

Provincial Emergency Program

VOLUNTEER POLICY & PROCEDURES

Interim Volunteer Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Policy and Procedures Bulletin 2006

Reason for change:

The Provincial Emergency Program is undertaking a review of all current policies and policy bulletins. This review and the subsequent restructuring and rewriting of PEP policy will require some time. In order to ensure that volunteer reimbursements and allowances are kept current and reflect today's costs, it was felt that a rewrite of the policy on volunteer expense reimbursement and allowances should be undertaken as an interim measure without delay.

The new interim policy bulletin will incorporate reimbursement policies that are currently captured in several other policies, making the new rates more accessible and reducing duplication and inconsistency of policy. The rates themselves are now captured in a chart that can more easily be updated without demanding policy changes.

The new interim policy bulletin more closely aligns volunteer reimbursement rates and allowances with provincial government policies and guidelines. As well, it treats all five Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer groups as equitably as possible.

Effective date:

The mileage rates were changed effective June 1 st, 2006.

All other rates will be effective for all operational and training tasks initiated on or after October 15, 2006.

The policy changes will be effective for all operational and training tasks initiated on or after October 15, 2006

Provincial Emergency Program

INTERIM POLICY & PROCEDURES BULLETIN

Effective Date: October 15, 2006

**EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT AND
ALLOWANCE RATES - VOLUNTEERS
AND VOLUNTEER GROUPS**

OBJECTIVE

Public Safety Lifeline volunteers and volunteer groups are responsible for the care and maintenance of their own equipment during operational and training tasks. As well, volunteers often travel some distance to an incident or training site and spend prolonged time away from their work and home.

Public Safety Lifeline volunteers and volunteer groups shall not be faced with an onerous financial burden because of the volunteer work they do on behalf of the responsible agencies.

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) is reviewing all volunteer policies in order to align these policies with the provincial government core policies and guidelines where appropriate. As well, there is a need to ensure that all five Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer Groups are treated as equitably as possible.

In order to reduce duplication and inconsistency of policy regarding reimbursement rates for Public Safety Lifeline volunteers and volunteer groups the following policies are rescinded and replaced by this interim policy and procedures bulletin:

- 05.12 Reimbursement Rates – Volunteers and Volunteer Groups
- 01.03 Meal Reimbursement – Emergency Service Volunteers
- 00.08 Accommodation Expense Reimbursement – Volunteers

- 00.05 Volunteer Child Care Expense
- 00.01 Search and Rescue Equipment

This interim policy and procedures bulletin will override some sections of *Policy 05.01 Road Rescue Services*, including all rates in Annex A other than pumper trucks. Policy 05.01 Road Rescue Services will be amended shortly.

GENERAL

PEP is committed to providing reasonable reimbursement of expenses to all five Public Safety Lifeline volunteers and volunteer groups while under approved operational or training tasks. Unless otherwise specified in a sub-section, the Public Safety Lifeline volunteers affected by this policy are:

- Emergency Social Services (ESS)
- Search and Rescue
- Road Rescue
- Emergency Communications
- PEP Air

POLICY

PEP will reimburse Public Safety Lifeline volunteers and volunteer groups for defined personal out-of-pocket expenses and for the use of their equipment and property for approved emergency response or training tasks.

Expense Reimbursement Approval

PEP Task Number

The necessary approval, by either an emergency response or training task number, must be obtained before the appropriate reimbursements can be approved.

The issuance of a task number shall not be regarded as an automatic approval of reimbursement requests.

Training Task Number

All expense reimbursements and allowances to be claimed under a training task number must be pre-approved. Refer to the current policy on [Application for Training Task Number](#).

Expense Authority

A PEP Regional Manager must approve all volunteer expense reimbursement claims.

Meal Allowances

Volunteers and volunteer groups shall use the most current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#) to determine the meal allowance claim. When meals are provided, volunteers may not claim for these meals unless they have special dietary needs that prevent them from eating the food provided.

Operational Task (Emergency Response)

Where the operational task exceeds three hours duration, the individual volunteer may claim for one meal every three hours to a maximum of four meals per 24 hour period. This 24 period shall include the travel time of the individual volunteer portal to portal. Portal to portal shall be understood as the round trip from the volunteer's residence to the assembly point and/or incident site.

Travel

Accommodation Expense

Volunteers who require accommodations due to an operational or training task must have pre-approval from a PEP Regional Manager.

Reimbursement for commercial or private accommodation within BC must be in accordance with the provincial government *Core Policy and Procedures Manual*. Refer to the most current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#) for information. Soft-sided accommodations such as tents will be considered private accommodations for the purposes of the accommodations reimbursement claim.

