Bowen Island isn’t more dangerous than other communities in BC – we all face similar risks. But Bowen faces some unique challenges in an emergency due to the isolated nature of an island.

We made this guide so you can find the emergency information you need in one place; use it to prepare an emergency plan and an emergency kit. In a large-scale emergency, be prepared to look after yourself and your family for at least 72 hours, and ideally longer. In these conditions, emergency workers may need extra time to reach you. By better preparing yourself and your family, you are helping to make Bowen a more resilient community.

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Potential Risks on Bowen

Fire

Structure Fires

On Bowen, structure fires occur about twice a year, and have the potential to spread quickly and easily from house to house because of vegetation or density. Responding to isolated areas and properties with steep topography can be difficult. While Bowen’s volunteer Fire Department has a good range of apparatus to address these issues, the Fire Department encourages development in higher risk areas to incorporate sprinkler systems. Make sure you have working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide monitors in your home.

Helpful Hint

Have your fire extinguishers serviced at least annually and make sure everyone in the house knows how to use them. Visit the Fire Department’s annual open house in July to service extinguishers and practise putting out fires.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fires

A wildland urban interface (WUI) fire is a forest fire that spreads to human settlements and critical infrastructure. As evidenced in Fort McMurray in 2016 and BC in 2017, these fires can be extremely destructive. Overall, Bowen is classified as having a “moderate to high fire risk profile.”

If you’d like more information, search for the “Community Wildfire Protection Plan” on our website.

Make sure you and your visitors are careful with cigarettes, and respect camp and beach fire bans and restrictions.
**FireSmart Program**

FireSmart is an initiative to help property owners understand the ways in which wildfire might threaten structures and property located in, and close to, forested and wildland areas, and the steps individuals and communities can take to reduce the susceptibility of buildings and property to fire.

Protecting your home from wildfire starts with simple actions. Whether you are doing regular yard maintenance or making large scale changes during renovations or landscaping, you can make choices that will help protect your home from wildfire.

Learn more at bowenislandmunicipality.ca/fire-smart

**Helpful Hint**

Protecting your property from fire does not mean removing all your trees – there are many things you can do to make your home more resistant to wildfire. Removing overhanging branches or pruning trees up from the ground can make a big difference.

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1. Flames  
2. Embers + Sparks  
3. Heat  
4. Trees  
5. Logs/Twigs/Leaves  
6. Structures

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**Why homes burn**
Earthquake

It's not a matter of if we will have an earthquake, but when.

Bowen has many neighbourhoods with only one road in and out. That means homes could be isolated from the rest of the island after an earthquake because of damaged or blocked roads. You might have difficulties or delays in receiving assistance from fire and/or ambulance. You might be unable to reach out for assistance. And you may have to depend on stored supplies. Transportation by water access could also be limited or impossible after a major earthquake because docks are damaged.

Downed infrastructure (such as power lines and cell towers) could also add to increased isolation during and after an earthquake. You could be without help for at least 72 hours, or as long as two weeks.

Knowing what you can do and how to respond can make you, your family and your home safer. We’ll share some suggestions on what to do during an earthquake later in this guide.

Helpful Hint

A Rapid Damage Assessment course can show you how to assess damage to wood-frame, masonry and concrete buildings following a disaster. Contact the Emergency Program Coordinator to find out when the next free course is offered on Bowen Island.

For more information on risks on Bowen, see the Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment at bowenislandmunicipality.ca/emergency-program
Extended Power Outage

Bowen Island has experienced power outages that last as long as days or weeks at a time. If an earthquake happened during the winter and there was no power for a week, would you be able to stay in your home? Consider secondary sources of heat, power and water and make sure you have a plan!

Helpful Hint

Remember that most cars have batteries and radios. You can use your car to charge your phone or get information via radio if you need to.

