

2025 Emergency Social Services Framework

RMA Response

September 18, 2025

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Executive Summary

In May 2025, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) released the [Alberta Emergency Social Services \(ESS\) Framework](#) (GOA (b), 2025). Prior to the introduction of this updated framework, rural municipalities expressed concerns with Alberta's approach to ESS including expectations for the role of rural municipalities in providing ESS and provincial remuneration of ESS costs. Rural municipalities identified their concerns by endorsing [Resolution 7-24S](#): Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services. Resolution 7-24S requests the following:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta create a provincial level of service for emergency social services as a framework for municipalities to use when providing support to individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services include schedules that indicate services that are considered basic survival needs, and which services are discretionary; with identification of what costs are eligible for cost recovery;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services acknowledge that the host municipality is providing a fee for service and that they will directly invoice the home jurisdiction, or the Government of Alberta and will not be required to apply for Disaster Recovery Program funding to recover their costs.

Although the GOA did not directly consult the RMA in the development of an updated ESS Framework, the changes made address each of the three operative clauses. For example, the Government of Alberta differentiated between specific services that support essential or basic survival needs, and services that may be implemented at a municipality's discretion. For each essential ESS, the GOA described the "accepted" level of service and introduced considerations for municipalities that provide ESS to evacuees. The new framework also introduced a cost schedule that could serve as a guide for how much municipalities can bill for services.

RMA prepared this document as a response to the new Framework as both a member resource and submission to the Government of Alberta. Along with thanking the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services for the updated Framework, it provides the GOA with recommendations on how they can continue supporting ESS growth and improvement. This is achieved through the inclusion of the following recommendations:

A) Provincial Emergency Social Services Level Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Rural Municipal Government Consultation Prior to Next Update.

The Government of Alberta committed to update the ESS Framework every five years together with their partners. As municipalities pay for and deliver ESS it is reasonable for them to have input into ESS service changes moving forward.

Recommendation 2: Provide Guidance on When Individual Essential Emergency Social Services are Appropriate.

It is important for rural municipalities to have autonomy to determine which essential services are needed on the basis of individual evacuations. However, rural municipalities would welcome high level guidance from the Government of Alberta on when it may be appropriate to activate essential ESS.

Recommendation 3: Treat Communication with Impacted Populations as an Essential Emergency Social Services.

RMA is generally supportive of the list of essential and discretionary ESS in the updated Framework. However, communication with impacted population should be recognized as essential. Communication is essential to deliver ESS effectively and efficiently. Rural municipalities should be compensated for their communications work.

Recommendation 4: Extend Maximum Support Evacuation Period.

The Framework cost schedule specifies that ESS is typically provided for a maximum of 72 hours following an evacuation. The Government of Alberta's information and RMA data suggest that 72 hours is insufficient as evacuations increase in complexity and duration. Alternatively, the ESS Framework should enhance information on transitioning evacuees from short-term to long-term supports.

Recommendation 5: The Province Should Support Municipal Emergency Social Services Planning, Training, and Exercising.

The Framework and sample ESS agreements are welcome additions to municipal ESS toolkits. However, they introduce new administrative work for municipalities without any financial support. Additionally, rural municipalities would welcome any financial support from the Government of Alberta to support their requirements and expectation to have ESS plans, training, and to exercise those plans.

Recommendation 6: Think Critically About Who Should Pay for Emergency Social Services.

In large part, rural municipalities expressed willingness to pay for ESS on a fee-for-service basis due to their frustrations with the Disaster Recovery Program. However, RMA provided several reasons why the costs of ESS delivery should fall on the Government of Alberta, while municipalities continue to play a service delivery role.

B) Emergency Social Services Schedule Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Include Appendix 4 Rate Adjustment in Five-Year Framework Review.

RMA is not aware that the ESS Framework made any provisions for ESS cost increases from one year to the next. RMA recommends that the Government of Alberta include this provision to ensure the rates they recommend remain relevant and can cover the costs incurred.

Recommendation 2: Add Recommended Rate for Additional Emergency Social Services.

The cost schedule does not include guidance for cost recovery of all essential ESS. It should expand to include all services.

Most importantly, RMA would like to thank the Government of Alberta for their attention to ESS and looks forward to working together to continue strengthening ESS.

Introduction

In May 2025, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) released [the Alberta Emergency Social Services \(ESS\) Framework](#). The new framework replaces the 2016 Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework. The RMA appreciates the efforts of the Government of Alberta (GOA) and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services in undertaking this work and revising the 2016 ESS framework in way that better reflects and addresses the challenges that rural municipalities face in hosting evacuees from neighbouring communities.

This document is intended to serve as both an analysis and summary of the 2025 ESS Framework. It will provide a high-level overview of the role of rural municipalities in providing ESS, their concerns with the previous model, alignment with current changes, and future changes required to further strengthen the ESS Framework.

Municipalities have the responsibility of providing Albertans with the care and resources needed when ordered to evacuate from their homes. Because natural disasters such as floods and wildfires frequently occur in rural Alberta, rural municipalities often take on this role. When a municipality issues a mandatory evacuation order that requires residents to leave the municipality, another municipality “hosts” evacuated residents and offers a series of supports and services collectively referred to as Emergency Social Services (ESS). The hosting municipality incurs all related costs for providing these services. Later, once the evacuation order has lifted, the host municipality recuperates the costs for services provided to people who are not residents of their municipality. Prior to the introduction of updated ESS framework in May 2025, the hosting municipality recuperated costs through an application to the Disaster Recovery Program (DRP). DRP costs are allocated on a 90:10, federal/provincial – municipal cost-share.

Rural municipalities had several concerns with the previous ESS model. Fortunately, they also proposed a series of solutions:

- ◆ A standardized provincial ESS level to know what their residents would receive if they evacuated to another municipality, and what their municipality was required to provide if they hosted people from another municipality.
- ◆ A mechanism to support consistent costs and enhance certainty around what or how their municipality would be billed for ESS provided to residents before an evacuation occurs.
- ◆ More clarity on mandatory and discretionary options or related hosting and providing ESS for evacuees.
- ◆ A Framework that addresses the evolving frequency and duration of evacuations in recent years.
- ◆ Continuation of a fee for service model where municipalities bill one another for costs incurred, or the GOA when costs are incurred for residents of another province, territory, or nation state.
- ◆ Assurances that ESS costs would be paid by the evacuating municipality rather than by residents of their own municipality.

Overall, many of the challenges host municipalities face related to ESS provision could be addressed through the creation of an ESS level of service for hosting jurisdictions. This level of service should list and separate essential services, or those intended to meet evacuees' basic survival needs, from discretionary supportive services that require the Director of Emergency Management's approval, and which services are eligible for cost recovery through the DRP.

Given these concerns and solutions, rural municipalities endorsed [Resolution 7-24S](#): Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services. Resolution 7-24S requests the following:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta create a provincial level of service for emergency social services as a framework for municipalities to use when providing support to individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters;

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FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services acknowledge that the host municipality is providing a fee for service and that they will directly invoice the home jurisdiction, or the Government of Alberta and will not be required to apply for Disaster Recovery Program funding to recover their costs.

Emergency Management and the Disaster Recovery Program

Emergency Management

The GOA operates a four-phase disaster and emergency management program that supports a comprehensive approach to addressing an emergency and disaster before, during and after it has occurred (GOA, 2022). The GOA defines emergencies and disasters as follows:

Emergency: “An incident that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the safety, health, or welfare of people or to limit damage to property or the environment” (GOA, 2022).

Disaster: “An incident that results in serious harm to the safety, health, or welfare of people or in widespread damage to property or the environment” (GOA, 2022).

The four phases of emergency and disaster management are:

- 1) Mitigation or prevention - efforts undertaken to avert or minimize the impact of a disaster like building a berm or introducing protective land use planning bylaws
- 2) Preparedness - making plans and establishing agreements to support the response, recovery, and mitigation
- 3) Response - actions undertaken to react to an incident and minimize consequences, such as using an Incident Command System, activating ESS, and protecting people and structures
- 4) Recovery – measures taken to reconstruct and re-establish physical and non-physical community components, like supporting residents’ post-evacuation return and restoring critical infrastructure (GOA, 2022).

Local governments have several emergency and disaster management responsibilities. As a high-level overview, some of these responsibilities include:

- ◆ “Preparing to direct and control emergency response with the local authority’s jurisdiction
- ◆ Appointing an emergency advisory committee
- ◆ Establishing and maintaining a municipal emergency management agency
- ◆ Preparing an emergency plan...
- ◆ Conducting mandatory exercises” (GOA, 2022)
- ◆ Training requirements for councillors, emergency management directors, and employees
- ◆ Providing their emergency management plan to AEMA for annual review (GOA, 2022)

Disaster Recovery Program

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) is the agency within the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services responsible for leading and overseeing “...all disaster prevention, preparedness and responses” under the *Emergency Management Act* (2000). The AEMA was established by the *Government Emergency Management Regulation* (2007) (GOA (a), n.d.). The AEMA manages the DRP as per the *Disaster Recovery Regulation* (1994), a regulation of the *Emergency Management Act* (2000).

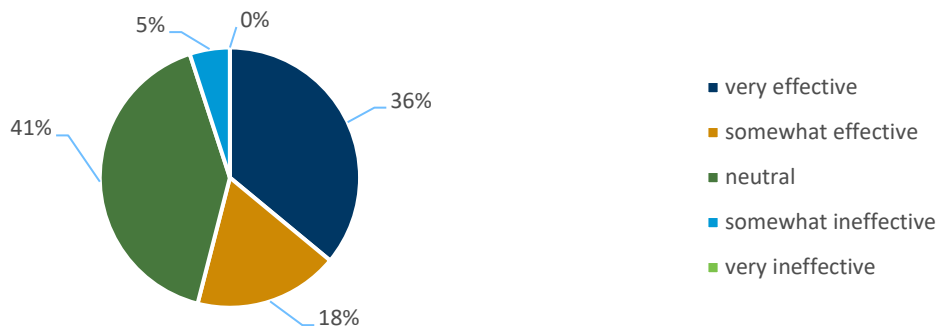
The regulation describes the disaster compensation framework and limitations, including when an entity is eligible for funding. The DRP provides compensation to individuals and groups for damage or losses from disasters including compensation to local governments for conducting emergency operations. “The Minister may establish guidelines that (a) govern the assessment of damage or loss caused by a disaster, (b) govern what damage or loss caused by a disaster or costs incurred in emergency operations may be compensated, and (c) establish limits on the amount of compensation that may be provided to an applicant (Disaster Recovery Regulation, 1994).” Applicants are ineligible to receive DRP funds if the the damage or loss could have reasonably been prevented, the damage or loss was insurable, even if the applicant did not have insurance, the damage or loss was reasonably recoverable through legal action, or funding is available under other government programs (Disaster Recovery Regulation, 1994; GOA (a), 2018). Public and private entities must access their own insurance before applying for DRP funds. Properties are eligible to receive DRP funds only once, regardless of ownership (GOA (c), n.d.).

To guide the administration of the DRP, the AEMA introduced the Alberta Disaster Assistance Guidelines that further specify eligibility criteria and the application process (GOA (a), 2018).

None of the rural municipalities who responded to [RMA’s 2023 wildfire survey](#) had received the full amount of DRP funding requested due to recent disaster-related costs. Rural municipalities had varying information from the AEMA on when they would receive funding. Some members did not receive any timeline information, while others received funds within several months or had delays communicated to them.

