



A PUBLICATION OF THE YUKON EMERGENCY MEASURES ORGANIZATION

emo NewsLetter

FALL 2005

Season's Greetings From EMO

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On the weekend of October 14 to 16, EMO hosted the Search and Rescue Team Leader Workshop in Whitehorse. Members of the RCMP and search and rescue associations from across the territory took part in an intensive weekend with trainer Al Ekholm and EMO training coordinator, Ron Adams.

Pitching in after Katrina

I watched on TV as the events of Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. I'm not sure why I felt compelled to go—I just did. I tell people about a video clip of a father stranded on the roof with his wife and children huddled around him, frantically signaling a helicopter. Spray-painted on the roof was a message asking for help for his diabetic wife. As my wife is a diabetic, this struck a chord with me. I asked myself, "If I was there would anyone come for me?"

I searched the Internet and located the Harris County Volunteer Corps of Houston, Texas. Over the phone, I offered my assistance and a verbal resume: I work for the Penticton Indian Band as a Youth Worker, and six years experience working with the local Search and Rescue Unit as a Team Leader and First Responder.

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Katrina

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A few minutes later I received a call from Houston; they asked me to be there in three days. I received much more than a nod of approval from my manager and the Chief of the band. When they found out I was paying for my own expenses they began chipping in out of their own pockets.

A Houston family volunteered to take me in and lend me a vehicle while I was there. They were some of the friendliest people I've met. They gave me maps and a crash course on being in the fourth largest city in the US. My host tossed me the keys to his Jeep Grand Cherokee, winked and said, "I don't know how you boys drive up North, but in Texas we drive on the right-hand side of the road."

There was a great deal of energy outside the Astrodome. People with hotel placards were registering folks on the spot, some were trying to get into the Astrodome and others were trying to leave. It was amazing to grasp the size of the relocation which involved the Astrodome, Reliant Center and Arena, and the Trade and Convention Center. When I arrived, there was an estimated 33,000 people inside. Because of

my background, I was placed in a special isolation unit with 150 children and 30 elderly people, all detached from their families.

Non-essential resources were scarce. We spent most of the first day playing games like hopscotch using masking tape on concrete floors. Some of the children were non-verbal, others were clutchy, and some kept to themselves. The elderly appeared to manage much better. One lady in her late 80s waited so patiently, and the nurses suggested she may be suffering from a dementia. She sat in her wheelchair leaning over her cane, with her wig slightly askew. On the second day, some Red Cross volunteers escorted in a family who were searching for a relative. An excited voice cried out, "Grandma!" and a family of about 16 people jogged across the room to this lady in the wheelchair. They sang and cried and prayed out loud.

Other days we spent trolling the Astrodome with children in tow looking for parents, in some cases because they were too young to give the names of their parents. Walking through the buildings with children sometimes turned up results, and we would

escort parent and child to the Child Protection Workers.

Some of the strongest images were the rows of cots that seemed to stretch forever and the Astrodome backstop covered with messages trying to contact loved ones. But overall, my strongest images were the people—so many were lost, upset and confused. I was really surprised that so many took the time to say thanks, and I've never been hugged so much in my life. Folks got a kick out of my Team Canada hat, and many commented about how thankful they were to see someone travel that far to help. I met other Canadians from Halifax, Montreal and Edmonton. One woman ran up to me and asked if I was from Canada, and when I said yes she began crying and told me how a SAR group from Canada had helped her family out. It felt pretty good to hear her story, and it felt good to be part of such a good experience.

Being there taught me a number of things—that no matter where you are people have the same basic needs, and everyone has an obligation to be prepared. Teaching children their names, parents names and contact numbers early is vital, and having enough food and

water for three days or longer should be a priority in every household. But most of all, it reminded me that sometimes we need to take of each other, and yes, I believe that someone would come for me.

Matthew Baran lives with his family in Penticton. His father is our own Larry Baran, Faro's CAO and EMO coordinator.



The Yukon's Al Alcock volunteered with the Canadian Red Cross in the aftermath

of Hurricane Katrina. For three weeks Alcock was stationed in Hammond, Louisiana, a small town that was spared the brunt of the storm but doubled in size with misplaced people. Alcock worked directly in client care for a few days, but the American Red Cross quickly recognized his experience and he was asked to serve as Shelters Manager Coordinator for Hammond for the rest of his deployment. Alcock brought home wonderful memories and stories full of joy and sadness, and he says it was a challenging job he is eager to do again. Now retired, Alcock has worked with SAR and the military for many years and now serves as fire chief of the Ibex Valley Volunteer Fire Department.



