Emergency Response Plans
(ERPs)

Lacombe County's Guide
to Developing an ERP
for a Special Event

AUGUST 2019

LACOMBE
COUNTY

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PREAMBLE

As part of the development approval process for special events (both minor and major) an Emergency Response Plan is required for review and approval by Lacombe County. The intent of the Emergency Response Plan is to ensure the attendants of these events approved by the County are safe and the organizers are prepared in the event of an emergency.

Time is limited and the initial actions before an emergency event happens are instrumental to successful outcomes. The preparation of an Emergency Response Plan ensures that the developers/organizers of an event have considered and thought through all eventualities that may occur at the event. The applicant must detail their plans to provide: security and fire protection; water supply, sewage and drainage facilities; food supplies and facilities; sanitation facilities; first aid facilities and services; and vehicle parking spaces, vehicle access, policing and on-site control. Also, if it is proposed or expected that spectators or participants will remain at night or overnight, the arrangements for illuminating the premises and for camping or similar facilities must be detailed. The applicant's plans shall include what provisions shall be made for numbers of spectators in excess of the estimate, provisions for clean-up of the premises and provisions for the removal of rubbish after the concert has concluded. A site plan showing the arrangement of the facilities, including those for parking, egress and ingress, shall be submitted with such application.

If you have any questions regarding the preparation of an Emergency Response Plan, Planning Services and Fire Services staff are available to answer your questions.

Lacombe County Fire Services
Telephone: 403-782-8959
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Lacombe County Planning Services
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Introduction

Special events such as concerts, trade shows and festivals provide important opportunities for communities to come together. That said events where large numbers of people attend creates risks for the health and safety of those attendees. As a result, the County requires that all applicants develop an Emergency Response Plan to mitigate any risks. This guide outlines the definitions that classify whether the event is a major or minor event; the importance of emergency response planning and what considerations need to be included in your Emergency Response Plan.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide developers with direction on the importance of emergency response planning; how to develop an effective Emergency Response Plan; and meet County requirements.

Policy

The County's *Land Use Bylaw* (LUB) requires all special events to prepare an Emergency Response Plan.

> **6.30 Special Events**
>
> (1) All special events must prepare an Emergency Response Plan approved by the County, at its discretion.

LAND USE BYLAW - DEFINITIONS

SPECIAL EVENT, MAJOR means a public or private event, held indoors or outdoors that is not part of the existing use of the site, the duration of which is temporary and has an expected attendance of more than 400 people. Typical events include but are not limited to festivals, trade shows, exhibitions or recreational competitions. The County may at its discretion permit certain small scale non-commercial or community events to take place without the requirement to obtain a development permit.

SPECIAL EVENT, MINOR means any public or private event, held indoors or outdoors that is not part of the existing use of the site, the duration of which is temporary and has an expected attendance of less than 400 people. Typical events include but are not limited to festivals, trade shows, exhibitions or recreational competitions. The County may at its discretion permit certain small scale non-commercial or community events to take place without the requirement to obtain a development permit.

Benefits of Emergency Planning

Thorough Emergency Planning has significant benefits in regards to event safety:

- Assists in identifying risks or potential risks to the event and attendees;
- Assists in identifying what measures need to be put in place for the protection of the event attendees and staff;
- Identifies roles and responsibilities for individuals, groups and organizations involved in the event; and
- Reduces the risk of injury, loss of life or property damage resulting from an emergency.

Developing an Emergency Response Plan

STEP
01

Identify the risks or potential risks that could affect the event.

Risks could include factors such as weather, crowd composition/crowd behavior, criminal activity, bomb threats, fire, environment, nearby or adjacent infrastructure, situations requiring evacuation or shelter in place, etc.

STEP
02

For each risk scenario, identify the mitigating action that could be taken in advance to reduce or eliminate the risk.

Adjust the event plan accordingly.

STEP
03

Where the risk cannot be eliminated in its entirety, identify the residual risk(s) and the most appropriate action(s) to be taken, and by what organization, should that situation arise.

Record this information in an Emergency Response Plan.

STEP
04

Get the Plan approved.

