

THE PROFESSIONAL

Professional Employees Association | Volume 48 Issue 1

BC's Union for Professionals

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In most places in the province spring has sprung! As this comes to print, I have my fingers crossed that the transition of seasons will be relatively smooth in our natural environment.

Many of you across the province have played a key role in disaster recovery and maintaining our healthy supply chain, and for that I am thankful.

The conflict in Ukraine has taken a toll on the socio-economic and political fabrics of global and local economies. High inflation and oil prices are being felt by us all.

It's a perfect storm, with so many of our chapters headed to the bargaining table over the next few months, including FMA, GLP, HSP, LABC, OGC and UVic. The cost of living is at the forefront, and the focus of your union continues to be fair compensation.

My thanks to the PEA staff who support the bargaining committees and chapter executives through the bargaining process, and to members, who commit significant hours to reviewing bargaining survey data, creating proposals, attending town halls and sitting at the table with employers over multiple weeks and sometimes months. These efforts are the heart of our union

and I am grateful for your participation.

You'll see in this edition there are two articles focused on the work of our Government Licensed Professionals (GLP) chapter. It was a record-breaking year for wildfires, flooding and landslides in 2021, and these members were a critical part of the emergency response.

I heard so many stories from members who stepped forward to help and worked 12-hour days, for three weeks straight. They worked without knowing whether they would be compensated for their overtime hours. Everyone I've heard from who contributed to this work did it because the need to help aligned with their moral code. When compensation was finally approved for members during these provincial emergencies, it wasn't nearly enough for the extra hours and sacrifices made. It's time to change this part of the GLP collective agreement, which is known as Appendix H (Leave for Meritorious Service).

We have been actively lobbying government on this issue and I'm proud to represent our members in fighting for fair compensation. As part of a small team, I met with more than 35 provincial MLAs and ministers to share



ABOVE: GLP members Dwayne Anderson, Jamie Rupar, and Shawna LaRade, along with PEA Labour Relations Officer Melissa Moroz, attended five NDP caucus meetings over two days to build awareness of the role members play during provincial emergencies.

stories that highlight the important contributions our members make to the health of our beautiful and naturally powerful province. We were also fortunate to have a successful meeting with Jennifer Rice, BC’s parliamentary secretary for emergency preparedness. Jennifer was appreciative of our message and thankful for the excellent work of our members. This type of membership advocacy work is why I joined the PEA executive. If you are interested in the campaign work that has been done so far, please visit pea.org/AppendixH.

Each PEA chapter has unique challenges, and I hope that as many of these as possible are resolved during these upcoming rounds of bargaining. My solidarity and best wishes to all of the members who are advocating for change. We are with you.

In solidarity,
Shawna

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Dwayne Anderson, Forester and GLP Chapter Chair

APPENDIX H

A LOOK INTO THE INEQUALITY OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR GLP MEMBERS

WORDS JESSICA NATALE WOOLLARD

PHOTOS DARRIN RIGO AND BC WILDFIRE SERVICES

Since 2004 PEA members have been answering the call to help out with disaster response efforts during provincial emergencies. This despite being compensated less than their BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) colleagues doing the same work. *The Professional* reports on the inequality—and what's being done about it—in a two-part series looking at Appendix H and emergency response. This is part one on wildfires.

The 2021 BC fire season saw 1,600 fires burning across 8,700 square kilometres of our beautiful province. It was the third worst wildfire season on record, for area impacted. The town of Lytton burned to the ground. Cattle, pets, and wildlife vanished in the flames. People lost their homes, their possessions, their livelihoods.

As the fires raged, the province, as it always does during states of emergency, called upon civil servants to leave their regular jobs and accept two-week deployments to work with the various incident management teams being set up to respond to the crisis.

Based in Prince George and pictured opposite, Dwayne Anderson was one of several PEA members recruited in 2021. A timber pricing officer who is responsible for the Coastal Mountain District as well as three other districts, Anderson is a notable recruit because he worked with BC Wildfire Service from 1993 to 2016. Most PEA members, like other public servants who volunteer to help in provincial states of emergencies, are assigned roles such as logistics, communications, or liaison officers. But because of his expertise, Anderson was tasked with a high-ranking operational role: incident commander.