Marine Hazardous Materials Spill

Hazardous materials spills, depending on their size and area, could have a serious environmental and socio-economic impact on Bowen Island. The extent of this impact depends on the substance released, the amount and proximity to inhabited areas, prevailing wind and tidal conditions. If you see a hazardous material spill:

Do:

- Call the Marine Spill reporting line: 1-800-663-3456
- Avoid/isolate the affected area; leave the cleanup operations to authorities and trained responders
- Let your family and neighbours know about the spill and to avoid the area

Don’t:

- Do not walk, swim, scuba dive, etc. in the affected area
- Do not fish or collect slow moving species (such as crabs) as they are the most affected
- Do not attempt to clean up the spill yourself
How to Prepare

Prepare yourself for more than 72 hours! During a disaster, phone, gas, electrical and water services may be disrupted. Roads could be blocked, stores closed and gas stations out-of-service. You and your family could be on your own for several days while emergency responders work to save lives and manage the aftermath. It may be weeks before infrastructure, utilities and essential services are restored.

Are you prepared to cope?

Personal Emergency Plan

Make a master list of family and emergency numbers, and ensure everyone in your household has a copy. Pick a meeting place, plan for your kids, know where to get information, prepare your home and stock supplies and know how to turn off your utilities.

For more information on what should be in your emergency plan, see gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC You’ll find fill-in-the-blank plans for households, small businesses and tourism operators.

Helpful Hint

If you have children commuting off-island to school, make sure everyone in the family knows where to go if they can’t return home immediately after a disaster.
Personal Emergency Supplies

Creating a home emergency kit doesn't need to take long. Just follow the basic list below to get started and enhance it over time.

- Food (ready to eat) and water
- Flashlight and batteries
- AM/FM radio
- Seasonal clothing and blanket
- Cellular phone charger
- Pen and paper, and a copy of your emergency plan
- Toiletries such as a toothbrush and soap
- Small first-aid kit
- Cash in small bills
- Whistle

In addition, remember to add personal items, such as prescription medications, an extra pair of eyeglasses and copies of important documents like passports, birth certificates and insurance papers. Always make sure emergency kits are in easily accessible locations.

Helpful Hint

Water is critical for survival: You will probably need about 4 litres of water per person per day, but more is required in hot weather or if you are young, sick or nursing. Consider how and where to store water, hidden sources of water in your home (such as the hot water or toilet tanks) and how to capture and filter additional water.
Pet and Animal Preparedness

Pets are part of the family – they need an emergency plan, too! Write down information (such as current medications and microchip numbers) for all of your pets and have a recent photo of each. Pack everything you need for your pets in a grab-and-go bag:

- Waterproof backpack for supplies
- Food and water dishes (consider collapsible)
- Leash/ muzzle/ harness
- Treats, a toy and a small towel
- Pet carrier
- Copy of vaccination records
- Pet food for at least three days
- Medications and basic pet first aid supplies
- Water for at least three days
- Photos of your pets with you and on their own

Don't forget species specific items:

- Cats - You’ll need a small container of cat litter and plastic bags
- Reptiles - You may need a portable battery-operated heat lamp
- Dogs - You’ll need a roll of poop bags
- Birds - You might need cuttlebone and grit

If you have large animals (horses or livestock), make sure you’ve trained your horse to load calmly into a trailer before a disaster. Consider voluntarily removing them from the area when an evacuation ALERT is issued, before an evacuation ORDER is carried out.
Helpful Hint

Make sure you have someone close by prepared to help with your pets if you can’t get home in an emergency.

The Bowen Island Notification System (BowENS) can quickly and effectively notify residents in the event of disasters or events that may impact your safety and well-being, such as earthquakes, wildfires or hazardous spills. The system may also be used to give you important instructions, such as evacuation information, shelter-in-place instructions or neighbourhood notifications.