The Emergency Response Plan should include a section that is signed by all parties involved in the plan, where they indicate their concurrence with the plan and agree to their responsibilities. Including the approval signatures is essential, for it assures that all parties involved are aware of and understand the Emergency Response Plan and agree to do their assigned roles should an emergency take place.

Note: As part of the special event approval process, Lacombe County will request submission of your Emergency Response Plan for review.

STEP
05

Ensure understanding of the Plan and readiness.

Ensure that all members of your organizing committee/group are briefed and understand the Emergency Response Plan and particularly their roles and responsibilities in advance of the event occurring.

Remember no one has time to read a plan once an incident occurs. Depending on the complexity of the event and contingencies recorded in your Emergency Response Plan you may wish to conduct training or tabletop exercises to ensure understanding of your Emergency Response Plan and readiness of staff.

STEP
06

Critique.

Conduct a post event critique and record what worked and what can be improved upon. Safeguard these lessons learned for future use.

Elements of an Event Emergency Response Plan

An event Emergency Response Plan should include the following elements:

- **Command and Control**

- **Responsibility of Individual Agencies/Groups**

- **Resources**

- **Communications**

- **Planning Considerations**

- **Risk Specific Contingencies**

  including Weather, Lost/Found Persons/Property, Crowd Control, Shelter In Place, Evacuation Plan, Traffic Management, First Aid Services, Media, and Other Risks/Hazards

Command and Control

Identify the Event Manager (person who has overall responsibility). Include his/her name, where they will be located during the event, and how they can be contacted.

Please note, this person will also be responsible for transferring command to Emergency Services upon their arrival.

Identify other key personnel (i.e. Safety Officer, Medical / First Aid Coordinator, Traffic manager, Communications Manager, etc. Include his/her name, where they will be located during the event, and how they can be contacted.

Develop an event notification chart with the above information and distribute to event agencies/groups as appropriate. (A notification chart is a diagram of the hierarchy for notification in an emergency, including who is to be notified, by whom, and in what priority. The chart should be prominently displayed in the Emergency Response Plan document; often it is the first page of the Emergency Response Plan).

In developing your notification chart and procedures consider both internal and external persons and agencies that should be notified. These may include: sponsor personnel, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management officials, Police, Fire Services, local Hospitals and others, as appropriate.

Identify who is responsible to make the notification call to the appropriate emergency agencies, e.g. call to 911, or other emergency agencies, and

Notification procedures should be developed to ensure the timely notification of persons responsible for taking emergency actions. The procedures should be brief, simple, and easy to implement.

Emergency procedures should outline what initial actions need to be taken by the event organizers and staff in notifying event participants and the public through an appropriate method (i.e. public address systems/warning systems).

Event participants should be briefed on what actions they are expected to take when alerted of an impending risk.

Responsibility of Individual Agencies/Groups

List the agencies/groups participating in the event and briefly list their responsibilities and major tasks.

The Emergency Response Plan must specify the person(s) responsible for declaring an emergency under various circumstances and for initiating emergency actions.

Resources

List any equipment to be used for public safety during the event or in the event of an Incident e.g. hand held radios, fire extinguishers etc.

Communications

How the event control/organizers will communicate with the event staff and vice/versa.

How the event control/organizers will communicate with the public.

Include a list of persons who will have radios and what channel or frequency they can be contacted on.

Include a list of persons who at the event location will have access to a phone and their contact telephone numbers.

Communications systems can include portable radios, telephones, cellular telephones, public address systems, etc.

Consider using loud audible signals to notify the public and staff of specific emergencies, e.g. shelter in place, evacuation, etc. For example, a number of blasts on an air horn to inform staff and public of issues has proven effective.

Planning Considerations

The location of the venue can have an impact on emergency responses during an emergency. Designated emergency access and egress routes need to be identified in the traffic management plan. Venue sites that have geographical impacts to emergency response agencies need to be identified in the planning process.

Depending on the nature of the event, the plan should be available for review by emergency services agencies to ensure that any pre-planning that is required is addressed in a timely manner.

