

5.9 Emergency Evacuation of a First Nation Community

Policy

Tikinagan Child and Family Services has a role in providing emergency response support to families receiving its services, and children in care and their foster parents during a partial or complete evacuation from one of the First Nation communities within its jurisdiction to one or more host communities. This policy supports activities undertaken by agency staff to respond to the emergency situation and track the whereabouts of all clients throughout the period of the evacuation order.

An evacuation is defined as the process of removing people from an area where a present or imminent situation has or may result in a loss of life and/or a risk to the safety, health and welfare of people.

Procedures

When Evacuation Warning is Issued

1. The Service Manager responsible for the community, in consultation with the Supervisor responsible for the community, will designate a main contact person for the duration of the evacuation warning/evacuation time period. The name and contact information will be provided to the designated Emergency Response Lead in the First Nation and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. All parties will know that all information and/or questions will be directed to the Contact Person for the agency.
2. The Service Manager will inform the Executive Director or designate and other members of the agency's management team about the possibility of a community evacuation and the identity of the Contact Person. A member of Senior Management will be designated to be the liaison with the Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community Family and Children's Services.
3. The designated Contact Person will ensure that there is timely and up-to-date information flowing between the agency, the First Nation and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The Contact Person will ensure that the Supervisor responsible for the community and the agency's management team are kept informed at all times on the status of the evacuation warning or evacuation order.
4. The Service Manager will obtain a current list of all children in care placed in the community from the Residential Care Unit, along with the names and contact information for the foster parents.
5. The Service Manager will provide the children in care list to the Child Care Workers and management team, including Service Managers and Directors of Service, to ensure list of children in care placed in the community is up to date and accurate.
6. Residential Service Workers will contact the Foster Parents to convey the expectation that should an evacuation of the community occur, the foster parents will take their foster child(ren) with them to the host community and continue to care for him or her. The foster parents will be given the contact information for On Call Services in case they require assistance during an evacuation.
7. The Supervisor will prepare a list of open high risk family files and staff members in the community who could potentially be evacuated and where they might be staying if evacuated.
8. If there is time, the staff members in the community will gather any original service file documents which have not already been forwarded to the main office for filing. Documents are to be faxed to the Quality Assurance Unit at the main office. If evacuated, laptops should be left in the Tikinagan office and the office locked up properly.

When an Evacuation Order is Issued

9. The Service Manager will notify and/or update the Executive Director or designate and other members of the agency's management team about the evacuation of a community.
10. The Service Managers and Supervisors are responsible to ensure that all Child Care Workers are notified to complete a Serious Occurrence Report for each Child in Care being evacuated.
11. The designated Contact Person will review the list of children in care placed in the community and their foster parents, high risk family files and agency staff and ensure the whereabouts of everyone is known (which community they have been evacuated to). The Contact Person will update this information to ensure timeliness and accuracy. The list will be provided to the agency On Call Services, Supervisors, Service Managers and Directors of Service. The designated liaison with the Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community Family and Children's Services will ensure that the information is forwarded to him/her.
12. The Director of Service responsible for the community being evacuated will inform agencies and organizations in the host communities that our First Nation community has been evacuated to their jurisdiction and Tikinagan Child and Family Services will continue to provide support to clients through the On Call Services. The agencies and organizations will be given contact information for On Call Services.
13. Workers are expected to provide assistance to foster parents prior to and during the evacuation by ensuring that Purchase Orders for diapers, formula and other necessities are provided.
14. Only in exceptional circumstances may foster children be moved out of the foster parent's care during the evacuation. Any such decision must be reviewed by the appropriate Service Manager and the decision is forwarded to the Supervisor for the community and the agency's designated Contact Person for the evacuation.
15. During the evacuation meals and lodging are provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and only in exceptional circumstances will alternate plans be made. Any decisions must be approved by the appropriate Service Manager and forwarded to the Supervisor for the community and the agency's designated Contact Person for the evacuation. (e.g. a foster parent with many foster children in their care, foster child with special needs).
16. Workers are expected to have a face to face meeting with all families receiving services from the agency to discuss the family's evacuation plans and how the agency will maintain contact with the family. The family will be given the contact information for On Call Services. The worker will review the existing Safety Plan for the family and make any revisions necessary to accommodate the family's evacuation from the community. The identified high-risk families will be informed that a worker will be visiting them in the host community.
17. Any workers being evacuated must make plans with their Supervisor regarding their work time during the evacuation. There are two options available for the workers to choose from.
 - Be available for light duties (e.g. check on families and children moved to the host community where the worker is staying, other duties as assigned by the Supervisor) and check in with the Supervisors on a daily basis. **In order to get paid, the worker must work or be available to work;** or,
 - Request CTO or Vacation time for the duration of the evacuation.
18. The Supervisor responsible for the community or designate will arrange for workers to visit children in care and their foster parents once evacuated on a daily basis. The workers will visit identified

high risk families as determined in consultation with their Supervisor and maintain telephone contact with the remaining families on their case load.

Tikinagan Contact at Main Office in Sioux Lookout

Name: _____

Telephone: 1-800-465-3624

Fax: 1-807-737-3543

Tikinagan Contact at Evacuation Site

Name: _____

Telephone:

Emergency Evacuation During a COVID-19 Pandemic

In addition to the procedures listed above, there are additional considerations when a community is evacuated during a COVID-19 pandemic.

- All staff members working with families, children in care and foster parents during the evacuation must wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g. masks, gloves) and follow the universal precautions for preventing the transmission of COVID-19 – physical distancing, proper hand washing, cough etiquette, face mask, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects
- All staff members working with families, children in care and foster parents during the evacuation must self-monitor for early signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing
- Staff members who have symptoms that align with COVID-19 should complete the self assessment tool at the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website and contact the local health unit for direction
- Staff members who are required to self-isolate must not come to work and immediately inform his/her supervisor who will inform the Human Resources Manager
- In consultation with supervisor, decide which families, children in care and/or foster parents can be contacted virtually (telephone, email, zoom, face time) and who requires face to face contact with the worker
- Evacuees (families, children in care and foster parents) should be given the following information by their worker or designated contact person:
 - There is an increased risk of illness due to COVID-19 pandemic during the evacuation period, all evacuees need to keep in mind the importance of physical distancing and limit their close contact while being sheltered (outside of their family unit), including during meal times and any transportation. All evacuees should have a face mask to wear during the evacuation period along with hand sanitizer
 - Critical to follow the universal precautions for preventing the transmission of COVID-19
 - Evacuees should self-monitor for early signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - In the event an evacuee or close contact of an evacuee develops symptoms that align with COVID-19, the evacuee and their close contacts should immediately self-isolate and inform

the evacuation centre coordinator, First Nation liaison and Tikinagan Child and Family Services

- The evacuation centre coordinator or community liaison will contact the local public health unit for guidance on next steps
- When a worker is informed of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 of a client, child in care or foster parent during the evacuation period, the worker will immediately consult with a supervisor and service manager for direction in next steps.