Overview

- VictoriaReady Volunteer Program
- Safety and Legislation
- Urban Search and Rescue
- Recommendation
During times of crisis communities come together to help one another

Mexico earthquake: Mexicans show the world how to work together when disaster strikes — Quartz

Emergency Management is a shared responsibility across all sectors of society
Well-trained, skilled volunteers play vital roles before, during, and after emergencies.

Volunteer Program
Over 100 talented volunteers!

Emergency Social Services

Auxiliary Communications Services

General Service:
EOC Support Team, GIS projects, Public Education, Cyclist Response Team, Remotely Piloted Aerial Vehicle program
Victoria Ready Volunteer Program

Cyclist Response Team Training

Team Exercises!
The City of Victoria provides many opportunities for citizen involvement in emergency management by empowering volunteers and citizens to perform critical roles before, during, and after emergencies through our many volunteer teams.

visit [www.victoriaready.ca](http://www.victoriaready.ca) for details on volunteering

Block parties, festivals, and markets
VictoriaReady Volunteer Program

Vic-West Fest and Oaklands Market

CONNECT & PREPARE
The health and safety of our volunteers is paramount
Legislation

• Under the *Emergency Program Act*, local authorities are responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of their citizens.

• Emergency Management BC provides support and protection for local government using volunteers and provides the essential legal authority to recognize volunteer groups in responding to emergencies and disasters, who are registered as *Public Safety Lifeline Volunteers*.

**PUBLIC SAFETY LIFELINE VOLUNTEER SAFETY POLICY**

Covers all safety of all Public Safety Lifeline (PSL) volunteers while participating in, preparing for, and responding to a disaster or an emergency for which EMBC has issued a task number.

Supports the first response goal of BCEMS which is to “*Provide for the Safety and Health of All Responders*”
**Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)**

- USAR is not one of the disciplines recognized under EMBC’s PSL volunteer program.
- The Federal government is the overall lead of USAR in Canada.
- USAR volunteers are not eligible for WorkSafeBC coverage

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**Response from WorkSafeBC on application for coverage:**

As section 3(5)(b) of the Act’s extension of coverage is an exceptional exercise of authority, it requires strict compliance with the policy and the terms and conditions set forth in the application. The first such condition is that the organization seeking coverage must be a legally constituted non-profit organization. Since the Emergency Management division is part of the City of Victoria’s Fire Department, and the City of Victoria is not a non-profit organization, this condition is not met. Thus, as the VUSAR does not satisfy the terms and conditions for extended coverage under section 3(5)(b) of the Act, the volunteers do not have coverage under the Act for those services.

I considered my discretion to deviate from strict application of policy and practice in order to affect a reasoned balance between an affected person’s interests and “the best interests of the workers’ compensation system” [s. 36(2) of the Act]; however, I was not able to find a justifiable rationale to deviate from the application of WorkSafeBC’s long-standing terms and conditions.
USAR teams perform highly specialized rescue skills including:

USAR teams are typically comprised of firefighters, medical professionals, engineers, search dog teams, etc. all of whom have specialized skills and training and have received the necessary certifications and insurance through their professional organizations.

These individuals perform:
- breaching, shoring, lifting and removing structural components, using heavy construction equipment
- locating trapped persons
- removing debris
- medically treating and transferring victims

The Federal Government contributes to the strengthening of our 6 USAR teams’ capabilities:

Quote:
"Increasing urbanization, coupled with the growing frequency and severity of weather-related emergencies means that ensuring sufficient HUSAR capacity across the country is becoming more important. The Government of Canada is working with the Provinces/Territories and municipalities to ensure that our approach to emergency response is reflective of the needs of all partners, and the changing risk environment. We look forward to continue working together to modernize emergency management”

- The Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Recommendation

That emergency management resources be dedicated to the continued enhancement and opportunities for citizen involvement in emergency management through existing programs (as recognized through EMBC’s Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer Program), including:

- Emergency Social Services (ESS)
- Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) support
- Auxiliary Communications Services (ACS)
- Cyclist Response Team (CRT) volunteer teams as well as
- Public education programs and initiatives (Connect and Prepare, neighbourhood preparedness)