Kluane Wardens Recognized for SAR

At SARSCENE 2005 held in Charlottetown, P.E.I., two parks wardens from Haines Junction received national recognition for their search and rescue efforts. Kluane National Park wardens Rick Staley and Lloyd Freese were awarded a 2005 Search and Rescue Certificate of Achievement from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSRS).

NSRS executive director Joan Murray said both Staley and Freese deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

"Rick Staley's hard work and dedication to search and rescue in working with

the schools to promote avalanche awareness and mountain travel safety and in organizing training sessions for the Kluane Search and Rescue Group," said Murray.


"Lloyd Freese is one among many whose commitment to search and rescue continues to inspire new generations of volunteers. It is the dedication and record of achievement of all those working in the search and rescue field that we honour with these awards."

Both men have twice been recognized with honorary testimonials from



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the Royal Canadian Humane Association and

twice with Parks Canada Awards of Excellence. 

The Art of Fire

Artist Sandra LaPlante recently presented EMO with one of her paintings of a forest fire. Sandra knows a lot about wildfire – she is married to longtime Wildland Fire crew member Lloyd LaPlante.



Emergency Mobile Hospital Training

Anyone who has ever watched an episode of the TV series M.A.S.H. will recognize some of the equipment that makes up Yukon's Emergency Mobile Hospital Unit. From the portable overhead examination lights, anesthetic machine and canvas stretchers to the portable generators and the x-ray and laboratory equipment, the set-up is reminiscent of the Korean War. Though the components may appear to be vintage, in fact they're contemporary and ready for operational use.

Last April, a group of Yukon government staff received training on the set-up and mobilization of the 50-bed Emergency Mobile Hospital Unit which is located in Whitehorse. Participants included Todd Pinkess, Don Duncan, Jim Smith, Beth Henderson, Jean Kapala, Tony Grabowski

and Nora Trombley. The Emergency Mobile Hospital Unit is only one of the components of the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) headquartered in Ottawa. All the units are packed for long-term storage and crated for easy transport by truck, train or plane.

The Office of Emergency Services, one of the specialized offices of the Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, manages the National Emergency Stockpile System which includes medical and pharmaceutical supplies and other items like cots and blankets. The Yukon



Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the care and management of all the NESS items in the territory.

After two days of training to assemble and disassemble the various pieces of medical gear—like the autoclave, the x-ray machine, and all the operating room equipment—the trainees hosted an Open House on April 14 in the Thompson Centre. About 175 visitors toured the Emergency Mobile Hospital, starting from the reception and inquiry desk, through triage, x-ray and laboratory services, and onto the pre-op ward, operating room and finally the general ward. The Mobile Feeding Unit was also on display under the supervision of

Emergency Social Services to demonstrate the emergency supplies that are available for meal preparation.

The purpose of this training is to ensure that there will be trained personnel ready to coordinate the transportation and set-up of the Emergency Mobile Hospital Unit in the event that these supplies are required to augment the existing health care system.

Submitted by Yukon Dept. of Health and Social Services.



Yukon VHF Marine Distress System

For decades there has been a great need to provide basic marine communications to serve the growing numbers of boaters on Yukon lakes. While this type of service has existed for many years in Canada's southern waterways, a marine communications system has never been implemented in the Yukon despite fatal incidents each year on our lakes.

The Yukon Marine Distress System was first conceived in 1992 by a non-profit community group, the Yukon Amateur Radios Association (YARA). Since 1978, YARA has been very active in providing safety and data communications for large community events and YARA continues to work with EMO to assist in emergency communications.

Given YARA's experience and existing mountaintop radio installations, in the early 1990s they began to overlay a marine distress system on their network. Through partner support and fundraising activities over the past 11 years, YARA has succeeded in installing four mountaintop radio sites and one at Action Answering Ltd., a local business that volunteers its answering services.

