



MATHESON ISLAND: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

When the Matheson Island Harbour Authority incorporated in 1990 and signed the lease for Matheson Island and Matheson Island Landing at The Narrows of Lake Winnipeg, it found itself in a unique situation.

It was a harbour authority without a harbour. The large government docks at Matheson Island built to accommodate the fish tugs that collect the area catch were slowly deteriorating, and there were no other facilities. The community of 125 people is supported entirely by fishing, but most fishers had to use small docks in front of their homes or pull their boats ashore every evening.

Twelve years later, it's quite a different story.

The Matheson Island Harbour Authority now manages three harbours: Matheson Island, Matheson Island Landing and Catfish Creek. The main harbour at



Matheson Island Harbour in 1988 (inset) and today.

Matheson Island now has a breakwater and floating docks. The shoreline has been dredged and developed. Vehicle access to the harbour has been improved.

"It's been a process of constant improvement, building and adding little by little," explains Harold Bennett, President of the Harbour Authority's board of directors.

The Harbour Authority began work by tearing out the old docks and building a boat ramp. This allows trucks to back trailers right down to the water for the seasonal movement of boats in and out of the harbour.

The addition of a breakwater immediately improved the accessibility and usefulness of the harbour. The old dock provided some protection and mooring space, but in a strong south wind the water retreated from behind the dock, grounding the boats. A strong north or northwest

wind created heavy waves, making it dangerous for boats to leave the area.

The Harbour Authority then added a wooden crib along the shoreline. This crib stabilizes the shore and securely attaches three 43-metre floating docks that extend into the harbour. Along the length of two of these docks, nine finger floats provide berths for fishing boats. There is also room along the docks for six of the larger whitefish boats. "The boats are safer in the harbour than we are in our own beds," says Mr. Bennett.

The Harbour Authority hired local men to carry out the work and used local materials as much as possible. The limestone in the breakwater, for example, comes from a nearby quarry.

With the improvement in the facilities, other boaters have begun to use the harbour

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NHAAC TACKLES LONG-TERM FUTURE OF SCH

The National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC) kicked off spring with renewed vigor in New Westminster, British Columbia, on April 11–12.

Donna Petrachenko, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, and Robert Bergeron, Director General, Small Craft Harbours, both attended the meeting. A common theme throughout their presentations was the long-term future of the Small Craft Harbours (SCH) program. This is especially relevant in light of the Departmental Assessment exercise, during which SCH is looking closely at its mandate, particularly in terms of clients' needs and service delivery.

Harbour authority representatives on NHAAC said that they want to see the SCH program continued and even enhanced in certain respects. For their part, Ms. Petrachenko and Mr. Bergeron responded that, while changes to the program were likely in the future, there are no plans to transfer core assets from the government to the harbour authorities. Should such a transfer be considered in the future, it would not be undertaken without discussions with harbour

authorities and approval of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

NHAAC members also discussed the development of an action plan for harbour authority fatigue. Group brainstorming brought out a number of possible solutions, including hiring staff as regional harbour authority support, teaching harbour authorities how to access financial help, and increased training

A COMMON THEME THROUGH-
OUT THEIR PRESENTATIONS
WAS THE LONG-TERM FUTURE
OF THE SMALL CRAFT
HARBOURS PROGRAM.

on governance and other areas of harbour authority management.

One initiative still under investigation is an on-line forum for harbour authorities. Rachel Muston, SCH Systems Administrator and Programmer, says the idea has great potential, and SCH is working to resolve technical and policy issues before implementation.

Although business concluded on the second day, the region had more in store for conference attendees. Participants were invited out for a full-day harbour tour the following day. The group met for a ferry ride over to Vancouver Island, and visited the Fanny Bay, Deep Bay and French Creek small craft harbours.

PUTTING HEADS TOGETHER AT HEADQUARTERS

The Small Craft Harbours program is being strengthened by the merger of three important and related groups. The Real Property Management and Environmental Coordination groups are joining forces with Small Craft Harbours at Department of Fisheries and Oceans' headquarters in Ottawa. Given that these groups already work closely together on many issues, the merger is a logical move that is expected to improve the program at a national level. It also reflects how these groups work together in many regions.

