Plan what you and your family will do in each of these situations, and make sure all family members understand the plan. What follows is a small sampling of advice available in more detail from the GESS website and/or other emergency planning agencies such as the RDN (www.rdn.bc.ca.pep.bc.ca):

- Arrange a family meeting place, and, on the assumption that family members could be in different places when an emergency occurs, plan how you will reconnect with each other.

- Know what to do during an earthquake. Protect yourself against injury from falling objects by making sure items in your house such as mirrors, picture frames, tall bookcases, etc are securely attached.

- Make sure you have an adequate supply of food, water, medical supplies, and anything else you might need should you become isolated from the rest of the world for a prolonged period of time. Estimates vary on how long you should plan for, but PEP is currently recommending a minimum of one week. Don’t forget the needs of your pets.

- Have candles, matches, and flashlights (including spare batteries) easily accessible in a fixed location.

- Don’t rely on electricity for heat or water! Have a non-cordless phone in your home for use when power is out but phone lines are still working. Without electricity water pumps won’t work.

- Keep a hand-cranked or battery-operated radio handy for listening to emergency broadcasts. See Communications section for stations to listen to.

- Take the steps necessary to protect your home from a forest fire. Know in advance the routes you and your family will use to escape a raging fire coming from different directions. Make sure everyone has a sturdy pair of shoes, suitable clothing, and a grab-and-go pack ready for quick evacuation at any time. Maintain smoke detectors.

- If you smell smoke during the hot dry season when outdoor fires are prohibited, notify the Fire Department immediately, 247-9677.

- Make sure one of your neighbours can access your pets in case you’re off the island when an emergency occurs.

- Minimize phone use during an emergency to help keep circuits free for emergency response personnel.

- Work with your neighbours to develop a neighbourhood emergency plan.

**Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness**

Many benefits can be realized if neighbours help each other during an emergency, particularly if the neighbourhood as a whole has an emergency plan. A typical neighbourhood emergency plan involves designating one house as a central meeting place – the place where the able-bodied go once they’ve looked after their own family’s needs. This home acts as the centre from which a systematic search of the neighbourhood is made to assess damage and find out who needs help.

Neighbourhood resources (people with first-aid training, spare rooms, chainsaws, etc) can be brought to bear on immediate problems. Gabriola’s long-term emergency plan involves 2-way radios for use in communicating with the rest of Gabriola's disaster team during an emergency.

Establishing a neighbourhood emergency plan is not difficult. Kits are available. Review the information under Emergency Preparedness, Neighbourhood in [www.essgabriola.com](http://www.essgabriola.com) for more detailed information.

"PREPAREDNESS IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY"

GET INVOLVED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD EMERGENCY TEAMS!
Reception Centres & Disaster Registration

In the event of a large-scale disaster, GESS volunteers will set up two Reception Centres on the island - one at the Rollo Senior’s Center: 685 North Road (north end) and the other at the Community Hall: 2200 South Road (south end).

The Reception Centres are for keeping track of individuals and families during an emergency, gathering information as to the extent of injury/damage, and reconnecting individuals and families who have become separated. They will also provide food vouchers and a crude form of shelter for people forced from their homes, but they don’t stock food, water, blankets, etc. If you leave your home to stay with friends, leave a note on the door stating everyone is okay and where you have gone – then register at a Reception Center so family and friends can find you.

Communication During a Disaster

Dialing 911 on your telephone continues to be the best procedure to follow during an emergency if there are injuries to your family or residents of your neighbourhood. However, telephone lines may be damaged and access to emergency services could be affected. Listen to local radio stations such as WAVE (FM 102.3); WOLF (FM 106.9); or CHLY Radio Malaspina (FM 101.7; CBC AM 690); CKNW (AM 980).

As the program develops and unfolds we anticipate equipping Neighbourhood Emergency Program contacts with Communication Radios (VHF and / or FRS -- Family Radio Service) to be able to communicate inter-neighbourhoods and with the Emergency Operations Centre, which would be activated during a serious event.

Becoming Involved …

If you are interested in becoming part of the growing team of GESS volunteers, or if you simply want more information on what GESS is all about, contact Rose Topp at 247-8597. To receive email updates on Gabriola’s Emergency Preparedness, subscribe to the mailing list in GESS Info at www.essgabriola.com.

Emergency Preparedness on Gabriola

Global events have clearly demonstrated that individual and neighbourhood emergency preparedness are of the utmost importance in surviving a catastrophe. Although Gabriola is part of the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), we need to remember that in a large-scale emergency such as a major earthquake, resources will be scarce and a small island like Gabriola will be low on the provincial priority list.

In a worst-case scenario, phone and power lines will be down, RCMP, Fire and Ambulance will have a difficult time assessing damage and responding as they do normally. It has been demonstrated many times that lives will be saved if families and neighbourhoods are prepared in advance and act according to a plan during an emergency.

A wealth of information on family and neighbourhood preparedness can be found by visiting the GESS website: www.essgabriola.com, or, if you don’t have a computer, by contacting the Gabriola Fire Dept at 247-9677. The remainder of this pamphlet provides a sampling of emergency preparedness basics specifically oriented towards living on Gabriola.

Family Emergency Preparedness

- Anticipate the type of disaster Gabriola might encounter, eg – major earthquake, out of control forest fire, prolonged power outage during freezing weather, pandemic, etc.