Fellow PEA member Clayton Bradley, a range practices specialist in West Kelowna, also agreed to leave his regular position and young family to lend his expertise during last summer's provincial state of emergency. Bradley was recruited specifically because of his experience as a range agrologist who knows the Interior region and landscape and has strong relationships with stakeholders. Working directly with the incident commander in the area, Bradley spent his deployment serving as a conduit to the partners on the ground—First Nations, ministries, local government, utility companies, organizations with business interests on the land, and individuals.



PEA members leave their homes and jobs year after year for weeks and sometimes months in service to the province. They witness first-hand the destruction caused by wildfires, floods, and other disasters requiring aid. With shaky voices, they recount the impact of homes and businesses destroyed, like in Lytton or Monte Lake. They share stories of doing everything possible to save animals—pets and livestock—and mourning losses with their owners. They remember individuals they've met, remember holding the hands of weeping strangers. And, they grieve for the environment, the flora and fauna ravaged by these acts of God.

In describing the physical and emotional wounds he carries from the Monte Lake fire, Bradley says, “It makes me emotional to think about it. Just trying to deal with it . . . I had a week off before I came back to my regular job, and I felt useless for a week.” He adds, “It takes its toll. You don’t realize it until it’s over.”

Part of TEAMS

The majority of PEA members who respond to the call for help during emergencies do so through the province’s Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (TEAMS), which connects public servants with emergency response teams in times of need.

Rosalie MacAulay, a registered professional forester who works as a business relations officer for BC Timber Sales for the coast, has been a member of TEAMS since 2004, the first year PEA members were eligible. In 2021, she spent more than two months away from home, helping the BC Wildfire Service in 100 Mile House, Lillooet, Salmon Arm and Oliver.

“I’ve continued to be part of TEAMS because I want to help people and work with the communities,” MacAuley explains.

In 2021, she served as an information officer, providing communities, stakeholders and media with updates on the emergency as well as listening to the concerns and fears of the community.

Typically, TEAMS members work 14 days on and get three days off. The shifts are long and arduous; it’s not unusual for a day’s work on a TEAMS deployment to last 16 hours. Members live in army camp-like conditions, often sleeping in tents set up near the disaster area. Living in a state of constant high alert, most of these workers experience above-average levels of stress and strain for the duration of their deployment.

The inequality of Appendix H

Being a member of TEAMS is a sacrifice. It’s high stress and hard work but also emotionally and physically taxing. And for PEA members, volunteering for TEAMS has an additional strain: inequality rooted in Appendix H. TEAMS members who are part of the BCGEU are compensated significantly differently than PEA members doing the same work. The inequality adds a moral burden to the conscience of every PEA member wanting to help British Columbians in times of need.

History of TEAMS and the PEA

The roots of the inequality date back to 2004, when members of the PEA’s Government

Licensed Professionals were first recruited for emergency response work. The previous year, following a devastating fire season in Kelowna, the province vowed to recruit more public servants in times of emergency. PEA members responded positively to the call, and Appendix H, “Professional Employee Recognition for Leave for Meritorious Service in Response to Emergencies” became part of the collective agreement.

From the start, Appendix H had issues. PEA members tried to address the inequalities in bargaining over the years but were unsuccessful. Now, the PEA is addressing the problems with Appendix H outside of bargaining. At issue is compensation and fairness.

First, PEA members receive overtime compensation of one hour for one hour worked when a provincial state of emergency (level 4) is declared by the province. In contrast, BCGEU members are compensated at time and one-half for the first two hours of overtime on a workday, then double-time, as well as double-time for hours on a non-work day.

If the state of emergency is a level one, two, or three, PEA members are paid their regular wages and work for free after their daily hours are completed and on weekends and statutory holidays. On the other hand, BCGEU members are compensated the same as if it were a level 4 emergency—at time and one-half for the first two hours of overtime on a workday, then double time, as well as double time for hours on a non-work day.

Second, even if Appendix H is triggered by the government, PEA members on TEAMS are instructed to submit their time diaries in December, which, in the case of the summer forest fire season, is several months after they have done the work. Their pay takes an additional few months to process, meaning they might not be paid until May, nearly nine months after they completed the work. Meanwhile, BCGEU members submit their time diaries each pay period and receive their pay on the next pay period. BCGEU members are paid immediately for their work; PEA members wait more than half a year.