FROM THE EDITOR

Robert Bergeron, head of the Small Craft Harbours program, has said that the program fosters a strong sense of identity and inspires commitment in its staff. As always, the stories you share with all of the Small Craft Harbours community through *Harbour Authorities Forum* reinforce why this is so.

I would like to extend special thanks to Bill Thomas and Glen Thomas of the Balsam Bay Harbour Authority, Kevin Ateah of Victoria Beach Harbour, and Alan Kathan, Gaylene Hunter, Kelly Beach and Adele Butcher in the Winnipeg office for their hospitality during my recent visit, and for the chance to see a harbour authority in action.

Please continue to contact us with your suggestions for stories for future issues.

Tara Hartley

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PREPARING FOR HIGH WATER IN THE FRASER VALLEY

Yellow Alert!

When fishers on the Fraser River in British Columbia hear a Yellow Alert has been declared by Small Craft Harbours (SCH), they know it's time to move their boats to a safer mooring facility. Yellow Alert means that the river has risen to 6.5 metres with spring run-off, as measured at the Mission, British Columbia, gauge station, explains Levi Timmermans, a Program Officer with SCH, Pacific Region.

The Yellow Alert system is part of a plan SCH has developed to secure harbour structures and safeguard fishing vessels in the event of the risk of flooding. When the river rises to 7.0 metres, the Yellow Alert is upgraded to a Red Alert, at which point access to all harbours and vessel traffic on the river is closed.

Four years ago, the depth of the snow pack in British Columbia's interior



A debris shear at Mission, British Columbia, protects the wharf from floating debris. Note the concrete parking barriers and cabling on the wharf itself.

mountains above the Fraser River signalled the potential for serious spring flooding. SCH operations and engineering staff developed a response plan to address concerns about public safety and damage to wharves and floating structures at the eight SCH sites on the Fraser River.

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OF FLOODING.

"Public safety is our first priority," says Mr. Timmermans. "Vessels can be damaged by water-borne debris or unsafe boating conditions resulting from high water levels and increased current velocity."

SCH also developed responses to the risk of property damage. When a Yellow Alert is declared, the response plan calls for contractors to place concrete parking barriers on the wharves. These prevent the wharf superstructure from lifting, which would cause major damage to the structures and public property. In addition, wharf pilings are banded to the wharf superstructure with pre-fabricated galvanized steel cable to retain the alignment of the structures, and floats are tethered to the main wharves.

"The emergency response for each harbour is documented and circulated to each of the Fraser River harbour sites," Mr. Timmermans says. When the Yellow Alert is declared, harbour managers contact all harbour users to be on stand-by.

This past spring, river levels rose dramatically and the previously developed response plan was initiated. Not only was a timely response possible, but because everyone knew their roles and responsibilities, the sites and vessels were secured in less than two days. Extreme flood conditions did not occur this year, but all involved were pleased with the state of preparation and able to watch the amazing power of Mother Nature.

SAFETY COURSES BENEFIT BOATERS AND HARBOUR AUTHORITY

Recreational boaters in Newfoundland and Labrador can learn the ropes of boating safety and help support the Harbour Authority of Long Cove at the same time.

The Harbour Authority was contacted in 2000 by AAA Boating Safety Standards, a company that provides boating safety training, to distribute and administer a one-day boating safety course or a home study program, explains Calvin Peach, Harbour Supervisor for Long Cove. In return for teaching the eight-hour course, distributing the home study packages and administering the test, the Harbour Authority receives a percentage of the course fee.

"We taught 30 boaters in the summer of 2001," says Mr. Peach, "and roughly the same number in 2002 as well." Advertising at the school, on local radio and television stations, in the newspaper, and through e-mail and the Internet brought the importance of safety training to the community's attention and encouraged people to join the course.

Safety is too often the last issue on a boater's mind, Mr. Peach comments. "No one ever expects anything to go wrong," he says, "and when it does, they don't know what to do." The safety course helps boaters understand the importance of planning to be safe.