RMA’s 2023 wildfire survey asked other questions about the DRP, including how members perceived the quality and frequency of communication from DRP managers and/or field officers. Of 38 respondents, 10 had hosted evacuees from neighboring municipalities. Of these 10, eight had fires occur within their municipality over the same wildfire season. Both municipalities that hosted evacuees but did not have fires also provided resources to other municipalities. Costs incurred ranged from \$10,000 to \$300,000. Most members (54%) thought communication with the DRP had been very or somewhat effective, while a large portion were neutral, and a small minority (5%) found communication to be ineffective (Table 1).

Table 1. Quality and Frequency of Communication from Designated DRP Area Manager/Field Officer, 2023 Wildfire Response (n=22)



Lastly, the Government of Canada contributes to provincial DRP funding when Alberta’s expenses exceed \$3.07 per capita (GOA (a), 2018). This amount is annually adjusted for inflation. The GOA’s Disaster Assistance Guidelines include cost schedules located in Appendix X and referenced in RMAs recommendations for a provincial ESS schedule (GOA (a), 2018).

Rural Municipal Evacuations

While some emergencies and disasters can be managed by allowing municipal residents to stay in their homes or lead residents to shelter in place, other emergencies and disasters - like wildfires - require rural municipal governments to order mandatory evacuations to ensure public safety. Residents may evacuate within or outside of their home municipality. Having been displaced from their homes by order, evacuees are then eligible to receive ESS from their own municipality or a host (GOA (c), 2018). The GOA ((c), 2018) pointed out that most communities will be able to accommodate a 10% influx in their population from evacuees without negatively impacting local service levels to an unacceptable level. In 2018, following the wildfire and evacuation in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, a wildfire review recommended the GOA create a provincial emergency evacuation guideline that local authorities could use to develop their own evacuation guidelines. Community Evacuation Guidelines and Planning Considerations were introduced in 2018 and are [available here for review](#) (GOA (c)).

Introduction to Evacuations and Municipal Powers

The GOA (2022) defines an evacuation as the “[o]rganized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of civilians from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.” Ultimately, evacuations are risk management strategies intended to save lives by moving people out of high-risk areas (GOA (c), 2018). Accordingly, the area and population evacuated are incident specific. Some evacuations are in response to threats that permit warnings, while others are more immediate and/or involve drastically evolving situations like the 2024 evacuation of the Town of Jasper, which quickly moved from a warning to a mandatory evacuation due to the wildfire’s rapid spread (GOA (c), 2018; GOA (b), n.d.). Local governments can issue information and order evacuations through Alberta’s Emergency Alert program.

Evacuation plans should include a risk assessment, evacuation locations, egress routes including fuel access, traffic control, and emergency services access, special population demographics, transportation supports for vulnerable populations, information around the decision to evacuate making process, evacuation communication, chain of authority, evacuation phases, such as evacuating hospitals, seniors facilities, and or childcare facilities first, and a clear outlining of staff roles and responsibilities (GOA (c), 2018). Evacuation planning is of particular importance for remote and/or single access route communities. Evacuation plans may be accompanied by a separate ESS plan.

“The order to evacuate a community is recognized as one of the most difficult decisions a local authority is likely to face” and is made in consultation between the Director of Emergency Management (DEM) and Incident Commander (GOA (c), 2018). This decision is protected by three pieces of legislation: the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) (2000), *Emergency Management Act* (2000), and *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* (2018).

The MGA gives a municipality the authority to “...take whatever actions or measures are necessary to eliminate the emergency,” and includes several clauses around the service contracts to carry out this work (2000).

The *Emergency Management Act* (2000) defines the declaration of a local state of emergency, evacuation order, local authority, and municipality. This act gives local authorities, including rural municipalities, responsibility for and direction:

- ♦ for emergency responses, including the ability to issue an evacuation;

- ♦ to establish (and pay for) an emergency advisory committee with specified membership;
- ♦ to establish and maintain an emergency management agency to act as the local governments' authority under the *Emergency Management Act* and allows them to transfer some act responsibilities to this authority;
- ♦ The on the expectation to report to and collaborate with the acts minister;
- ♦ to declare and cancel a local state of emergency and exercise authority under it; and
- ♦ for local disaster compensation.

The *Local Authorities Emergency Management Regulation* (2018) includes additional provisions around emergency advisory committees and bylaws, the procedures around declaring a state of local emergency, emergency plan inclusions, the requirement to exercise the plan, and to ensure staff are trained for their responsibilities under the plan. Municipal emergency plans must include a description of the plan's administration, procedures, preparedness, response, and recovery activities, a hazard and risk assessment, a plan exercise program, the local emergency management agency's plan to review the plan, the command structure, municipal staff and elected official responsibilities and training program, the emergency and disaster communication plan, and the local authority's plan to provide ESS.

In their 2025 ESS Framework, the GOA (b) noted an "...increasing frequency, scale and complexity of emergencies and disasters..." in the province. RMA assembled information from the Alberta Alert Archive to better understand the duration and types of evacuations that have occurred recently and came to a similar conclusion (Appendix; GOA (b), n.d.). A summary of this information is presented in Table 2. The number of evacuations reported in Alberta has varied from two in 2022, both of which occurred in Clearwater County, to 46 across the province in 2023 (Table 2). Combined, Alberta residents collectively spent as little as two days, 18 hours and 54 minutes evacuated in 2021, and as many as 204 days, six hours and 37 minutes evacuated in 2023. From 2018 to 2024, the average evacuation ranged from 14 hours, 14 minutes in 2021, to six days, five hours, 46 minutes in 2024. The shortest evacuation RMA identified from the Alberta Alert Archive was when residents in the Town of Pincher Creek evacuated for 28 minutes in 2018 due to a natural gas leak and the longest evacuation was nearly 27 days due to wildfire in the Town of Rainbow Lake in 2023 (Table 2; GOA (b), n.d.).

Table 2. Alberta Evacuation Summary			
Year	Number of Evacuations	Evacuated From	Durations (approximate)
2024	10	Cold Lake First Nation, MD of Peace, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Garden River, MD of Opportunity – Chipewyan Lake – Chipewyan Cree Nation, John D'Or Prairie - Fox Lake – Little Red River Cree Nation, Town of Jasper and Jasper National Park, Saddle Hills County.	Total: 43 days 15 hours 50 minutes Average: 6 days 5 hours 46 minutes Note: AEA did not list the cancelation date for three evacuations, therefore the total and average are based on seven evacuations. See Appendix X.
2023	46	Parkland County, Yellowhead County, Clearwater County, Leduc County,	Total: 204 days 6 hours 37 minutes

		Ponoka County, Brazeau County, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Lac St. Anne County, Cold Lake and Cold Lake First Nation, Athabasca County, Saddle Hills County, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, Municipal District of Greenview, County of Grande Prairie, Peerless Trout First Nation, Strathcona County, Big Lakes County, Fox Creek, Rainbow Lake, Northern Sunrise County, Mackenzie County, Dene Tha' First Nation, Chipewyan Lake, Municipal District of Opportunity, Peavine Metis Settlement, Municipal District of Lesser Slave River, County of Grande Prairie, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Allisan Bay First Nation, Dog Head First Nation, Woodlands County, Town of Cardston, and often towns and villages within rural municipalities. Some counties evacuated multiple times throughout the year.	Average: 5 days 22 hours 42 minutes Note: RMA could not locate start or cancellation date for 12 evacuations, therefore the total and average are based on 34 evacuations. See Appendix X.
2022	2	Clearwater County.	Total: 11 days 3 hours 33 minutes Average: 5 days 13 hours 47 minutes
2021	4	Vulcan County, Parkland County, Yellowhead County, MD of Willow Creek.	Total: 2 days 18 hours 54 minutes Average: 14 hours 14 minutes
2020	5	Kneehill County, Mackenzie County, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Diamond Valley, Birch Hills County.	Total: 15 days 5 hours 9 minutes Average: 3 days 1 hour 2 minutes
2019	18	Town of High Level, Yellowhead County, Dene Tha' First Nation, Peerless Trout First Nation, County of Northern Lights, Municipal District of Opportunity, Municipal District of Bonnyville, Municipal District of Slave River, Mackenzie County, Cypress County, Special Areas, Lethbridge County. Some counties evacuated multiple times throughout the year.	Total: 52 days 16 hours 1 minute Average: 3 days 2 hours 21 minutes Note: RMA could not locate start or cancellation date for 1 evacuation, therefore the total and average are based on 17 evacuations. See Appendix X.

2018	8	Mackenzie County, Village of Beiseker, Woodlands County, County of Grande Prairie, Foothills County, Municipal District of Lesser Slave River, Town of Pincher Creek.	Total: 16 days 9 hours 10 minutes Average: 2 days 17 hours 32 minutes Note: RMA could not locate start or cancellation date for 2 evacuations, therefore the total and average are based on 6 evacuations. See Appendix X.
Information from Alberta Alert Archive .			

Although RMA did not list all of the urban municipalities that evacuated, most evacuations originated in the rural municipalities indicated in Table 2. Accordingly, rural municipalities have a special interest in ensuring their residents are accommodated through ESS. Table 2 also indicates that rural municipalities face a particular responsibility to pay for this service. Wildfire was the leading cause of evacuations, however, RMA noted that events like gas leaks, flooding, train derailments, civil emergencies and traffic accidents have also led to evacuations in Alberta in recent years (Appendix B, GOA (b), n.d.).

Evacuations: Processes and Communication

After an emergency or disaster event is recognized and/or reported, the Incident Commander (the official in charge of leading the response), together with the appropriate municipal official (usually the DEM) will assess the event's impact on and risk to residents (GOA, 2022). The DEM and Incident Commander will determine if an event dictates an immediate evacuation or if an evacuation may be needed in the short term. Emergency and disaster alerts are communicated through Alberta Emergency Alert, a program that issues warnings, shares information and provides direction on how residents should respond to keep themselves and their household safe (GOA, 2022). The GOA manages and maintains the program, while local governments and Environment and Climate Change Canada are responsible to release and cancel alerts. This system is particularly important given that everyday means of communication like phone calls or the internet may not work during an emergency or disaster (GOA (b), 2018).

The Alberta Alert system operates several stages or phases of an emergency which correspond to a different urgency and public response (GOA, 2018; GOA, 2023):

Stage 1 – evacuation alert	Intended to inform the community about a threat that could lead to an evacuation and give them time to prepare. An evacuation alert generally precedes an evacuation order when possible.
Stage 2 – evacuation order	Everyone must evacuate.
Stage 3 – evacuation order cancelled/rescinded	People may return to their homes. However, an alert may remain in place. The decision to cancel an evacuation order is made by the Incident Commander and DEM. A phased approach, or lifting the evacuation for certain parts of the original evacuation zone, may be used if clearly communicated.