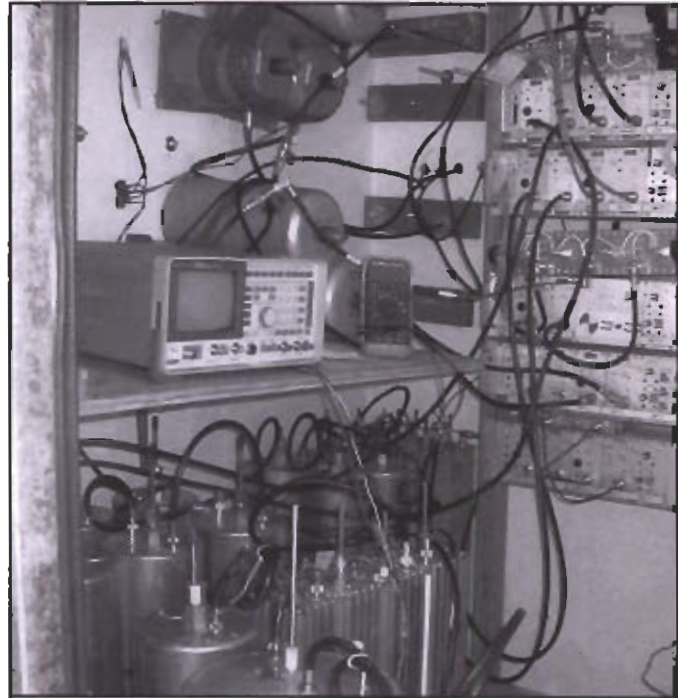
YARA's network now

covers most Yukon lakes that are popular with boaters. For the public, marine radios are affordable and readily available in local stores. The Daniels and Motorola equipment is also used by the Canadian and U.S. Coast Guard. Solar and wind-powered sites are located on Montana Mountain (Channel 16), Hayes Peak (Channel 09), Pilot Mountain (Channel 20), Mt. Decoeli, (Channel 23) and at Action Answering Ltd. in downtown Whitehorse.

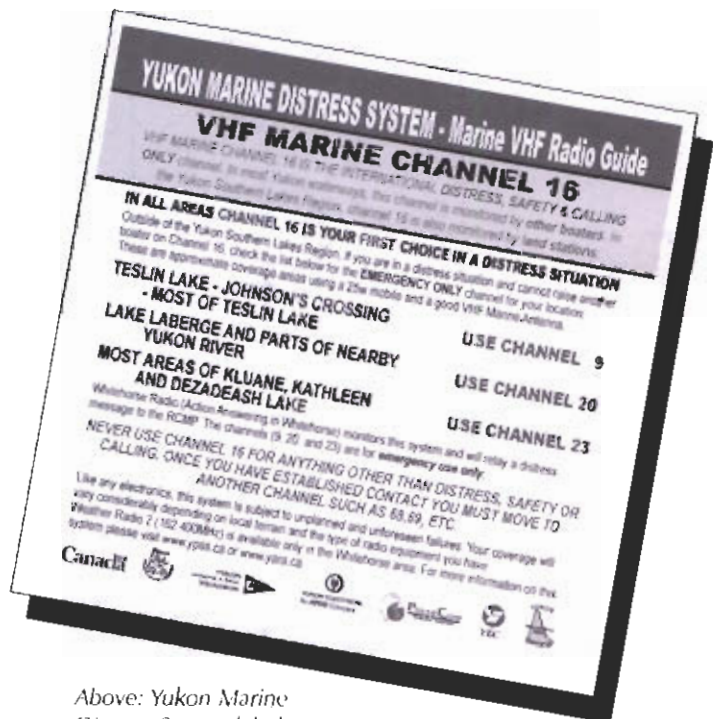
Altogether these radio sites across southern Yukon span 500 km east to west and 250 km north to south. The system provides a direct link on standard international VHF marine channels from distressed boaters to a volunteer dispatch service, with relays to search and rescue personnel who can use the system directly from their own radios.

Thanks to our community partners:

Yukon Emergency Measures Organization
 Yukon Power Squadron
 Action Answering Ltd
 Yukon Forest Service
 Department of Fisheries and Oceans
 Yukon Electrical Company
 Yukon Energy Corporation
 RCMP (British Columbia)
 B.C. Ministry of Forests
 Many community volunteers.



YARA's Mt. Decoeli site (7,800 ft) for Marine Channel 23 west of Haines Junction.



Above: Yukon Marine Distress System label.



New Whitehorse



In December 2004, six members of Whitehorse District Search and Rescue decided to formalize their individual search dog training pursuits by establishing a SAR dog group. On February 14 of this year, 'Search and Rescue Dogs Whitehorse'

was officially registered as a Yukon society.

The idea behind a registered search dog group was to improve training by working together to achieve established standards. SARDW also developed a Code of Ethics which

reflects a cooperative and professional approach to training and conduct. To become a member of SARDW, a handler must be a member of Whitehorse District Search and Rescue, and then be unanimously approved by the SARDW executive.

