

## Emergency Preparedness Expos in Parksville-Qualicum Beach

Emergency Preparedness Week (May 3-9) is an annual event held across Canada to encourage Canadians to be prepared personally, as an individual, a family and in the workplace. *Are you prepared for an emergency? Do you know the risks? Do you have a plan?* Hosted by Parksville and Qualicum Beach, EP Week Expos will feature displays, demonstrations, opportunities to learn about the challenges you will face in an emergency and how to be better prepared.

***May 6 at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre and May 7 at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre***

*Both days from 10 am to 2 pm*

This year, EP Week is being recognized with a regional approach by the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville in partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo. Parksville-Qualicum Beach will host two Emergency Preparedness Expos to raise awareness and provide information about emergency situations - May 6 at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre and May 7 at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre; both days from 10 am to 2 pm.

Participating agencies and organizations such as the RCMP, local fire departments, BC Ambulance Service, Oceanside Emergency Support Services, Oceanside Emergency Communications Team, Island Health, Parksville Qualicum Shriners Club, Genesis Fire Safety, BCSPCA and others will provide information through displays and hands-on demonstrations. Residents will have the opportunity to ask questions and will leave with information on how to be better prepared for emergencies. (You can even bring your fire extinguisher to be tested).

Emergencies can strike with very little warning, leaving you with no time to make plans about where to go and what to do. Here are some of the challenges you might face in an emergency:

- You may not have the opportunity to gather the resources you need.
- Family members may be in different locations when the event occurs.
- Communication networks may break down.
- It is possible that electricity, water or gas service to your home will be disrupted.
- Roads could be blocked or closed.
- Regular sources of food, water and gasoline might not be available.

By taking a few simple steps, you can become better prepared to face a range of emergencies. It is important to:

- **Know the risks** – although the consequences of disasters can be similar, knowing the risks specific to our community and our region will help you be better prepared.
- **Make a plan** – being prepared ahead of time will help you cope with an emergency more effectively and enable you to make a faster recovery.
- **Prepare a kit** - assemble an emergency kit with items to be self-sufficient for the first 72 hours of an emergency. Ideally you will have a 72 hour basic emergency kit, vehicle emergency kit and if required, a pet emergency kit. Kits should be checked at least once each year and a good time to do this is during EP week.

Disasters may be beyond our control, but there are ways to reduce the risk and the impact of whatever emergency we might face. Residents and business owners are encouraged to join Parksville-Qualicum Beach in taking action to be prepared. Emergencies can strike at any time so being prepared is critical since it can take time for help to arrive.

**For more information, please contact emergency program coordinators:**

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