Alerts should include the following information: issuing authority, reason for the alert and a description of the hazard, duration of the evacuation (i.e. until further notice), areas under alert, information on

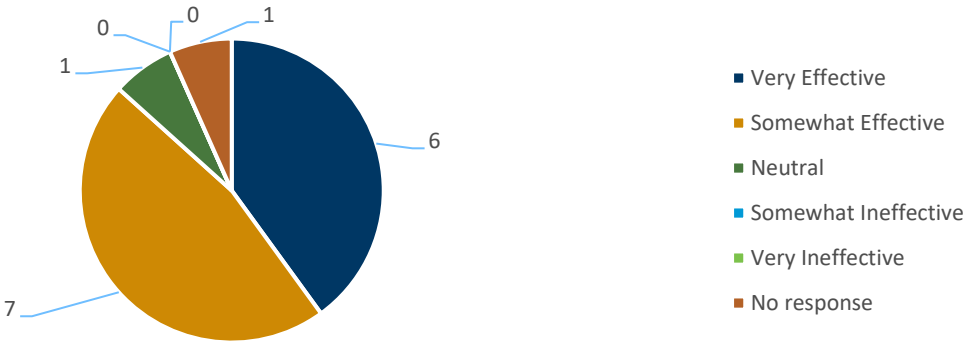
evacuation routes and/or route closures, reception centre and shelter location, personal belongings to take, and where to get more information (GOA (c), 2018). Similarly, evacuation orders should be cancelled using a similar level of detail, including when residents can return, how they can return, details on (un)available goods and services, open and closed transportation routes, phased return planning, and infrastructure safety (GOA (c), 2018). As witnessed when Jasper residents returned following the wildfire that destroyed homes and businesses, home and business owners had supported opportunities to learn information about their property’s condition prior to re-entering the municipality.

Many local governments have re-entry plans in place prior to an emergency or disaster. If a general plan is not in place, local governments should prioritize ad hoc return planning (GOA (c), 2018). The decision to return will be made as a collaboration between the Incident Commander and DEM. It may be based on the restoration of essential services like “...medical facilities, emergency services, water systems, sewage, garbage, storm water, gas and electric, communications, lighting and traffic signals, public works, critical retail (grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations), banking, donation management, daycares and schools” (GOA (c), 2018).

Good communication is an essential component of both the decision to issue and cancel an evacuation order. The GOA ((c), 2018) found that the public demand for information during an emergency or disaster is very high. Fifteen respondents to RMA’s 2023 Wildfire survey required residents to evacuate and/or hosted evacuees from a neighboring municipality(ies) (Table 3). The survey included a series of questions about how they communicated with municipal residents, municipal staff, municipal first responders, the provincial government, and evacuees in their community, as well as general communication successes and challenges. This report section highlights key responses.

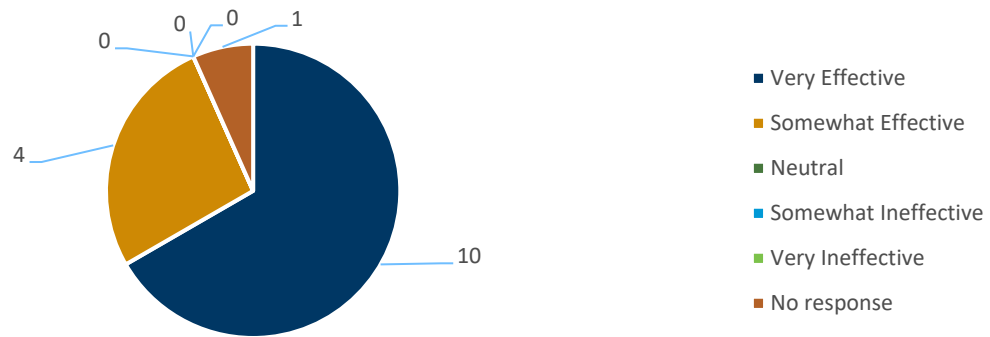
Rural municipalities that had residents evacuate or hosted evacuees in their municipalities perceived their communication with residents fairly positively throughout the 2023 wildfire season (Table 3). None of the respondents viewed their communication with residents as ineffective and most perceived it as very or somewhat effective (Table 3).

Table 3. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with Evacuated Residents (n=15)



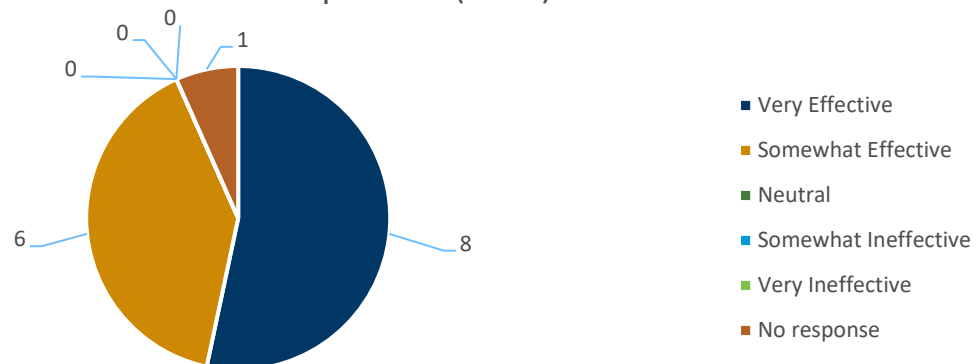
The survey also asked about members perceived communication with municipal staff (Table 4). Apart from one member who did not respond to the question, all survey respondents from rural municipalities who evacuated residents or hosted evacuees perceived their communication with municipal staff as very or somewhat effective.

Table 4. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with Municipal Staff (n=15)



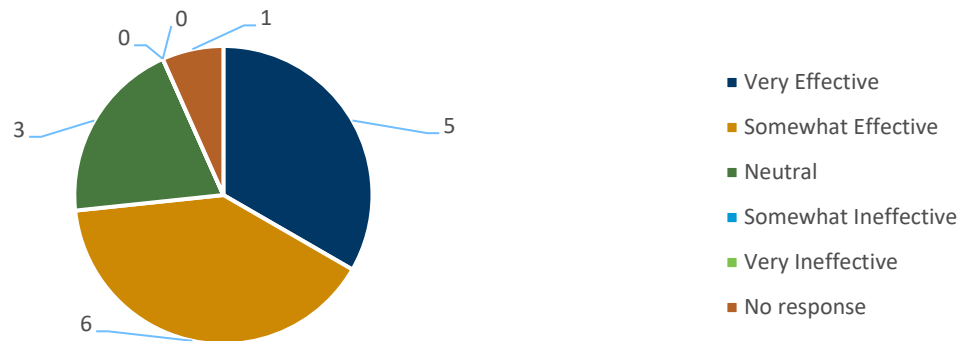
Similarly, all but one member perceived their communication with municipal first responders as very or somewhat effective (Table 5).

Table 5. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with Municipal First Responders (n=15)



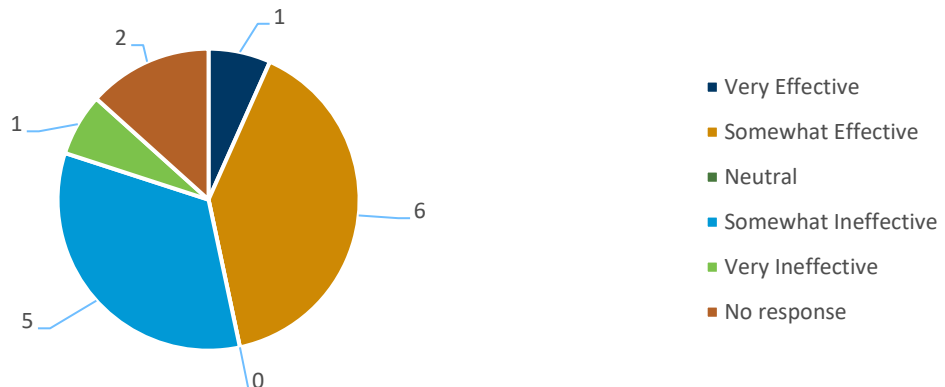
Respondent perceptions of communication with the provincial government were similar in that respondents predominantly perceived communication as very or somewhat effective (Table 6). A higher portion of respondents perceived their communication with the provincial government as neutral than communication with residents, municipal staff, or municipal first responders. While perceptions of communication with the provincial government were positive overall, this slight variation may suggest that communication with the provincial government was more challenging than communication within the municipality (Tables 3-6).

Table 6. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with the Provincial Government (n=15)



To confirm this point, RMA inquired about respondents' perceptions of GOA communications process during wildfire events (Table 7). Roughly equal proportions of respondents rated the GOA approach as effective (7) and ineffective (6), while two did not respond.

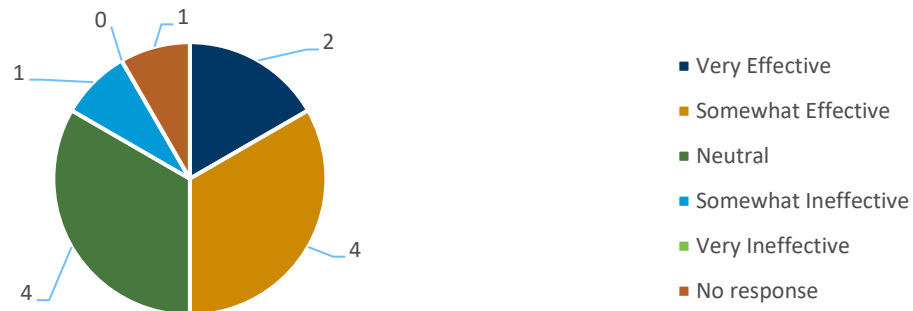
Table 7. Rural Municipal Perceptions of the province's communications process during wildfire events (n=15)



RMA also asked members who had welcomed evacuees from another municipality to rate the effectiveness of their communication with these evacuees (Table 8). Twelve respondents had received evacuees from a neighboring municipality, of which eight had both hosted and evacuated. When compared to communication with municipal residents, staff, and first responders, trends begin to differ. While more than 86% of respondents perceived their communication with municipal residents, staff, and first responders as very or somewhat effective, only 50% of respondents perceived their communication with evacuees as effective (Tables 3-5, 8).

This difference may be attributed to reliance on different communication channels (i.e. various mediums, different social media pages), inter-municipal communication methods, or perhaps even miscommunication with various service providers like ESS or the provincial government (Table 8). While residents and staff may be familiar with the channels the municipality uses to share information, evacuees would be unfamiliar with how to receive information from their host local government.

Table 8. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with Evacuees in the Community (n=12)



The 2023 wildfire survey did not yield enough responses from members who only evacuated residents or only hosted to make a meaningful comparison in variation of communication styles. However, RMA asked the 15 members who evacuated residents and hosted evacuees to describe the communication channels they used and how effective each was.

Members identified 16 different channels (Table 9). Most common were various social media platforms like Facebook, municipal websites, and radio. Despite social media being a relatively quick and resource light means to use, some members pointed out that it was only effective for residents who already used social media and/or had access to the internet. Similarly, while nearly all respondents mentioned updating their municipal websites, several members also noted that user uptake was low and only worked if residents had internet access. One respondent noted that radio communication had been “a bit of a mess,” which appeared to be particularly problematic when radio hosts reported online communication instead of speaking directly to the municipality.

Rural municipalities used a series of other channels to connect with residents and evacuees. These included in-person conversations, message boards and tables at reception centres, local mass notification systems, Alberta Emergency Alert, email, road signs, community partners websites, in-person or telephone town halls, live-streamed updates, and media alerts (Table 9). Respondents considered some of these communication channels more effective than others, and noted that they varied in the staff and other resources required (Table 9).

