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EMERGENCY RESPONDERS RECEIVE WATER RESCUE TRAINING

WHITEHORSE – Minister Glenn Hart today announced the Yukon Search and Rescue (SAR) teams as well as the Marsh Lake and Tagish volunteer fire departments (VFD), equipped with rescue boats, are receiving water rescue training this month in preparation for boating season on Yukon waterways.

“This training is designed to ensure safety for both the responders and the people in peril, while effecting a rescue in either the swift rivers or unpredictable lake conditions of Yukon,” Hart said.

“Emergency response training is ongoing throughout the year,” Yukon EMO manager Erin Deacon said. “We provide training in many different disciplines in order to keep responders current with new techniques. Practicing these maneuvers and familiarizing personnel on the equipment is essential before the teams are called to respond to a real emergency.”

The theory session started Saturday, May 26 with 50 participants from Yukon communities in attendance. Following the theory portion of the course, practical exercises will be conducted with Southern Lake’s SAR and VFD communities on various Yukon waterways. The sessions, to be held until mid-June, will test the responders in real-life settings, utilizing recently acquired water rescue craft.

Long time Whitehorse SAR organizer, Al Ekholm, noted the value of the training sessions in relation to the many activities undertaken during the summer season. “The training is vital to develop the skills we need to keep ourselves safe while we respond to a water rescue. We also play a role in maintaining boating safety for events like the Yukon River Quest and day-to-day safety for boaters during the summer months.”

Boaters are reminded of the Yukon Marine Distress Radio system now available in the Southern Lakes region. Developed by the Yukon Amateur Radio Association with support from Industry Canada and the Yukon government, boaters can make calls for help and monitor others in distress by purchasing, installing and knowing how to use a marine grade VHF radio in their boat.

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