



VERNON SEARCH AND RESCUE GROUP SOCIETY

9850 Aberdeen Road
Vernon, B.C. V1B 2K9

VERNON SEARCH AND RESCUE

PRESS RELEASE (June 16, 2009)

Re: Withdrawal of Search and Rescue Services

Vernon Search and Rescue (Vernon SAR) has reviewed the recent withdrawal of search and rescue services by Golden and District Search and Rescue (Golden SAR).

Vernon SAR fully supports and endorses Golden SAR's withdrawal of search and rescue services and is appreciative of their taking such a strong stand on behalf of the SAR community as a whole.

Vernon SAR agrees that the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) provides inadequate and sub-standard legal liability and WCB coverage for the SAR community. A key component of British Columbia's Public Safety Lifeline is not being properly supported.

For over 13 years the SAR community has, without success, repeatedly requested PEP to address these deficiencies. It is unfortunate the PEP has deliberately chosen to allow the situation to deteriorate to the point where such drastic action is required to attempt to convince PEP to act fairly and quickly.

Charitable and non-profit SAR Societies should not have to pay for their own legal liability coverage when they provide an essentially free service to the Province of British Columbia and its communities. It's time for that to STOP!

It's also time for PEP to stop taking advantage of the altruistic nature of its unpaid SAR volunteers who do so much to make their communities safe. These unpaid, yet highly trained professional volunteers already make substantial gifts to the Province with so much of their time, their personal funds and, in some cases, risk their safety and lives to rescue our fellow citizens. It is inappropriate and disrespectful to the SAR volunteers for PEP to refuse to provide comprehensive legal liability coverage for the entire SAR community.

Quite simply, the Province of British Columbia should pay to provide full liability insurance and complete WCB coverage to all parts of its search and rescue community.

After much deliberation Vernon SAR has decided that it will temporarily continue its normal Search and Rescue operations, but under one condition.

Within the next 60 days PEP must act in good faith, make binding commitments and undertake substantial steps to begin to address the legal liability/WCB concerns identified by its SAR volunteers or Vernon SAR will meet to consider implementing a



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full and complete withdrawal of search and rescue services pending a satisfactory resolution by PEP of these concerns.

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National Search and Rescue Secretariat
Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada
Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada
RCMP "E" Division, Commander
Municipal Police Chiefs Association
Mayor, City of Vernon
Mayor, City of Coldstream
Mayor, City of Armstrong
Mayor, Village of Lumby
Mayor Village of Falkland
Mayor, City of Enderby
Mayor, Township of Spallumcheen
Vernon RCMP Detachment Commander
Vernon BCAS Unit Chief
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