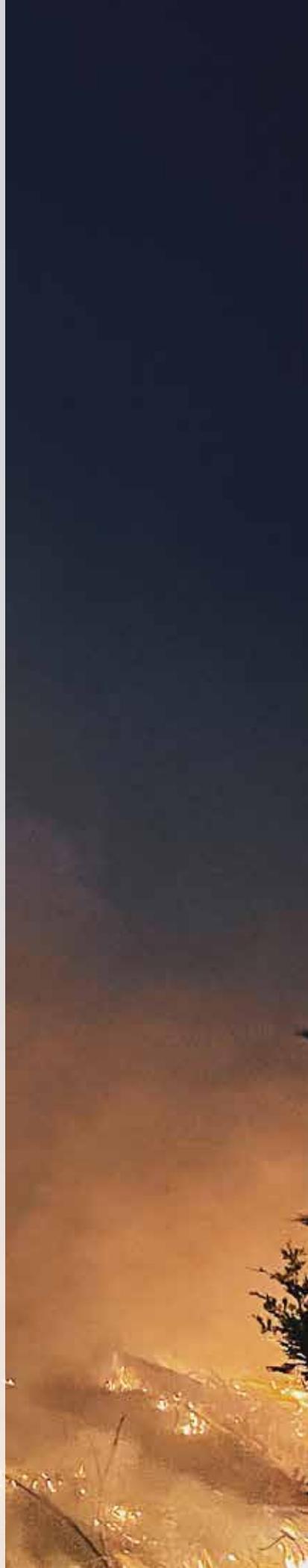
Deeper than money

While compensation is a key problem for Appendix H, the issue runs deeper. PEA members who want to join TEAMS and contribute to helping people are discouraged from participating. Anderson, for example, is a former BCGEU member who was part of the Wildfire Service for years. Since joining the PEA in 2016, he has continued to do emergency deployments with TEAMS. He says it was an unwelcome surprise to learn about the reduced pay and the sacrifice of personal time it would involve, but he’s chosen to stay involved out of a sense of duty.

“If there’s a provincial emergency, I’m not going to say no,” he says. “To withhold my experience would be detrimental to firefighters and the public.”

For other PEA members—engineers, agrologists, foresters, geoscientists, health professionals and others—the decision may not be so easy.

Says Rosalie MacAulay, “There are a lot of talented people who would like to participate, but because of the current situation with compensation, they don’t. It’s not worth it to give up family life and not receive proper overtime for it.”



Recruiting outside the province

In recent years, the province has been challenged to recruit enough skilled British Columbians to help out during emergencies. Instead, it has turned to other provinces and in some cases other countries, such as Australia, to supplement its supply of emergency labour, efforts that come with a high price tag.

In contrast, PEA members have professional expertise that could much more easily, and more affordably, be deployed to protect British Columbians during emergencies. Our members have deep knowledge of the landscape and the communities involved and an abundance of the skills and professionalism required for an effective emergency response. Above all, they possess a strong desire to help and be of service to others. Unfortunately, as things currently stand, the province is discouraging the involvement of our members because of an unfair and outdated compensation policy.



Clayton Bradley, Range Practices Specialist
Photo Credit: Billy Stevens

Speaking up for the PEA

Momentum is building to get changes made to Appendix H. In April 2021, Nadia Skokun, a land and resource specialist with the Ministry of Forestry, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, sent a briefing note about the pay inequities to several MLAs, raising the profile of the issue. A PEA member since 2006, Skokun joined TEAMS in 2008 to assist on forest fires. Since then, she has continued to accept deployments in planning and logistics and in 2021 served on two TEAMS deployments, both for fire emergencies. By this time, word about her briefing note had spread.

“People recognized my name, and they showed a lot of support,” Skokun says. “BC Wildfire Services people showed they were aware of the imbalance between PEA and BCGEU members,” she adds.

The 2021 fire season was long and arduous. “People were getting burned out,” Skokun remembers. “I feel that if [Appendix H] gets fixed to make it fair compensation between both unions, BC Wildfire Services will have additional staff. PEA members will sign up.”

Skokun says that, for her own part, she will continue to sign up for TEAMS because she cares. “I am providing valuable support where it’s needed,” she says. “I do it because I love it.”

