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Report of the Auditor General of Canada

CHAPTER 6

Emergency Management on Reserves



Office of the Auditor General of Canada

OAG

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CHAPTER 6

Emergency Management on Reserves

Performance audit reports

This report presents the results of a performance audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada under the authority of the *Auditor General Act*.

A performance audit is an independent, objective, and systematic assessment of how well government is managing its activities, responsibilities, and resources. Audit topics are selected based on their significance. While the Office may comment on policy implementation in a performance audit, it does not comment on the merits of a policy.

Performance audits are planned, performed, and reported in accordance with professional auditing standards and Office policies. They are conducted by qualified auditors who

- establish audit objectives and criteria for the assessment of performance,
- gather the evidence necessary to assess performance against the criteria,
- report both positive and negative findings,
- conclude against the established audit objectives, and
- make recommendations for improvement when there are significant differences between criteria and assessed performance.

Performance audits contribute to a public service that is ethical and effective and a government that is accountable to Parliament and Canadians.

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Emergency Management on Reserves

Main Points

What we examined

Emergency management can involve a number of different stakeholders, each with their own roles and responsibilities. Depending on the circumstances, assistance is sought from local, provincial, and territorial authorities, with provincial and territorial governments requesting federal government support for emergencies that are beyond their capacity. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada works with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that First Nations communities on reserve have access to emergency assistance services comparable to those available elsewhere in Canada.

During the four fiscal years 2009–10 to 2012–13, the federal government spent at least \$448 million supporting emergency management activities on reserves. This support was provided primarily by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada. We examined whether the departments adequately managed their support to emergency management activities on First Nations reserves. We focused on roles and responsibilities of the key parties involved in providing emergency management support, the design and delivery of the support, and monitoring and reporting on results.

Our audit did not include a detailed review of any given emergency event, nor did it assess the adequacy of the federal support. The performance of non-federal organizations and First Nations was also excluded from the scope of our audit.

Audit work for this chapter was completed on 20 August 2013. More details on the conduct of the audit are in **About the Audit** at the end of this chapter.

Why it's important

In Canada, natural disasters and catastrophic events, such as flooding, are increasing in both frequency and intensity. When it comes to such disasters, First Nations communities are considered to be at risk of emergencies due to their isolation and geographic location. In addition, their ability to effectively deal with emergency events when they occur is affected by their poor socio-economic conditions,

low education levels, and few economic opportunities. During the period 2009–10 to 2012–13, 447 emergencies occurred on reserves. The adverse impacts of emergencies on First Nations communities can include social, physical, and financial aspects.

The federal government provides funding to cover all eligible costs related to emergency support to First Nations communities. How well this support is managed affects communities' ability to prevent and mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

What we found

- The safety and well-being of First Nations communities on reserve are being adversely affected in significant ways because of their vulnerability to emergencies and to the cumulative effects of these emergency events. Moreover, some communities require long-term solutions that are dependent on agreements and actions of all parties. Not all communities had plans for managing emergencies, and most of the plans that we reviewed were outdated and incomplete, increasing the risk of those communities being unprepared to deal with emergencies and the resulting impacts.
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada relies on provinces and third parties to support First Nations in times of emergency. However, agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities are either absent or unclear. According to Department officials, these weaknesses make it difficult to administer the federal emergency management program because they are continuously reacting to situations without having clarity about who is responsible for doing what. The lack of clarity has also led to some disagreements and, in some cases, contributed to legal actions between various parties. Lastly, the Department does not know if First Nations communities on reserve are receiving emergency services comparable to those available elsewhere in Canada.
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's annual budget of about \$19 million for the emergency management program is not sufficient. As a result, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has had to fund the program by reallocating funds from other sources (particularly capital) and from the Treasury Board Management Reserve. According to Department officials, the capital program is also underfunded to meet its needs, and reallocations result in delays or cancellation of community infrastructure projects.
- The Department has focused its efforts on response and recovery activities, spending only \$4 million on prevention and mitigation activities over the 2009–10 to 2012–13 period. According to Public

Safety Canada, prevention and mitigation activities can prevent emergencies and can reduce long-term human and financial costs.

- Depending on the severity of an emergency and where it takes place, the funding process can involve several departments and jurisdictions and place a heavy administrative burden on First Nations communities. In addition, the process contains several internal control weaknesses. For instance, there is a lack of clarity around which costs are eligible for reimbursement. It is also not clear whether internal controls are effective to safeguard against the risk that First Nations might receive funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program for the same activity. Program monitoring and reporting by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is incomplete.
- Although Health Canada and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada recognize the importance of better coordinating their emergency management activities and have taken some steps in this regard, they have made limited progress in clarifying roles and responsibilities to achieve coordinated support and in integrating pandemic plans into community emergency management plans for First Nations on reserves.

The entities have responded. The entities agree with all of the recommendations. Their detailed responses follow the recommendations throughout the chapter.

Introduction

Emergency—[A] present or imminent event that requires prompt coordination of actions concerning persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare of people, or to limit damage to property or the environment.

Source: *An Emergency Management Framework for Canada, 2011*

6.1 About half of the 900,000 First Nations people in Canada live on reserves. The reserves are in urban, rural, and remote locations across Canada. There are currently 617 First Nations communities, of which 42 are located north of the 60th parallel. Ninety-five communities are located south of the 60th parallel in remote areas that do not have year-round road access. According to data from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada, First Nations communities have been particularly affected by natural **emergencies**, such as floods and fires as well as the H1N1 influenza outbreak in 2009. Furthermore, Canada's premiers, after their meeting in July 2013, noted that serious inadequacies in emergency management in Aboriginal and remote communities remain and that cooperation among governments is essential to improve services in these communities.

6.2 The *Emergency Management Act* of 2007 defines emergency management as the prevention and mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies. The four elements of emergency management are described in the 2011 document *An Emergency Management Framework for Canada*, produced by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to support their legal and policy frameworks, programs, activities, standards, and other measures. The Framework defines the four elements as follows:

- **Prevention and mitigation:** to eliminate or reduce the risks of disasters in order to protect lives, property, the environment, and reduce economic disruption. Prevention and mitigation includes structural measures (such as the construction of floodways and dykes) and non-structural measures (such as building codes, land-use planning, and insurance incentives).
- **Preparedness:** to be ready to respond to a disaster and manage its consequences through measures taken before an event; for example, emergency response plans, mutual assistance agreements, resource inventories and training, and equipment and exercise programs.
- **Response:** to act during or immediately before or after a disaster to manage its consequences through, for example, emergency public communications, search and rescue, emergency medical assistance, and evacuation to minimize suffering and losses associated with disasters.

