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How You Can Prepare For 9-1-1

In just one week, over 90 percent of the residents within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine will be able to enjoy the benefits of having access to 9-1-1 emergency telephone service.

To prepare for the coming implementation of 9-1-1 dedicated emergency service personnel have been attending assemblies at elementary schools throughout the regional district, teaching children when and how to use 9-1-1. The message being delivered to the students contains information that's good for everyone to know.

Whenever a 9-1-1 call is made, caller information is displayed on a computer screen controlled by the 9-1-1 operator. It's important for people to know that while the operator can view that information, the caller will still have to confirm the phone number and location that they are calling from, which means it is vital for people to know their correct address. In some cases – for example a fire – where you are calling from is not where the emergency is. It's even more important for people making 9-1-1 calls from a cell phone to provide the operator with accurate location information.

Cell phone users should be aware that when they carry their cell phone on their belt or in their pocket, unintentional pressure on the phone's key pad can trigger a 9-1-1 call. Locking the keypad while the phone is not in use will prevent that from happening.

Never call 9-1-1 just to see if it works or as a joke. If you call 9-1-1 by accident, stay on the line and explain what's happened to the operator, do not hang up. When a hang-up occurs, the 9-1-1 operator will call back. If there's no response, someone will have to be dispatched to investigate the call, usually the police. If there is no emergency, response to a real emergency may be delayed resulting in potentially tragic consequences. It's also important to note that criminal charges can be laid against anyone who maliciously abuses the 9-1-1 system.

If you ever need to make a 9-1-1 call from a pay phone, you don't need a coin.

If you don't have fire protection now, 9-1-1 will not provide you with fire protection services. To verify whether or not you live within a fire protection area, contact the regional district or your local municipal or village office.

As implementation day approaches, there are a number of things that people can do to ensure that they will obtain the maximum benefit of having 9-1-1 emergency service.

Clearly display designated street addresses so they can be easily seen from the roadway. Reflective signs work best.

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Don't program 9-1-1 into your phone's speed dial and if you have an alarm system, never program 9-1-1 into your system's auto-dialer.

Post your phone number and address by each phone in your home or place of business.

Teach everyone in your family the proper use of 9-1-1. Remain calm and provide the following information to the 9-1-1 operator:

- What type of emergency service you need – police, ambulance or fire.
- The location and any landmarks that will help emergency personnel find the actual emergency site.
- The extent of the injury, and the number of persons involved.
- Any additional information that will assist the 9-1-1 operator in dispatching the necessary emergency equipment and personnel i.e. medical conditions, road/weather conditions, type of fire, etc.
- Stay on the phone and do not hang up until the operator tells you to.

While some may believe that the service is only for those who live in the larger municipalities, that is not the case. 9-1-1 service will be available to all residents living in Kitimat and area, Terrace and area, the Hazeltons from Kitwanga to Moricetown and in Stewart. This also includes the First Nation Communities of Gitanmaax, Gitanyow, Gitaus/Kulspai, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Glen Vowell, Hagwilget Village, Kitamaat Village, Kispiox Village, Kitsumkalum and Moricetown.

9-1-1 emergency telephone service officially launches on February 4, 2009.

The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine Emergency Telephone Response System was built with funding through contributions from the Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program.

For more information contact:
Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
Suite 300 4545 Lazelle Avenue
Terrace, BC V8G 4E1
250-615-6100 ph
250-635-9222 fax
1-800-663-3208
info@rdks.bc.ca
www.rdks.bc.ca