



# Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association

## Managing Medical Risk in Off Shore Environs: Pointe au Baril

### Living in High Risk Areas

Pointe au Baril is probably the riskiest environment that most of us will experience in our lives. We must consciously recognize that our wilderness community has real dangers that are inherently different than those found in the cities where we live.

Cottagers are then extending their seasons and wanting to enjoy living off-shore much later in life than in prior generations. That too poses additional risks.

### Mitigating Risks

We must all take measures to prepare for, manage, and mitigate risks. This can be accomplished through **individual preparedness** and **planned responses** to emergencies. We need to combine individual responsibility with the existing capabilities of all available emergency services and work with government agencies to provide services appropriate for our water based community.

It is important that if a person residing on your island has heightened health concerns, it is wise to have those around that person alert to emergency procedures and any necessary medications that might be warranted.

The existing emergency response system operates out of the Emergency Response Office near the hospital in Parry Sound. It is reached by dialing 911 for all emergencies. Response time to the station docks will vary considerably from 30 minutes to several hours, depending on time of day, the weather and location of the EMS units.

### Emergency on Your Island

The 911 Operator will explain where to meet the EMTs and the ambulance. The 911 Operator will make the decision on how to move forward, with your input. However, if the decision is to take the patient to the mainland, consider the following:

- How would you carry a comatose patient from your cottage down your path to the dock;
- How many people would it take to safely maneuver a how would you get that comatose patient safely into your boat;
- Would you be able to drive your boat into the station in the pitch dark?

If possible, we should all have a plan available for transportation a patient to the mainland. The assistance of neighbours or friends may provide critical assistance on site with the patient by:

- Helping you get the patient down to the dock and into a boat, and
- Transporting the patient to the mainland, especially if they can drive the boat in the dark and you cannot.

All cottagers are encouraged to establish a “Neighbourhood Plan” that sets out how you and your neighbours may assist each other in times of emergency. Meet with them and exchange phone numbers and identify who is qualified to assist and in what capacity. Keep a written record of this information handy, in the form we have provided with this document.

### **Your Island Plan**

Your plan should include a written description of how you will evacuate someone from your island in an emergency. This will help others on your island know what to do if those who made the plan are not available. Sometimes it is difficult during a crisis to remember what needs to be done, where phone numbers are written down and equipment is located.

- Do you own a backboard, and where is it stored?
- Do you have a defibrillator?
- Do you know where to locate one?
- What boat will be used for emergency transport, keeping in mind it should be at least 18 feet long?
- Have you made plans to ensure the boat will always have enough fuel, and that a phone will always be charged?
- How, who and down what paths will you transport a disabled person to the dock and then lift them into the boat? Who are the friends and neighbours you can call on for help?

Because of our remote location, it is important that you have a good First Aid Kit and a basic understanding of first aid. The 911 Operator may request that you take certain actions, especially if there is going to be a long delay before the EMT's take over care of the patient. Your ability to support the patient in such a case will depend on your first aid training.

### **DISCLAIMER**

#### **This document does not provide medical advice!**

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