- Recovery: to repair or restore conditions to an acceptable level through measures taken after a disaster; for example, return of evacuees, trauma counselling, reconstruction, economic impact studies, and financial assistance.

Federal roles and responsibilities

6.3 Emergency management, depending on the circumstance, involves a number of stakeholders, each with their own roles and responsibilities. In Canada, the responsibility for dealing with an emergency in the first place has traditionally rested with individuals to see to their own safety as much as possible. When individuals are no longer able to cope, assistance is sought from local, provincial, and territorial authorities, if necessary. Provincial and territorial governments will request federal government support if the emergency moves beyond their capacity.

6.4 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is responsible for ensuring that First Nations have access to emergency assistance services comparable to those available to other residents in their respective province. The Department does this preferably by entering into collaborative agreements with provincial governments and providing funding to First Nations, provinces, and third parties to cover eligible costs related to emergencies in First Nations communities.

6.5 Health Canada also plays a role in emergency management by ensuring access to or providing health services on reserves. It is also responsible for the safety and security of Health Canada staff working on reserves.

6.6 At the national level, the Public Health Agency of Canada supports Health Canada through technical and scientific expertise and health emergency preparedness and response activities, but does not directly deliver or fund public health programs or services on reserves.

6.7 Public Safety Canada is responsible for exercising leadership relating to emergency management in Canada by coordinating, among government institutions and in cooperation with the provinces and other entities, emergency management activities. It has no legislated responsibilities specifically for on-reserve emergency management for First Nations. It reimburses provinces for eligible on-reserve response and recovery costs following a large natural disaster under its Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program.

6.8 The total cost of federal support for emergency management on reserves is unknown, because expenditures are not tracked for this purpose. Instead, they are embedded either within or across separate departments and their programs, depending on the main intent of the expenditure. Using unaudited departmental expenditure data, we estimate that during the four fiscal years 2009–10 to 2012–13, at least \$448 million was spent on support to First Nations for emergencies.

Focus of the audit

6.9 Our audit objective was to determine whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s and Health Canada’s emergency management support to First Nations on reserves is adequately managed.

6.10 The audit focused on the following areas:

- clarity and agreement of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders,
- design and delivery of emergency management support, and
- monitoring and reporting of performance.

6.11 More details about the audit objective, scope, approach, and criteria are in **About the Audit** at the end of this chapter.

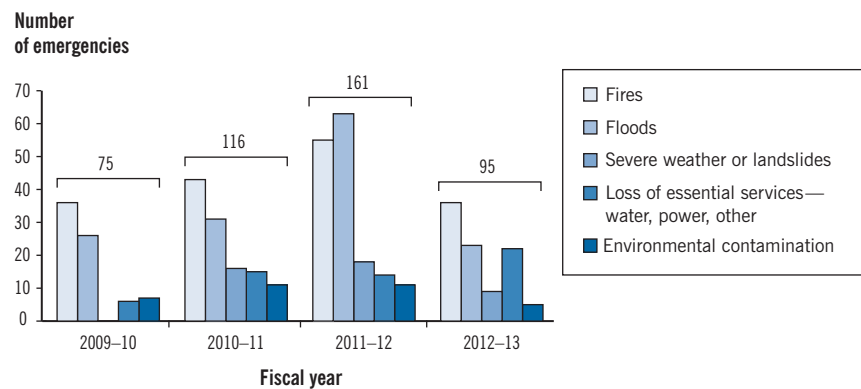
Observations and Recommendations

6.12 The safety and well-being of First Nations are being adversely affected in significant ways because of their vulnerability to, and the cumulative effects of, emergencies.

6.13 According to Public Safety Canada documents, natural disasters in Canada are becoming more frequent, intense, and costly. According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, many First Nations communities are considered at risk of emergencies due to their isolation and geographic location. In addition, their ability to effectively deal with emergency events when they occur is affected by their poor socio-economic conditions, low education levels, and few economic opportunities. The three key on-reserve emergency management risks are floods, fire, and infrastructure failures (loss of essential services such as power and water). First Nations would also include social risks, such as suicides, as giving rise to emergencies.

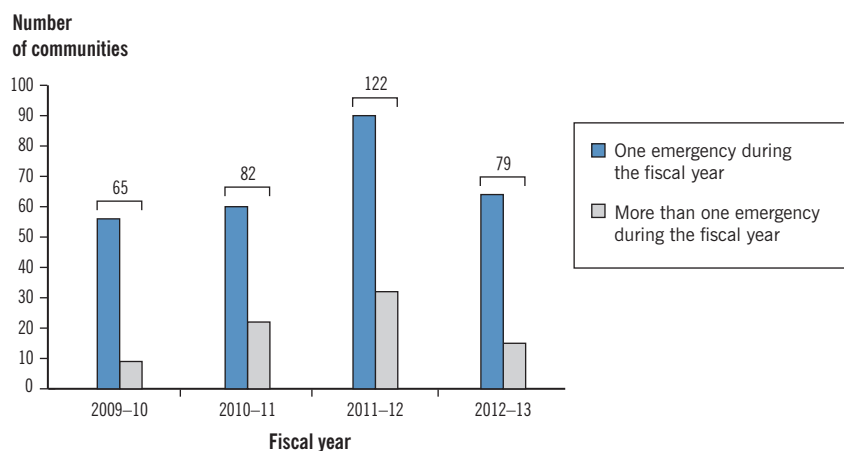
6.14 To understand the recent impact of emergencies on First Nations, we visited 10 First Nations communities in four provinces. We also spoke with representatives from an additional five communities, as well as two First Nations organizations responsible for delivering elements of emergency management services, and three First Nations political organizations. We also reviewed department documents and analyzed data on emergencies over the four-year period from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal years, going beyond our audit period to establish a longer-term trend. Exhibit 6.1 summarizes the number of emergencies by category in each fiscal year from the 2009–10 through the 2012–13 fiscal year.

Exhibit 6.1 Emergencies on reserves by category



Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (unaudited)

6.15 Using Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada data on emergencies, we noted that 447 emergencies occurred on reserves during the four-year period. These emergencies affected 241 communities, representing approximately 39 percent of all First Nations communities in Canada. Fifty-eight communities experienced emergencies in two out of the four years, while 21 experienced emergencies in three out of the four years. Three communities experienced emergencies in all four years. Exhibit 6.2 shows the number of communities affected by one or more emergencies within each year from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal year. In the three regions that we visited, we estimated, using departmental data, that at least 9,500 community members were evacuated due to major fire and flooding emergencies in 2011. According to the Department, about 2,000 of these people had not yet returned to their homes as at 15 May 2013.