Accommodation expenses within BC that exceed the limits established by this guide require specific pre-authorization to exceed this limit from a PEP Regional Manager. Amounts in excess that are considered acceptable may be determined on a case by case basis, considering variables such as the urgency of the travel, whether travel is occurring in peak season and if accommodations at the established limits are not available.

Mileage Allowance

Volunteers and volunteer groups may claim mileage when using a privately owned vehicle on an operational task. Volunteers are expected to carpool where practical to minimize costs.

Mileage claims for a training task must be pre-authorized by a PEP Regional Manager.

Refer to the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#) for the mileage rates in effect.

Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

Volunteers on an operational task are entitled to claim miscellaneous travel expenses for:

- ferry tolls, ferry reservation fees and highway tolls
- airport improvement and security fees, NAVCANADA fees and applicable fuel charges
- parking charges
- Telephone, cellular and satellite calls related to the operational task
- personal phone calls (one five-minute telephone call home for each night away)

Receipts and/or statements showing the charges incurred are required for all miscellaneous travel expenses other than personal phone calls.

Volunteer Child Care Expenses

The Provincial Emergency Program may authorize the reimbursement of child care expenses for a volunteer on an operational task in the following circumstances:

- the volunteer is the only available service provider with the required skill-set for the operational task;
- there is no one else at the volunteer's residence to provide child care;
- prior authorization by a PEP Regional Manager to have child care expenses reimbursed has been received;
- child care expenses are not being funded by an employer or other agency.

Volunteer child care expenses will not be paid for volunteers under a training task.

Volunteer child care reimbursement rates can be found in the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#).

Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Supplement

The OSH supplement will provide volunteer teams with funds to assist in accessing training that will minimize the OSH risks to volunteers during operational tasks. This supplement represents a percentage of the total claim from an operational task excluding extraordinary costs such as helicopters.

The OSH supplement can be claimed under the following conditions:

- this supplement must be claimed by a volunteer group and is not available for individuals
- this supplement must be claimed by each volunteer group in a mutual support operational task based on the amount claimed by the group and its members
- this supplement can only be claimed for operational tasks
- while all volunteers groups are eligible to claim the OSH supplement, for the purposes of the OSH supplement, an [Emergency Social Services \(ESS\) Level 1 response](#) is not an eligible operational task
- a volunteer group that participates in a call out, i.e. the deployment of the group is cancelled either en route to the site or at the site before any volunteer response activity has occurred, may not claim the OSH supplement

- the OSH supplement percentage rate and the minimum supplement amount can be found in the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#)

Equipment

Volunteer Group Equipment Allowance

Volunteer groups will be able to claim a daily Volunteer Group Equipment Allowance for each volunteer who participates in an operational task. This daily allowance replaces previous radio equipment allowances and can be claimed under the following conditions:

- this allowance must be claimed by a volunteer group and is not available for individuals
- this allowance must be claimed by each volunteer group in a mutual support operational task based on the number of group members participating
- this allowance can only be claimed for operational tasks
- this allowance cannot be claimed for convergent volunteers
- this allowance is limited to the following Public Safety Lifeline volunteer groups:
 - Search and Rescue
 - Emergency Communications including Amateur Radio
 - Road Rescue
 - PEP Air (when on PEP tasking)
- a volunteer group that participates in a call out, i.e. the deployment of the group is cancelled either en route to the site or at the site before any volunteer response activity has occurred, may not claim the Volunteer Group Equipment Allowance
- the Volunteer Group Equipment Allowance can be found in the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#)

Vehicles

Rates

These rates are in addition to the mileage rate. Rates can be found in the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#).

Call Out

The call out rate is used when the deployment of the group is cancelled either en route to the site or at the site before any volunteer response activity has occurred. For road rescue, a volunteer response activity involves extrication or embankment rescue. Refer to [Policy 05.01 Road Rescue Services](#).

SAR Command Vehicle Allowance Rate

A SAR volunteer group may claim these rates for the vehicle from which the response is managed. If the command vehicle is a trailer, the motor vehicle pulling the trailer and trailer are treated as one unit.

As well, they serve to reimburse the volunteer group for the use of all equipment and administrative supplies associated with the command vehicle.

During a mutual support operational task, only the primary SAR volunteer group may claim these rates. However, in unusually large emergency responses, a PEP Regional Manager may choose to pre-authorize a claim for the use of additional command vehicles.

Communications Vehicle Allowance Rate

A volunteer group using a vehicle specifically for the provision of emergency communications during an operational task may claim this rate. The vehicle must be staffed by Emergency Communications volunteers

There is no call out allowance for communications vehicles.

