

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Emergency Preparedness Week from May 2 to May 8, 2010

**51% of Quebecers are not adequately prepared
to deal with an emergency situation***

Montreal, May 3, 2010 — Referring to Aesop's famous fable about the grasshopper and the ant, the Quebec ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP), Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), the Quebec Division of the Canadian Red Cross and Public Safety Canada joined forces to underscore the 3rd annual Emergency Preparedness Week and remind everyone of the importance of being well prepared to deal with a disaster.

So, are you more like the grasshopper or like the ant? That was the question asked by Robert Lafrenière, Quebec's Deputy Minister, Public Security, as he launched Emergency Preparedness Week, in the company of Jack Chadirdjian, Director, Member Services and Public and Governmental Affairs at IBC, and Suzie Malouin, Interim Regional Manager, Public Safety Canada.

Do you have the supplies you need to be self-sufficient for 72 hours?

Under the theme "72 Hours...Is Your Family Prepared?", Emergency Preparedness Week 2010 got underway in Quebec and across Canada and runs from May 2 to May 8. "This week, we are again inviting Quebecers to adopt simple measures that will help them meet the needs of their family for 72 hours in an emergency situation, which is usually the time it takes first responders to come to the assistance of individuals who need immediate assistance", affirmed Suzie Malouin, Public Security Canada. The objective of Emergency Preparedness Week is to raise awareness among the general population about being prepared for various emergencies and encourage citizens to have emergency kits on hand.

Surprising results

According to a Léger Marketing poll taken in March 2009, for Allstate Insurance Company, while Quebecers acknowledge the importance of emergency preparedness, 51% said they were not prepared. "I was surprised to see that so many people are more like the grasshopper. We should remind ourselves that, in an emergency situation, we are the ones responsible for our own safety, and for the safety of our family and our property. A family should therefore have handy all the supplies they would need to be self-sufficient during the first 72 hours of a disaster. I would hope that people will do their part this week and put together an emergency kit", declared Robert Lafrenière, Quebec's Deputy Minister, Public Security.

Enter the contest to win an emergency kit

There are a number of tools available to be prepared to meet emergency situations and test one's knowledge. With that in mind, an interactive game and the "72 hours" contest were produced in collaboration with IBC. Go to www.securitecivile.gouv.qc.ca or www.infoinsurance.ca. to take part. You could win one of 50 emergency kits being offered by IBC.

"Being prepared to face emergency situations is to acknowledge that no Quebecer is immune. Disasters can strike in the summer or winter with no warning. We can't prevent them from happening, but we can certainly take measures to minimize their negative impact: it's not simply a matter of having insurance coverage and putting together an emergency kit, it's also investing in the maintenance and landscaping of your home to make it safe so that it can stand up to the vagaries of Mother Nature", Jack Chadirdjian, Director of Member Services, and Public and Governmental Affairs, at IBC.

Emergency Preparedness Week activities

Quebec's Ministère de la Sécurité Publique will be holding awareness activities at several malls across the province, including Laurier Québec (Quebec City), Promenades Saint-Bruno, (Montréal) and Place du Royaume (Saguenay). In addition to these activities, a number of awareness measures are being taken addressed to younger kids, more specifically the *Come Play with Séкуро!* drawing contest, which runs until May 7.

For more information about Emergency Preparedness Week or to find out what your emergency kit should contain, go to www.securitecivile.gouv.qc.ca.

The launch was organized with the collaboration of:



*According to a Léger Marketing poll carried out in March 2009 for Allstate Insurance Company.

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Source :

David Couturier
Press Attaché
Ministère de la Sécurité publique (Quebec)
418 643-2112

Anne Morin
Public Affairs Advisor
Insurance Bureau of Canada
514 288-1563, ext. 229

Information :

Mario Vaillancourt
Responsible for Media Relations
Ministère de la Sécurité publique (Quebec)
418 646-6777, ext. 30274

Geneviève Déry
Press Attaché
Canadian Red Cross, Quebec Division
514 362-2930, ext. 2936

Schedule

Recent disasters in Quebec

- August 4, 2009: A **force 2 (F2) tornado** hit the town of **Mont-Laurier**. Winds damaged close to 40 homes, rendering 21 of them uninhabitable. An assistance centre was set up to help victims. The *Organisation régionale de la sécurité civile des Laurentides* and its partners came to the assistance of Mont-Laurier and its citizens.
- August 2, 2008: **Torrential rains in Montreal** and in **several Quebec regions**. Torrential rains fell in the east end of Montreal causing the closure of Highway 40 for several hours, in addition to backing up sewers in some 100 homes. No evacuations were necessary and everything returned to normal within five to six hours. In Saint-Marc-du-Lac-Long, two individuals drowned in their car. The waters swept away Bell equipment, leaving some 280 clients without phone service for two days. A shelter was opened for stranded residents. A bridge was swept away and roads were flooded.
- March 7, 8 and 9, 2008: **Snow storm**. The storm left 30 to 50 cm of snow in south-western Quebec, 20 to 40 cm in the Lower St. Lawrence region and 10 to 20 cm in the Saguenay. The precipitations were accompanied by at-times heavy snowfall and powerful winds, which interrupted air, train and road travel, and also caused accidents on the roads. The storm broke existing winter snowfall records in Quebec City, Trois-Rivières and Mirabel.
- August 9, 2007: **Flooding in Rivière-au-Renard**. The *Organisation régionale de la sécurité civile de la Gaspésie* was mobilized. A shelter was opened to accommodate stranded residents. Two people lost their lives in this disaster, which also closed roads and caused major power outages.
- June 2005: **Forest fires** raged near **Chibougamau** for several days. SOPFEU installed temporary shelters. An emergency coordination centre was set up. About 1,000 people were evacuated during the night of June 5 to 6.
- March 2005: **Major landslides** in **Petite-Rivière-Saint-François** forced the evacuation of residents of some 50 homes. This event made the municipal authorities aware of the risks. Since then, the municipality has adopted a public security plan, and work was carried out to protect homes at risk.