



City of Parksville
Town of Qualicum Beach
Regional District of Nanaimo

NEWS RELEASE

April 25, 2017

Exercise Sweeper to Test Communications in Emergency

On May 3, 2017, between 9 am and 3 pm, the former hovercraft pad (Arbutus Point) in the Parksville Community Park will become the centre of activity for Exercise Sweeper, a large scale emergency communications exercise. The public is welcome to stop by throughout the day to observe the exercise.

Exercise Sweeper is based on an earthquake scenario affecting the northern communities of Vancouver Island, eliminating traditional forms of communications such as land telephone, cellular phone and internet service. Local government emergency communications is centered on the use of digital and analogue amateur radio. The exercise will involve mobile emergency communications trailers from the Oceanside area and the Cowichan Valley.

Exercise Sweeper is an exercise created and supported by the Mid-Island Emergency Coordinators and Managers Committee (MIECM), a group of emergency managers representing local governments on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast. This exercise is created by the MIECM in collaboration with Metro Vancouver, Greater Victoria, Emergency Management BC, the Canadian Air Force and Washington State to test multiple methods of transferring information in an emergency or disaster.

Please note - Part of the exercise involves low flying Canadian military aircraft, at elevations between 1,000 and 1,500 feet between the hours of 10 am and noon. It is anticipated up to three aircraft will be participating in the exercise. As a result of previous exercises in other areas, there have been complaints or concerns from the public about the noise of the aircraft and privacy concerns due to the proximity of the craft to private properties. The imagery collected during the exercise is to assist with emergency preparedness planning and will not be released to external parties. The Canadian Air Force planes will provide an alternative communication link for the teams on the ground and will allow emergency coordinators to identify potential challenges/gaps in communication during a real emergency event.

###

For more information:

Aaron Dawson, City of Parksville
Emergency Program Coordinator
adawson@parksville.ca; 250 954-4672

Rob Daman, Town of Qualicum Beach
Emergency Program Coordinator
rdaman@qualicumbeach.com; 250 752-6232

Emergency Management Oceanside – City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, Regional District of Nanaimo

www.parksville.ca | www.qualicumbeach.com | www.rdn.bc.ca