Helpful Hint

Make sure you and your family members are all enrolled in BowENS. For more information, visit bowenislandmunicipality.ca/ens

Communications

After a disaster, you will want to confirm that family and friends are safe. It may be difficult to make local phone calls, as phone lines or cellular towers may be damaged, and there may be network congestion. There are steps you can take to better prepare for this potential reality.
How to Prepare

Before an emergency:

- Subscribe to BowENS! Important information will be sent to residents using this system.
- Save family contact information in your cell phone contacts, and keep hard copies in your emergency kits in your car, house and at work.
- Keep cellular phones fully charged and add extra batteries and chargers to all emergency kits.
- Make sure you have a family communication plan including what methods will be used in what order, and an out-of-province contact. Long distance calls may get through when local calls can’t.
- If you have a landline, keep a corded phone around for use in power outages.
- Have a hand-crank or battery-operated radio to monitor news reports.

Help Us Find You

House numbers save critical time in an emergency.

If you’ve driven around Bowen Island, you know that some houses can be hard to find. Remember that sometimes our first responders may be from elsewhere or are not familiar with the island. If you want them to find your house, you have to help them out! Make sure your house number is clearly displayed at the road. Bowen has a bylaw requiring house numbers, and Bowen Rotary offers signs at a low cost. Contact Bowen Rotary via rotarynumber@gmail.com to order yours.
During an Emergency

Evacuation

Some emergencies, such as wildfire, may make staying in your home dangerous. In such cases, it may be safer for you to evacuate the area and go to family or friends, or to an emergency Reception Centre. For more information on Reception Centres, see page 16.

In BC, there are different types of evacuations used in different circumstances (e.g. tactical, voluntary and mandatory), and the type of evacuation will affect the notification residents receive. Understand the stages of evacuation to know when it’s time for you to go.

**Evacuation ALERT**

You may be at risk, so get your grab-and-go bag ready and be prepared to leave at a moment’s notice. If you leave before or during this stage, it’s called voluntary evacuation.

**Evacuation ORDER**

You are at risk and need to leave the area immediately. This will be enforced by the RCMP and other officials. Residents are strongly encouraged to register at a Reception Centre to let officials know they are safe and connect them with services (such as food and lodging) if needed. In the event of an evacuation ORDER, impacted residents will be notified by RCMP and first responders knocking on their door, and may or may not receive notice prior to that.

**Evacuation RESCIND**

All is currently safe and you can return home, but keep informed and be ready for other evacuation alerts and orders.
While we hope to be able to give notice prior to an evacuation, this is not always possible depending on the nature of the event. In the event of a tactical evacuation, no notice of an evacuation ORDER will be given, and residents will have only moments to leave their homes; hopefully this reality highlights for you the need to be prepared in advance.

Listen carefully to instructions from first responders, then act quickly. If you’re accessing the information online or via media (t.v., radio), make sure that the evacuation order applies to your address. If you need to evacuate, follow instructions provided by emergency personnel.

Evacuation routes cannot be pre-identified because each emergency situation is unique. You will be directed to the safest route by emergency responders during the emergency.

Things to remember:

- Get your grab-and-go bag (don’t forget medications, glasses and cash)
- Turn off power (at the breaker panel) and water at the main line
- Secure your home: lock doors, close windows
- Take your pets
- Forward your home phone to your cellular phone
- Follow instructions provided by emergency officials
- Register with Emergency Support Services at a Reception Centre
- Take your pets

**Shelter-in-Place**

You may be asked to “shelter-in-place” during certain types of emergencies, such as the release of a hazardous substance. Shelter-in-place means stay inside and seal off doors, windows and vents until any danger has passed. Instructions
to shelter-in-place are usually provided for durations of a few hours, not days or weeks. Select a room where you will shelter-in-place and prepare a small shelter-in-place kit.

**Helpful Hint**

Don’t use kitchen or bathroom fans, air conditioners, fireplaces or dryers when sheltering in place. To learn more about how to shelter-in-place, visit PreparedBC at [gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC](http://gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC)

**Communicating in an Emergency**

After a disaster, you may not hear from anyone for the first several hours, and it could take up to 24 hours or longer for anyone to access a phone line. Stay calm, and trust that your family is following your emergency plan.

