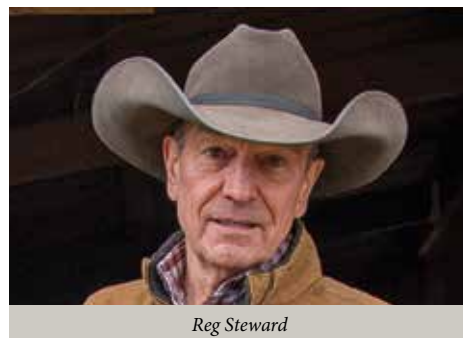


Emergency PREPAREDNESS

Submitted by Reg C. Steward, B.C. Ranch Safety Consultant



Reg Steward

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. When we say, or even when we hear “those words”, there are immediate thoughts that crawl out of the depths of the deep dark caverns of our minds where we have tried to keep them locked up.

Negative thoughts and memories and those awful feelings that accompany them is really a deep sense of fear. Negative thoughts give rise to very real memories of conflict, memories of anger and unrest. Thoughts and remembrances of loss, disruption, discomfort...the recollection of that which was very real and that which was dreaded and imagined, but very possible. We don't go looking for these thoughts, don't seek them out, don't try to extract them from that dark place where they live; existing as one little thought, one small anxiety filled memory. Everyone knows that there is enough to worry about every day, enough new challenges and plenty of new realities that we do not need. Surely we do not want to go and borrow trouble, but there it is, so get prepared. The oft overlooked reality is that just the worry and stress of an anticipated emergency will make us a victim of that emergency. All emergencies, and especially ones that look like the one we faced before, the one we know the reality of, the pain of, the loss caused by, and even the massive inconvenience arising from, will have a mental and emotional cost. This cost is rarely spoken of as we inventory who lost what in an event or incident.

So, what to do?

- How does one manage the potential of an emergency, how does one prepare?
- How do I recognize the hazard,

evaluate the risk, and manage the outcome?

- How do you seek to live your life normally and all the while be aware of and concerned about an emergency?
- What do I prepare for?
- What about all the stress?
- How do we manage the imposed and inflationary mental price tag, deal with the worry, anxiety and fear that is part of this?
- What do I do with the “knot in my stomach reality” that hammers me, burdens me, impacts my demeanor, my happiness, is imposed upon my family and employees, makes me who I do not want to be and keeps me awake even if there is no emergency near me?

Enter preparedness.

Being prepared is one of the best ways to ease ones worries and to manage what you can in any circumstance that might be categorized as an emergency. When you started to read this article, when you read the title, your mind went to the most recent emergency in your memory. If you were impacted by wildfire, and have concerns about the current situation and pending season, many made a mental jump to that emergency right away. If your impacting event was the floods of 2021, your mind probably took a hard right in that direction. Your mind may have found some relief from flood fears, eased by the drought conditions that are upon us. But while that may have brought

a flickering sense of relief, it prompted another very real thing to worry about. Simple fact, when we reflect upon and think in terms of emergencies, our minds run not to preparedness but to experience and recollection. We think first about those incidents or events that we have experience of, or of which the media, or our neighbors, or our association, or our mothers-in-law are on about. Moving your mind from anxiety and worry to preparedness is one of the best ways to ease mental stress and strain. Designing and enacting a viable response can help you move forward with a deliberate sense of control rather than being a victim of the imagined, or actual emergency. Being prepared keeps your mind on the survivability of the situation, and getting prepared keeps your hands busy in getting it done. Being prepared is all you can do when there is the possibility, even the probability, of a set of situations or circumstances arising that can be classified as an emergency.

Getting prepared.

The initial undertaking to engage in emergency preparedness involves doing a risk assessment. How vulnerable are you and to what? What are the hazards that exist on or near your farm or ranch that could meet that emergency criteria for which you need to plan and prepare?

Planning for those things that have the potential to impact you, your family, workers, farm or ranch begins with an honest risk assessment. Your AgSafe

field representatives can help you with this. You need to assess your hazards, and realistically consider all those things that can arise and to which you might have to respond. This moves the needle of our mind from pointing to just the biggies like wildfire and flooding to other situations that can become life or death, property survival or destruction realities.