All recreational boat owners must pass an accredited boating safety course (recreational boat operator competency) by 2009, under the Canadian Coast Guard's Competency of Operators of Pleasure Craft Regulations.

HARBOUR GRACE HONOURS LOCAL HERITAGE

Harbour Grace folklore says that at one time, a person could walk across the harbour from north to south, from ship to ship, without touching the water.



The Happy Adventure Chalet in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland and Labrador, shown here at night, is named for the ship of notorious local pirate Peter Easton and resembles a schooner sailed by fishermen years ago.

The Harbour Authority of Harbour Grace, in Newfoundland and Labrador, has honoured that prosperous past with an extensive improvement project designed to attract and welcome tourists and businesses.

The Admiral's Marina includes many amenities:

- ▶ 1,100 metres of berthage;
- ▶ the Barracks (a management, client and visitor services building that also contains a photo gallery and hosts theatre, festivals and special events);
- ▶ the Happy Adventure Chalet (a tourist information centre and gift and coffee shop);

- ▶ Peter's Playpen (a playground); and
- ▶ many park and picnic areas.

The theme of the marina is the life and adventures of the notorious pirate Peter Easton, who lurked in the waters near Harbour Grace and built his fort in Harbour Grace in the 17th century.

As a result of all this development, which was funded by a partnership of the federal, provincial and municipal governments and the Harbour Authority, Harbour Grace has seen an increase in employment, tourist visits and community pride.

Tell us about *your* harbour improvement projects!

STUDY TO LOOK AT HARBOUR USAGE AND AQUACULTURE

Small Craft Harbours in Maritimes Region has commissioned a study to identify the effects of the rapidly growing aquaculture industry on harbours and harbour authorities in southern New Brunswick.

"The deficiencies in existing infrastructure were becoming very apparent," explains Joey Garnett, Business Manager for Southwest New Brunswick, Small Craft Harbours.

Aquaculture, the farming of fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants, is a very freight-oriented business, he explains, and "fish farmers" regularly move a lot of material through their local harbour. In addition, the business tends to use many types of boats, some needing very large berthage. In some harbours, space is at a premium and there simply is no room to expand the dock space or build any additional buildings.

These problems are being felt across Atlantic Canada and the study's results should help inform planning across the region. Leo Muise, Director of Aquaculture for the Nova Scotia government, says that the movement of traditional fishers in and out of the harbour and through the

surrounding water on their way to their fishing grounds, along with the comings and goings of pleasure and tourist boats, means the fish farmers are restricted to where they can operate.

The study, which is being carried out by Gardner Pinfold Consulting of Halifax and will be published this fall, is intended to look towards the future growth of the industry, identify potential problems and suggest solutions.

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regularly. Residents of communities such as Berens River, which has no road access, now dock at Matheson Island on their trips to Winnipeg. Recreational power and sail boaters use the harbour as well. This brings money into the community and generates income for the Harbour Authority in the form of docking fees.

These fees cover maintenance work, including dredging. Until recently, a Public Works and Government Services Canada dredging plant toured Lake Winnipeg, visiting and dredging harbours on a 10-year schedule. Now, with the breakwater in place, not only does the harbour not need to be dredged as often, but a backhoe is sufficient to remove the accumulated silt and keep the harbour open.

Several hundred fishers from Matheson Island and from the surrounding area now off-load their catch across Lake Winnipeg at the improved dock at Matheson Island Landing. The large fish transport vessels that bring fish from non-road accessible communities all around Lake Winnipeg also use the landing.

Mr. Bennett notes that the improvements to the harbour, combined with the opportunity to become involved in the management of the harbour through the Harbour Authority, mean that enough young fishers have remained in the area and will help keep the community alive and the Harbour Authority thriving in the years to come.

CITIZENS ON PATROL IN PORT DE GRAVE

A large blue and white sign at the entrance to the Port de Grave harbour tells everyone they're entering a COP community. COP stands for Citizens on Patrol, explains Bill Ralph, the Port de Grave Harbour Supervisor, and it means that "everyone's keeping their eyes open for each other."