During a mutual support operational task, only the primary volunteer group may claim these rates. However, in unusually large emergency responses, a PEP Regional Manager may choose to pre-authorize a claim for the use of additional communications vehicles.

Feeding Van Allowance Rate

A volunteer group using a vehicle specifically for the provision of cooking and/or serving food to Public Safety Lifeline volunteers during an operational task may claim this rate. If the feeding van is a trailer, the motor vehicle pulling the trailer and trailer are treated as one unit.

These rates are in addition to the mileage rate. As well, they serve to reimburse the volunteer group for the use of all equipment and supplies other than food and consumables associated with the feeding van.

Bulk food and other consumable purchases shall be reimbursed to the volunteer group. Such claims must be accompanied by a receipt for goods received.

If the volunteer group chooses to use a different organization for mobile food service, pre-authorization from a PEP Regional Manager must be obtained.

There is no call out allowance for feeding vans.

Mutual Support Vehicle Allowance Rate

This allowance replaces the “first vehicle per group” allowance and applies to one vehicle per volunteer group under the following conditions:

- the group is not claiming the allowance rate for a command vehicle, communications vehicle, or feeding van
- the group is assisting in a mutual support operational task

There is no call out allowance for mutual support vehicles.

Equipment Expense Reimbursement Rates

Eligible equipment expense reimbursement rates can be found in the current [Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart](#). Should a volunteer group choose to rent equipment, the rental rate shall apply. All rental agreements should be pre-authorized by a PEP Regional Manager.

PROCEDURES

Obtaining Approval

Volunteer groups on an operational task requiring pre-authorization for expense reimbursement and/or allowance claims according to the above policy should call

their PEP Regional Manager either directly at the [PEP regional office](#) or by way of the PEP Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456.

All expenses incurred during a training task must be pre-approved in writing.

Required Forms ([PEP Forms Matrix](#))

Task Registration Form

Claims for personal expenses will only be processed if a task registration form has been completed and signed by all volunteers participating on the task. If it is not possible to get all volunteers to sign the task registration form, the team leader must sign the form on their behalf. Refer to the current policy on [Task Registration](#).

Task Report

A Task Report must be completed for all PEP authorized activities for which a volunteer or volunteer group requests reimbursement of personal and group expenses incurred while engaged in an emergency response or training activity. Refer to the current policy on [Task Report](#).

Expense Reimbursement Request

A separate Expense Reimbursement Request form must be submitted with supporting documentation for each emergency response or training task that has been assigned a unique task number. Refer to the current policy on [Expense Reimbursement Request](#).

Application for Training Task Number

A Public Safety Lifeline volunteer group should contact the PEP regional office to receive a verbal commitment that upcoming training will be funded by PEP. This verbal commitment must be followed by an Application for Training Task Number at least 28 days before the scheduled training.

Authority to sign off forms

Volunteer Authority

A PEP [Expense Reimbursement Request](#) form will only be accepted by a PEP regional office if it is signed by a volunteer who is a member of a Public Safety Lifeline volunteer group and who is registered with PEP.

PEP [Task Registration Forms](#) and [Task Report Forms](#) must be signed by a Public Safety Lifeline volunteer group team leader who is registered with PEP. Where the operational task was performed in support of a local government, the Emergency Program Coordinator's signature is also required.

PEP [Application for Training Task Number](#) forms are generally signed by the local government Emergency Program Coordinator. However, if a Public Safety Lifeline volunteer group is not affiliated with a local government, the form should be signed by a volunteer group team leader who is registered with PEP.

PEP Authority

Please refer to the provincial government *Core Policy and Procedures Manual (Chapter 4, Expense Management)*.

APPROVAL

Submission of Claim

Volunteer expense reimbursement claims must be submitted to the appropriate PEP Expense Authority within 30 days of the last day of the task for which the claim is being made.

Exception from Policy

Any justifiable exceptions from this policy will require a recommendation from a Regional Manager and authorization from a Senior Regional Manager or another member of the PEP Executive.

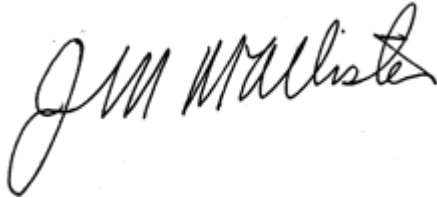
Effective Date

This interim policy and procedures bulletin will be in effect for all operational or training tasks initiated on or after October 15, 2006.