During an emergency:

- Text, email and social media are less likely to experience major interruptions and require less battery power than a phone call.
- Keep calls short to reduce network congestion – report how you are, where you are, and where you plan to go.
- DO NOT CALL 911 unless a life is at stake.
- Check the municipal website and social media feeds for updates.
- Don’t waste battery life on anything other than what is necessary – no gaming, no apps, no videos. Put your phone on power save mode.
- If you have an answering machine, update it with your status and location.
- Expect communication gaps – even texts may be delayed.
Earthquake Safety

During an earthquake you need to:

Wait 60 seconds after the shaking stops before you move, and be prepared for aftershocks. Stay in your house if you’re able to, but if it has sustained considerable damage and poses a risk, leave immediately. Put out small fires and address minor injuries. Only phone 911 if you have a life-threatening emergency. Don’t drive unless you have an emergency. There are many steps you can take to prepare yourself, your family and your home for an earthquake.

Search “Prepared BC Earthquake and Tsunami Guide” online for more information.

What to expect during an earthquake

Small or moderate earthquakes

- These can last only a few seconds and represent no emergency risk.
- Ceiling lights may move and some minor rattling of objects may occur in your home.
- You may feel a slight quiver under your feet if you are outside.
- If you are close to its source, you may hear a loud bang followed by shaking.

Large earthquakes

- These can last up to several minutes and constitute a natural disaster if its epicentre is near a densely populated area, or if its magnitude is sufficiently large for the region.
- The ground or floor will move, perhaps violently.
- Whether far away or close to the source, you will probably feel shaking followed by a rolling motion, much like being at sea.
- If you are far away from the source, you might see swaying buildings or hear a roaring sound.
Volunteer Organizations

Before, during and after an emergency, Bowen Island relies on volunteers to provide critical services.

Bowen Island Fire Department

The Bowen Island Fire Department provides fire suppression, medical response and fire prevention education to the Municipality. BIM has a full-time Fire Chief and a part-time Deputy Fire Chief and Training Officer. The rest of the Fire Department (approximately 30 members) are all volunteers and participate in weekly training sessions.

To learn more or get involved, please visit the webpage at bowenislandmunicipality.ca/fire-department or contact the Fire Chief.

Volunteer fire fighters use their hazard lights for an Emergency Call-Out

When you’re driving on island, check your rear-view mirror frequently. Our volunteer fire fighters use their hazard lights to let you know when they are heading to the fire hall to respond to an emergency call-out. All fire fighters have Bowen Island Volunteer Fire Department license plate borders on their vehicles.

Please pull over when it’s safe to allow our volunteers to pass – yielding could save somebody’s life.

Emergency Support Services (ESS)

Emergency Support Services (formerly Emergency Social Service) helps people who have had to evacuate their homes. ESS can assist with food, clothing and lodging needs for 72 hours, while you figure out where you can receive support (insurance claim, relatives, etc.). ESS also provides reunification services for separated families, and may provide pet care, child care, emotional support and other specialized services.
0. Collins Hall, BI United Church | 1120 Miller Rd
1. Royal Canadian Legion #160 | 1267 Scarborough Rd
2. Catholic Church (St Gerards) | 1111 Miller Rd
3. BI Community School | 1041 Mt Gardner Rd
4. Tir Na Nog | 585 Rivendell Dr
5. The Gallery | 430 Bowen Island Trunk Rd
6. Xenia Retreat | 782 Smith Rd
7. BI Lodge | 380 Cardena Rd
8. Rivendell Retreat Centre | 600-601 Rivendell Dr
9. Tunstall Bay Clubhouse | 1654 Tunstall Blvd
A Reception Centre is a safe place where evacuees can receive information, assistance and access to services. On Bowen Island, over 10 different organizations have offered to allow us to use their facilities as Reception Centres when needed. A map of these is available on the BIM website.

When you are evacuated, the evacuation notice sent through BowENS will tell you which Reception Centre has been activated.

ESS is a provincial program run by local volunteers. Over 5000 people across BC volunteer with ESS. To learn more or to get involved, visit the ESS webpage at Bowenislandmunicipality.ca/ess or contact Bowen’s ESS Director by calling Municipal Hall.