Exhibit 6.2 First Nations communities affected by emergencies

Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (unaudited)

6.16 Emergencies in First Nations communities can have adverse social, physical, and financial impacts. For instance, in several communities, flooding caused severe damage to houses and created mould problems with associated health risks. Flooding also damaged critical community infrastructure, such as water and sewage systems.

6.17 Severe and repeated flooding in some communities caused isolation and family disruptions due to evacuation to other sites for long periods of time, including interruption in education. For example, a community told us that repeated flooding damaged the transportation routes to schools, causing students not to attend school for extended periods.

6.18 Exposure to hazards, such as flooding, smoke from fires, unsafe drinking water, and possible evacuation from the community, can also cause physiological and physical stress on community members in general, and particularly on the more vulnerable members, such as elders, children, and the sick and injured.

6.19 Several communities told us about how their traditional grounds for ceremonies, burials, and other sacred sites were being eroded and are at risk of being lost due to repeated flooding.

6.20 First Nations emergencies can also negatively affect individuals' livelihood and cause loss of income due to evacuations, road and business closures, and damage to property and equipment.

6.21 First Nations are increasingly concerned about their communities' inability to cope with and fund the cost of repeated emergencies. They also said that the efforts needed to account for and report against the requirements attached to the assistance received is challenging and can be overwhelming, depending on their administrative capacity.

6.22 In two of the three regions we visited, we noted examples of communities that are suffering from the effects of repeated emergencies that require long-term solutions. Although discussions between these First Nations and federal and provincial governments have been ongoing for years, and numerous studies and reports have proposed various options, long-term solutions are dependent on agreements and actions of all parties. In the meantime, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada provided tens of millions of dollars to these communities for response and recovery emergency measures, including evacuation.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

6.23 Under section 91 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, Parliament has legislative authority over “Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians.” The *Indian Act*, which Parliament passed under this authority, and numerous court decisions in this area, establish a complex legal regime that applies to reserves. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has been the main federal organization responsible in this area.

6.24 The *Emergency Management Act* states that each federal minister is responsible for the identification of risks that are within or related to his or her area of responsibility, including those related to critical infrastructure. Under the Act, ministers are required to prepare emergency management plans in respect of those risks; maintain, test, and implement the plans; and conduct exercises and training in relation to the plans.

Responsibility for emergency management on reserves among stakeholders is unclear

6.25 We examined whether roles and responsibilities with respect to emergency management on reserves are clearly defined and agreed to.

6.26 The *Emergency Management Act* is an act of general application and is drafted in a non-prescriptive way. This means that the Act applies to all ministers and that all ministers have the same responsibilities regarding emergency management within or related to his or her area of responsibility.

6.27 Since the introduction of the Act, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has on several occasions clarified certain specific aspects of its responsibility for emergency management on reserves, such as what constitutes an emergency and who is responsible for declaring a state of emergency on reserves. In March 2011, the Department approved its National Emergency Management Plan, and at the time of the audit, four out of seven regions had an approved regional plan. The purpose of a regional plan is to provide a regional framework for the roles and responsibilities of the emergency management system to support First Nations in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

6.28 The National Emergency Management Plan states that the Department accepts responsibility for providing emergency management support to First Nations communities. The Plan also states that First Nations are responsible for developing community emergency management plans that include conducting an assessment of hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities faced by the community and ensuring the plan is maintained, exercised, and modified annually. However, First Nations communities told us that they do not have sufficient resources to develop and maintain sound emergency management plans.

6.29 We asked the Department how many First Nations communities had an emergency management plan. We were informed that, as at March 2013, 506 communities had an emergency management plan and 67 did not. We noted, however, that the Department had only 396 of these plans. According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Department does not directly fund the preparation of emergency management plans and does not require First Nations to provide it with copies of their plans. Several First Nations have voluntarily provided copies of their plans to the Department, and the Department keeps a list of First Nations that have plans, but the Department does not have a process to assess the quality of the plans. As a result, the Department does not know whether all First Nations have identified emergency hazards and risks for their communities on reserves, and whether their emergency management plans have been maintained and tested.

6.30 We examined a sample of 19 plans to assess their currency and completeness. We found that only 2 of the plans had up-to-date contact information, such as the name of the current chief of the community, and only 9 plans contained an assessment of hazards and risks faced by the community. As a result, those First Nations communities may be unprepared when emergency events occur.

6.31 The Department states that it enters into collaborative agreements with provincial governments for fire-related and emergency management services to ensure that First Nations communities have access to comparable emergency assistance services available to other residents in their respective provinces. We looked to see the extent to which these agreements were in place and to assess whether roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and agreed to by the parties.

6.32 We found that the Department has fire-related agreements with seven provinces and an emergency management agreement with four provinces (Exhibit 6.3). For these 11 agreements, we found that only four contained a specific provision to ensure that the provinces provide First Nations with comparable services to those that are available to other residents in their respective provinces.

Exhibit 6.3 Fire-related and emergency management agreements are not in place in all 10 provinces

Province	Fire-related agreement in place	Emergency management agreement in place
Alberta	Yes Not all First Nations covered	Yes
British Columbia	Yes	Yes
Manitoba	Yes	No
New Brunswick	Yes	No
Newfoundland and Labrador	No	No
Nova Scotia	No	No
Ontario	Yes Not all First Nations covered	Yes
Prince Edward Island	No	No
Quebec	Yes Not all First Nations covered	No
Saskatchewan	Yes Not all First Nations covered	Yes

Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada records

6.33 We also identified two other weaknesses in these agreements that could be strengthened. We found that 7 out of 11 agreements that are in place considered incremental administrative expenses to be an eligible cost for reimbursement, contrary to the approved program terms and conditions, and that the fire suppression agreements for four provinces do not cover all First Nations in those provinces. Lastly, for the 5 agreements with provinces that specifically name the communities to be served by the province, we noted that the listing of communities was not up to date for 2 agreements. According to the Department, the fact that a community is not listed does not deprive it of receiving emergency management services. However, we found that in one province, four First Nations were excluded from the fire-related services agreement due to the communities' distance from the nearest fire management facilities. Consequently, these communities may not have access to fire-related emergency services.