SARDW has chosen to train to RCMP standards for area search dog and handler teams, while the two members with CARDA certified avalanche dogs will continue to train to CARDA standards for their profile. Three SARDW members

Dog SAR Group

already have validated search dogs, two through CARDA and one through the local RCMP.

Obedience work has been a main focus of the group. Training a dog to range, follow human scent to its source, and to alert is one part of dog search work, but RCMP and CARDA standards also require the dog to have a high level of obedience.

Training the handler is usually more work than training the dog! The handler has to design a search pattern based on terrain, wind, weather, and even the time of day, among other things. The handler has to be able to move quickly across terrain while watching and directing the dog, reading the compass, taking note of ground features and being aware of grid location, which can involve counting steps. Dog and handler teams also need to consider evidence preservation and search protocols.

Canine detection work is broad and complex and can include avalanche, tracking, disaster

(rubble), air scenting, urban, cadaver, fine search (small objects) and other profiles. As civilian volunteers, dog handlers have to choose a profile and work to become competent in that discipline. Training and practice are ongoing – teams never reach a point where they are 'done training.' Search work with a dog sometimes feels like art and sport, as well as being a potentially valuable service to the community.

The members of SARDW have each chosen a profile to become proficient in, and they hope to add to the tools in the Yukon's search

and rescue toolbox.

Thanks to Susan Rogan and members of SARDW for their newsletter contribution (Debbie Brewster, Rosanne

Conrad, Cynthia Friedrikson, Gail Nardi, Stephan Poirier, Susan Rogan). ❁





Above: Haines Junction community members—SAR rep, CAFN Municipal Dept., Rangers, Youth & community members talk about issues in and around Haines Junction



Above: Break Time — Community representatives — MLA Garry McRobb

Below: Workshop Facilitator — YTC's Erin Deacon & Presenter AJ Beaver — Thanks for all your help!



Above: Rose Kushniruk, CAFN EMO Coordinator



Above: Champagne & Mendenhall Community people talk about emergency planning in their areas

Emergency Function in the Junction

At a general assembly, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations government was told by citizens that 'we live in a spruce beetle-infested forest, and we are concerned about fire and the safety of our communities.' Leaders were also told that emergency planning is important, and that CAFN should designate someone to initiate emergency planning for the First Nation.

Three years ago, CAFN community lands officer Rose Kushniruk was placed in charge of emergency planning. CAFN received assistance from Yukon EMO to get a planning process underway and has held a number of sessions with staff, chief, council

and citizens. CAFN now has emergency plans for six of its communities along with a CAFN Government Plan. The government plan does not take over responsibilities from existing emergency response agencies—it ensures that CAFN works alongside designated agencies and provides for extra care to CAFN citizens.

Last February, CAFN hosted a 2-day session on developing emergency plans followed by a 1-day session on forestry. Facilitated by Erin Deacon (Yukon EMO) and Rose Kushniruk (CAFN), the workshop brought together representatives from all six CAFN communities, emergency response

organizations, youth and elders.

The focus of the workshop was to build a community emergency plan, determine what resources are needed in CAFN communities, build awareness and educate people about what happens during an emergency. The workshop focused on forest fires and missing persons, the two main incidents to occur in our region.

The response was extremely positive, and members of the community had the chance to meet and work with many agencies that attended, including Rangers, SAR, RCMP, Haines Junction & Mendenhall Fire Depts,

Yukon EMO, Kluane National Park, the local school, airport, Yukon Electric, Trans North Helicopters, YG Fire Management and Social Services.

This workshop was made possible by the CAFN, the Community Development Fund and assistance from many emergency response agencies. CAFN has developed a step-by-step info sheet about its emergency planning experience that may assist other Yukon First Nations and communities. Contact Rose Kushniruk at CAFN to receive a copy; rkushniruk@cafn.ca (867) 634-4233.

Thanks to contributor Rose Kushniruk.



Exercise Log Cabin



Exercise Log Cabin at the White Pass summit on April 9-10, 2005 was an opportunity to deploy the Emergency Mobile Incident Command Post, to practice telecommunications systems, to share SAR Safety awareness with snowmobilers, skiers and other outdoor types, and for responding agencies (SAR, CASARA, RCMP and EMO) to network, liaise and practice teamwork.