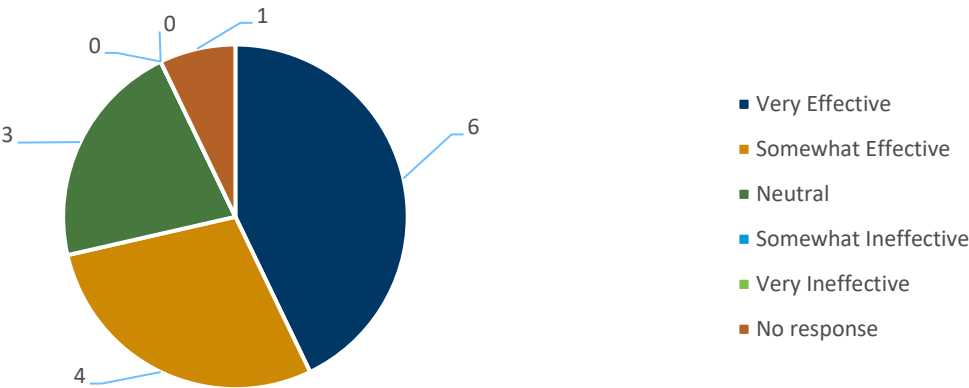
Table 9. 2023 Wildfire Season Communication Channels	
Communication Channel	Number of Respondent Users
Social Media	13
Municipal Website	11
Radio	8
Call In	4
In Person Conversation	4
Community Message Boards and Tables at Reception and Accommodation Centres	3
Local Mass Notification System	2
Alberta Emergency Alert	2
TV	2
Email	2
Road Signs	1
Community Partners Websites	1
Town Hall (in person or virtual)	1
Live Streamed Updates	1
Media Alerts	1

A GOA ((c), 2018) evacuation planning document identified social media as a useful tool in “rapidly” distributing “critical information,” shaping the disaster outcome by directing the public, promoting information, and supporting and caring for residents. Social media can be used in the longer term throughout an extended response and recovery. The same GOA report recognized radio messages, TV announcements, government websites, email, text messages, sirens, public address and warning systems, door knocking, and phone trees as accepted means of emergency communication.

Regarding intermunicipal communication, the 2023 wildfire survey asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of their municipalities communication with neighboring municipalities, how they communicated with municipal neighbours, and whether their municipality was alerted of any wildfire risks or potential impacts from neighbouring municipalities. About two thirds of respondents perceived

communication with their municipal neighbours as very or somewhat effective (Table 10). More respondents who had only managed their own evacuation or hosted residents from another municipality perceived communication as very effective while members who had managed both were more likely to perceive communication with a neighbouring municipality as somewhat effective.

Table 10. Perceived Communication Effectiveness with Neighbouring Municipalities (N=15)

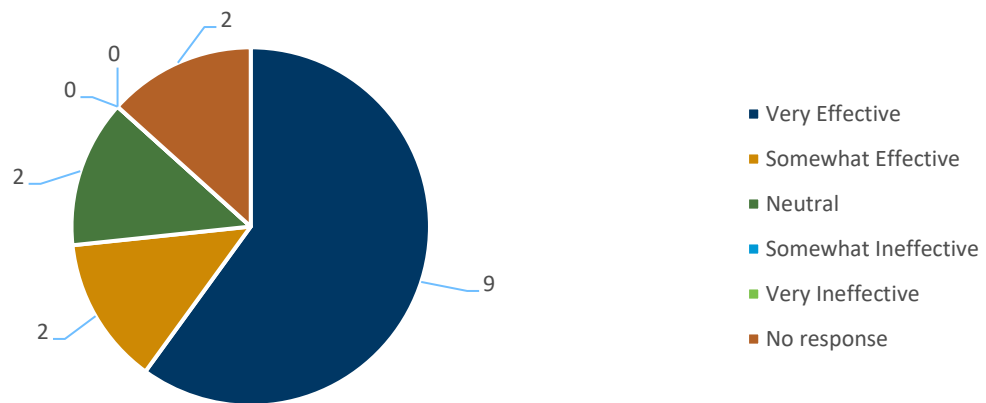


Fire chiefs, DEMs, and chief administrative officers would often communicate directly with one another to ensure intermunicipal messages were passed on. Some members stated that the situation they experienced did not necessitate reaching out to their neighbour, perhaps because the event was central in the municipality and not at high risk of spreading across municipal boundaries, and/or noted that neighbouring municipalities could access publicly available information on their social media or website. When neighbours communicated, several noted that neighbours either had not or did not need to share any risk or impact information as the situation had not threatened boundaries, or that neighbours did not have legislated communication responsibilities as each rural municipality is responsible for their own risk management. Several others noted that communication between Fire Chiefs was excellent, or that the sending municipality had listened when told that the receiver could not accommodate any more evacuees, or that they had received other information through the Alberta Emergency Alert System. Advance notice often seemed to be appreciated so that municipalities could respond with extra preparedness such as prepping or activating ESS or alerting paid on call fire fighters.

Table 11. Did your municipality have evacuation plans in place with surrounding municipalities?	
Response	Count
Yes	1
No	10
Did not specify	4

As noted in Table 11, most respondents that evacuated and/or hosted municipalities did not have evacuation plans in place with their neighbours and thereby had to rely on ad hoc communication to respond. Despite this and the variation described around intermunicipal communication, respondents described the support they received from neighbouring municipalities throughout the 2023 wildfire season very positively (Table 12). No one described the support they received as ineffective.

Table 12. The Effectiveness of the Support Municipalities Received from Municipal Neighbours



Emergency Social Services

Following the decision to evacuate, rural municipalities have certain responsibilities related to displaced residents, including through ESS. This section provides an overview of the legislation that governs ESS on the federal, provincial, and municipal government levels, the common ESS services available, and reviews related programs in other Canadian provinces and territories.

Emergency Social Services Legislation and Frameworks

Each level of government has a unique role related to the provision of ESS.

Federal

The Government of Canada (GOC) is responsible for the federal *Emergency Management Act* (2007). This Act lays the groundwork for the previous description of emergency management and establishes the Minister of Public Safety as “...responsible for coordinating the Government of Canada’s response to an emergency” (GOC, 2011). The Minister of Public Safety is responsible for establishing related policies and programs, advising, evaluating and monitoring government institutions and other ministries in respect to their programs and plans (however, all ministers are responsible to develop emergency plans for their areas of responsibility), establishing agreements with Canadian provinces and territories and coordinating the provision of aid, responding to requests for assistance, calling out the Canadian forces for aid, and to guide Canada’s response to foreign disasters and emergencies (Emergency Management Act, 2007; GOC, 2011). The GOC’s “‘all hazard’ response plan,” otherwise known as the Federal Emergency Response Plan, is authorized by the Minister of Public Safety’s authority under the *Emergency Management Act* (GOC, 2011).

The *Emergency Management Act* (2007) establishes that the GOC can only respond to provincial emergencies if the provincial/territorial government requests assistance. A provincial/territorial request could potentially include requests to deliver ESS on a provincial scale. Federal ministries and agencies that are most commonly involved in a response are “...Public Safety Canada, the Department of National Defence, Indigenous Services Canada, and Health Canada” (GOA, 2022). The RCMP may engage in an emergency/disaster role through their federal policing capacity. Other areas of responsibility for the federal government include the “...oversight and funding of emergency management for First Nations,” sharing emergency funding in alignment with provincial/territorial agreements, and providing agency representatives for the response (GOA, 2022).

Provincial

As previously described, emergency responses in Alberta are governed by the *Emergency Management Act* (2000) and the *Municipal Government Act* (2000), along with several regulations including the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation* (2018), *Disaster Recovery Regulation* (1994), and the *Government Emergency Management Regulation* (2007). Broadly speaking, these acts and regulations clarify roles and responsibilities around who provides ESS. Alberta’s Emergency response plan is directed by provincial legislation, but informed and shaped by federal documents and legislation (GOA (c), 2018).

As per the GOA (2022): “Every emergency has a human dimension, which compounds the effects of an emergency or disaster.” The GOA increased their ESS resources and planning following a review of the 2013 southern Alberta flood response and recovery, which recommended developing and implementing

a provincial ESS program. In 2016, the GOA introduced the Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework, which provides a general introduction to ESS and its purpose, how it relates to emergency management, ESS governance, including municipal responsibilities, and the ESS that could be included in a response (GOA, 2016). The GOA released an updated version of the 2016 ESS Framework in 2025 due to incidents, predominantly wildfires, that had occurred and delivered significant learnings in the years since (GOA (b), 2025). Additionally, the GOA noted the “...increasing frequency, scale and complexity of emergencies and disasters...”, or overall evacuation and ESS context, such as the City of Yellowknife’s 2024 evacuation into Alberta, had changed the planning, delivery, and financial context related to ESS.

ESS varies from incident to incident, but could include food and water, clothing, accommodation/shelter, registration and inquiry to help locate friends and family, personal services, family reunification, childcare, transportation, pet care, multicultural services like translation, communications, psychosocial supports, establishing and operating reception centres and volunteer and/or donation management, and personal recovery planning (GOA (c), 2018). The identification of services that could be considered ESS are nearly identical in the 2016 and 2025 versions of the Framework, with a few exceptions around childcare, personal recovery planning, pet care and more specific clarifications around registration and inquiry/family reunification and personal services.

When it comes to the specific GOA responsibilities in relation to ESS, at the highest level, their “...role is to support local authorities when they have exceeded their capacity” (GOA, 2016). In particular, the GOA (2022) noted that as the scale, complexity, and duration of emergencies and disasters increase, local governments cannot reasonably meet the needs and challenges presented independently and the province should step in. The AEMA leads the Alberta program in providing local governments with ESS support upon request. The AEMA’s ESS support is not limited to the response phase. Instead, they exist to support rural municipalities in their ESS preparations by supporting education and training, related stakeholders, and in other areas. During a response the AEMA may support staff professionally, administratively, or operationally, deliver reception centers and registration programs, and/or coordinate ESS delivery. The AEMA may also work with Municipal Affairs to support the delivery of ESS (GOA, 2022). The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework clarifies the GOA’s responsibilities to pay and/or bill the sending jurisdiction when a municipality hosts evacuees from outside Alberta.

Municipal

The Alberta Government strongly encourages local governments to include ESS plans in the emergency plan they are required to develop under the *Emergency Management Act* (2000) (GOA, 2016). ESS plans should include:

- ◆ ESS staffing, staff training, and resourcing;
- ◆ ESS communication and coordination;
- ◆ reference to partnerships, memorandums of understanding and/or mutual aid agreements; and
- ◆ an ESS exercise plan (GOA, 2016).

The ESS plan should also follow key principles like supporting both municipal residents and residents from other jurisdictions, aligning with the provincial ESS Framework and incident command system, and accommodating all the ESS that residents may require (GOA, 2016; GOA (b), 2025).

Local authorities may ask the GOA for support providing ESS before local needs exceed local capacity, including capacity available from ESS partners like neighbouring municipalities and non-profit organizations (GOA, 2016). Local governments do not have to declare a state of local emergency to request aid from the GOA, however they may wish to do so to engage “extraordinary powers” in limited

circumstances (GOA, 2016; GOA, 2022). Additionally, rural municipalities may choose to establish and enter a regional and/or joint emergency management agency which would then subsequently assume ESS responsibilities. Alternatively, rural municipalities may accept delegated responsibilities from a summer village bylaw (GOA, 2022).