6.34 The Department also enters into annual funding agreements with the provinces and third parties as a means to reimburse them for providing various emergency management services to First Nations. However, we found that the funding agreements with provinces are not in place at the beginning of the fiscal year. Consequently, there is a risk that in the event of an emergency, services may be provided without a funding agreement being in place setting out which costs are eligible for reimbursement. For the three regions that we visited, it took approximately 10 months to finalize annual funding agreements so that payments could be made for services provided. We also noted that as at 13 June 2013, only one funding agreement had been signed for the 2013–14 fiscal year.

6.35 With respect to funding agreements with third-party emergency services providers, we looked at departmental documentation for two organizations in two of the provinces that we visited. We found that roles and responsibilities for one organization were generally well specified in the funding agreements and their amendments. This organization received approximately \$1.4 million over the four-year period from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal year to train First Nations communities on how to set up, enhance, and maintain their emergency management plans. In the case of a second organization, which received about \$14.7 million over the same period, we found that roles and responsibilities, including services to be provided, were not well defined. For example, services to be provided to evacuees and eligible costs for reimbursement were unclear. Consequently, there is a risk that payments could have been made for ineligible costs.

6.36 The lack of formal agreements that clearly outline roles and responsibilities for emergency management on reserves has created ambiguity and confusion between various stakeholders and has resulted in some disagreements. In some cases, it contributed to legal actions between the federal government and a provincial government, between the federal government and several First Nations, and between the federal government and a class of individuals. The lack of agreements also increases the risk that First Nations communities might not have access to comparable emergency assistance services that are available to other residents in their respective provinces. Regional officials told us that the lack of agreements and ambiguities in the agreements that do exist cause difficulties and challenges in managing the emergency management program because officials have to continuously react to situations without having clarity about who is responsible for what.

6.37 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with First Nations, the provinces, and other federal organizations, should take the lead role in clarifying federal roles and responsibilities so that these can be set out formally in agreements with the provinces and in the contribution agreements with First Nations and third-party providers.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with Public Safety Canada, Health Canada, and other federal organizations as appropriate, and First Nations themselves, will continue to build upon its efforts to clarify existing roles and responsibilities for the delivery of emergency management services on reserves. Consistent guiding principles on roles and responsibilities will form the foundation of enhanced bilateral agreements to be negotiated with provincial/territorial governments for emergency management service delivery on reserves.

Program authorities are out of date, and regional plans and supporting guidelines have not been completed

6.38 We examined whether emergency program authorities (that set out the terms and conditions of the program), plans, policies, and guidelines were in place and current.

6.39 We found that program terms and conditions have not been updated to reflect important aspects of the *Emergency Management Act* and *An Emergency Management Framework for Canada*. For example, although undertaking capital projects is recognized as a solution for recovery and mitigation purposes in the program terms and conditions,

they specifically prohibit the program from making capital expenditures for mitigation purposes. Capital expenditures for mitigation purposes are, however, permitted in Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's capital authority.

6.40 The Department has developed a National Emergency Management Plan, which provides a framework for emergency management on reserves. However, the Department has not fully developed corresponding regional plans and supporting guidelines. We found that for the regional plans that had been finalized, they were not consistent in their level of detail and clarity. In the absence of national guidelines, we noted that in one region, evacuation guidelines were developed jointly between the province and Department regional officials in consultation with First Nations. Department and provincial officials told us that they find these guidelines useful in dealing with emergencies in that region.

6.41 The lack of updated program authorities, finalized regional emergency management plans, and national guidelines makes it difficult for the Department to manage the program in a coherent manner, taking into account regional differences.

6.42 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should update and align the authorities for its emergency management program with the *Emergency Management Act* and An Emergency Management Framework for Canada.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will ensure that expenditures in community infrastructure for mitigation purposes complement and support the Department's Emergency Management Assistance Program.

6.43 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with stakeholders, as appropriate, should finalize its regional emergency management plans and should develop national emergency management supporting guidelines, taking into account regional differences.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will continue to review and update its internal regional emergency management plans, which reflect regional differences. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's National Emergency

Management Plan will provide guidance to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's regional offices, and will be regularly updated.

A risk-based all-hazards approach to emergency management on reserves is not in place

All-hazards approach—An approach that addresses vulnerabilities exposed by both natural and human-induced hazards and disasters. It integrates common emergency management elements across all hazard types and supplements common elements with hazard-specific sub-components to fill gaps, as required.

6.44 We examined whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's support to First Nations is designed and funded using a risk-based **all-hazards approach**, and includes all four of the emergency management elements: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

6.45 Under the *Emergency Management Act* and the Federal Policy for Emergency Management, departments are required to adopt a risk-based all-hazards approach to manage emergencies. This requires that risks are identified, assessed, and managed using an all-hazards approach. The all-hazards approach improves the ability of emergency management activities to address unknown hazards or risks regardless of the nature of the event.

6.46 We found that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada does not take an integrated risk-based all-hazards approach to support the management of emergencies on reserves, although the Department recognizes the need to do so. For example, the Department has made some organizational changes to better align risks and program funding. However, as stated in paragraph 6.29, the Department does not know whether all First Nations have identified emergency hazards and risks for their communities on reserves, and whether their emergency management plans have been maintained and tested. Without this information, the Department is unable to determine which communities are more at risk, to properly assess and prioritize needs, and to allocate limited departmental resources to areas of highest risk.

6.47 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with First Nations, should develop and implement a risk-based all-hazards approach for emergency management support to First Nations on reserves.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Under the umbrella of the *Emergency Management Act* and *Emergency Management Framework*, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will work with First Nations and other federal

organizations, including Public Safety Canada and Health Canada, to coordinate a risk-based all-hazards approach for the management of emergencies on reserves.

The budget for the emergency management program is not sufficient, and support has focused on response and recovery activities

6.48 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada established the Emergency Management Assistance Program to support First Nations on reserves in managing emergencies. The Department knows that the program's annual budget of about \$19 million is not sufficient and it has had to fund the program by reallocating money from other sources. According to the Department, during the period from the start of the program in the 2004–05 fiscal year to the 2012–13 fiscal year, approximately \$64 million of additional funding was provided from internal reallocations, particularly from the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program, and about \$326 million was received from the Treasury Board Management Reserve. According to Department officials, the capital program is also underfunded, and reallocation of funds to other programs results in delays or cancellation of community infrastructure projects.

6.49 We reviewed program cost information covering the four-year period from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal year to determine the amounts spent on each of the four elements specified under the *Emergency Management Act*. We did not examine the adequacy of these amounts. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada spent \$286 million over the four-year period. Approximately \$180 million (63 percent) of the funds was spent on response and recovery activities and only \$4 million (1 percent) was spent on prevention and mitigation. Of the remaining balance, \$34 million (12 percent) was spent on preparedness and \$68 million (24 percent) was spent on fire-related services, which was not allocated among the four elements.

