



PIERS ISLAND EMERGENCY PROGRAM AGM REPORT 2018

July 2017 to June 2018

The Piers Island Emergency Program (PIEP) is part of the Southern Gulf Islands Area Program providing services during an island emergency. Our major task is to support the work of the Piers Island Volunteer Fire Department (PIVFD) whose members respond to on-site emergencies while PIEP members work off site at an Emergency Operations Centre and a Reception Centre.

Duty Officer

At all times on Piers Island there is a member of the Emergency Program (EP) who is the designated duty officer. In an emergency, the **Duty Officer** leads the EP's emergency response and assembles the EP team as needed.

Public Alert Notification System (PANS)

As most of you know an automated alert system has been implemented in the Gulf Islands. Known as PANS (*Public Alert Notification System*), it is separate and apart from the federal *Alert Ready* system that is used solely for tsunami warnings. To receive notification about island emergencies you must be signed up for PANS. Short-term occupants can also register for PANS for the period they are on island.

Over the past year the Emergency Program set up at many different venues (Annual Picnic, Pancake Breakfast, Wildfire event, Walkabout, etc.) to facilitate PANS signup. Although we reached many islanders, we believe there are some who have not yet registered. The Emergency Program does not have access to the list of PANS signees so the responsibility rests with each household to register. If you have yet to register for PANS and require assistance, please contact Sandy Brunham at sbrunham@gmail.com.

Telephone Tree

PANS does not completely replace our telephone tree call-out system. The "tree" is still used for less urgent matters such as power outages and, in some situations, may be used to augment PANS.



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Power Outages

In the past year the Emergency Program used the telephone tree to call islanders about two separate island power outages.

Fire Response

The Emergency Program team activated its response procedures as the PIVFD attended to a kitchen fire last August. We stood by “at the ready” as the PIVFD successfully dealt with the fire.

Tsunami Response

On January 23rd, 2018 Environment Canada sent out a tsunami warning to British Columbia’s coastal communities regardless of whether they were in a high or a low risk tsunami zone. (Piers Island is in Zone E, a low risk tsunami zone.) Members of the PIVFD and Emergency Program were paged through 911 and, following protocol, the Fire chief called for the EP’s duty officer to set up an Emergency Operations Centre at the fire hall. Many of the EP team were off-island, but the few team members on island assembled at the hall in the middle of the night along with the PIVFD. They awaited information and direction from the Area Emergency Program. Because the Gulf Islands are in a low risk zone the Area Coordinator directed each island Emergency Program to “stand by”. Unfortunately, no information was provided to the island teams between the time they were directed to stand by and later when they were told to “stand down”. The Piers Island Duty Officer made several attempts to obtain accurate, official information and direction from other sources but it was not forthcoming.

The Piers Island team, the PIVFD, the Southern Gulf Islands Emergency Program and CRD Protective Services all reviewed the event in considerable detail. As you can imagine there was plenty of discussion about unnecessarily alerting areas that would be unaffected. In hindsight, the Area Coordinator stated the Area Program should have initiated a message to all Gulf Island residents to say no action was required given the low risk level. This could have avoided needless individual responses.

Simulated Evacuation Exercise

Recently a simulated evacuation exercise was held in conjunction with the PIVFD. It was a tremendous success with 98 islanders and guests signed up as “evacuees.”

Public Presentation: Earthquake Rapid Damage Assessment

One of the mandates of the EP is public education. Last summer we arranged a public presentation at the fire hall on Post Earthquake Rapid Damage Assessment. The session was both well attended and well received. We will continue to offer public education in conjunction with the Southern Gulf Islands Emergency Program.



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Piers Island Emergency Procedures (2018)

This procedures brochure, distributed in June to all island properties, contains vital details about what to do in a Piers Island emergency. It lists the cell numbers of the EP's team members who are available should you need information or direction during any kind of emergency. Additional copies are in the Piers Island fire hall book case.

Thank You

I would like to acknowledge the following PIEP volunteers:

Team members: Sandy Brunham, Velvet Warrior, Mary Jordan, Nancy Troger, Colleen Bryden, Kerry Wheeler, Patti LL, Kerry Keats, Gary Glover, Jackie Charleworth, Gloria Morson, Evey Gabille

Zone contacts: Jacquie Troger, Wende Smart, Uta Bryce, Linda Vanden Berg

Boat operators: Gary Glover, Charlie Troger, Barry Tate, Brian Wheeler, Mike Smart

Commissioners: Gary Glover, Kerry Keats

Special thanks to Brian Wheeler who has served very capably for several years as a Commissioner representing Piers Island on the Southern Gulf Islands Emergency Advisory Commission and to Kerry Keats for taking on this role for the next term.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Glover, Coordinator (EPC)
Piers Island Emergency Program