The GOA (2022) provided figure 1, which highlights different levels of governments as well as individual's emergency management responsibilities.

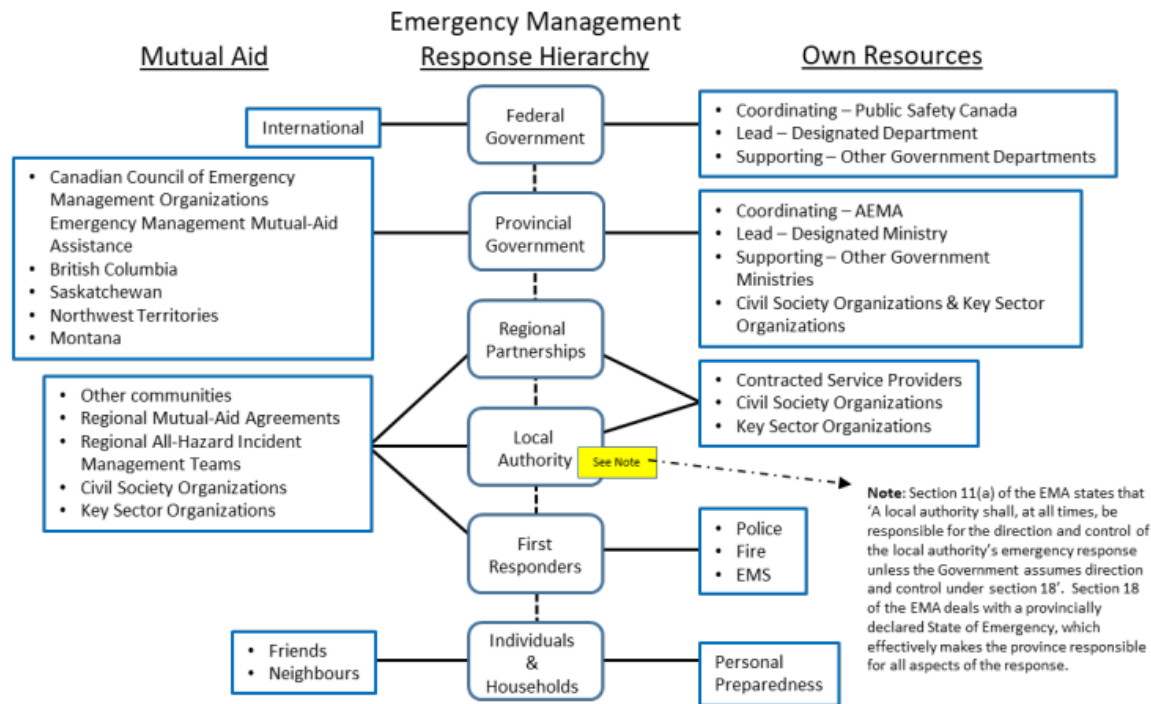


Figure 1 Image from the GOA, 2022.

Introduction to Emergency Social Services

In the Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework, the GOA (2025) defines ESS as follows:

ESS can be defined as the range of short-term support services provided to meet the immediate, basic needs of individuals, families and communities impacted by emergencies and disasters.

This includes the provision of:

- ◆ Temporary shelter;
- ◆ Food and water;
- ◆ Personal services such as:
 - ◇ Emergency first aid and health care services;
 - ◇ Hygiene items;
 - ◇ Essential clothing;
 - ◇ Support for individuals with disabilities and/or complex care needs;
 - ◇ Essential multicultural and/or linguistic services;
 - ◇ Mental health and/or psychosocial supports; and
 - ◇ Essential transportation;

- ◆ Emergency services for companion animals and guide and service dogs;
- ◆ Registration and tracking of evacuees;
- ◆ Family reunification, if authorized; and
- ◆ ESS facilities.

ESS may vary depending on the type of emergency, scope, duration and/or local needs and demographics (GOA, 2016). The 2025 ESS Framework differentiated between essential and discretionary ESS listed in table 13. Below is an overview of the different essential ESS listed in the GOA's ((b), 2025) definition and the activities that comprise each service.

Table 13. Essential and Discretionary Emergency Social Services	
Essential	Discretionary
Temporary Shelter – congregate, group	Re-entry Planning and Supports
Food and Water	Personal Recovery Planning
Personal Services – emergency first aid, prescription medications, and health services	Personal Services – access to medical professionals, optometrists or dentists
Personal Services – hygiene items, clothing, support for individuals with disabilities, multicultural and/or linguistic services, mental health and/or psychosocial supports, transportation and additional personal services	Impacted Population Communications
Carer for Companion Animals, Guide and Service Dogs *Livestock not included	Donations Management
Registration and Tracking of Evacuees	Volunteer Management
Family Reunification	
ESS Facilities	

Temporary Shelter

Residents are evacuated from areas where it is no longer safe to be. Since people cannot be in their residence during an emergency, an essential ESS component is providing a safe, temporary alternative space where residents can sleep and access some of the comforts of home. This service may also be referred to as “accommodation” or “lodging” (GOC (c), 2007).

Temporary shelter in a private residence refers to billeting individuals and families to spaces people volunteer in their home. Although this may be the preferred or only option in some circumstances, the GOC's ((c), 2007) emergency lodging report recommended against it due to concerns around liability and evacuee needs for mobility and service access within a community which can be hindered if all evacuees are not lodged in a centralized facility. The 2025 ESS Framework did not mention private accommodation as an option. The framework considered congregate lodging, or lodging in shared

spaces like community centres, and group lodging facilities like hotels and campgrounds where residents were provided with their own private spaces, accepted options. These options are likely preferred as liability is lower and these shared spaces likely offer easier access to other essential services (GOC (c), 2007). Sheltering people together also has the benefit of allowing them to support one another. Additionally, when people are accommodated together, the accommodation centre can become a service delivery centre thereby minimizing the need for the ESS transportation service. Other shelter considerations for rural municipalities include establishing mutual aid agreements with neighbouring local governments to use facilities in their jurisdiction for this service and planning to “sit up” spaces like theaters or auditoriums that may be separate from sleeping spaces, warming, cooling, and/or clean air centres (GOC (c), 2007; GOA (b), 2025). The cost of blankets and bedding is included in the cost of temporary shelter (GOA (b), 2025).

Food and Water

Food and water are an essential ESS for “...those who cannot feed themselves, or those without food or food preparation facilities; and recovery workers and volunteers” (GOC (b), 2007). Food programs and plans should be designed to provide “...a sufficient amount of food to maintain a feeling of well-being; meet the special food requirements of high-risk groups, including infants, children, pregnant and nursing women, the elderly, diabetics, and disaster workers.” According to the 2025 ESS Framework, essential food should be “sufficient, safe and nutritious.”

The ESS plan should consider a variety of factors like food storage and refrigeration, preparation, cooking, serving, waste disposal and cleaning, available supplies and facilities, the “time of year,” “religious or cultural requirements,” relationships with food organizers and/or nonprofit organizations who may deliver the service, including “food retailers, wholesalers, and distributors.” Communication about these services should be provided to residents. Emergency food plans and programs may wish to appreciate the relationship between the stress of an emergency or disaster and nutrition, like how eating habits may change. The food service may be delivered in many ways including at the reception centre if a suitable kitchen is available, in a mobile unit, or in another facility such as a school, hotel, care facility, community facility or church. The emergency food service includes safe potable water in reasonable and reliable amounts for drinking, food preparation, and cleaning (GOC (b), 2007).

Personal Services and Personal Recovery Planning

In ESS terminology, “personal services” may encompass a variety of sub-services and may be used as a catch-all term. Many personal services may be provided by municipal partner organizations (GOA (b), 2025). The GOA recognizes the following personal services as essential:

A) Emergency First Aid, Prescription Medications, and Health Care Services

The 2016 (GOA) ESS Framework did not pay a substantial amount of attention to first aid or health services, apart from explaining that municipal residents may have health needs because of the situation. The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS framework takes things a step further, including first aid and health services as an essential ESS. Some health services may not require a hospital and/or may reasonably be provided by trained first aiders. Municipal staff and/or volunteers can play a role connecting residents with access to their prescription medications and other insured health care services.

B) Hygiene Items

The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework identified hygiene items as essential “...for basic cleanliness and personal care.” Individuals in need may receive a sufficient quantity of items such as toothbrush, soap, diapers, and feminine hygiene products for the time they are displaced. Although hygiene items were not specifically recognized in the 2016 (GOA) ESS Framework, they were likely often provided as a valued personal service.

C) Clothing

Clothing is justified as an essential ESS for several reasons. Depending on the nature of the emergency or disaster and the amount of warning people receive, households may not be able to pack a change of clothes or may not arrive with appropriate clothing for the climate. For example, individuals may have to evacuate without a winter coat in a cold weather season. Alternatively, clothing can be lost or destroyed (GOC (a), 2007). The GOC ((a), 2007) identified the purposes of this service is “...to prevent loss of life from exposure; and to meet clothing needs until normal sources of supply are available.” The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework emphasized that clothing ESS is not intended to replace wardrobes, but to “preserve health and modesty.”

Evacuees may be provided clothing services at the reception centre or directed to a non-profit partner who supplies the service at another location in the community. New clothing is generally preferred to used clothing. However, whatever is available locally will be prioritized. Most ESS responses will not have the capacity to manage clothing donations (GOC (a), 2007).

D) Support for Individuals with Disabilities and/or Complex Care Needs

A one-size-fits-all approach does not work for ESS planning and delivery as the individuals who receive these services may have a varied range of abilities and care needs. To plan for and deliver more inclusive ESS, it is essential rural municipalities plan for and make support available for evacuees with mobility, sensory, or cognitive needs (GOA (b), 2025).

E) Multicultural and/or Linguistic Services

Both the provincial and federal government recognized the importance of offering evacuees multicultural services (GOA (b), 2025; GOC (d), 2007). Evacuees may not be fluent in English or French and require translation services. Residents may be comforted by a cultural or religious ceremony, like a sweat lodge or church service, or culturally appropriate foods and programming. The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework encourages municipalities to incorporate knowledge of local demographics into ESS plans.

F) Mental Health and/or Psychosocial Supports

The 2025 (GOA, n.d.) ESS Framework places mental health and psychosocial support under the umbrella of personal services. An emergency or disaster can emotionally and psychologically burden individuals, households, and communities. The impacts of an incident can be felt far below the surface (GOA, 2016). ESS psychosocial supports are activities “...aimed at strengthening the coping strategies of individuals or communities involved in or affected by an incident” and caring for people who may need additional support to navigate complex and/or crowded spaces, service line ups, etc. Psychosocial supports could take the form of encouraging access to psychosocial supports, organizing access to trained mental

health professionals, or simply supporting community- or peer-led support initiatives. These services may be provided by municipal staff or through a partnership with a non-profit organization.

Transportation

Transportation as an ESS is distinct from transportation services and planning intended to aid residents' evacuation. Residents may not have a personal vehicle or access to fuel to move between different support and lodging facilities. Transportation planning should support evacuees' ability to move between facilities, including transportation services for those with accessible mobility needs.

Childcare

Children may be evacuated or become separated from their guardian in the process and require care. Guardians may need support caring for the children that are with them, including to organize access to other services. Children and adults alike struggle with emergencies and disasters and need psychosocial supports, but children may express their stress and concerns in different ways (GOA (d), 2018). Child specific services can support children and their caregivers in a manner that is appropriate for the circumstance.