6.50 A recent internal audit report noted, and our work confirmed, that the Department had not carried out a cost/benefit analysis of investments in emergency prevention and mitigation activities on reserves. The report also noted that the Department did not assess information about the physical, economic, and social benefits of not simply returning a First Nations community to its former state, but rather increasing the community's resilience against future disasters.

6.51 According to Public Safety Canada, prevention and mitigation activities can prevent emergencies by reducing the vulnerability of communities to natural hazards, thus reducing the long-term human

and financial costs. There is strong evidence that suggests that greater investment in prevention and mitigation measures can significantly reduce the cost of long-term recovery efforts. Effective risk assessments as well as emergency management and mitigation planning should be conducted with disaster risk reduction as the primary objective. For example, effective land-use planning can prevent or minimize urban development in flood plain areas, thereby preventing damage from floods. Several national and international mitigation cost/benefit studies that we reviewed indicate, and the Department confirms, that there are benefits from investments in mitigation activities.

6.52 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada recognizes that it needs to focus its support to First Nations more on prevention and mitigation. At the end of our field work, the Department informed us that it was developing a business case to seek additional program funding, including funding for prevention and mitigation activities.

The funding process is complex and contains internal control weaknesses

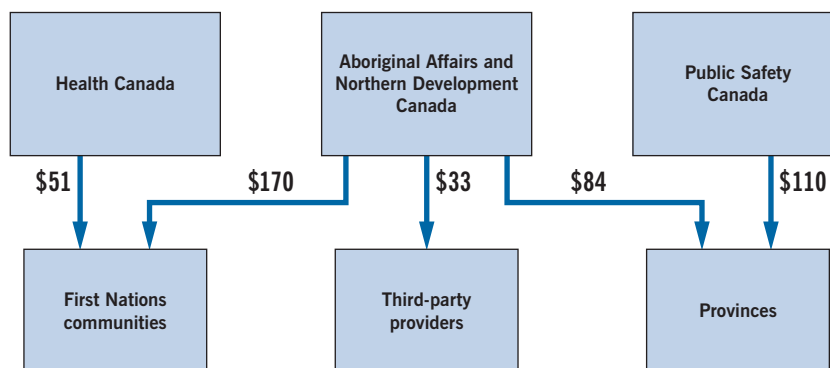
6.53 We examined whether emergency management support is delivered with due regard for economy and efficiency and in accordance with appropriate financial controls and whether service commitments and standards are established, communicated, and met.

6.54 The funding flow process can involve several parties, can vary depending on the severity and location of the emergency, and can place a heavy administrative burden on the First Nations communities affected by the emergency. During the four-year period from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal year, we estimate that about \$448 million was spent on emergency management support by several federal departments (Exhibit 6.4).

6.55 When costs of an emergency are expected to exceed certain thresholds and costs of responding would place a significant burden on the provincial economy, Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) program provides compensation to the provinces, which compensate affected First Nations communities for eligible costs. For example, according to Public Safety Canada, Manitoba's interim request for payment under the DFAA for emergency services to First Nations relating to floods in 2011 was approximately \$104 million.

Exhibit 6.4 Federal emergency management funding totalled about \$448 million between the 2009–10 and the 2012–13 fiscal years

(in millions of dollars)



6.56 When Public Safety Canada becomes involved, it adds a further complexity because another organization is part of the process. When natural disasters affect both on- and off-reserve lands, requests for payment are made by the province to Public Safety Canada, which reimburses the province at 100 percent for eligible costs related to First Nations communities according to its criteria. Under the DFAA, provinces have up to five years from the date that the event is determined to be of concern to the federal government to submit a final request for payment. This could lead to potential delays until the requests for payment are finalized and reconciled by the province. Additional time is required by Public Safety Canada to audit the requests for payment. However, advance and interim payments can be made to the province and First Nations before the request for payment is finalized.

6.57 We identified the following internal control weaknesses over the management of federal emergency management funds that need to be addressed.

- There is lack of clarity over what is an eligible cost for reimbursement. This creates an administrative burden in finalizing payments for all parties. It also creates control weaknesses when funds are advanced to First Nations, as they may be difficult to recover if some costs are later deemed ineligible. This is problematic for First Nations communities with limited resources that spend funds on items that are later deemed ineligible, and that may be required to repay funds they no longer

have. We noted several instances where Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and First Nations disagreed on whether costs were eligible, which resulted in both parties spending additional time and money trying to resolve the dispute.

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada engaged two third parties to provide emergency management services to First Nations communities. However, we saw no evidence that the Department performed due diligence to determine if the third parties had the capacity to deliver the emergency management services. Consequently, this may not have resulted in the best service being provided to First Nations, and the Department may not have received best value for the expenditures, totalling approximately \$16 million.
- It is not clear whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's internal controls are effective in safeguarding against the risk that First Nations might access funding from the Department as well as from Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program for the same activity. This possibility of duplicate payments is commonly referred to as the risk of stacking. According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, sources of funds are identified in the audits of First Nations' financial statements. In addition, according to Public Safety Canada, their financial audits of the assistance provided by the provinces contain audit steps that document the sources of funding provided to First Nations and ask the province whether they are aware of any other sources of funds to the First Nations for a particular activity. However, in our view, neither the financial audits of First Nations nor the financial audits carried out by Public Safety Canada are designed to specifically conclude on the nature and extent of this risk.
- During the 2011–12 fiscal year, at least \$500,000 in administrative and capital costs were paid by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada that were contrary to the approved program terms and conditions and thus were ineligible.
- Lastly, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada conducted several financial reviews and forensic audit investigations on how emergency management funds were used by recipients. The Department found significant weaknesses in internal controls, such as in controls to ensure that assistance is provided only to eligible recipients. At the time of our audit,

it was not clear what additional controls had been implemented to address the identified weaknesses. Also, the value of ineligible costs that may be recoverable from First Nations was under review.

6.58 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, in consultation with Public Safety Canada and working with First Nations, should streamline the funding process for the emergency management support provided to First Nations and strengthen internal controls over the management of federal emergency management funds. Ineligible costs advanced should be recovered, or, if the Department decides not to recover, it should seek approval and document the rationale for the decision.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will continue to work with relevant federal organizations, including Public Safety Canada, to streamline First Nations emergency management funding and strengthen internal controls. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will also review the list of eligible expenses to ensure that costs, such as administrative fees to municipalities hosting First Nation evacuees, are included. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will formalize, and communicate to recipients, guidance on the recovery or forgiveness of ineligible costs advanced to recipients during emergencies.