Improving TEAMS and Appendix H

The advocacy work taking place to amend Appendix H has four objectives:

1. To compensate PEA members for overtime hours in the same fashion as BCGEU members.
2. To apply the above level of compensation during any emergency preparation level—1, 2, 3 or 4.
3. To allow for the submission of time diaries for PEA members, resulting in timely payment for services rendered.
4. To add a new clause that mandates inclusion of PEA members during emergency responses to ensure BC professionals are brought in before outside consultants.

Achieving these objectives would benefit the province as a whole. These changes will lead more PEA members to volunteer for TEAMS, leading to less burnout, faster response times and less money spent to train outsiders, since GLP members bring a high level of professionalism and local knowledge to the job. Skokun's briefing note has initiated a province-wide conversation among stakeholders that is needed to make changes to Appendix H. PEA members can join the discussion by connecting with the PEA about the strategy and then engaging with their MLAs and other relevant parties on this important issue.

For the love of community

Each of the four PEA members interviewed for this article revealed, through stories and memories, their passion for the task of supporting their fellow citizens in times of need. It's what buoyed them through long weeks of strenuous work away from home, terrifying environmental conditions and emotional and physical traumas. It's what has motivated each of them to decide that, despite the unequal compensation, they will continue to accept emergency deployments when called upon.

As Anderson says, "When you're done a deployment, you feel like you've accomplished something. You've been part of something that is very important. Morally, it's why I help out."

Scenario: A level 4 provincial state of emergency is declared (and recognition of meritorious service is activated) in July. A PEA member and BCGEU member join TEAMS for a two-week deployment. Both work in the same role for the same number of hours, and both work 50 hours of overtime in each week (five extra hours each weekday and 12.5 hours each day on the weekends). The chart below uses a base rate of \$37.50 an hour.

PEA	BCGEU
Overtime pay for 100 hours (50 hours per week)	
100 hours at \$37.50 = \$3,750.	With time and a half and double-time calculations, BCGEU members are paid for 190 hours for a total of \$7,125. This does not include other benefits BCGEU members receive, such as breaks for overtime meals, which would bring the actual amount to over 200 hours.
Submit hours and receive pay	
Submit hours in December and receive pay as late as May the following year, nine months after the work was performed.	Submit hours in July and receive pay four to six weeks later.

REBUILDING THE PROVINCE

GOVERNMENT LICENSED PROFESSIONALS RESPOND TO THE FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES OF 2021

WORDS JESSICA NATALE WOOLLARD

PHOTOS STEVE PAGE

The weekend before BC's catastrophic floods in November, PEA members across the province were on high alert as they followed news reports about weather and rainfall projections. Modelling predicted nearly a month's worth of rain would pummel southern Vancouver Island, the South Coast, parts of the Interior and the Kootenay Region, in just a few days.

In Penticton, Mike Noseworthy sounded the alarm with colleagues at the regional district, signaling that flooding was likely imminent. A senior dam safety engineer and flood specialist with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRO), Noseworthy worked through the weekend to identify areas to be put on evacuation alert and prepared to assess the damage by helicopter first thing Monday morning.

Meanwhile in Smithers, a thousand kilometres from the disaster's focal point in the southern Interior, Steve Page watched the news with his family. The projected rainfall signalled potential bridge failures and landslides to the engineer, who also works with FLNRO.

"My teenagers said, 'Dad, you gotta go help them. They need someone like you,'" Page recalls. "My kids could see from the news that there were bridges and roads being washed out, and they recognized that that's the type of work I do."

When a provincial emergency like a severe flood or forest fire takes place, PEA members who are government licensed professionals (GLPs)—foresters, engineers, agrologists, geoscientists, and others—play crucial roles in the disaster response.

Engineers lead restoration efforts—reconstructing bridges, securing damaged structures, reinforcing the landscape. Foresters assess the impacts on and aid in the protection of the forest industry, including timber businesses and communities. Agrologists mobilize to protect farmers, farmland and animals. They provide assistance to producers to help relocate livestock, ensuring the animals have food and shelter, and help deal with the remains of those that perish in the disaster. The November floods led to the death of 630,000 chickens, 2,000 pigs and 450 cows.



