



What is the history of this issue and how does it impact First Nations?

First Nations that are at risk of flooding, wildfires, critical infrastructure damage and other hazards, rely on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide support when a statement of local emergency is declared. This is problematic on many fronts as the unilateral approach taken by federal, provincial, and territorial governments has left First Nations powerless to respond and protect their citizens from these impending emergencies while waiting for response services. Without culturally relevant emergency management regimes or dedicated funding, First Nations are at a disadvantage when no consideration is given to their special circumstances, and face additional risks due to a lack of equipment, personnel, and developed plans that incorporate culturally relevant prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery strategies, as well as training for incident command systems, emergency operations centres, and evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency or disaster.

How has the AFN's recent advocacy affected this area?

The AFN has been advocating for First Nations care, control, and development of their own emergency management regimes, and access to adequate and appropriate emergency management funding. Recent advocacy efforts in this area include initial discussions for a strategic plan for First Nations-led emergency management, and ensuring all Indigenous Services Canada developed emergency management policies, processes, and procedures are inclusive of regional First Nations representation and contribution.

On this topic, the AFN is mandated by Resolutions 03/2015, *First Nation Involvement in Emergency Preparedness*; 83/2019, *First Nations Control of Emergency Management*; 84/2019, *Call for Emergency Operations Management Planning in First Nations*; and 85/2019, *Support for a Proposed Emergency Training Institute on Emergency Management*.

In July 2021, AFN co-led and developed, in conjunction with Indigenous Services Canada, a national project named the Steering Committee on First Nations Home Flood Insurance Needs to be completed in May of 2022. This project, led by the AFN, interviewed insurance industry representatives for their perspective and recommendation on working with First Nations for insurance products, and engaged First Nations in six (6) regional engagement sessions to capture the issues, challenges, and needs through research and engagement to help improve access to communities for insurance products and options, and/or better mechanisms to mitigate flood risks.



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An online portal was also developed with an online questionnaire for those First Nations without the initial opportunity, to participate and contribute to the collected data.

AFN is also engaged with Public Safety Canada on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the transfer of collected data from the Inventory of Emergency Management Capabilities in Indigenous Communities Project (Inventory Project). This data will be analyzed by the AFN to establish an overall perspective of emergency management capabilities for First Nations and will help to inform potential proposals.

AFN, participating since 2018 in the Canadian Safety and Security Program (CSSP) - Fire Risk and Evacuation Capabilities in Isolated Communities project as the designated First Nations Advisor, has helped to select and engage First Nations communities, and secure an allotment of funding for their participation and research employment opportunities. This project is ongoing and consists of the following four components:

- 1) Identify region(s) with isolated, high-risk communities based on a fire risk map.
- 2) Employ high resolution risk modeling and methods to identify mitigation opportunities to support pre-suppression planning for potential fire breaks or fuel treatments and to protect evacuation routes, suppression priority areas and prospective “shelter-in-place” locations.
- 3) Develop methods/model to identify dynamic evacuation trigger points throughout the fire season.
- 4) Perform an in-depth analysis of evacuation capabilities available to isolated communities and identify options for optimizing evacuation assets and timelines based on the context or location of the most vulnerable communities.

AFN has collaborated with the Canadian Red Cross on updating the original 2009 Memorandum of Understanding for clarity of purpose, respect, and mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities of each organization. Development of this Relationship Protocol began in 2018, and in support, the AFN signed off on the finalized Relationship Protocol in October 2021.

Where do we hope to go in the future?

AFN will continue to encourage respectful working relationships between First Nations and federal, provincial, and territorial governments, to increase cooperative and collaborative emergency management processes, and advocate for the transfer of emergency management responsibility, administration, and funding to First Nations.