Left: Sgt. Pat Egan and Bob Melanson, President of YARA. Right: Sgt. Pat Egan and Dan Boyd, Director of Protective Services

EMO Taskings

1-Jun-05	Training	SAR 2005 Yukon River Quest
5-Jan-05	Training	Fire Training Level 1
5-Jan-05	Training	Avalanche Training
7-Feb-05	Training	Rendezvous Participation
22-Feb-05	Training	Avalanche Transceivers
22-Feb-05	Training	SAR Haines Junction Avalanche Training
22-Feb-05	Training	SAR Haines Junction Dogs Avalanche Training
28-Feb-05	Incident	SAR Carcross Search in Carcross Area
5-Mar-05	Maintenance	YARA Battery Replacement & Repairs
5-Mar-05	Maintenance	SAR Whitehorse Vehicle Maintenance
5-Mar-05	Training	SAR Carcross Avalanche Course
5-Mar-05	Incident	SAR Whitehorse Search at Log Cabin
5-Mar-05	Training	SAR Log Cabin Exercise
5-Mar-05	Training	SAR Faro Spring Training Weekend
5-Apr-05	Incident	EMO Dawson High Water Levels
5-May-05	Maintenance	YARA Repair at Haines Junction
5-May-05	Maintenance	YARA Beaver Creek Simplex Installation
17-May-05	Incident	EMO Campbell Hwy Closure due to Flooding
18-May-05	Incident	EMO Liard/Watson Lake High Water Levels
20-May-05	Training	SAR Whitehorse Boat Relocation
25-May-05	Incident	EMO Teslin Lake High Water Levels
25-May-05	Training	SAR Faro Training Weekend
26-May-05	Training	SAR Teslin Boat Training
30-May-05	Training	YARA Chilkat Pass Bike Race
10-May-05	Maintenance	SAR Faro Boat Repairs
2-Jun-05	Training	SAR Haines Junction Boat Safety Training
6-Jun-05	Training	SAR Faro Boat Safety Examinations
9-Jun-05	Training	YARA Canada Day Demonstration
13-Jun-05	Training	SAR YARA Marine Distress System Ceremonies
13-Jun-05	Incident	EMO Tagish Lake High Water Levels
14-Jun-05	Training	TARA Klwane Chilkat Bike Race
16-Jun-05	Maintenance	SAR Carcross Boat Maintenance
17-Jun-05	Maintenance	YARA Faro Repeater Maintenance
4-Jul-05	Incident	SAR Faro May 29 Search at Pelly River
11-Jul-05	Training	SAR Faro Canada Day Parade

11-Jul-05	Maintenance	SAR Faro Boat Repairs
19-Jul-05	Maintenance	YARA Mt. Berdoe Repeater Repairs
22-Jul-05	Incident	SAR Carmacks Rescue Person
26-Jul-05	Maintenance	YARA Mt. Bennett Maintenance
27-Jul-05	Incident	SAR Whitehorse Search for Missing Persons
27-Jul-05	Incident	SAR Carcross Rescue at Spirit Lake
1-Aug-05	Incident	EMO Yukon Flood Supplies
4-Aug-05	Maintenance	YARA Mt. Bennett Maintenance
8-Aug-05	Incident	SAR Carcross Search at Tagish Lake
9-Aug-05	Maintenance	YARA Mt. Bennett Repeater Relocation
22-Aug-05	Incident	EMO Medical Evacuation at Old Crow
29-Aug-05	Incident	SAR Whitehorse Search at Lake Laberge
30-Sep-05	Training	Annual Klondike Road Relay
1-Sep-05	Maintenance	SAR Whitehorse Maintenance
1-Sep-05	Training	SAR Boat Training, Pelly River, Johnson Lake
7-Sep-05	Training	SAR Basic Boat Training, Schwatka Lake
13-Sep-05	Training	SAR Faro GPS Map Training, Pelly River
16-Sep-05	Training	SARDW Dog Training Cadaver Workshop
19-Sep-05	Incident	SAR Whitehorse Search at Fish Lake
19-Sep-05	Incident	SAR Teslin Rescue at Squanga Lake
21-Sep-05	Training	SAR Faro, RCMP Boat Training
21-Sep-05	Maintenance	YARA Pilot Mountain Tower Maintenance
28-Sep-05	Training	SAR Teslin Boat Training Exercise, Teslin Lake
28-Sep-05	Training	FMO Boat Training, Destruction Bay
3-Sep-05	Maintenance	SAR Carcross Vehicle Maintenance
4-Oct-05	Incident	SAR Assist BC PEP Ground Search in BC
12-Oct-05	Maintenance	SAR Vehicle Maintenance
12-Oct-05	Training	SAR Team Leader Workshop
14-Oct-05	Maintenance	SAR Teslin Boat Repairs
20-Oct-05	Training	SAR Whitehorse Halloween Patrol
25-Oct-05	Maintenance	SAR Whitehorse Boat Relocation
31-Oct-05	Maintenance	SAR Faro Boat Relocation
4-Nov-05	Maintenance	YARA Mt. Berdoe Tower Maintenance
7-Nov-05	Training	SAR Faro Map & Compass Training