Monitoring and reporting of performance information is incomplete

6.59 Performance information is used to determine the extent to which expected results are achieved. We examined whether systems and practices were in place to measure and monitor performance, act on opportunities for improvement, and report on performance.

6.60 In 2010, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada evaluated its Emergency Management Assistance Program against its desired outcomes. That evaluation included a recommendation to develop a framework of performance measurement indicators to better evaluate program results. Three years later, the Department had only one performance measurement indicator: the number of emergency management plans in place in First Nations communities. A recent internal audit of the Emergency Management Assistance Program noted, and our work confirmed, that this performance measure is not being reported in its internal quarterly performance reports. We also

noted that this indicator has not been reported to Parliament in the departmental performance reports for the 2010–11 and 2011–12 fiscal years. At the time of our audit, the Department was working on finalizing a performance monitoring and reporting framework and related performance indicators for emergency management.

6.61 The Department carries out lessons learned exercises following emergencies to identify areas for improvement and to identify key lessons learned. However, we were unable to assess the extent to which the lessons learned were in fact implemented, because of a lack of supporting documentation.

6.62 In 2012, the Department reported that there was a low risk that emergency management funds could be used for other purposes. It also reported, as a low risk, that First Nations could access funds through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as well as through a province that then requests cost sharing through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program. We noted that in previous years, the assessment of the second risk had varied between low and high. The Department could not provide us with the details of the underlying analysis and substantiation to support its assessments of these risks. Our review of departmental documents and discussions with Department officials indicates that these financial risks may warrant a higher assessment than reported.

6.63 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should maintain proper documentation to substantiate its assessment of program risks.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will improve the documentation collected and used to substantiate the assessment of program risks, taking into account reporting burden on First Nations.

Health Canada

6.64 Health Canada's responsibilities for the management of health emergencies on reserves are carried out by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. The Branch is responsible for preparing for and responding to communicable disease health emergencies, such as pandemics and food-borne and water-borne infections. The Branch also supports First Nations on reserve and other government departments' response to all-hazards emergencies, such as floods, forest fires, and chemical and other natural disasters.

6.65 According to Health Canada, compared with the Canadian population at large, First Nations have higher rates of underlying medical conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. These conditions can be further worsened by overcrowded housing, limited access to safe drinking water, and inadequate sewage systems. Consequently, First Nations face increased rates of disease and mortality.

6.66 During the period under examination, there were no reported health emergencies on reserves. However, according to Health Canada, in 2009, H1N1, a new strain of influenza virus, affected about 40,000 Canadians. Aboriginal people made up a disproportionate number of the hospitalizations, intensive care admissions, and deaths. According to the Department, the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 represents the only significant health-specific pandemic emergency on reserves in recent years.

6.67 In 2010 and 2011, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology reviewed the H1N1 experience and emergency management preparedness and response. The three reports made a number of recommendations to Health Canada and to the Public Health Agency of Canada aimed at strengthening their management of health emergencies, including those on First Nations. We selected several recommendations and lessons learned to assess the extent to which they had been implemented. These concerned the need to update a draft 2007 emergency preparedness policy, including roles and responsibilities, and to identify, assess, and address health risks.

Departmental roles and responsibilities and risk management for health emergencies can be strengthened

6.68 Two internal audit reports issued in 2010 and 2011 identified the need to update Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada's draft 2007 Health Portfolio—Emergency Preparedness Policy. This included clarifying their roles and responsibilities in a public health emergency and the need to take further action on risk identification and assessment in order to support preparedness and response efforts. We examined the extent to which this had been done.

6.69 We found that in 2012, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada completed the Health Portfolio—Strategic Emergency Management Plan that replaced the emergency preparedness policy. The Plan outlines their roles and responsibilities with respect to emergency management, including on reserves.

6.70 However, we noted that in 2013, the Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada Health Portfolio Emergency Management Committee, which oversees the coordination of joint emergency preparedness activities between the two organizations, identified that roles and responsibilities between them needed to be further clarified. For example, the Committee identified the need to update its 2007 memorandum of understanding between the two organizations that sets out the principles for effective collaboration on health emergency management. At the time of the audit, we were informed that the memorandum of understanding was no longer required and that the roles and responsibilities for each organization would be clearly specified once the departments have followed through on their undertaking to revise the 2012 Strategic Emergency Management Plan.

6.71 We also noted that the 2012 Strategic Emergency Management Plan identified the need to develop additional operational emergency response plans that would specify roles and responsibilities of headquarter and regional organizational units responsible for emergency response activities. We found that the 2010 Health Portfolio—Emergency Response Plan and related annexes were in the process of being updated, but had not yet been approved. In addition, we noted that draft regional pandemic plans for First Nations, which also specify roles and responsibilities, still had not been finalized for three out of six regions.

6.72 In December 2011, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada issued a report that identified, analyzed, and evaluated threats, hazards, and risks that could result in public health emergencies in general. The report contained a preliminary high-level qualitative assessment of health risks related to First Nations. However, the organizations acknowledged that further work was required to adequately assess and address health risks faced by First Nations that could be increased during an emergency.

6.73 Recommendation. Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada should further clarify their roles and responsibilities by updating and approving their emergency management and response plans and First Nations regional pandemic plans.

Health Canada's and the Public Health Agency of Canada's response. Agreed. The current Health Portfolio—Emergency Response Plan was approved in 2010 and is presently being updated to reflect the new Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada shared service approach to emergency management, following *Budget 2012*. Particular attention will be paid to the roles and responsibilities of Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada through the review and revision of the Plan. Health Canada will also work to clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch regional pandemic plans.

Pandemic plans do not exist in all First Nations communities

6.74 The goal of pandemic planning is to minimize serious illness and deaths resulting from pandemics, such as influenza, and to minimize disruption by allowing as many people as possible to carry out their normal activities during a pandemic.

6.75 Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch is responsible for working closely with communities to advise on and support the development, testing, and periodic revision of their pandemic plans. Health Canada and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada recognize that the pandemic plans should be integrated into the emergency management plans of First Nations communities.

6.76 We assessed the extent to which First Nations have pandemic plans, and the currency and completeness of these plans.

6.77 Health Canada reports in its Departmental Performance Report that 98 percent of First Nations have a pandemic plan. According to the Department, this figure was based on the interaction of regional officials with First Nations communities. We found, however, that the Department could not substantiate the 98 percent figure, as it had only 69 plans covering 148 communities.