When PEA members respond to an emergency, they frequently work overtime for days at a time, abandoning their weekends and flex days in service to the province and the people affected. Angela Boss, an agrologist and licensed science officer with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, recorded 117 hours of overtime in just seven weeks after the 2021 floods.

As Page says, “There are no weekends in an emergency.”

When the province needs professional emergency services, PEA members accept the call. And they do so without any guarantee of overtime compensation.

Overtime, shift work and standby (OSS) and Appendix H leave for meritorious service

Since 1978, the GLP members’ overtime hours have been governed by Article 15 of the collective agreement, which grants a blanket 7 per cent of basic salary per year to regular full-time members for their overtime, shift work and standby work. The OSS provision, as it’s known, is an in-lieu payment for all overtime, regardless of hours worked. Members are not required to track their hours, and all receive the same 7 per cent compensation, which they may take as vacation time or as a cash payout, to be paid on February 28 of the following calendar year.

The OSS provision was intended as an efficient way to compensate employees for the occasional overtime work required in professional settings, such as staying late to finish a report or attending a meeting outside of work hours.

In the case of a provincial emergency, however, the compensation structure changes, and the PEA’s Appendix H leave guidelines for “meritorious service in response to emergencies” come into effect. Under Appendix H, members receive one hour’s pay for every hour worked above and beyond their normal hours of work during a regular week, and one hour for every hour worked on a day of rest.

These rates are an improvement, but a problem arises in that Appendix H is often not activated right away. Frequently, the province waits weeks or months to declare an emergency. If a PEA member responds to a call for assistance but no provincial emergency is declared, they receive no additional compensation. They may work 14-hour days, over weekends and flex days, but they will receive no extra pay except what is offered under the OSS provision.

In the case of the November 2021 floods, the province took nearly a month to declare it a provincial emergency, meaning PEA members were working around the clock in extremely stressful situations to protect the people, animals, and landscape of British Columbia, with no recognition for their overtime hours.

In emergency situations such as these, OSS is inadequate. It fails to recognize the dozens of additional hours the province needs PEA members to work to respond to the emergency. By comparison, BCGEU colleagues who perform similar emergency roles to PEA members receive time and a half or double-time for extra hours logged above their normal hours of work. What is more, while BCGEU members track their overtime and receive payment in the next pay period, PEA members must wait until December to submit their hours, which won’t be paid out until the next calendar year. Overtime hours worked during the summer fire season, for example, may not be paid until the following spring. The inequity of this disparity between PEA and BCGEU workers is felt on both sides.

Angela Boss, Regional Agrologist
North Island/Sunshine Coast



Steve Page, Area Engineer
Northern Engineering Group



“Our BCGEU counterparts are often the ones who are the most supportive of us. They feel guilty. They feel bad we don’t get compensation. Some are hesitant to put in their overtime,” says Marie Wood, an asset management engineer with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in Prince George.

Wood is a member of the province’s Temporary Emergency Assignment Management System (TEAMS), which calls on public servants to leave their regular positions in times of emergency to assist with the response. During the 2021 forest fire season, Wood worked on TEAMS during the day and completed her regular position’s responsibilities in the evenings, essentially working two jobs, all summer long.

“When I was called in to TEAMS, they told me straight up, ‘We don’t call PEA people unless it’s the last resort. Even though you’re some of the most effective workers, it’s not fair because you don’t get paid,’” Wood recalls. “When half the team is treated differently than the other half, it creates a divide that doesn’t need to be there.”

Emergency burnout

For 18 years, Angela Boss worked in international agricultural development in more than 20 countries. Through her work, Boss supported people suffering from hunger and malnutrition due to drought, war, earthquakes, natural disasters and human-made disasters. Accustomed to high-stress, life-and-death situations, she’s the kind of person you want to have around when facing an emergency. Boss joined the PEA in 2019 as a licensed science officer and agrologist with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. She is based in Courtenay, on Vancouver Island. After the first major flood event in November, Boss’s supervisor called her early on to ask if she could join him in Surrey for an indefinite amount of time.

“He saw they needed more help from someone experienced as it was swiftly moving to an all hands on deck event,” she remembers. “There were new staff who had never worked in an emergency before. They needed experienced agrologists to rely on.”