In your hazard assessment, consider things specific to you and your operation. It may include things like, but will not be limited to:

- A lost or overdue worker.
- A missing child who came to visit and play at your ranch.
- Predators in the area.
- Livestock on highways.
- Assisting with a livestock transportation incident or accident.
- A train derailment near you.
- Wildfire
- Flooding
- Earthquake
- Anything that is a real or potential hazard

Your risk assessment will be a guided interpretation of how likely the hazard is to impact you and to what severity.

Being prepared will involve ensuring that you have the right equipment and supplies. You know where they are, can access the things you will need, and know how to use those response supplies and equipment. It means you will have a plan. *If you are a registered ranch with WorkSafe BC you MUST have and practice an emergency plan, and you MUST have a documented, realistic, workable, evacuation plan.* What you will do, where you will go and how you will get there are among the prime considerations you must address. You are not alone, *AgSafe has advisors and consultants in every part of the province who are willing and able to help you as a registered employer.* There is available

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to all, a package of documents to assist you with this planning can be found on our website at agsafebc.ca.

Staying prepared.

Being prepared means you have done what you can to reduce the risk associated with the hazard you have identified. Wildfire? Have you fire smarted your property? Flooding? Have you worked with those who can design, develop, or implement your flood resistance strategy?

Being prepared and emergency preparedness, are topics that can fill volumes. It is something that you can and must work towards. It is a living entity where you will fully achieve all that you needed to in some areas and be

very lacking in others. It has been said and it is a reality that you can't plan for every event or incident, but you sure can and must plan for most of them and you can then adapt when and if necessary. “If you fail to plan you plan to fail”, is another of my dad's great quotes. Being prepared involves knowing who to reach out to for various means of assistance: financial aid, transportation, permitting, association sponsored help and direction, information, insurance needs, various supplies and so much more. No one is better positioned than you to know what you will need.

It is always my hope that those in authority will work with us “local folks”. Work with us and listen to the needs identified by those who know, who are



New Workers
Employers are responsible for the safety of their workers. Educate new and young workers to identify hazards and minimize risks.

1-877-533-1789



Emergency Water



Gate tubes with property information available at BCCA

there and who have been there for generations.

I have always said that “shoes on the carpet should never tell boots on the ground what to do”. Shoes on the carpet need to listen, to hear and to help, because shoes on the carpet CAN pull the levers to make the direction coming from boots on the ground a reality.

Simply put

- Simply put, emergency preparedness is doing everything you can, about anything that you can do something about.
- Simply put, doing frees you from the sense of being a victim that emergencies can impose.
- Simply put, having a plan, being suitably equipped, having the right things for the right tasks is empowering and mind freeing.
- Simply put, doing a hazard assessment of your place will dial in your realities and extinguish many “unknown fears”.
- Simply put, emergency preparedness is about putting as many ducks in a row as you can before you need to count them. (added that last part myself but it works).
- Simply put, being physically

equipped and prepared will help you be mentally equipped and prepared. You will worry less and be more likely to react appropriately. You will be better able to, when necessary, adapt as you go, “it is easier to change direction when in motion than to initiate movement.”

On that wellness note...

In doing a personal inventory you may feel disheartened, discouraged, or something even deeper when you look at living through or responding to an emergency. It’s an absolute reality to acknowledge that there is often some level of anxiety and mental stress that accompanies this entire concept. *If you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious, worried, and stressed and feel that you may need to talk to someone about this, AgSafe has professional services available that you can access for free. You just need to reach out. I can assure you of total confidence in the process and will do everything I can to help.*

It has been my FARSHA/AgSafe motto for nearly a quarter of a century that; “You can pretend to care; you can’t pretend to be there”.



A hazard is a potential source of harm. Substances, events, or circumstances can constitute hazards when their nature would allow them, even just theoretically, to cause damage to health, life, property, or any other interest of value. The probability of that harm being realized in a specific incident, combined with the magnitude of potential harm, make up its risk.

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