Port de Grave provides docking for approximately 120 local boats and up to 50 occasional use boats during the fishing season. "After a few incidents of vandalism and theft," Mr. Ralph continues, "we [the Harbour Authority] decided to put a stop to it before it got any worse."

An initial community meeting in March 2002 brought 26 people to meet with Constable Marc Trioreau, the local

"AFTER A FEW INCIDENTS OF VANDALISM AND THEFT, WE DECIDED TO PUT A STOP TO IT BEFORE IT GOT ANY WORSE."

RCMP community policing officer, and formed the basis for the Citizens on Patrol project. "We now have 40 people registered," Mr. Ralph reports.

Training and information sessions by the RCMP teach registered members the "dos and don'ts" of the program. "We encourage members to patrol their area, take notice of any unfamiliar or suspicious vehicles or activity and make notes of descriptions and licence plate numbers," explains Constable Danny O'Keefe, a local RCMP officer. Citizens on Patrol have no power of arrest, Constable O'Keefe emphasizes. If they see any suspicious activity, they should not confront a possible perpetrator, but should contact the RCMP immediately.

The COP program not only increases the involvement of the Port de Grave Harbour Authority in the community, but it also improves the RCMP presence, explains Constable Trioreau. Normally officers only respond to emergency calls, but now there is regularly scheduled contact between the RCMP and the

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Citizens on Patrol office. This ensures any community concerns are addressed before they become serious problems.

Mr. Ralph administers the program out of the Harbour Authority office. "There've been no incidents since the program's been in place," he reports. Plans to put COP signs on the highway entrance to the community are in the works.

For more information, contact Bill Ralph at (709) 786-8560 or constables Trioreau and O'Keefe at 1 800 709-7267.

ANCHORS AWEIGH FOR CENTRAL AND ARCTIC REGION

The Freshwater Harbour Authority Advisory Council (FHAAC), in an effort to improve communications throughout the Central and Arctic Region, has launched a four-page, semi-annual newsletter.

Named *Anchors Aweigh*, the newsletter includes news about the region, relevant contact information and a section called "Kathan's Korner" for articles from Alan Kathan, Western Area Manager.

Communication between Council members and around the region presents a great challenge to the running of FHAAC. The region is extremely large, covering Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Not all members have Internet access and e-mail, so a newsletter is a great way to get important information out.



Photo by Chad Skimmer.

A VERY BIG FISH STORY

Bobby Strickland, a fisherman in Burnt Islands, Newfoundland

and Labrador, for more than 35 years, says he's seen some big fish in his days on the water, but this halibut, estimated at 190 kilograms, was a record for him. Caught on July 30 about 20 kilometres off Burnt Islands, this very big fish is shown here with Brian Collier, a fish plant worker from Isle aux Morts. Excerpted from a story in *The Gulf News* by Mandy Ryan. Reprinted with permission.

THINKING ABOUT GOING ON-LINE?

Why have a harbour authority Web site when the harbour or community centre is just down the road?

Because a Web site offers more than access to the community bulletin board. A Web site can include links to government offices, frequently used application forms and important regulations, even when government offices are closed. A Web site can also keep you informed about industry-relevant issues with links to research organizations, advocacy services and news organizations. It can even help you find and purchase difficult-to-obtain parts and services.

Even when most people in your community use the same computer (at the library,

for example), a Web site with useful links can save search time for users.

Building a Web site requires a computer, a modem, Internet access and a Web page design program. You also need a place to keep your Web site, called a Web host. Many organizations will provide Web hosting free to non-profit organizations, for small personal Web sites, or with an e-mail account.

A Web site also requires someone to build it. Fortunately, it's not difficult or complicated. Many small companies will design a Web site for a reasonable fee, and there is computer software that will walk you through the process yourself. Many students learn how to make Web sites as part of school projects.

What could a harbour authority or community Web site contain? It depends on your community and the activity in your harbour, but your site could include the following:

- ▶ names, phone numbers and other contact information for the members of your harbour authority's board;
- ▶ contact information for personnel of the various offices and businesses you deal with regularly;
- ▶ lists of links to other useful sites: for example, a site with fishing licence applications, or the Environment Canada site for the latest five-day weather forecast; and
- ▶ information about the tourism facilities and activities in your area.