6.78 Further, while the Department automatically receives a copy of the pandemic plan for the 279 First Nations communities that manage their community health programs, for the remaining communities, whose health programs are managed by the Department, officials do not have copies of all the plans. Consequently, First Nations communities that do not have a pandemic plan may be more at risk of not being able to effectively respond to serious illness resulting from pandemics.

6.79 We examined a sample of six community pandemic plans to assess their currency and completeness. We found that two plans were out of date. For the remaining four, we could not assess their currency due to the lack of information in the plans. We also found that none of the plans contained an assessment of populations within the community at risk.

6.80 Recommendation. Health Canada should continue to work with First Nations in the development, maintenance, and testing of appropriate pandemic plans for all First Nations communities.

Health Canada's response. Agreed. Health Canada engages communities when sharing pandemic best practices through various vehicles, such as hosting workshops. Health Canada will continue to work in consultation with First Nations to support communities in developing, maintaining, and testing their pandemic plans.

Coordination of support

6.81 We reviewed recommendations made in lessons learned reports, documents, and third-party agreements to determine whether systems and practices were in place to facilitate emergency management coordination both between federal departments and with First Nations.

There is limited coordination between Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada

6.82 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada recognize the need to better coordinate their emergency management activities and have taken some steps in this regard. In 2011, the departments established a working group to collaborate and identify priorities. These priorities included planning and capacity development for vulnerable communities; program integration and alignment; and support for the integration of pandemic plans into community emergency development plans. We found that the extent of coordination between the two departments to achieve these priorities has been limited.

6.83 For example, Health Canada provided \$1 million in one region over the period from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 fiscal year to First Nations for maintaining and testing pandemic plans. During the same period, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada also provided approximately \$1.4 million to the same region through a First Nations organization to assist First Nations to develop community emergency management plans and provide training in

using the plans. We noted that these activities were carried out independently of each other.

6.84 We also saw no evidence that any of the six pandemic plans that we reviewed were integrated into the communities' emergency management plan. This may mean that integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency management plans are not in place.

6.85 Furthermore, the departments' strategic documents, such as their national emergency management plans, do not yet reflect the coordination activities required to deal with all-hazards emergencies on reserve. Areas for coordination include clarification of roles and responsibilities, information sharing, addressing the social determinants that affect health, and communications.

6.86 Lastly, two lessons learned reports carried out following the H1N1 pandemic identified the need for better coordination between departments regarding significant public health events. We noted that a draft memorandum of understanding between Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada was prepared; however, it was limited to influenza pandemic preparedness.

6.87 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada should continue to work with First Nations in the development of integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency management plans for all First Nations communities.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will work with First Nations and other federal organizations, including Public Safety Canada and Health Canada, to assist in the development, exercising, and implementation of community-level plans.

Health Canada's response. Agreed. Health Canada currently offers support to communities by sharing best practices and distributing templates for emergency management plans and pandemic plans. An integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency plan would include, as an annex, a community-level pandemic plan. Health Canada will continue to work with First Nations in the development of their integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency management plans.

6.88 Recommendation. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada, working with First Nations, should implement mechanisms to coordinate departmental activities for emergencies on reserves.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Health Canada, and other relevant federal organizations will establish interdepartmental working groups to coordinate their activities for emergencies on reserves.

Health Canada's response. Agreed. Health Canada is currently working with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in identifying their respective roles and responsibilities for emergency management when it comes to First Nations. An Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada–Health Canada–Assembly of First Nations All-Hazards Emergency Management Working Group will be established to better coordinate departmental activities to support integrated plans and coordinate activities for all-hazards emergencies on reserves.

Conclusion

6.89 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has taken some steps and has plans to address some of the issues identified in the audit. However, during the period covered by the audit (September 2012–August 2013), we concluded that the Department had not taken sufficient steps to adequately manage those areas of emergency management support to First Nations on reserves that we examined.

6.90 Except for not having clearly defined its roles and responsibilities and not being able to fully substantiate whether First Nations communities have appropriate pandemic plans, Health Canada had taken sufficient steps to adequately manage its emergency management support to First Nations on reserves.

6.91 While both departments recognize the need to better coordinate their efforts, limited movement has been made on providing coordinated support to develop integrated community emergency management plans for First Nations on reserves.

6.92 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada recognize these challenges and continue to work independently and jointly on solutions.

About the Audit

All of the audit work in this chapter was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set out in *The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants Handbook—Assurance*. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

As part of our regular audit process, we obtained management’s confirmation that the findings reported in this chapter are factually based.

Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s and Health Canada’s emergency management support to First Nations on reserves is adequately managed.

For the purposes of this performance audit, adequate management means that

- roles and responsibilities with respect to emergency management on reserves are clearly defined and agreed to;
- support is designed and funded using a risk-based all-hazards approach, and includes prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery;
- support is delivered with due regard for economy and efficiency and in accordance with appropriate financial controls, and service commitments and standards are established, communicated, and met; and
- systems and practices are in place to measure and monitor performance, act on opportunities for improvement, and report on performance.

Scope and approach

The audit examined Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s and Health Canada’s emergency management support to First Nations on reserves south of the 60th parallel. The audit also took into account, as appropriate, the roles and responsibilities of Public Safety Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The audit scope did not include

- any specific emergencies in detail, although the audit looked at some elements of emergencies, such as floods in 2011 or the H1N1 pandemic in 2009;
- threats or incidents involving individuals within the community, such as missing persons, suicides, individual crimes, and house fires;
- performance of non-federal organizations (such as provincial governments and non-governmental organizations) with respect to their emergency management roles and responsibilities; and
- the adequacy of amounts spent on each of the four elements of emergency management.

The audit involved reviewing key documents, interviewing departmental officials, analyzing selected emergency data and costs, reviewing internal financial controls and procedures, and testing selected financial controls and procedures. Information was gathered from both headquarters and selected regional offices in three provinces.

In addition, the audit included visits and discussions with representatives from First Nations communities, interviews with provincial officials, and interviews with representatives of First Nations and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, to obtain their views and perspectives.

