
Prepared BC: Guide for Apartments, Condos and Townhomes

Publication / Date: The CHOA Journal-Spring 2016

Written by: Emergency Management BC

Since May 2015, PreparedBC has been developing resources to help British Columbians prepare themselves and their families for emergencies. With the creation of household plans and preparedness guides, communities in British Columbia were able to find the support needed to get prepared for an emergency in their homes and in their communities.

The goal of these step-by-step guides is to encourage British Columbians to plan and prepare for emergencies. However, with almost half of all British Columbians living in some form of multi-family housing complex, it was clear this group of residents have unique living considerations that may not be covered in existing resources. And so, in collaboration with the Condo Homeowners Association of B.C. (CHOA) and the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), the *PreparedBC: Guide for Apartments, Condos and Townhomes* was created with you in mind.

The guide explains eight key steps you can take to prepare yourself, your family and with your neighbours in advance of an emergency. Review the steps below for a brief overview of the content of this guide and for more information on downloading your own copy.

Help make your complex more resilient! It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

Step 1 Complete the *PreparedBC: Household Preparedness Guide and Plan*

- Emergency preparedness begins in your home.
- Download and follow these resources so you and your family will know exactly what to do before, during and after a disaster.

Step 2 Get to Know Your Neighbours

- Living in an apartment, condo or townhome creates an inherent sense of community. Still, it can be hard to move from "familiar face" to "friendly neighbour".
- Use this guide as an icebreaker to reach out to your neighbours by organizing a get-together such as a BBQ or potluck.

Step 3 Assign Responsibilities

- It can be difficult to think clearly during and immediately after a disaster. Assign responsibilities in advance for a faster and more coordinated response.
- Create and assign formal roles based on skill and expertise of residents. Roles could include: Chief Warden, Floor or Zone Wardens, First-Aid Attendants and Communications Specialists.
- You should also identify the responsibilities of your Strata Corporation and ensure they are familiar with what their responsibilities are in an emergency.

Step 4 Identify Safe Meeting Place(s)

- In an emergency, you, your family and your neighbours should gather at a predetermined safe meeting place to evaluate the situation and what needs to be done.
- Depending on the emergency and size of your building/complex, you may need different types of meeting points. Consider these in your plan.

Step 5 Map Your Street

- Use the grid provided in the guide to map out your street including your floor or zone, units that may require additional assistance, your safe meeting location and other key resources or vulnerabilities.

Step 6 Store This Guide

- Store all necessary documents (including maps and household plan) in an accessible location.
- Ensure everyone in your group has a copy of the information.

Step 7 Keep In Touch

- Maintain the momentum by staying in contact with your neighbours.
- Use your strata corporation or residents' association's meeting times to talk about preparedness.

Step 8 Best Practices to Review and Update

- Identify someone who will be responsible for organizing a get-together to review and update the plan each year.
- You should also review your insurance and refresh your emergency kit annually.

When you live in a multi-family housing complex, preparedness is a joint task. Let this guide help you begin your journey to preparedness, and help you join forces with your neighbours so you know what to do, who to check up on and what resources are available should disaster hit.

Prepared neighbourhoods—whether a street, cul-de-sac or condo floor—are resilient neighbourhoods. When you're in it together, you're stronger.

PreparedBC is the Province of British Columbia's one-stop shop for disaster readiness information. Connect with us on Twitter @PreparedBC.

For natural disaster alerts and information on large-scale emergencies, visit EmergencyInfoBC.gov.bc.ca and follow @EmergencyInfoBC on Twitter.

Download the *PreparedBC: Guide for Apartments, Condos and Townhomes* and all of the other guides at gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC.