



In the Backcountry: Yukon's Emergency Response Network

The government coordinates a response to every call for help, but our ability to respond in the backcountry requires time, information, risk analysis and consideration of the safety of responders and the public.

You should understand the risks you take as a backcountry user. File a trip plan, have avalanche and wilderness first aid training, and carry a two-way communication device. During an emergency, know how to self-rescue out of immediate danger, activate your emergency plan, and be prepared to be self-sufficient for 6 to 12 hours.

What happens when the worst happens?

Yukon's emergency responders are reached by calling 9-1-1 or 001 867 667 5555 on two-way communication devices such as cellular or satellite telephones. Don't rely solely on personal locator beacons (e.g., SPOT or InReach), as signals may be impeded or delayed by satellite coverage, topography and weather. Messages from these devices also do not go directly to Yukon's emergency services—they are answered and relayed by distance call centres, which could delay response.

If you are calling for yourself or a party member, provide the emergency call taker with details about your location, nature of the emergency, number of people, access to the site, weather conditions, and how to contact you.

If someone is calling on your behalf, based on your trip plan or activation of your personal locator beacon, they should provide as much of that information as possible.

Who is coming to help?

Depending on the nature and location of the emergency, one or more agencies will be involved. In addition to the organizations described here, the RCMP, Parks Yukon and Parks Canada may play a role.

Responders need time to mobilize, assess their own risk and safety, move to the scene and implement an extrication plan that is safe for everyone.

Yukon Search and Rescue Association

This volunteer, non-profit association supports land and inland-water search and rescue operations. Volunteers typically search for, and rescue, missing or lost persons at the request of the RCMP or to support the Emergency Measures Organization in civil emergencies.

Special Operations Medical Extrication Team

SOMET is used to access patients who are injured or incapacitated on remote or technical terrain—greater than 100 meters off the road and beyond the reach of a Yukon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team.

When calling 9-1-1, be sure to indicate “remote response” medical assistance is needed. Deployment decisions are at the operational discretion of Yukon EMS.

Yukon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - Medevac

Medevac is a 24-hour air ambulance service delivering critical care and advanced life support during emergency patient transport between the communities and the three territorial hospitals. Medevac practitioners support remote response and ground ambulance operations, and transport patients to specialty facilities outside Yukon.

Yukon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Ground Ambulance Responders

Approximately 70 paramedics and 150 community volunteers provide pre-hospital medical treatment and emergency patient transport in 16 Yukon communities in cooperation with allied health care providers, the RCMP and emergency responders from other agencies. Volunteer responders provide local community coverage on an ‘as available’ basis. When local responders are not available, Yukon EMS supplements local coverage using centrally located Medevac crews from Whitehorse.

Yukon Fire Marshal's Office – Volunteer Firefighters

Volunteers support 16 fire departments in unincorporated communities. The Fire Marshal's Office provides firefighter training and supports the operation and maintenance of all fire halls, vehicles and equipment. Community firefighters respond to local fire events and provide structural search and rescue, motor vehicle extrication, and medical first response requests as available.

Emergency Measures Organization

The Emergency Measures Organization provides advice and public information on emergency preparedness and management. It leads the Government of Yukon's emergency planning, preparedness and mitigation of major emergencies and disasters, and provides guidance and training to government departments, First Nation governments, municipal councils and unincorporated communities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who pays?

For Yukoners in Yukon, there are no fees for a medical remote response, SOMET use or search and rescue operations. However, for out-of-territory residents or Yukoners retrieved from outside our borders, Medical Travel may recover ambulance costs from the individual. Information on billing and travel insurance is available through Yukon's Insured Health Services.

To whom can I direct questions or provide feedback about remote response?

Remote response is coordinated through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

Please call the Duty Manager at 867-456-8401 or write to EMO.Yukon@gov.yk.ca or

Yukon Emergency Measures Organization
Box 2703 (EMO), 60 Norseman Road
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6