Criteria

Criteria	Sources
To determine whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's and Health Canada's emergency management support to First Nations on reserves is adequately managed, we used the following criteria:	
Roles and responsibilities with respect to emergency management on reserves are clearly defined and agreed to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emergency Management Act</i> • <i>Constitution Act, 1867</i> • <i>Indian Act</i> • <i>Department of Health Act</i> • Treasury Board–approved program authorities and programs' terms and conditions • Federal Policy for Emergency Management, 2009 • Public Safety Canada National Emergency Response System, 2011
Support is designed and funded using a risk-based all-hazards approach, and includes prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emergency Management Act</i> • Federal Policy for Emergency Management, 2009 • Policy on Transfer Payments, Treasury Board, 2008 • Framework for the Management of Risk, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010 • Emergency Management Planning Guide 2010–2011, Public Safety Canada • Emergency management and business continuity programs Z1600-08, Canadian Standards Association, 2008
Support is delivered with due regard for economy and efficiency and in accordance with appropriate financial controls and service commitments, and standards are established, communicated, and met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's (AANDC) National Emergency Management Plan, 2011 • Federal Emergency Response Plan, 2011 • Federal Policy for Emergency Management, 2009 • Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, Treasury Board, 2006 • Management Accountability Framework, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat • Companion Guide—The Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks for Horizontal Initiatives, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat • Policy on Transfer Payments, Treasury Board, 2008

Criteria	Sources
To determine whether Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's and Health Canada's emergency management support to First Nations on reserves is adequately managed, we used the following criteria: (Continued)	
Systems and practices are in place to measure and monitor performance, act on opportunities for improvement, and report on performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Management, Resources and Results Structures, Treasury Board, 2010 • Policy on Transfer Payments, Treasury Board, 2008 • Policy on Evaluation, Treasury Board, 2009 • Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP-2), Public Performance Reporting, Public Sector Accounting Board, 2006

Management reviewed and accepted the suitability of the criteria used in the audit.

Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period between September 2012 and August 2013. Some areas included review of departmental documents and analysis of departmental data for prior periods. Audit work for this chapter was completed on 20 August 2013.

Audit team

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Appendix List of recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations found in Chapter 6. The number in front of the recommendation indicates the paragraph where it appears in the chapter. The numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs where the topic is discussed.

Recommendation	Response
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	
<p>6.37 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with First Nations, the provinces, and other federal organizations, should take the lead role in clarifying federal roles and responsibilities so that these can be set out formally in agreements with the provinces and in the contribution agreements with First Nations and third-party providers. (6.25–6.36)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with Public Safety Canada, Health Canada, and other federal organizations as appropriate, and First Nations themselves, will continue to build upon its efforts to clarify existing roles and responsibilities for the delivery of emergency management services on reserves. Consistent guiding principles on roles and responsibilities will form the foundation of enhanced bilateral agreements to be negotiated with provincial/territorial governments for emergency management service delivery on reserves.</p>
<p>6.42 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should update and align the authorities for its emergency management program with the <i>Emergency Management Act</i> and An Emergency Management Framework for Canada. (6.38–6.41)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will ensure that expenditures in community infrastructure for mitigation purposes complement and support the Department’s Emergency Management Assistance Program.</p>
<p>6.43 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with stakeholders, as appropriate, should finalize its regional emergency management plans and should develop national emergency management supporting guidelines, taking into account regional differences. (6.38–6.41)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will continue to review and update its internal regional emergency management plans, which reflect regional differences. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s National Emergency Management Plan will provide guidance to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s regional offices, and will be regularly updated.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>6.47 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with First Nations, should develop and implement a risk-based all-hazards approach for emergency management support to First Nations on reserves. (6.44–6.46)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Under the umbrella of the <i>Emergency Management Act</i> and Emergency Management Framework, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will work with First Nations and other federal organizations, including Public Safety Canada and Health Canada, to coordinate a risk-based all-hazards approach for the management of emergencies on reserves.</p>
<p>6.58 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, in consultation with Public Safety Canada and working with First Nations, should streamline the funding process for the emergency management support provided to First Nations and strengthen internal controls over the management of federal emergency management funds. Ineligible costs advanced should be recovered, or, if the Department decides not to recover, it should seek approval and document the rationale for the decision. (6.48–6.57)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will continue to work with relevant federal organizations, including Public Safety Canada, to streamline First Nations emergency management funding and strengthen internal controls. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will also review the list of eligible expenses to ensure that costs, such as administrative fees to municipalities hosting First Nation evacuees, are included. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will formalize, and communicate to recipients, guidance on the recovery or forgiveness of ineligible costs advanced to recipients during emergencies.</p>
<p>6.63 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should maintain proper documentation to substantiate its assessment of program risks. (6.59–6.62)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will improve the documentation collected and used to substantiate the assessment of program risks, taking into account reporting burden on First Nations.</p>
<p>Health Canada</p>	
<p>6.73 Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada should further clarify their roles and responsibilities by updating and approving their emergency management and response plans and First Nations regional pandemic plans. (6.68–6.72)</p>	<p>Health Canada’s and the Public Health Agency of Canada’s response. Agreed. The current Health Portfolio—Emergency Response Plan was approved in 2010 and is presently being updated to reflect the new Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada shared service approach to emergency management, following <i>Budget 2012</i>. Particular attention will be paid to the roles and responsibilities of Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada through the review and revision of the Plan. Health Canada will also work to clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch regional pandemic plans.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>6.80 Health Canada should continue to work with First Nations in the development, maintenance, and testing of appropriate pandemic plans for all First Nations communities. (6.74–6.79)</p>	<p>Health Canada’s response. Agreed. Health Canada engages communities when sharing pandemic best practices through various vehicles, such as hosting workshops. Health Canada will continue to work in consultation with First Nations to support communities in developing, maintaining, and testing their pandemic plans.</p>
<p>Coordination of support</p>	
<p>6.87 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada should continue to work with First Nations in the development of integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency management plans for all First Nations communities. (6.82–6.86)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will work with First Nations and other federal organizations, including Public Safety Canada and Health Canada, to assist in the development, exercising, and implementation of community-level plans.</p> <p>Health Canada’s response. Agreed. Health Canada currently offers support to communities by sharing best practices and distributing templates for emergency management plans and pandemic plans. An integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency plan would include, as an annex, a community-level pandemic plan. Health Canada will continue to work with First Nations in the development of their integrated risk-based all-hazards community emergency management plans.</p>
<p>6.88 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada, working with First Nations, should implement mechanisms to coordinate departmental activities for emergencies on reserves. (6.82–6.86)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s response. Agreed. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Health Canada, and other relevant federal organizations will establish interdepartmental working groups to coordinate their activities for emergencies on reserves.</p> <p>Health Canada’s response. Agreed. Health Canada is currently working with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in identifying their respective roles and responsibilities for emergency management when it comes to First Nations. An Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada–Health Canada–Assembly of First Nations All-Hazards Emergency Management Working Group will be established to better coordinate departmental activities to support integrated plans and coordinate activities for all-hazards emergencies on reserves.</p>