

Emergency Response – 2023 Year in Review



FEDERAL

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jun 19: If newly tabled [Bill C-345](#) passes, murder of a first responder would automatically be considered first degree murder under the *Criminal Code*. The bill also increases the maximum prison term for aggravated assault of first responders and creates a new offence of assaulting a first responder.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jun 19: That's the deadline to comment on [proposed changes](#) to BC OHS regulations (Part 5) requiring employers to implement a plan for responding to emergencies involving a hazardous substance, both within and outside the workplace. Employers will first have to perform a risk assessment and develop written procedures that go beyond simple evacuation, such as sheltering in place. Employers will have to train workers in the plan and conduct regular drills to test plan effectiveness.

Action Point: [Ensure your workplace emergency response policy](#) accounts for the disabled.

Sep 11: In response to the recent pandemic, wildfires,

drought, heat and floods, BC established an expert task force to help the province prevent and respond more effectively to emergencies.

Oct 3: Newly tabled [Bill 31](#) reorganizes BC's emergency management system based on the lessons from the recent wildfire, COVID-19 and other disasters. The *Emergency & Disaster Management Act* addresses all phases of emergency management, including preparation, mitigation, response and recovery, while streamlining the powers and responsibilities of government agencies involved in emergency response.

Action Point: [Ensure your workplace emergency response policy](#) accounts for the disabled.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jun 20: The GNWT launched a new Evacuee Registration Portal to speed up and simplify the emergency evacuation process. Residents who have to evacuate will now only have to register once, which they can do in advance by pre-registering.

Sep 8: The GNWT adjusted the Evacuee Income Disruption Support (EISD) program to ensure that residents who suffered disruption to their income as a result of being forced to evacuate for more than 7 days due to the recent wildfires receive the full \$750 one-time payment. Previously, the government was applying a 10% withholding tax.

Action Point: Implement a [wildfire smoke protection game plan](#) at your outdoor site.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dec 15: An Emergency Forestry Task Force issued [recommendations](#) on what PEI should do to provide immediate help to private woodlot owners and forest industry operators

in the province affected by Hurricane Fiona, including offering free chainsaw safety courses over the winter.

Aug 28: As hurricane season gets into high gear, PEI established a new Major Incident Response Team to work with the Emergency Measures Organization and government agencies on hurricane preparation, tracking and response. Meanwhile, the WCB issued [hurricane safety tips](#) for employers.

Action Point: Ensure that your company is [properly prepared for workplace emergencies](#).

Sep 27: The PEI Major Incident Readiness Team partnered with the United Way to provide residents \$200,000 worth of free emergency preparation kits consisting of water, non-perishable food, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, emergency hand-crank radios and emergency blankets.

Action Point: Ensure that your company is [properly prepared for workplace emergencies](#).

YUKON TERRITORY

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 3: Yukon launched a new online [Flood Atlas](#) website that residents and visitors can use to access flood-related alerts, flood maps and information about long-term flood preparations in the territory.

Jun 30: Even as wildfires continue to rage, Yukon launched a new recovery program to support residents, farmers and business owners who suffered uninsured losses because of the recent floods in the Klondike Valley, including up to \$250,000 for housing, \$500,000 for agricultural damage and \$500,000 for damages to small businesses.