A great example of a site that includes many of these elements is that of the Comox Valley Harbour Authority in British Columbia (<http://www.ComoxFishermansWharf.com>). This site provides prospective boating visitors with maps of the harbour and information about docking fees, available facilities, local sites of interest, and the restaurant and stores nearby. The entire community, not just the harbour authority and marina, gains from this service.

HARBOUR AUTHORITIES KEY PARTNERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE

A new initiative to improve preparedness for oil and other spills puts the training and materials right where they are needed — with the harbour authorities.

The Harbour Authorities Pollution Preparedness and Response Improvement Initiative is a partnership among the Canadian Coast Guard, Industry Canada, Environment Canada and harbour and port authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Beginning this summer, two oil spill response specialists are touring harbours, delivering a one-day training program and leaving a small cache of specialized oil-spill response equipment.

"We've already covered 61 harbours this summer," reports Terry Harvey, Acting Superintendent for Environmental Response with the Canadian Coast Guard. The program, which will run for three years, will eventually reach the nearly 200 harbour authorities throughout the province.

Response specialists pass along their personal experiences while covering the proper deployment of specialized oil-spill response equipment, the reporting of oil and unknown source spills and polluter responsibility, Mr. Harvey explains. The training day ends with the signing of an agreement with the harbour authority for the use and replenishment of the equipment used during oil-spill response.

This initiative is intended not only to heighten the awareness and preparedness of harbour authorities by providing equipment, support, advice and training, but also to improve the relationship between the harbour authorities and Environmental Response, thus enhancing the protection of the marine environment.

For more information, contact Terry Harvey at (709) 772-3281 or harveyt@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

TAKING CARE OF

Harbour authority board members across Maritimes Region got to learn about board governance and other intricacies of running a harbour authority at a series of board of directors and meeting effectiveness training sessions held last winter and spring.

"I designed the course after talking directly to fishers," explains Anne Camozzi of CORVID Enterprises Inc., a consultant on board governance. "They wanted a

CONFERENCE TEACHES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND TEAM BUILDING

A colourful cast of characters from “Smelly Guts” Harbour Authority argued their way through a pointless monthly meeting, much to the delight of their audience, the participants at a Freshwater Harbour Authority Advisory Council (FHAAC) meeting in April.

The fictional harbour authority and its unpleasant members were the invention of Dr. Wray Pascoe, a systems consultant and motivational speaker, who led several workshops on effective communication and team building during the three-day business and planning conference. “I created [the characters] as an entertaining illustration of some of the things that can go wrong in a meeting,” Pascoe explains.

With illustrations, exercises and discussion, Dr. Pascoe’s workshops first addressed topics such as the following:

- ▶ different communication styles and how they affect a meeting;
- ▶ leadership and team building;
- ▶ meeting management; and
- ▶ the hallmarks of a successful meeting, including setting priorities, developing consensus and charting a clear direction for the group.

Dr. Pascoe then led the group through a brainstorming session during which

participants developed a list of their five most important issues for the executive to address in the coming year (see box).

The conference was judged a success by all the participants. Unlike previous conferences which, though enjoyable, had ended with no definite conclusions, this year’s conference gave the executive

a clear mandate from its members and the participants felt that they had made a real contribution.

And a closing session of the (somewhat) improved “Smelly Guts” Harbour Authority encouraged everyone to bring the lessons learned back to their home harbour.

FHAAC’s Five-point Mandate

1. FHAAC and SCH Regional Officials will pursue increased funding based on a fair and equitable formula.
2. FHAAC will insist that SCH continue to provide the existing Third Party Liability Insurance beyond 2003, and will further request that SCH protect the HA Directors by purchasing Directors’ and Officers’ Insurance.
3. Employ sufficient staff in the SCH-Winnipeg office to provide assistance and training for HAs, aid in communication (newsletters, meetings, conferences) and to create HAs at unmanaged harbours.
4. Undertake repairs, maintenance, and dredging projects to correct unsafe harbour conditions and develop essential facilities to meet the commercial fishers’ needs.
5. FHAAC to liaise with Canadian Coast Guard to improve boating safety and to ensure each harbour has adequate navigational aids.

course that was simple, understandable and full of practical examples.”

