



Piers Island Emergency Program Report July 2019 to June 2020

Every part of British Columbia is mandated to participate in a locally organized emergency response program. The Piers Island Emergency Program (PIEP) is part of the Southern Gulf Islands Area Program and provides services during an island emergency. Its major task is to support the work of the Piers Island Volunteer Fire Department (PIVFD). The PIVFD responds to the emergency site while PIEP members work off site at an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). If community support is needed PIEP members can set up a Reception Centre (RC).

Duty Officer

The major responsibility of the Emergency Community Coordinator (ECC) is to assemble the Emergency Program (EP) team in an island emergency. In the absence of the ECC a member of the Emergency Program team serves as **duty officer** and responds accordingly.

Public Alert Notification System (PANS)

As most islanders are aware, an automated alert system known as PANS has been implemented in the Southern Gulf Islands. It is NOT the federal *Alert Ready* system used to provide alerts for potentially life-threatening events such as a tsunami. **To receive notification about Piers Island emergencies you must be signed up for PANS.** The Emergency Program does not have access to the list of PANS signees so the responsibility rests with each household to register. For information on how to sign up for PANS please contact Nancy Troger at nancytroger@telus.net

Telephone "Tree"

The Emergency Program maintains a phone list of all property owners/occupants for circumstances where PANS is not utilized. Please ensure Nancy has your latest contact information.

Piers Island Emergency Procedures

Members of the Emergency Program delivered an updated *Piers Island Emergency Procedures* pamphlet to all properties in June. It contains important information about how to respond to island emergencies including fire/evacuation, power outage or water. Importantly the pamphlet lists cell numbers of Emergency Program team members to contact as needed in an emergency.

Fire/Evacuation

A full evacuation of Piers Island ordered by the fire chief will not be preceded by an alert. If the chief calls for a partial evacuation he will direct the Emergency Program team to contact the properties affected.

Power Outages

Piers Island usually experiences one or more power outages during the winter months. If there is a power outage and if conditions permit, islanders may receive a phone call from an Emergency Program team member with relevant information. For updates during an outage islanders can check bchydro.com/out

Water Emergencies

Should a situation involving the Piers Island water system require notification of some or all islanders, the PIID water trustee will ask the Emergency Program team to make contact. This past year there was a breach in the water system and the EP team contacted residents in the affected zones.

Emergency Simulations/Exercises

Normally each year the Emergency Program organizes exercises to practice scenarios that could potentially arise on island. Most often these are held with the participation of the Piers Island Volunteer Fire Department. However, with the onset of Covid 19 in 2020 both tabletop and simulated exercises were cancelled. Fortunately during the Fall of 2019 the EP team was able to review and practice how to set up an Emergency Operations Center.

Emergency Preparedness Week

The first week of May each year is designated Emergency Preparedness Week. To encourage islanders to “be prepared” Sandy Brunham, Deputy Coordinator, organizes a contest to raise awareness about having an emergency plan. If you have not already done so, please take the time to put together a “grab and go” bag as part of your plan.

Meetings/Reports/Coved-19

Emergency coordinators and other team members from each Southern Gulf Island usually meet with the Area Coordinator several times each year to discuss common issues. However, in 2020, because of COVID 19, bi-weekly meetings through Zoom became the new reality.

Because of the pandemic each island coordinator must file a weekly “Situation Report” with the Area Coordinator who makes a consolidated area report to the Emergency Operations Centre of the CRD. In the Piers Island report I noted the cancellation of large community events such as the picnic and the pancake breakfast. However on a positive note I described the Victory Garden initiative and the Piers Island Race which was held with guidelines endorsed by Island Health. Although the pandemic is the main topic of the weekly situation reports all island emergency teams must stay current regarding other potential hazards. We continue to review and update our procedures.

Respectfully submitted:

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Piers Island Emergency Program