Neighbourhood Emergency Response Persons (NERPs)

When disaster strikes, the most immediate help may come from those around you. Building relationships with your neighbours today will mean a better response and faster recovery. NERPs encourage their neighbours to be personally prepared, work to prepare their neighbourhood for emergencies, and share with their neighbours relevant information (for example, free training opportunities). To become a NERP or find the one closest to you, contact the Emergency Program Coordinator.

Emergency Communications Team

The Emergency Communications Team is made up of qualified amateur radio operators who receive additional training in emergency management. The team primarily uses VHF UHF radios and is able to communicate across British Columbia using amateur radio. They’re also able to send emails via radio.

For more information or to volunteer, visit the webpage at Bowenislandmunicipality.ca/bears or contact the Emergency Program Coordinator.
Community Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Program

An AED is a small, lightweight and portable electronic device that delivers an electric shock through the chest wall of a person whose heart has stopped beating. It is proven to be one of the most important tools in saving the life of someone suffering sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are designed to be easy for anyone to use, and volunteers across the island help to ensure that Bowen’s public AEDs are always ready.

Bowen Rotary has installed over 15 AEDs in publicly accessible places on the island. Check out the AED map to find the closest AED to your home, work or school.

**Helpful hint**

If you have first aid training, download the PulsePoint app on your phone to be notified when someone near you is in cardiac arrest.

### Automated External Defibrillator Locations

1. Hood Point
2. Hood Point West
3. Royal Canadian Legion
4. Upper Millers Landing
5. Lower Millers Landing
6. Deep Bay
7. Bowen Island Library
8. General Store
9. Cates Pharmacy
10. Municipal Hall
11. GYM - Artisan Square
12. Rivendell Retreat Centre
13. Teen Centre 650 Carter Road
14. Knick-Knack-Nook
15. Spy Glass Road
16. Captains Way Road
17. Olivia Road at the corner of Emily Road
18. Emily Road
19. Arbutus Point Road
Out-of-Area Contact

After an earthquake or other major disaster, local phone service may be limited, so you should arrange with someone to be your out-of-area contact.

Choose someone that:

- Is outside of your area
- Is away from BC/US coastal areas
- Has voicemail or an answering machine

Ensure that every family member knows that after a disaster, they should listen to the radio/TV for phone use instructions. Then, phone your out-of-area contact to say how and where they are and what their plans are. Keep calls short and arrange to call back at a specified time, if possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>________________________________</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City/Province</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Number</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Helpful hint

Download printable Emergency Contact Information cards from our website and give copies to each family member to carry with them at all times.
Meeting Places

At the time of a disaster, your family may not be together. It is important to choose family meeting places.

Remember that bridges may be out and roads may be blocked, so carefully choose your meeting places with access in mind.

Pick places that are:

- Easy to identify
- Reachable by foot
- In an accessible, open area

Consider where each of you will likely be at different times and on different days.

Working Daytime __________________________________________________________

Working Evening _________________________________________________________

Non-Working Daytime ____________________________________________________

Non-Working Evening ____________________________________________________
Contact Information

Make sure you are signed up for BowENS to receive the most up-to-date and relevant information directly to your phone or email.

bowenislandmunicipality.ca/ens

Bowen Island Municipality
bowenislandmunicipality.ca

Emergency Program Coordinator
604-947-4255

After Hours Public works emergencies
(road, sewer, water systems)
604-834-0770

Fire Department non-emergency phone
604-947-9324

Bowen Island RCMP non-emergency line
604-947-0516

Emergency Support Services
bowenislandmunicipality.ca/ess
gov.bc.ca/emergencysocialservices
604-947-4255

Evacuation Alerts and Orders
emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca

Wildfire Status
bcwildfire.ca
1-888-336-7378

Report a Marine Spill
1-800-663-3456

Public Weather Alerts
(Environment Canada)
weather.gc.ca

Air Quality Health Index
bcairquality.ca
(Environment Canada)

PreparedBC
gov.bc.ca.PreparedBC