The course began with a basic examination of by-laws and examples of how boards should function. In many cases, Ms. Camozzi says, legal language hinders board members’ complete understanding of their legal responsibilities and liabilities. This led to a closer look at the role of the harbour authority, its by-laws and how boards of directors could function more effectively.

A subsequent group discussion addressed common harbour authority issues such as non-compliance with harbour regulations and non-payment of harbour fees.

This led naturally to the after-lunch session about developing policy and procedures. Policy can be seen as the “who, what and why” of harbour operations, Ms. Camozzi explains; for example, “All harbour members will park in the designated area to maintain pedestrian safety.” Ms. Camozzi describes procedure,

on the other hand, as enforcing the policy and the consequences for non-compliance: “Failure to park in the designated zone will result in your vehicle being towed at your risk and expense.”

The last session of the day dealt with effective meeting management. Since the entire training day was modelled after a meeting, with set objectives and notes written on a flip chart, the importance of setting an agenda and keeping minutes became obvious to everyone.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



In addition to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, several federal laws apply to

protecting the environment in and around small craft harbours. The following highlights some of the practical information in a few of those laws.

The *Fisheries Act* contains several sections you should be aware of, including the following.

- ▶ You must get permission from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for any activity, other than fishing, that would destroy fish.
- ▶ DFO must authorize work that would disrupt or destroy fish habitat. Examples of such activities are dredging and ocean disposal of dredge spoil, and wharf, breakwater and containment construction and removals.
- ▶ You must not put any harmful substance in water frequented by fish.

The *Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act* addresses environment matters related to the administration of small craft harbours, such as disposal of garbage, use of hazardous materials, disposal of sewage and transfer of fuels.

SEVERAL FEDERAL LAWS

APPLY TO PROTECTING THE

ENVIRONMENT IN AND AROUND

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS.

The *Canada Shipping Act* prohibits the direct discharge of garbage, oil and oily mixture, ballast and bilge and pollutants listed in its Pollution Substance Regulations. The direct discharge of sanitary wastes in certain bodies of water is also prohibited but not of galley or washing wastes.

Your regional office may be able to help you identify which laws apply to activities at your harbour, and help you obtain permission for work that may affect the environment.

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DEAR HARBY

What is a safety audit and why should we do one?

A safety audit identifies those “accidents waiting to happen” present in any workplace and suggests ways to create a safe working environment and prevent accidents.

A safety audit looks at the kinds of work taking place, whether or not it involves hazardous materials or dangerous equipment, the traffic patterns of people and machinery and other areas of potential danger. You can contact your provincial or territorial labour board for suggestions on how to carry out a safety audit and for the names of consultants that can do it for you.

When doing a safety audit ourselves, what kinds of things should we look for?

Proper signage. Occasional visitors to the harbour, such as fish buyers or suppliers, may need to operate light or heavy machinery on site. Make sure that clear, easy-to-follow operating instructions and cautions are posted on or near each piece of machinery. Mark critical on/off switches or levers with red paint or tape.

Safe walking surfaces. Spills of fish products or oil can make wooden or concrete wharves extremely slippery. Piles of fishing equipment or tools can present tripping hazards. Make sure that spills are cleaned up quickly and the equipment to do so (hoses, brooms, sand) is readily available. Post signs, if necessary, reminding people to pick up their equipment and provide easily accessible storage space for these materials.

Movement and storage of equipment. Make sure that your storage space doesn't impede day-to-day movement of vehicles and people and that material is piled or tied down securely. When moving equipment, make sure that the path between the storage area and the dock is straight and smooth, with clear sight lines for the operator, and that it doesn't cross any other traffic paths.

Safety plan. Be prepared for the unforeseen by having a safety plan. Develop standard operating procedures that specify day-to-day operations of the harbour and ensure that any operators that come onto your site have safety plans of their own. Make sure that at least one person on site has up-to-date first aid training, including CPR, and that there is a well-stocked first aid kit on hand.