry Bellegarde and AFN portfolio holder, Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart, the Emergency Services Unit has also been working with the Chiefs Committee on Emergency Management (CCEM) in formalizing and finalizing its Terms of Reference (TOR). A meeting is also planned with the CCEM to address the development of the First Nations Strategy on Emergency Management. This strategy will aid regional First Nations in assuming and driving the care and control of their emergency management regimes, as opposed to prescribed directives from ISC.

With the introduction of a very cooperative and collaborative new Director for the Emergency Management Directorate, there has been at least one introductory meeting to date and an agreement to hold regularly scheduled meetings and discussions to fully mature the decade old relationship with the AFN, and ensure alignment of respective roles and responsibilities for First Nations emergency management. The new ISC Director supports the direction of the Emergency Services Unit and hopes to align a new working relationship to the betterment of First Nations.

A pivotal issue for the Emergency Services Unit came on July 15, 2019, when the federal government created Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA), each with their own Ministers. The AFN now has direct access to a federal Minister for Indigenous Services Canada that is dedicated to Emergency Management.

Are there recent current events or government action affecting the Emergency Services Unit or its priorities?

The recent development of the COVID-19 virus and its subsequent pandemic have resulted in a delay in Chiefs Committee on Emergency Management – Strategic Planning Session that was scheduled to take place in Winnipeg, Manitoba on March 24-26, 2020. Any follow up meetings were also affected due to a ban on gathering in groups and air travel.

The pandemic has also caused a delay in the formal signing ceremony of the Relationship Protocol between the AFN and the Canadian Red Cross (CRC). A virtual signing ceremony has been suggested by the CRC to bring about a virtual link between the two organizations and define and structure their working relationship.



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What is your Sector planning for the future?

The Emergency Services Unit follows the mandate and advocacy efforts of the Assembly of First Nations in working on behalf of First Nations in the area of Emergency Management. This plan includes efforts to assist First Nations in establishing their own emergency management regimes with adequate and appropriate funding mechanisms to develop stable, stand-alone, and self-sufficient emergency management policies, procedures, and programs.

AFN ES plans to continue helping First Nations develop their emergency management regimes through the direction of the Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolutions concerning First Nations involvement in Emergency Preparedness, Care and Control of Emergency Management, Emergency Operations Management Planning, the development of a First Nations Training Institute on culturally appropriate Emergency Management training, and First Nations direct involvement in the development of the regional Emergency Management Agreements, as well as others.

Upcoming Events

- **Date TBC** - AFN Emergency Management Forum, potential for In-person Forum (dependant on the COVID-19 Pandemic situation)
- **Date TBC** - Chiefs Committee on Emergency Management Strategic Planning session