The 2016 (GOA) ESS Framework placed a different emphasis on childcare than the 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework. The 2016 (GOA) Framework addressed children as a separate and distinct essential ESS category where children were considered an at-risk population. While the 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework still deemed childcare essential, it did not consider it as a standalone service, but instead posited childcare and related service cost recovery as a personal service. Unlike the previous context where childcare was more broadly concerned with supporting children and their guardians, in the updated framework, cost recovery for child services is limited to services for "...minor children separated from their family." Municipalities are encouraged to link child personal services to congregate lodging (GOA (b), 2025).

Pet, Livestock, and Companion Animal Care

People live with and/or evacuate with their pets and livestock which "...are often seen as part of the family" or are an essential part of Albertans' livelihoods (GOA (c), 2018). Some Albertans with disabilities are accompanied by service animals. The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework shifts away from pet and livestock care to companion animals and guide and service dog care. Companion animals are identified by their relationship with humans where they are not used for commercial or agricultural purposes, but have their needs met in the home. ESS for companion and service animals includes shelter, food, and emergency first aid in a facility as appropriate. Municipalities can recover costs for services like pet food, extra cleaning when a hotel room makes an exception to allow pets in non-pet friendly rooms, agreed services provided by a rescue agency, private kennel, or veterinary service if arranged by the municipality. Any similar services arranged by pet owners should be recovered through private insurance.

Livestock are not considered companion or service animals as they are domesticated animals used for commercial or agricultural purposes and are therefore considered a business resource/product. Planning to evacuate and manage livestock should be part of community emergency management plans, not ESS plans.

More information on emergency preparedness for livestock and farm animals can be [found here](#).

Registration and Inquiry and Family Reunification

The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework considers registration and inquiry and family reunification as two related but distinct services.

- ◆ Registration and Inquiry – a system that tracks evacuees through the ESS system. It knows where they are, what they need, and which services an evacuee has already accessed. The GOA has provided municipalities with a free digital cloud-based registration system.
- ◆ Family reunification - a collaboration between the AEMA, local ESS, law enforcement, and civil society organizations who help “reunite” separated family members within or outside of an evacuation zone. Privacy is a top consideration as some individuals may not wish to have certain information shared, or to withhold information from certain people. Cost recovery may be complicated when the service is provided by multiple stakeholders, but the municipality is responsible for the cost.

ESS Facilities

ESS facilities, the most prominent of which is the reception centre, is the place or facility where ESS is offered (GOA (b), 2025). Reception centres are the cornerstone of ESS and often serve as the hub or “one-stop” shop from which these other services are offered or where evacuees are connected to or made aware of them (GOC (d), 2007). Reception centres may or may not provide shelter within. The GOA ((c), 2018) noted that reception centre services are often dynamic over the course of a response and recovery as residents needs change throughout the evacuation or emergency.

Rural municipalities may offer ESS outside of reception centres. For example, municipalities may offer clean air, warming, or cooling centres to escape unsafe air quality due to wildfire smoke or extreme weather events. Alternatively, individual ESS services like shelter for companion animals, donation sites, and lodging may be offered at separate locations.

Discretionary Services

Along with the essential services identified above, the GOA ((b), 2025) recognized some ESS as discretionary or optional (Table 13). Discretionary ESS are deemed those that enhance well-being but are not required for survival. However, along with enhancing well-being, they arguably improve the overall ESS response system efficiency. Rural municipalities can plan for discretionary services to be included (billed for) in an ESS response or requested and provided ad hoc as available and appropriate during a response.

If rural municipalities are concerned about being remunerated for services provided to evacuees from outside of their jurisdiction, rural municipalities should ensure all services they provide are deemed essential. If rural municipalities want to ensure their residents exclusively receive and the municipality is only billed for essential and/or predetermined discretionary services, they should have an arrangement in place with a neighbouring municipality and/or service delivery stakeholders that specifies accepted services. Any changes to service levels that occur during an ESS response should be well documented.

Re-Entry Planning and Supports

To support resident transition from ESS to returning home, rural municipalities may request that their residents receive resources associated with the transition (GOA (b), 2025). Re-entry and planning support extends beyond the short-term, temporary time period when ESS would typically be offered to a clearly defined point after which residents have returned to their homes. Rural municipalities may

choose to open a re-entry facility for residents that is a one stop information and resource shop for returning residents (GOA (b), 2025).

Personal Recovery Planning

ESS can prove cumbersome for an evacuee to navigate along with other responsibilities like insurance claims (GOA (b), 2025). Rural municipalities may wish to supply residents with help navigating the ESS system and other recovery programs like insurance coverage. Generally, personal recovery planning begins during an evacuation period and ends shortly after a resident has returned home.

Impacted Population Communications

Communication with evacuees, impacted residents, municipal neighbours, internal municipal staff, and stakeholders is critical to managing an evacuation and response, including the provision of ESS. Communication with evacuees and/or residents can include information on available services, emergency response updates, and instructions about what to do next (GOA (b), 2025). The updated Framework reported that mental health impacts have been linked to poor communication and that good communication can promote stronger mental health. Further, if municipalities support the ability of evacuees to communicate with family and friends, it can ease the burden on other services and allow evacuees to support their own mental health through contact with friends and family, information access, and planning (GOA (b), 2018). Given the undisputed benefits of impacted population communication, RMA is unclear as to why communication is considered a discretionary or non-essential ESS in the 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework.

Emergency Social Services in Other Provinces and Territories

RMA reviewed ESS legislation and programming in other provinces and territories to develop a well-rounded understanding of the questions at hand: what are appropriate ESS service levels and how should remuneration work?

British Columbia

In British Columbia, ESS “...is financed by the provincial government and administered by Indigenous communities and local governments” (GOBC (c), n.d.). Indigenous communities and local governments bill the Government of British Columbia for the costs they incur. In this model, local emergency response programs are responsible for coordinating and delivering ESS and recruiting and training responders (GOBC (a), n.d.). The local program dictates the types of responders (i.e. staff, volunteers, contractors) and the support organizations and suppliers built into their plans (GOBC (b), n.d.).

The intent of British Columbia’s ESS program is to provide temporary support to individuals for up to 72 hours following the emergency (GOBC (d)). Support is targeted to people who cannot meet their own needs and/or individuals without insurance coverage for personal expenses (GOBC (a), n.d.; GOBC (b), n.d.). ESS “...may include food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, information about the crisis, and family reunification” along with specialized services like “first aid, child minding, pet care and transportation,” as well as emotional support programs (GOBC (c), n.d.). As ESS is delivered by local governments, necessary services appear to be determined on an individual basis at the discretion of the local government. The provincial government reimburses local governments for in-scope services local governments determined to be necessary.

Saskatchewan

In place of ESS, Saskatchewan has the Emergency and Community Support (ECS) program. Like ESS, ECS is designed “...to meet the urgent, basic needs of Saskatchewan residents who have been displaced from their homes due to a disaster” (GOS, n.d.). Generally, local governments provide these services. However, local governments can request assistance from the Government of Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency for larger disasters that exceed local capacity. Given this organization, it may be reasoned that local governments receive a bill from the province for any provincial supports received. ECS encompasses registration and enquiry, lodging, food, and clothing, psycho-social services, transportation in the host community, and some recreational activities (GOS, n.d.).

Manitoba

ESS is available to Manitoba residents when a local government has issued a mandatory evacuation (GOM, 2019). ESS is the local government’s responsibility unless an evacuation lasts longer than 72 hours or if the evacuation order is mandatory, in which case the province can provide support. ESS is available for a maximum of 30 days or until it is safe to return as determined by officials, or if insurance coverage is reestablished. ESS does not reimburse costs covered by insurance or those linked to expenses not incurred through ESS program delivery. It appears the Government of Manitoba pays for any ESS the province provides. Local governments pay for supports within the first 72-hour window or for any supports provided when an evacuation is not mandatory (GOM, 2019). The following ESS categories are available in Manitoba on a per disaster basis: accommodation, food, and personal services like clothing, transportation, childcare, psychosocial supports, registration and inquiry services, and reception centers (GOM, n.d.; GOM, 2019).

Ontario

ESS in Ontario appear to be provided by municipalities (service system managers) and have the same stated purpose as other provincial ESS programs: to help individuals meet their basic physical, mental, social and economic needs on a temporary basis (GOO, 2022). Program offerings include “...food, clothing, shelter, personal services, registration and inquiry services.”

Quebec

The Government of Quebec does not appear to offer ESS. Residents in need of ESS following an evacuation may receive support from non-profit organizations like the Red Cross.

New Brunswick

The “Province of New Brunswick’s Municipal Emergency Response Plan” provides the following definition for and purpose of emergency social services: “1. provide accommodation for people evacuated from their homes 2. provide emergency clothing when required 3. feed evacuees and emergency workers 4. provide registration and inquiry services 5. provide personal services for those in need.” (GONB, 2008) It appears that the Department of Family and Community Services plays a large role in delivering these services.

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipal Associations and the Government of Nova Scotia (2005) signed an agreement that the province would cover the cost of ESS delivered by the Red Cross. The federal government contributes the rest when the amount exceeds a preset provincial amount. “...the Canadian

Red Cross may provide emergency and disaster services such as emergency lodging, reception and information, emergency food, emergency clothing, personal services and family reunification services” (CRC, n.d.).

Prince Edward Island

ESS in Prince Edward Island are predominantly provided by municipalities and incorporated into municipal emergency management plans and guides (GOPEI, 2018). Municipalities pay for their residents to access these services. The Government of Prince Edward Island (2018) reported that the provincial government can work with organizations like the Red Cross and/or Salvation Army to assist municipalities.

The Government of Prince Edward Island (2018) considers several ESS categories essential, including registration, feeding, lodging, clothing and personal services. The province also noted that first aid and public health services should be provided along with those listed services as “...displaced residents may arrive with minor injuries, without necessary medication or may be ill or recovering from an illness” (GOPEI, 2018). They proposed that other municipal emergency services like transportation, sanitation, and recreation may also need to be available at the reception centre, albeit on a more discretionary basis than the essential services (GOPEI, 2018).

Newfoundland and Labrador

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (n.d.) describe the purpose of ESS as “...offer[ing] essential services to all those affected by wide-scale emergency or disaster in Newfoundland and Labrador.” “ESS provides temporary assistance until regular services resume operation or until other plans or programs come into effect” (GONFL, n.d.). Accepted ESS categories include reception centre, registration and inquiry, emergency food, emergency clothing, lodging, personal services. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2016) signed an agreement with and provided funds to the Canadian Red Cross and Salvation Army to provide ESS, suggesting that the province rather than municipalities pay for ESS.

Yukon

The Government of the Yukon (n.d.) identified ESS to include “...non-medical support to people affected by an emergency.” These services include public reception centres, registration and inquiry services, emergency lodging, feeding, clothing, and the coordination of alternate shelter for pets.

Northwest Territories

Municipalities in the Northwest Territories pay for ESS as they provide the most local level of a coordinated emergency response through the Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) (GONWT, n.d.). The City of Yellowknife’s (2024) Emergency Plan includes a section on hosting evacuees and the emergency support services they would provide. These services are intended to meet evacuee needs in the short term, including providing food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, information, and family reunification services. The City of Yellowknife, for example, organizes the reception centre and accommodation while other partners provide food, amenities, financial support, childcare and other evacuee needs. Their plan also recognizes that evacuee needs vary from disaster to disaster and that supports should be tailored accordingly at the city’s discretion (City of Yellowknife, 2024).