Approved by:

Jim McAllister
A/Deputy Director

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim McAllister". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Date: September 7, 2006

Provincial Emergency Program

INTERIM POLICY & PROCEDURES BULLETIN

Effective Date: October 15, 2006

PEP Volunteer Reimbursement and Allowance Rates for 2006

Minimum 2 (two) hours for all hourly rates
All rates are to be rounded to the nearest hour up or down

ITEM	RATE
Meals	\$15.00 per meal
Accommodation (commercial)	See Government Business Travel Accommodation Listings
Private Accommodation	\$30 per night
Mileage (for all types of insured motor vehicles)	Current provincial government rate Note: for volunteers annual mileage rate changes will occur on April 1st
Volunteer Child Care Expenses	\$25 per child per day or \$50 per child if overnight
Occupational Health and Safety Supplement	15% of total claim (not including extraordinary costs, e.g. helicopter)
Aircraft	Based on fuel factor and engine size - see CASARA fuel factor chart
SAR Command Vehicle (includes all associated equipment and administrative supplies)	\$125 per call out \$500 per response per 24 hour period
Communications Vehicle	\$250 per response per 24 hour

	period
Feeding Vehicle (truck or trailer equipped with cooking and refrigeration equipment and includes all associated equipment and non-food supplies)	\$250 per response per 24 hour period
Mutual Support Vehicle (one per group responding)	\$125 per response per 24 hour period
Highway Rescue Truck (includes all associated equipment and consumables)	\$125 per call out \$500 per response per 24 hour period
All Terrain Vehicle (snowmobile, Argo, quad) and motorcycles	\$30 per operating hour
Trailer (boat, ATV, equipment, horse)	\$15 per operating hour
Watercraft (powered)	.60 x HP = rate per hour of use, minimum \$30 per hour
Watercraft (unpowered)	\$8 per hour of use
Bicycle	\$10 per hour of use
Horse or Certified SAR Dog	\$25 per hour of use
Generator (not command vehicle mounted) and Chainsaw	\$8 per hour of use
Telephones and Cellular Phones	\$0.40 per minute
Satellite Phones	\$1.50 per minute
Thermal imager, underwater camera, and similar equipment when pre-authorized	\$15 per hour of use
Equipment rate (handheld/mobile radios, fixed/mobile repeaters, GPS/APRS, incidentals)	\$25 per person on task per 24 hour period

Provincial Emergency Program

VOLUNTEER POLICY & PROCEDURES

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Questions & Answers

Mileage

Is the mileage rate the same regardless of the size of the vehicle?

Yes. The 24 hour fixed rate for command, communications, feeding, and mutual support vehicle acknowledges the extra costs of operating these larger vehicles.

What is meant by portal to portal?

Portal to portal refers to a round trip from the volunteer's residence to the assembly point plus mileage used during the response (when the volunteer's vehicle was required by the group during the response) and the return trip. Responders should ensure that the number of personal vehicles used on the response is minimized.

Is there a separate rate for idle time due to weather?

No.

Is the mileage rate included in the 24 hour fixed rate for command, communications, feeding, and mutual support vehicles?

No. Mileage should be claimed over and above the eligible 24 hour fixed rate.

Meals

Can volunteers claim for individual meal rates if meals are provided by a feeding van?

Yes. Volunteers may claim meals for the travel period to and from the assembly site (location of feeding van) when this travel is over 3 consecutive hours in duration each way. As well, any volunteer with special dietary requirements may claim for meals when the food provided by a feeding van is not appropriate.

Accommodation

What is the rate for soft-sided accommodations (tents)?

The rate for this type of accommodation would be the same as the rate for private lodging.

Watercraft

Is there still a two hour minimum for powered watercraft?

Yes. The two hour minimum applies for powered watercraft. This does not apply for river rafts used under rental agreements.

Road Rescue, Command, Communications, Feeding, and Mutual Support Vehicles

What does a SAR group claim if they have used their command vehicle to respond to two separate incidents within a 24 hour period?

It should claim $2 \times \$500 = \$1,000$

When is the call-out rate used?

The call-out rate is used when a command vehicle or road rescue truck is deployed but the deployment is cancelled en route or the vehicle is not used in the response. There is no call-out rate for communications, feeding or mutual support vehicles.

In a mutual support situation, will PEP pay for more than one command vehicle responding to an incident?

In general, no. PEP will pay for one command vehicle per incident. In extenuating circumstances, the RM may authorize claims for other command vehicles due to the scope and size of the response.

Has the “first vehicle rate” been dropped?

This rate has been replaced by the mutual support vehicle rate. Again, PEP will normally only pay for one mutual support vehicle per group per response.

Was the Salvation Army involved in the review of feeding van rates?

No.

