

Emergency scenarios playing out next week

(Penticton, BC – September 15, 2023) – It’s only a drill.

Next week Penticton residents will see an influx of emergency personnel as they deal with a simulated landslide, building collapse, parkade collapse and a water evacuation.

But not to worry, it’s all part of a three-day training exercise for the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team out of Vancouver, more commonly known as HUSAR, along with teams from across the country.

“We’re excited to be coming to Penticton for training and the opportunity to hone our skills on a variety of emergency situation,” says Captain Eric Grootendorst, who is with Canada Task Force 1 and Vancouver Fire and Rescue. “Penticton provides a variety of terrain that allow us to simulate different types of rescue operations and that’s vital to keep our members trained for when an emergency does strike.

This exercise will include 87 members of Task Force 1 from Vancouver, as well as members from, Manitoba TF4, and the Canadian Armed Forces. In all, there will be 110 members participating in this exercise.

This exercise will simulate a Provincial response to an extreme weather event where multiple technical rescues are required. The scenarios will be set up in and around Penticton, and will include things like building collapses, landslides, technical rope rescues, and water rescues.

In addition to land resources, air operations will be taking place Sept 19 and 20. A helicopter will be conducting low level flight operations around the City, but primarily around the convention center.

The base of operations for the exercise will be the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre. The exercise has been supported by, and will involve, the Penticton Fire Department. The public can expect to see marked emergency vehicles, uniformed personnel, and helicopter operations for the three days.

The public is welcome to observe and ask questions of members. Danger areas will be marked and taped off.

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