The event emergency contingency plan should be broken down into components - i.e. traffic management plan, medical plan, security plan, emergency procedures plan, contingency plans for specific situations risks that may arise, etc.

Risk Specific Contingencies

Where the risk cannot be eliminated entirely identify the most appropriate action(s) to be taken, and by what organization, should that situation arise. While these will vary for each event and event site it is suggested that the following should be considered. Note: event risks and hazards are specific to each event and location – some or all of the following may be appropriate to your event:

Weather

Identify what seasonal weather conditions will be prevalent at the time and make appropriate plans. Also, identify any severe weather conditions (i.e. thunderstorms, high winds, extreme cold, blizzards, etc.) that could arise at the time of your event, and under what weather conditions you would be required to:

- Modify or cancel your event?
- Evacuate or Shelter in Place persons attending your event?
- What is your 'wet weather' plan?
- Consider making a weather call (go or no-go) in advance of the event where appropriate and identify the time that this will be made, by who, and how the decision will be communicated to event staff and participants.

Lost/Found Persons/Property

What steps will be taken for re-uniting people who get separated?

Where is lost property to be taken to? If it is not reclaimed, what will happen to it?

Event organizers should exercise special care to provide well identified signs, announcement by public address systems or pre-event handouts that clearly designate such services. In setting up a lost and found service, it is important for event organizers to assign individuals who will remain at the lost and found area until the event is fully terminated.

Crowd Control

Does your event require that you plan for crowd control throughout or are there situations that could arise that would require you to take steps to provide for crowd control / security? If so, adequate training of event personnel and the use of fencing equipment are measures to consider in the management of crowds.

Consider that for large crowds, it is essential that staging be of sufficient height and visibility to project the activities to the crowd adequately. Security for the stage should be carefully planned:

If your event will have a stage consider providing for a separation of the stage from the crowd, i.e. use of snow fencing could be considered.

When setting up the stage, always leave a well identified emergency access route. Such a route is especially important when emergency medical care is needed by participants near the front of the crowd.

Shelter In Place

Describe the actions to be taken and the shelter location in the event of a decision to have event participants and staff shelter in place. Ensure in advance that the shelter infrastructure selected is appropriate when compared with the anticipated risk and ensure the capacity to house persons from a fire safety perspective.

Negotiate the use of this 'shelter in place' infrastructure and how it can be accessed in advance of the event.

Have pre-scripted public information messaging available for shelter in place and coordinate who will be responsible for passing on the information to the public, and by what means in advance of the event.

Evacuation Plan

Describe the actions to be taken if the event location had to be partially or fully evacuated.

Estimate time required to conduct the evacuation (how long it will take from the time a decision to evacuate is made, to when all evacuees can be moved to safety. This will help to identify the lead time required and your decision point to order an evacuation. Your plan should ensure that everyone can be evacuated to safety in the time available and identify the resources required.

Identify:
- Who will make the decision to evacuate?
- Who will co-ordinate the evacuation (be in charge)?
- How will the event staff and participants be informed of the evacuation?
- Do the event staff have specific tasks in the event of an evacuation?
- Which exits will the public be directed to?
- To where will the public be evacuated?
- Who will inform the emergency services?
- How will the persons evacuated for be accounted for? (this is particularly important should persons be evacuated to more than one location)

If your event is a linear type event i.e. sponsored walk, bike ride, etc. you will also need to consider:
- If required how do you stop the event?
- How do you inform the safety staff?
- How do you collect and account for the participants?
- To where do you evacuate the participants?

Have pre-scripted public information messaging available for evacuation and coordinate who will be responsible for passing on the information to the public, and by what means in advance of the event.

Traffic Management

Ensure the emergency services have unobstructed access into the event location at all times.

First Aid Services

Who is providing the Medical/First Aid services?

Where is the first aid located?

Are communications in place to enable calls to 911 for EMS/ambulance support?

Is it accessible to ambulances?

Consider communications links to the event control/organizers for their situational awareness and/or action?

Media

If there was an incident at the event that attracted media interest, consider who would speak to the media and where this would take place.

Have pre-scripted messaging available for anticipated risks.

Other Risks / Hazards

Consider any other risks or situations that you may have.