Can a group claim for both a command vehicle and a communications vehicle?

A group can only claim for a communications vehicle if it is staffed by emergency communications personnel and the vehicle is used solely and specifically for communications purposes. In general, SAR groups for example, will use their command vehicle for communications as well and should only claim the command vehicle rate.

Have the rates for pumper trucks changed?

No, the policy and rates for pumper trucks have not been addressed in this policy as this policy is only for volunteer groups. Policy dealing with local government will be reviewed at a later date.

Are the hourly rates for command, communications, feeding, mutual support, and road rescue vehicles still in effect?

No, these rates have been replaced by per response per 24 hour rates.

Equipment

Is amateur radio equipment included in the equipment rates?

Yes. As PEP only reimburses volunteers for the expenses incurred in using the equipment amateur radio groups should be able to claim these expenses.

Can a group claim the \$25/person equipment rate for a call out?

No. This equipment rate can only be claimed for a response.

Can a group that responds to two separate incidents in a day claim the \$25/person equipment rate for each incident?

Yes.

Can an individual claim the \$25/person equipment rate?

No. This claim must be made by a group on behalf of its members and will be paid to the group.

Can a group claim the \$25/person for converging volunteers?

No, a group can only claim for those members who have a PEP ID card.

Will the \$25/person equipment rate apply to ESS volunteers?

No. Currently, ESS volunteers do not use specialized equipment. This rate only applies to SAR, Emergency Communications, and Road Rescue at this time. If a volunteer emergency communications group is deployed to provide communications for an ESS response, the emergency communications group can claim this rate.

What constitutes incidents in regards to the Equipment Rate?

Incidentals covered under the \$25/person equipment rate would be those incidental items that are related to the equipment (for example, batteries).

Thermal imager, underwater camera etc. when authorized

These items can vary in price from a few dollars to many thousands. Will there be a scaled reimbursement rate to reflect this?

No. There is such a steady stream of new equipment coming on the market that PEP decided to use one rate for all at this time. Groups must also note that the use of this type of specialty equipment must be pre-authorized by PEP.

Occupational Health and Safety Supplement

Is this supplement an addition to the Search and Rescue Equipment Allowance?

No, groups are now able to claim a \$25/person equipment allowance.

Can the OSH supplement be claimed by an individual?

No, this must be claimed by the group.

Can the OSH supplement be claimed by a local government?

No, this must be claimed by a recognized volunteer group.

Does the OSH supplement apply to all teams during a mutual support operation?

Yes. Each team should claim the OSH supplement on their submitted claim total for the response.

Why is it called an OSH supplement?

The intent is to provide teams with dollars towards training that will minimize OSH risks to volunteers during response.

How do you round rates up or down?

Rates are rounded to the nearest hour, with the half hour rounded up to the full hour.

Will the group need receipts for phone charges?

Groups should retain their phone records but these will only be required if the claims for these charges is excessive.

What is a 24 hour period?

24 hours, beginning from the call out of a volunteer group and regardless of the time of day.

Does this interim policy and procedures bulletin and the Volunteer Expense Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart apply to fire departments conducting out-of-jurisdiction road rescues and medical rescues?

No. Please refer to the PEP policies which currently address local government taskings.



EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST



Page ___ of ___

Claimant Name: (print or type) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Task No. _____ Date Incurred: (from) _____ (to) _____

PERSONAL/VOLUNTEER/MUNICIPAL/SOCIETY EXPENSES				
To Whom Paid	Travel ² Mileage @ km	Meals ¹	Vehicle/ Equipment ²	Total
	km=			
	km=			
	km=			
	km=			
	km=			
	km=			
				SUBTOTAL
				\$

1. Calculated to a maximum of four per 24-hour period. See current PEP Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart
2. Rates as per current PEP Reimbursement and Allowance Rate Chart

Miscellaneous Expenses (attach receipts)	\$
Balance Forward from Supplements	\$
TOTAL CLAIM	\$

Signature of Claimant: (use ink) _____ Date: _____

Position: _____ Telephone: _____

PEP USE ONLY

EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT/REPAIR REQUEST APPROVAL

YES/NO

Goods and Services Received:

PEP Regional Staff

Date

September 2006

<p>PEP HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY</p> <p><i>I do hereby certify that the amount to be paid is correct, complies with the appropriate statute or other authority where required, the goods have been received and/or other conditions have been met:</i></p> <p>Spending Authority: _____</p> <p>Resp: _____ Account: _____ STOB: _____ Project #: _____</p> <p>Commitment t#: _____ Supplier #: _____ INV# _____</p> <p>Entered by: _____ Date: _____</p>
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