

REGIONAL EMERGENCY COORDINATORS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday, February 12, 2026, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**
Location: Saanich EOC Meeting Room, 760 Vernon Avenue

Attendees:

Erin Stockill – District of Saanich (Chair)	Michael Dussault - St. John Ambulance
Corey Anderson – Capital Regional District (Vice Chair)	Wendy Watt -Island Equipment Owners Association
Bruce Clark – Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (Vice Chair)	Suzanne Weber - EMCR
James Beasley – 39 Service Battalion	Kim Brundrit - Red Cross
Lee Archibald – City of Langford	Russel Bardak - RedCross
Al Marston - CREST	Jolette Schenk – District of Oak Bay
Alfred Klein - RCMSAR	Jennifer Carvill – Capital Regional District
Rob Johns – University of Victoria	Shawn Carby - Capital Regional District
Sharon Storey - BC Hydro	Matt Cawsey – Saanich Police
Jane O’Higgins-Wilson – Joint Task Force Pacific (JTFP)	Jerid Letchford - Fortis BC
David Picket – JTFP	Morais Ferreira - Fortis BC
Melody Szabo - Transportation Safety Board	Cathy Leahy – CRD (recorder)

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair E. Stockill called the meeting to order at 2:00 and provided a territorial acknowledgment. There was a moment of silence for the tragedy in Tumbler Ridge, BC.

2. Roundtable Introductions

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented by consensus.

4. Adoption of Minutes of November 6, 2025

The minutes were approved as presented by consensus.

5. Invited Presentations

a. Capital Region Emergency Service Telecommunications

A. Marston (General Manager) gave a presentation on Capital Region Emergency Service Telecommunications (CREST), which links 50 emergency response agencies across southern Vancouver Island, including local police, RCMP, military, fire, SAR, bylaw, BC Transit, BC Ambulance, St. John Ambulance, Legislative Police Services, UVic Security, etc. He described location of radio sites, redundancies built into the system so that communication isn’t lost during a major event, their new post-disaster building and large generator. They use the same system as ECOMM in Vancouver and are interconnected. Discussion ensued regarding the technical aspects of telecommunications and tiers of communication.

b. Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue

Alfie Klein (RCMSAR) gave a presentation on the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue – its mission, organizational overview, roles and responsibilities, locations, training, services offered and Next Generation 911. The CRTC has set a deadline of March 31, 2027 for all public safety agencies to transition to ESInet Next Gen 9-1-1

(Emergency Services IP Networks). ESInets replace traditional copper-based systems with modern, high-capacity IP networks, improving speed, interoperability and data capabilities in “real time.” It’s a private network and promises significant advances to increase public safety.

There was also discussion of Public Safety Broadband (Band 14) network for first responders and public safety personnel. The US went live three years ago with Broadband through AT&T, but progress in Canada has stalled. Mr. Klein emphasized the need for a dedicated cellular public network for first responders/public safety agencies across Canada.

6. Networking Break – 3:05-3:15 pm

7. New Business

(a) Fortis BC Natural Gas Company – Jerid Letchford provided an overview of the Fortis BC natural gas line system, describing where the gas originates, the path it takes to get to southern Vancouver Island, controls to stop off gas in an emergency, backups in place for the single gas supply to the Island. There are two weeks of storage in Ladysmith; if damage to pipeline is south of Ladysmith, we don’t have gas.

Fortis is considering what would happen if there’s an earthquake/major line disruption. How long would it take to get gas to critical customers (i.e., hospitals, warming centres)? How would they mobilize repair teams? Possible transportation issues with BC Ferries or BC Transit (some ferries/buses run on LNG-CNG).

Due to time constraints, the presentation ended. Mr. Letchford is welcome to return to a future meeting for more discussion.

(b) Planning topics and presentations of interest for 2026 meetings – Please reach out to Kae, Erin, Corey or Bruce with ideas for future speakers/presentations.

(c) Q2 meeting location (May 14, 2026) – If you’re interested in hosting the next meeting, contact Kae Yee Tsai or Erin Stockill.

Roundtable Discussion

- **CRD (C. Anderson)** – Informed everyone of upcoming GIS for Emergency Management course on March 4 at 10 am.
- **EMCR (S. Weber)** – Recent reorganization has created some new divisions. Also, EMCR VICC is now part of the south coast PREOC; merged with the team in Surrey.
- **Fortis (M. Ferreira)** – No report.
- **BC Hydro (S. Storey)** – No report.
- **Saanich Police (M. Cawsey)** – Interoperability and redundancy of systems is important. Looking at getting satellite phones for major events. Have been requesting a prioritized cellular network for first responders for a long time; gets stalled at different levels.

- **University of Victoria (R. Johns)** – Working our way through emergency objectives for 2026. They have 800 ppl on campus with a variety of emergency roles. EOC training and exercises are coming up.
- **Red Cross (R. Bardak)** – Red Cross has had a lot of reorganization. Working on potential agreements with some Vancouver Island municipalities for contract ESS providers.
- **CREST (A. Marston)** – Please send any questions for CREST to E. Stockill to forward to him.
- **Transportation Safety Board (M. Szabo)** – No report.
- **JTFP (J. O’Higgins-Wilson)** – No report.
- **District of Oak Bay (J. Schenk)** – No report.
- **CRD (J. Carvill)** – No report.
- **St. John Ambulance (M. Dussault)** – If you’re running a physical exercise and need assistance from St. John Ambulance, contact him. Reminded everyone of the Regional Emergency Preparedness Fair on Sunday, May 3.
- **39 Service Battalion (Capt. Beasley)** – There’s traction for a proposed brigade exercise on the gulf islands but it likely won’t occur until 2027. They could provide a meeting room for next RECAC meeting.
- **Island Equipment Owners Association (W. Watt)** – Members are individual companies; no oversight of communications. Curious to explore how they would communicate in emergency situations. Will ask members which radio companies they use. She and J. Letchford (Fortis) will connect re contractors’ breakfast, joining meetings to discuss smaller-scale equipment in construction zones and the immediate impact.
- **City of Langford (L. Archibald)** – No report. Could potentially invite Fortis to do an exercise in Langford. Would be good for them to consider a CRD Watershed exercise, too.
- **District of Saanich (E. Stockill)** – Saanich is hosting an Emergency Preparedness Speaker Series on March 3 at 7 pm with guest speaker Russell Bardak from Red Cross. Reminded everyone of RECAC’s importance for networking and building relationships.
- **Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (B. Clark)** – No report.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 pm by consensus.

Next Meeting: May 14, 2026 (in person)