



E – CANS AND STANDARD DISTRICT EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

ABSTRACT

Storage containers with standard emergency equipment and resources for staff would enhance the emergency plans and procedures for schools in SD61.

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E-Cans and Standardization

Standard district emergency equipment and resources are an essential part of supporting and maintaining school emergency plans and procedures in SD61. E-Cans are storage containers with standard emergency supplies that provide an immediate response capability for staff, and are an opportunity to synergize emergency management plans across the district. While district personnel are not necessarily trained as emergency services workers, they may be called upon to fulfil roles related to first aid, damage assessment, locating students and staff, and providing care and comfort for students over an extended period of time.¹ Standardization ensures that school and district staff have the appropriate emergency supplies, and can respond to any situation, where ever they are when disaster strikes. Standard equipment and commonality of training for staff would allow schools in close proximity to provide mutual support during a crisis while ensuring that all district staff are familiar with resources, and can easily assist with emergency procedures at another school. Standardization will also save a great deal of our most common and precious resource which is the spare time that parents and district staff must find to start a plan from scratch.

Status of Emergency Supplies in SD61

District and school staff are accountable for students following an emergency, or catastrophic disaster, and must be prepared to care for them until they can be reunited with family or guardians. However, the expectation is that parents will fundraise to acquire the school's emergency supplies. This financial burden has led to an ad hoc system of gathering emergency supplies, gaps in resources, and inequity for schools across the district. While most PACs are making some sort of effort to address the school's deficiencies, parent volunteers are experiencing similar challenges and have not been effective in supplying district schools with the appropriate emergency supplies.

Parents want to be supportive of their school's emergency plan therefore, the focus for a PAC should be on replenishing and organizing the perishable stores for their school. These supplies will directly impact their children and can be rotated through PAC events while the family is part of the school community. Parents are not asked to pay for the school fire extinguishers, nor should they be asked to pay for the school emergency supplies.

¹Ministry of Education, *Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, School Districts, and Authorities*: pg. 6

School and District Needs

District schools follow the same procedures; therefore, they should have available the same equipment and resources. It is essential that the district supply all schools with the emergency equipment and resources to carry out the school's emergency plans. PACs can provide support by rotating perishable stores, however, there needs to be a clear division of responsibility when it comes to purchasing emergency supplies for schools. A memorandum of understanding between the VCPAC (on behalf of individual school PACs) and SD61 would provide directions and expectations for both organizations.

In addition to the need for school emergency supplies, the district requires supplies for Rapid Damage Assessment Teams, and the resources to set-up a District Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). Further more, the District needs to find adequate new funding for disaster mitigation and further develop the district emergency program. The need to have equipment, stores, and infrastructure available and easily accessible on the school grounds is essential, however, the money needed to directly support education cannot compete with the money needed for programs that keep our children safe.

Implementing a Standardized Plan for E-Cans at District Schools

It's not just what supplies a school has, but also how the supplies are stored, organized, and maintained. Parent volunteers are very effective and efficient when forming work parties. With clear direction and resources, school PACs can help a school organize and maintain their emergency supplies. As well, PACs can budget for and acquire any perishable items. We must work together as an organization to create a viable system of systems that both addresses the individual needs and situations of every school, but also works together to ensure the rapid recovery of the entire district. This consistency will minimize the training burden while also providing significant economy as it will allow mass purchasing of stores and equipment that dramatically reduces the overall costs of setting up and maintaining the plan by parent volunteers.

In turning this concept into reality, this plan will have core standardized elements that must remain intact, but will have areas that can be customized to fulfill the specific needs, or desires of each school, in order to best address the immediate needs of a school community following a disaster.

Responsibility for PACs	Responsibility for School District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of emergency equipment and supplies in the E-Cans - Upkeep of perishable items - Funding for any items above and beyond the standardized equipment and resources list - Communicate to district staff of any maintenance requirements for the E-Cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for an E-Can at each school with basic emergency supplies and resources - Funding for additional basic emergency supplies to support the flux in school population - Funding for additional equipment identified during exercises. - Funding for any maintenance required on the E-Cans

Table 1 - Division of Responsibilities



E-Cans The Way Ahead

Figure 1 – Current kiosks used by most schools to store emergency supplies, and a proposed standardized E-Can.