Nunavut

The Nunavut *Consolidation of Emergency Measures Act* (2007) gives the Minister power to “provide, maintain and co-ordinate emergency medical, social and other essential services in any area of Nunavut” and to “procure and distribute food, clothing, fuel, equipment, medical supplies or other essential goods” when a state of emergency is declared. The Nunavut Emergency Management Organization is responsible to support local governments in making their own plans. Under the legislation, the Government of Nunavut covers the cost of emergency support services like food, clothing and other necessities in the territory (GON, n.d.).

RMA Response to 2025 Provincial ESS Framework

Service Levels

[Resolution 7-24S](#): Establishing a Provincial Level for Emergency Social Services, includes three actions from government. Actions one and two are as follows:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta create a provincial level of service for emergency social services as a framework for municipalities to use when providing support to individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services include schedules that indicate services that are considered basic survival needs, and which services are discretionary; with identification of what costs are eligible for cost recovery;

The 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework satisfies the requested actions above. The updated ESS Framework identified and described services that were considered essential, or basic survival needs, and differentiated them from discretionary or optional services (Table 13). In the updated framework, the GOA created a provincial level of service by describing the ranges of acceptable services for each essential service. Furthermore, unlike the 2016 (GOA) ESS Framework, the GOA identified and appreciated differences between municipalities hosting their own residents, municipalities hosting evacuees from another Alberta municipality, and municipalities hosting evacuees from another province, territory or country.

The 2025 framework enhances certainty and stability related to ESS service delivery expectations for municipalities and the ESS services residents will receive within and outside of their home jurisdiction.

ESS Schedule and Billing

Resolution 7-24S also called for ESS be billed via a fee for service billing schedule where municipalities directly invoiced the evacuating jurisdiction:

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services acknowledge that the host municipality is providing a fee for service and that they will directly invoice the home jurisdiction, or the Government of Alberta and will not be required to apply for Disaster Recovery Program funding to recover their costs.

In Appendix 4 of the 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework, the GOA specifies what costs are recoverable per each service along with the administrative and overhead costs of providing these services. Section 4.1 of Appendix 4 specifies billable rates for food, clothing, incidentals like hygiene items and pet food and lodging. Section 4.1 identifies that accommodations are billed at the room cost or a maximum government rate for that lodging. Transportations costs are billed at cost.

The schedule excludes prices for water, emergency first aid, support for individuals with disabilities and/or complex care needs, essential multicultural and/or linguistic services, mental health and/or psychosocial support, registration and tracking of evacuee's, family reunification or ESS facilities. Further, clothing is capped at \$150 per person, or \$200 during extreme weather periods if approved by the evacuated jurisdiction, and incidentals, which funds a number of personal services, is capped at \$100. These amounts are likely inadequate to provide someone with one or two changes of clothing,

especially if a winter coat and winter boots are required, or to cover hygiene costs and food and board for pets for a period of three days. Municipalities would require an agreement to bill in excess of these amounts.

The amount a jurisdiction could bill for discretionary services would be determined by ESS agreements or based on the consent of the evacuating Director of Emergency Management.

RMA understands that municipalities will bill each other directly for all approved costs incurred rather than applying to the DRP in a fee for service model.

While these changes to the ESS Framework are a positive step in the right direction, RMA would like to share a few ideas on how the next ESS Framework update could be even stronger.

Recommendations for Continued Growth and Improvement

To support the GOA's continued ESS Framework improvement, RMA has prepared two sets of recommendations.

Provincial Emergency Social Services Level

Recommendation 1: Rural municipal government consultation prior to next update

RMA was pleased to see the GOA update the 2016 (GOA) ESS Framework in a way that increased alignment with the requested actions in [Resolution 7-24S](#): Establishing a Provincial Level for Emergency Social Services. RMA is also pleased that the GOA has made the updated ESS Framework subject to a "...comprehensive scheduled review every five years with other periodic updates as required," and that framework updates "...will be prepared in collaboration with GoA departments and ESS partners." As RMA represents Alberta's 69 rural municipalities, most of whom have evacuated residents and/or hosted evacuees and provided ESS at some point in recent years, both RMA and member municipalities should be highly engaged in the next update. As RMA did not receive any response to resolution 7-24S from the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, alignment appears to have been coincidental. RMA was not consulted on the 2025 ESS Framework update.

Given rural municipalities' significant experience delivering ESS, ability and openness to proposing new and creative solutions, rural municipalities would be an excellent partner. Further, as municipalities pay for and deliver ESS it is reasonable for them to have input into ESS and what they are made to pay for.

Recommendation 2: Provide guidance on when individual essential emergency social services are appropriate

Differentiation between essential and discretionary ESS is a significant area of improvement in the 2025 Framework. However, no two disasters are the same and municipalities must exercise a high degree of their own discretion to determine which essential ESS categories are appropriate for a given evacuation. The RMA maintains that rural municipalities can use their discretion in this manner and that ultimately the local authority is best informed to determine which services are and are not needed for a given disaster. However, to add additional clarity and promote continuity between municipalities, rural municipalities would be open to the inclusion of a high-level overview offering suggestions as to when each ESS may be mobilized.

Recommendation 3: Impacted population communications should be an essential emergency social service

RMA supports shifting "impacted population communication" into an essential ESS category as it is critical to supporting evacuee use and access to essential services and it is likely that rural municipalities will undertake this work in some form regardless of whether it is deemed essential and agreed upon between municipalities. Rural municipalities should be compensated for the service they provide, including communication.

Recommendation 4: Extend maximum support evacuation duration period

The 2025 ESS Framework reiterates that ESS are a *temporary* means of support. Section 4.1 of Appendix 4 states that “[s]upport is typically provided for a maximum of 72 hours immediately following an evacuation, unless otherwise authorized, in writing, by both the impacted and host community.”

The cost schedule does not recommend fee for service amounts or billing methods beyond the 72-hour window. However, in the framework the GOA also notes that the “...frequency, scale and complexity of emergencies and disasters...” is increasing. Further, RMA found that the average evacuation duration in 2023 was just under six days, while the average evacuation in 2024 was six days and five hours (Table 2). Seventy-two hours is not long enough. On a similar note, while the framework clarifies ESS as short term and temporary, it leaves a gap around how to transition evacuees from short term ESS supports to longer term supports and programs when evacuation periods are longer.

Recommendation 5: The province should support rural municipal ESS planning, training, and implementation

RMA was pleased to see the following supports for rural municipalities included or referenced in the framework:

- ◆ Free registration and inquiry tracking program
- ◆ Sample ESS agreements (GOA (b), 2025).

It is important to note that while rural municipalities want to meet the GOA’s expectations around ESS and are glad to have sample documents prepared, the expectation that municipalities establish agreements with several municipalities where residents could evacuate introduces a new and substantial administrative burden, particularly for smaller RMA members with fewer staff. RMA is not aware of any new funding programs that support rural municipalities undertaking this work.

More broadly, ESS requires significant “behind the scenes” work that makes it possible for rural municipalities to meet their legislative requirements and duty to care for residents. Some of these obligations include ESS planning and training. Rural municipalities often have limited resources to prepare, review and update these plans. GOA funding could be used to support local governments who do not yet have these plans or whose plans are rudimentary, along with funding ongoing training and exercising.

Recommendation 6: Think critically about who should pay for emergency social services

Although rural municipalities expressed interest in billing one another for ESS on a fee for service basis, this request may be attributed to their frustration with the DRP. Members have expressed a lack of clarity as to which costs were and were not eligible for cost recovery and members were frustrated with often unreasonably long payment waits. There is, however, a case to be made that the GOA should pay for ESS:

- ◆ Some Alberta municipalities are at higher risk for wildfires or floods than others and therefore regularly incur higher costs to provide ESS, wildfire suppression, and other related services.
- ◆ The GOA has a large role to play in wildfire prevention and mitigation, including through climate change mitigation programs and programs like FireSmart and through funding municipal governments emergency planning, training, and exercising. The GOA’s action and/or inaction has a role in shaping wildfires occurrence, severity, and duration and subsequently impacts the extent and duration of evacuations and the costs rural municipalities incur.
- ◆ A provincial financial backstop will increase consistency of ESS service delivery and reduce strain on municipal resources already likely impacted by other aspects of an emergency or disaster.

A jurisdictional scan of ESS offerings in relation to provincial-municipal government relations in other Canadian provinces and territories offers examples of provinces where local governments maintain discretion around local service level decisions and the province provides financial support. A similar arrangement could help introduce greater ESS consistency between communities while allowing local authorities to maintain discretion to determine what is needed.

Emergency Social Services Schedule

Recommendation 1: Include “appendix 4: rate adjustments” in five year framework reviews

To RMA’s knowledge, the 2025 (GOA (b)) ESS Framework did not reference plans to annually increase appendix 4 rate adjustments to inflation to ensure amounts that could be billed covered municipal costs, make reference of doing so when the Framework was reviewed every five years, or include guidance for how municipalities could build this consideration into their own plans. Rural municipal ESS plans should be able to stand the test of time or be able to be in force for several years to alleviate the administrative burden on municipalities having to potentially re-establish these agreements on an annual basis.

Recommendation 2: Add recommended rate for additional emergency social services

Although Appendix 4 is meant to serve as a guide to help municipalities establish their own intermunicipal ESS agreements as opposed to a binding cost schedule, future versions of the Framework should include recommendations or guiding rates for services such as:

- ◆ Food and water delivery at storage – recommended to bill at cost
- ◆ Snacks and refreshments available between meals - recommended daily maximum per person
- ◆ Water for drinking, cooking, and sanitation - recommended to bill at cost
- ◆ Additional considerations around daily meal allowances when per meal/per person costs may be inadequate in rural areas, particularly if transportation routes are limited or must be flown in
- ◆ Amounts for the delivery of all essential personal services - recommended to bill at cost or establish reasonable daily maximums
- ◆ Staffing and administrative costs when services are contracted or not provided by municipal government staff – recommended to bill at cost
- ◆ In general, reasonable accepted maximums or billing at cost are more acceptable means of cost recovery than listing a specific dollar value.

A more robust set of recommended ESS rates would help expedite the agreement process or serve as a tool that would be available to rural municipalities who did not have an ESS agreement in place when an evacuation occurred.

Conclusion: Collaboration and Next Steps

RMA appreciates the enhancements in the GOA's 2025 (b) ESS Framework, which introduced updated information around provincial ESS levels, including differentiating between essential and discretionary services, and a cost schedule rural municipalities can use to help establish their own ESS agreements. Each of these new additions directly corresponded to an operative clause RMA members endorsed in [Resolution 7-24S](#): Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services. Further, RMA is pleased that the GOA, Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services, took the initiative to introduce these positive changes.

RMA responded to the introduction of the updated ESS Framework (GOA (b), 2025) with a comprehensive overview of ESS as part of the emergency management cycle of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, rural municipalities responsibilities and powers ordering evacuations and providing ESS, including reviewing the role of municipalities and provincial/territorial governments in delivering ESS. RMA also took the opportunity to speak directly to the new framework's changes and how they fulfilled resolution 7-24S and provided the GOA with two sets of recommendations around how to continue to grow and improve ESS in the future through changes to provincial ESS levels and the ESS cost schedule. Perhaps most importantly, RMA has extended an invitation for the GOA to engage RMA as a partner in future ESS Framework revisions.

