



# Media Release

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For immediate release

## Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program Helping to build a self-sufficient community

Nelson, BC: Every year residents across the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) face the potential of flooding, wildfire, extreme weather conditions, avalanches, landslides, power outages and more. These types of disasters can happen at a moment's notice - are you prepared to handle these situations in your community?

This year the RDCK is pleased to announce the official roll out of its Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP), which supports residents in preparing for emergencies and building resiliency within their neighbourhood. During a disaster, your neighbours will be your most reliable and immediate source of help, until assistance from first responders arrives.

"With a little planning, preparation and support from our neighbours, residents can be self sufficient for 72 hours or longer after an incident," said Jon Jackson, RDCK Emergency Program Coordinator. "This allows first responders to focus on providing critical support, and prioritising those people in life-threatening situations."

NEPP provides the tools you need to expand from being personally prepared to developing an emergency plan with your neighbours that leverages the support you can provide to one another. The idea is to empower residents to work together to identify risks in their neighbourhood and collectively develop plans for how to prepare, often by utilizing skills and resources that already exist. It is based on the principle of 'neighbours helping neighbours'.

The RDCK ran a successful pilot program of NEPP in 2022. Residents were receptive to the idea and eager to work with their neighbours and get involved. During the pilot 10 neighbourhoods or community groups developed Neighbourhood Emergency Plans, and are continuing to work together to build their preparedness for emergencies.

"The process so far has been quite straight forward," said Nancy Corrin, Queens Bay Neighbourhood Emergency Team. "The tools are clear and can be adapted to whatever the community wants to include, based on the specific hazards for their area. NEPP extends the concept of community preparedness and neighbour helping neighbour ideas. There is value to be had in collective community strategy and cooperative action when it comes to facing a community crisis."

Spending time now to prepare for emergencies can alleviate much of the stress and some of the challenges that typically arise as a result of emergencies. A 2014 Statistics Canada survey determined that less than half of

Canadians had a home emergency supply kit. Canadians were less likely to set aside items such as water, food, medicine, flashlights or cash at their homes in case of an emergency. People lead very busy lives, with lots of priorities. It's not always clear to people why this is important.

"All around the world, disasters are happening more often - and the impacts are becoming more severe," said Jackson. "We've all seen the terrible impacts of the recent floods and wildfires in BC, and how the changing climate is contributing to an increase in flooding and wildfire risk in our region. It behooves us to prepare now, in order to build our resilience to emergencies."

"The support from the RDCK has been extremely helpful," said Corrin. "We feel that it is provident and timely for the community to undertake appropriate planning and activities ahead of any crisis. An informed community will reduce the chance of panic and assist the emergency agencies involved by reducing their burden."

"The goal of the RDCK is to engage as many of our residents as possible in the program – ultimately, we'd like to create a region-wide community of neighbourhood emergency teams sharing information and learnings. We're stronger together," said Jackson.

For more information on the program go to [www.rdck.ca/NEPP](http://www.rdck.ca/NEPP) or read the [RDCK NEPP Handbook](#).

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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