Nicomen River bridge rebuild
Photo credit: Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Boss agreed to help out, but notes that the decision was voluntary—she didn't have to go. She stepped forward even though there was uncertainty around the amount of hours she would work, and without knowing whether she would be compensated for her overtime. She thought, "So many of our colleagues are burnt out from wildfire season, this is the time to step forward. As a team we did our best, even though we were uncertain how our time would unfold."

Engineer Steve Page saw the same burnout when he arrived at the emergency site, to a job involving the replacement of a 49-metre-long bridge that had collapsed in the flood. The bridge provides essential access to the Nicomen First Nation in the Fraser Canyon. While a replacement bridge project would typically take 18 months, Page says the new Nicomen River Bridge, built as a temporary solution, was erected in just three weeks. When he left his home in Smithers to travel a thousand kilometres to the bridge area, Appendix H had not yet been activated, and he didn't know if it would be.

"But when I got there, I could see the people [from the area] were exhausted from the forest fire season. They really didn't have the strength to take on another major event; they really needed me to come in refreshed," Page says.

"Seeing their burnout motivated me more to take on more responsibility," he continues. "I'm looking in the eyes of PEA members, and I'm seeing them worn out, tired from the forest fires. . . . Then this flood event comes, and they don't have a lot of strength. I come in fresh and say, let me do that for you, let me do that for you. I can handle this."

Page, Boss and Wood share a similar message: the province needs more people who are trained and ready to help in an emergency.

"It would be beneficial to emergency management to have more professionals to tap into," Wood says. "Those are times you want your professionals . . . to pick up the phone and say, yeah, I'll be right there."

Striving for change

In November 2021, PEA Executive Director Scott McCannell submitted a letter to Tara Richards, deputy minister of Emergency Management BC, asking whether Appendix H would be activated for the floods. The letter also requested that the government consider re-evaluating the compensation structure of Appendix H, which is "unfair relative to the overtime compensation for BCGEU members," McCannell wrote. "Such compensation discourages professionals from responding



to calls for participation on TEAMS and makes it challenging for the province to respond during emergency situations.” Three weeks later, Richards responded to say that Appendix H had been activated for the November floods and landslides and that PEA members were being notified. The response, cc’d to deputy ministers responsible for GLP portfolios, made no mention of the request for a compensation review. Richards, did, however, note that the efforts of PEA members were “extraordinary” and “deeply appreciated.”

In past rounds of bargaining, the government has been unwilling to change Appendix H compensation without the PEA also agreeing to changes to the basic OSS provision received by regular full-time GLPs. But emergency work is not the same as OSS overtime, and it should not be treated as such.

Furthermore, Appendix H fails to recognize the extent to which the number and severity of provincial emergencies have increased in the last decade due to climate change. The province is quick to call on PEA members more often and for longer periods of time, but has so far been unwilling to consider a pay structure that ensures their contributions are fully and fairly compensated.

The GLP collective agreement expired on March 31, 2022. As the parties’ head to the bargaining table this year, the bargaining committee and PEA executive will be seeking improvements to Appendix H’s compensation as a top priority.

PEA members can support these efforts by engaging with their MLAs and other decision makers on this important issue. Tell them your story. Write about the impact of emergency work on your life and on the lives of British Columbians who benefit from your knowledge and experience.

For British Columbia

Every PEA member who raises their hand to respond to an emergency does so out of professional duty and for the good of the province and the public. In conditions where there is no guarantee of compensation, the motivation becomes one of basic altruism: to do what is possible for people in need.

“The typical emergency response situation is not going to be dealt with in a seven-hour day. An emergency situation doesn’t respect the clock,” Wood says. “We want to be here, we want to do this, but please help us do it fairly.”

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH

TOOLS TO BUILD RESILIENCY FROM THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

WORDS LUCETTE WESLEY

Mental health challenges are common today, particularly during this prolonged pandemic. I had the honour of presenting workshops to PEA members across BC in the last six months, on a variety of workplace mental health topics. This article builds on these concepts, which offer guidance for staying mentally healthy and safe while facing life's challenges, at work and at home.