Following this response, RMA is left with several questions for the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services:

- 1) To confirm, municipalities recover ESS costs directly from the jurisdiction receiving services and not through the DRP?
- 2) How did you determine which services were essential and which were discretionary?
- 3) What are your plans for the next ESS framework update? Would you consider working with RMA as an ESS partner?
- 4) How will the framework be implemented in 2025? What will happen to municipalities with residents who evacuated before or just after the framework was introduced?

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Appendix

Alberta Evacuations 2018-2024

Table 3. Alberta Evacuations 2024			
Data from GOA (b)(n.d.).			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Alberta Evacuations 2024			
First Nation of Cold Lake	April 22, 4:49pm	April 23, 4:08pm	23 hours 19 minutes
MD of Peace	April 23, 5:27pm	-	
County of Grande Prairie	May 10, 8:46pm	May 15, 2:44pm	4 days 17 hours 58 minutes
MD of Greenview	May 11, 12:12am	May 14, 2:02pm	3 days 13 hours 50 minutes
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	May 14, 2:05pm	May 18, 10:25am	3 days 20 hours 20 minutes
Garden River	July 10, 12:00	-	
MD of Opportunity – Chipewyan Lake/Chipewyan Cree Nation	July 18, 10:21pm	July 23, 4:19pm	4 days 17 hours 58 minutes
John D’Or Prairie and Fox Lake in the Little Red River Cree Nation	July 20, 12:31pm	July 21, 12:02pm	23 hours 31 minutes “Little Red River Cree Nation communities, including Fox Lake, Garden River, and John D’Or Prairie were evacuated multiple times throughout the summer due to the Semo Complex.”

Town of Jasper and Jasper National Park	July 22, 9:59pm	August 16, 4:50pm	24 days 18 hours 51 minutes
Saddle Hills County	August 3, 5:21pm	-	
Alberta Evacuations 2023			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Evansburg and Entwistle/Parkland County Wildfire	April 29, 6:11pm	May 3, 11:00am	3 days 16 hours 49 minutes
Yellowhead County Wildfire	April 30, 2:54am	May 3, 3:00pm	3 days 12 hours 6 minutes
Clearwater County	May 1, 6:53pm	May 3, 3:28pm	1 day 20 hours 35 minutes
Leduc County	May 2, 4:12pm	May 4, 9:06am	1 day 16 hours 54 minutes
Ponoka County	May 3, 4:36pm	May 4, 12:08pm	19 hours 32 minutes
Brazeau County	May 3, 5:37pm	May 4, 10:52am	17 hours 15 minutes
Beaver Lake Cree Nation	May 4, 1:37am	May 5, 12:59pm	1 day 11 hours 22 minutes
Brazeau County	May 4, 1:40pm	May 16, 1:52pm	12 days 12 minutes
Yellowhead County	May 4, 2:39pm	-	
Leduc County	May 4, 3:30pm	May 5, 8:59pm	1 day 5 hours 29 minutes
Lac Ste. Anne County	May 4, 3:54pm	May 10, 2:04pm	5 days 22 hours 10 minutes
Cold Lake/Cold Lake First Nation	May 4, 6:22pm	May 5, 3:56pm	21 hours 34 minutes
Parkland County	May 4, 7:21pm	-	
Athabasca County	May 4, 11:22pm	-	
Saddle Hills County	May 5, 2:49pm	-	

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation & MD of Greenview	May 5, 3:23pm	May 24, 3:28pm	20 days 5 minutes
County of Grande Prairie	May 5, 4:22pm	May 10, 8:47pm	5 days 4 hours 25 minutes
Peerless Trout First Nation/Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council	May 5, 5:03pm	May 12, 10:00am	6 days 16 hours 57 minutes
Strathcona County	May 5, 7:52pm	May 6, 1:00pm	17 hours 8 minutes
Big Lakes County	May 5, 10:26pm	-	
Big Lakes County	May 6, 2:31pm	May 16, 3:48pm	10 days 1 hour 17 minutes
Fox Creek & the MD of Greenview	May 6, 8:33am	May 30, 9:40am	24 days 1 hour 7 minutes
Rainbow Lake	May 6, 1:19pm	June 2, 9:59am	26 days 20 hours 40 minutes
Northern Sunrise County	May 6, 1:47pm	-	
Mackenzie County	May 6, 3:50pm	May 7, 10:31am	18 hours 41 minutes
Town of Valleyview (voluntary evacuation)	May 6, 7:27pm	-	
Big Lakes County and the Town of Swan Hills	May 13, 4:29pm	May 18, 10:10am	5 days 5 hours 41 minutes
Dene Tha' First Nation/Chateh	May 13, 6:32pm	May 18, 12:37pm	4 days 18 hours 5 minutes
Chipewyan Lake and the MD of Opportunity	May 14, 9:33pm	-	
Leduc County	May 13, 3:12pm	May 14, 9:31pm	1 day 6 hours 19 minutes
Town of Valleyview	May 15, 1:31pm	May 18, 9:18am	3 days 7 hours 47 minutes

Peavine Metis Settlement	May 16, 5:34pm	May 25, 12:53pm	8 days 19 hours 19 minutes
Town of Swan Hills	May 16, 1:16pm	May 24, 9:38am	8 days 8 hours 22 minutes
MD of Lesser Slave River	May 18, 3:35pm	May 22, 3pm	3 days 23 hours 25 minutes
County of Grande Prairie	-	May 19, 12:36pm	
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Chipewyan, Allison Bay First Nation, and Dog Head First Nation	May 30, 8pm	June 22, 11:01am	23 days 3 hours 1 minute
MD of Greenview - Sweathouse	June 9, 8:08pm	June 11, 3:57pm	1 day 19 hours 49 minutes
Yellowhead County – Flash Flood – Lower Robb	June 19, 5:44pm	June 22, 5:30pm	2 days 23 hours 46 minutes
Peers – Shelter in place/some people evacuated	June 20, 7:53am	June 23, 6:24pm	3 days 10 hours 31 minutes
Town of Whitecourt – Westview Mobile Village - Flooding	-	June 21, 2pm	
Sagitawah RB Park		June 23, 3:07pm	
Woodlands County - Flooding	June 21, 5:05pm	June 26, 3:10pm	4 days 22 hours 5 minutes
Parkland County – Entwistle – Flooding – Pembina Provincial Park Campground	June 22, 5:20pm	-	
Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council	June 30, 9:34pm	-	

Town of Cardston – Gas Leak (Civil Emergency)	August 28, 11:34pm	August 29, 1:19am	1 hour 45 minutes
Dene Tha' First Nation – Chateh – Wildfire	September 22, 10:33pm	September 26, 8:07pm	3 days 21 hours 34 minutes
Yellowhead County – MVC caused fuel spill – service center evacuated	December 19, 8:51pm	December 19, 11:44pm	2 hours 50 minutes
Alberta Evacuations 2022			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Clearwater County	June 3, 3:42pm	June 4, 9:21am	1 day 5 hours 39 minutes
Clearwater County	July 20, 7:15pm	July 30, 5:09pm	9 days 21 hours 54 minutes
Alberta Evacuations 2021			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Vulcan County and Village of Carmangay	March 28, 5:33pm	March 28, 7:07pm	1 hour 34 minutes
Parkland County	May 7, 12:34pm	May 8, 11:13am	1 day 10 hours 39 minutes
Yellowhead County	June 22, 5:51pm	June 23, 7pm	1 day 1 hour 9 minutes
MD of Willow Creek	December 1, 12:19am	December 1, 5:51am	5 hours 32 minutes
Alberta Evacuations 2020			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Kneehill County – Swalwell Train Derailment	March 9, 4:33pm	March 10, 3:00pm	22 hours 27 minutes

Mackenzie County – Water Levels	April 26, 8:51pm	May 4, 8:14am	7 days 11 hours 23 minutes
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Overland Flood	April 26, 12:23pm	May 2, 9:10pm	5 days 12 hours 19 minutes
Black Diamond – Gas Leak	June 20, 10:08am	June 20, 12:06pm	1 hour 58 minutes
Birch Hills County	July 3, 5:35pm	July 4, 10:37pm	1 day 5 hours 2 minutes
Alberta Evacuations 2019			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Town of High Level	May 20, 4:50pm	May 24, 9:41am	3 days 16 hours 51 minutes
Yellowhead County	May 19, 7:00pm	May 20, 9:00am	14 hours
Dene Tha' First Nation, Bushe River	May 20, 8:17pm	May 24, 9:39am	3 days 13 hours 22 minutes
Peerless Trout First Nation	May 31, 8:14am	June 8, 10:39am	8 days 2 hours 25 minutes
County of Northern Lights	May 29, 1:54pm	June 3, 2:05pm	5 days 11 minutes
MD of Opportunity and Chipewyan Lake Village	May 30, 3:40am	June 2, 2:45pm	3 days 11 hours 5 minutes
MD of Bonnyville – campgrounds and Franchere	June 4, 2:48pm	June 4, 6:36pm	3 hours 48 minutes
MD of Opportunity	May 29, 8:44pm	June 12, 10:29am	13 days 13 hours 45 minutes
Peerless Trout First Nation	June 17, 5:16pm	June 21, 8:17am	3 days 15 hours 1 minute
MD of Lesser Slave River	June 17, 2:04pm	June 17, 7:57pm	5 hours 53 minutes

Mackenzie County	June 17, 10:55am	June 21, 6:57pm	4 days 8 hours 2 minutes
Yellowhead County – Overland Flood	July 8, 3:55pm	July 10, 2:16 pm	1 day 22 hours 21 minutes
MD of Lesser Slave River – Overland Flood	July 25, 2:43pm	July 29, 3:51pm	4 days 1 hour 8 minutes
Cypress County	July 27, 4:50pm	July 27, 8:48pm	3 hours 58 minutes
Cypress County – Train Derailment with chemical exposure	August 2, 2019	-	
Special Areas – Traffic Hazard	August 20, 6:18pm	August 20, 8:56pm	2 hours 38 minutes
Lethbridge County – train derailment	September 2, 10:51am	September 2, 4:12pm	5 hours 21 minutes
Yellowhead County – Natural gas	December 13, 10:30am	December 13, 11:42am	1 hour 12 minutes
Alberta Evacuations 2018			
Location	Evacuation Order Start Date	Evacuation Order End Date	Duration
Mackenzie County	December 31, 2017 5:41pm	January 4, 2018, 8:49am	4 days 3 hours 8 minutes
Village of Beiseker – Overland Flood	April 24, 1:40pm	April 25, 1:32pm	23 hours 52 minutes
Mackenzie County	April 28, 11:14am	May 3, 12:15pm	5 days 1 hour 1 minute
Woodlands County	April 28, 6:39am	May 4, 10:25am	6 days 3 hours 46 minutes
County of Grande Prairie	April 28, 9:10pm	April 28, 10:05pm	55 minutes
Foothills County	May 27, 3:52 – voluntary evacuation	-	

MD of Lesser Slave River – High Water Levels	June 11, 9:07pm – voluntary evacuation	-	
Town of Pincher Creek – gas leak	July 26, 11:10am	July 26, 11:38am	28 minutes