



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
**Special Chiefs Assembly**

December 5-7, 2023

Shaw Centre – Ottawa, Ontario

*Ottawa is located on the unceded unsundered Territory of the Algonquin People.*

ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS  
**Assemblée extraordinaire des Chefs**

Du 5 au 7 décembre 2023 - Centre Shaw - Ottawa ( Ontario)

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## Emergency Management

### History

First Nations that are at risk of flooding, forest fires, or other natural disasters rely on federal and provincial/territorial governments to provide relief when an emergency is declared. This is problematic on many fronts as the unilateral approach taken by governments has left First Nations powerless to respond and protect their citizens from pending emergencies. Without their own regime or funding First Nations are at a severe disadvantage and face additional risks as they lack equipment and the personnel to develop plans that will incorporate prevention/mitigation strategies, training, and evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency and/or natural disaster.

The AFN is engaged in ongoing work to improve funding, programs, services, and policies for First Nations' emergency management. The AFN helps to promote respectful working relationships between First Nations and governments to develop equitable, reliable emergency services. First Nations must be supported in prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The AFN strives to develop and maintain respectful working relationships between First Nations and federal, provincial, and territorial governments. These efforts help guide a cooperative and collaborative emergency management process and ensure that capacity building is the focus of all government partners. To this end, the AFN is working toward ensuring these partnerships will effectively position First Nations for the eventual transfer of responsibility and direct funding of delivering emergency services for First Nations with the capacity and desire to do so. Until that time, the AFN will continue to ensure that Canada follows through with their responsibility to provide these services and honor Treaties and nation-to-nation agreements with First Nations.

### AFN's recent advocacy

Guided by AFN resolutions, the AFN continues to advance the protection, recognition, and respect for First Nations Inherent and Treaty rights in the review and revision of First Nation emergency management policies, programs, and legislation. To best achieve these aims, the AFN engages extensively with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Department of Public Safety, and other key partners to establish effective communication and liaison strategies between First Nations leaders and technicians and federal, provincial, and territorial emergency management partners.

For example, the AFN undertakes biweekly meetings with ISC to share up to date current hazard information and evolving situation reports with regional First Nations leadership and continues advocacy for the provision of comparable emergency services, appropriate and adequate funding, and support for capacity building in First Nations.

The AFN is engaging directly with ISC on its Steering Committee for the Implementation of ISC's Management Action Response Plan to the Office of the Auditor General's Report 8 on First Nations Emergency Management.



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The AFN also coordinates with the Chiefs' Committee on Emergency Management to prepare and engage in ongoing work with federal, provincial, and territorial ministers meetings. Engagement is currently taking place on emergency preparedness, First Nations wildland firefighters, climate change adaptation, and home flood insurance needs.

The AFN has also partnered with the Canadian Red Cross to support high-level advocacy through Climate Proof Canada's National Adaptation Summit Series to advocate for increased investment directly to First Nations in federal Budget 2024 to engage in capacity building for sustainable emergency management and climate change adaptation.

### **Next Steps**

The future of First Nations emergency management is the continual development of flexible, resilient programming as a self-determining and full partner with the federal, provincial, and territorial governments and regional emergency management organizations to address emergency and disaster events. A key focus area is shifting the emergency management paradigm from a reactive approach to a pro-active approach that values the generational knowledge and expertise of First Nations to guide their people through the impacts of climate change and all other hazards they face.

Moving forward, the AFN will continue to promote the development of First Nations-led care and control of emergency management regimes; ensuring all federal, provincial, and territorial emergency management policies, processes, and procedures are inclusive of regional First Nations representation for advice, guidance, and contribution. With this distinct and specific support, First Nations will be able to implement culturally relevant emergency management policies and programs that best serve their specific hazardscapes and incorporate their distinct ways of knowing and being to create unique regimes that best serve each First Nation.