I've heard the pandemic described as a situation in which we're all at sea in the same storm, but we're in different boats. Some of us are more resilient, perhaps because of our genetics, or because we've learned from past experiences. But many others find their emotions and psychological health are negatively impacted. The following signs could mean you may be at risk to struggle with mental health:

- have a family history of trauma or mental illness
- are an overachiever or perfectionist
- feel unappreciated or unrecognized
- are facing unreasonable demands
- don't have a support network
- are facing unexpected, uncontrollable events in your life (financial, personal or family)

If any of these sound familiar, it's important to recognize when your psychological well-being is starting to deteriorate, and when it might be time to either use different coping strategies or get professional help. Some signs to watch for include the following:

- excessive worry or sadness
- restlessness
- irritability or anger
- lack of patience or concentration
- cognitive difficulties (memory, judgement, decision-making)
- mood and self esteem changes
- low energy
- distorted thinking with negative bias



- reduced empathy
- physical and emotional exhaustion
- withdrawal and isolation
- loss of purpose

The good news is we can learn how to take better care of our mental health and build resiliency so that we can face new challenges that cross our path. It just takes a little time and effort to develop new strategies, or access old ones we've forgotten about. Here are some suggestions that might work for you:

At home

- Practice basic self-care: healthy nutrition, adequate sleep, and exercise (deep breathing).
- Remember to have self-compassion and to honour your emotional needs.
- Create a support network and don't hesitate to reach out when you need help.
- Give support to others to broaden your own support network.
- Don't ignore your cultural and traditional activities, just find new ways of doing them.
- Stay connected, whether in person (at a healthy distance) or through technology.
- Create opportunities to laugh with others.
- Find ways to relax during the day; consider mindfulness or meditation.
- Do something fun every day (remember how you used to do that?).
- Learn something new, like a hobby, playing an instrument, or a game.
- Spend time in nature whenever you can.
- Observe how you respond to your thought.
- Keep your boundaries intact, or establish new ones.
- Anticipate and plan for future challenges.
- Seek professional help when your self-help strategies aren't working.

At work

- Take breaks during the day.
- Encourage regular check-ins (not check up on).
- Emphasize the positive and downplay the negative aspects of day-to-day work.
- Open up dialogue to normalize stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, and mental illness.
- Create an informal or formal debriefing process for difficult situations.
- Talk to your employer about how your workplace can become more psychologically healthy and safe.
- Create a healthy work environment when working from home (ergonomic, clutter free, distraction free, etc.).
- Identify your stressors and think about how you will respond to them in future.

Remember that your energy and emotional and spiritual well-being are not limitless. Like your bank account, if you give too much away, there will be nothing left for you and your family. You cannot help others if you are not well yourself. Make a commitment to use some of these strategies to take better care of yourself. Write them down and share them with a trusted friend, colleague or family member who can help you stay accountable to those actions. There's no time like the present, so get started today. Visit the Canadian Mental Health Association website (www.cmha.ca) for more resources.

PEA UPDATES

BARGAINING UPDATE

The following PEA chapter agreements expire in 2022:

Government Licensed Professionals – March
Health Science Professionals – March
Family Maintenance Agency – March
University of Victoria – June
Oil and Gas Commission – June
Legal Aid BC – September

The Law Society Lawyers chapter voted to ratify a new three-year agreement in February 2022.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

The PEA office is slowly reopening to staff but remains closed to members at this time.

We said goodbye to Administrative Assistant Tammy Bouchard this past February. Tammy dedicated ten years to the PEA and her expertise and member servicing will be missed.

PEA EDUCATION CONFERENCE

We are currently planning for the PEA Education Conference for the spring of 2023. Details to come.

EXECUTIVE CHANGES

A warm welcome to our new representatives on the PEA executive: Clinton Thomas and John Foxgord (UVic), and Teressa Prentice (HESU).

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS WINTER SCHOOL 2022

Unfortunately Winter School was cancelled due to the pandemic.

CONGRATULATIONS

We wish GLP members and long-serving local reps Bob Keen and Margaret Crowley all the best in their retirement. Our thanks to GLP local rep, Kelly Loch, who left public service in 2021 and was with the PEA for 30 years.

If you would like to acknowledge a retiring PEA member, please email jwhetter@pea.org.

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SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

Scholarships are available to PEA members and their families. Bursaries are available only to PEA members.

Deadline for applying: May 1, 2022

pea.org/scholarships

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