Letter From Minister Hart

Yukon Search and Rescue Societies

Dear Volunteers,

It is my great pleasure to present your SAR society with a commemorative special edition stamp series issued by Canada Post honouring the men and women of Canada's search and rescue community.

Search and rescue in Canada is an activity undertaken by a large group of caring and compassionate people, many of them volunteers, working together in difficult circumstances and conditions to bring people home safely.

Every day of the year, SAR societies are at the ready to respond to distress calls in a territory encompassing Canada's 10 million square kilometers and an additional 15 million square kilometers of ocean.

Here in the Yukon, your efforts are well known and appreciated by the public who have needed assistance from your SAR team for a variety of dangerous situations on the water, in the snow and on the land.

The Yukon wilderness appeals to a large number of outdoor enthusiasts with varying levels of capability and experience who occasionally require the professional assistance of our search and rescue teams. Led by the RCMP, Yukon's SAR teams demonstrate a commitment and dedication to saving lives in all weather conditions and at all hours of the day or night.

On behalf of the Yukon government and the people of the Yukon, I extend our most heartfelt thanks for being there when the call to action comes and for your commitment and dedication to keeping people safe from harm.

Sincerely,
Glenn Hart
Minister Community Services



(Left to Right): Stacey Ashley, Officer Northern Region, Canada Post; Minister Elaine Taylor; Dale Gilpin, Superintendent of Mail Operations, Canada Post and Shelley Huebert, A/Manager, EMO.

Commemorative SAR Stamp

Recognizing the important role that search and rescue organizations have in our society, Canada Post recently chose to honour the search and rescue community with a commemorative postage stamp.

The colourful series depicts search and rescue personnel at work in different emergency situations across the country.

Probably the most visible of the Yukon search and rescue organizations are the community SAR groups. These are the neighbours and friends who drop whatever they are doing when the call for help comes. Over 200 trained volunteers make up eight Yukon SAR groups. Working under the authority of the RCMP, Yukon SAR teams often form the

last line of hope for people in distress.

In 1986 members of the Whitehorse Flying Club formed CASARA, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association of the Yukon. Their role is to assist the Canadian Armed Forces in the search for missing aircraft. Each year CASARA members participate in about ten searches and a similar number of training exercises.

Working in partnership with the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, the RCMP and our Emergency Measures Organization, Yukon SAR teams are a vital part of our territorial emergency program and we are grateful for their dedication and commitment to their fellow Yukoners and our visitors.



EMO Staff Update

There are some new faces at the Emergency Measures Branch since the last newsletter. Come by to see us anytime. Pictured left to right: Gord Settle, Emergency Planning Officer; Shelley Huebert, Acting Manager; Nikki Netzel, Acting Finance and Administrative Assistant; and Ron Adams, Training and Planning Coordinator.

The staff at EMO want to wish good tidings to all our partners this holiday season.



Winter Car Survival Kit

Snow is on the ground and wintertime is here! If you do a lot of winter driving in the Yukon, be prepared by assembling a winter car survival kit. Your advance preparation could help you get through tough driving conditions or a wintertime accident.

In your TRUNK store the following:

- shovel
- traction mats
- compass
- cloth or roll of paper towels
- warning light or road flares
- extra clothing and winter footwear
- emergency food pack
- booster cables
- ice scraper and brush
- matches and a survival candle
- fire extinguisher
- extra windshield washer fluid (with antifreeze)
- fuel line antifreeze
- sand
- tow chain

In the CAB of your vehicle store the following:

- road maps
- first aid kit
- flashlight
- blanket

Thanks to Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and the Canadian Automobile Association for this information. For more information about preparing for winter driving and winter power failures, go online to www.ocepep.gc.ca.



The editors gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions made by numerous members of EMO to this issue of the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization Newsletter.

Additional copies can be obtained from EMO:

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Website: www.community.gov.yk.ca/emo

Yukon
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