



TOWN OF MINTO

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor George Bridge and Members of Council for the Town of Minto.
From: Linda Dickson, MCIP, RPP, Emergency Manager/CEMC
Date: September 6, 2016
Re: **Report on the Strategic Direction for Emergency Management Programs**

Purpose/Background:

The After Action Reports from both the April 2013 and December 2013 Ice Storms provided good lessons learned and recommendations to improve our municipal emergency management programs and where applicable coordinating these recommendations across the County. In order to develop a more appropriate and consistent framework to County wide emergency events, in March of 2015, a focus discussion group session was undertaken with representation from all eight municipal Emergency Management Program Committees in Wellington County. The lessons learned and recommendations from the Ice Storm After Action Reports were used to define discussion points for this session.

The group discussion included the following topic areas

1. Sheltering/Warming and Cooling Centres
2. Generators and Funding
3. Time Frames
4. Crisis Communications

The results of the discussion provided some additional categories for consideration including Public Education and Hazard Specific Emergency Response Plans.

During the Emergency Management Program Committee meetings in 2016, the results were presented and discussed. The following sections outline five key emergency management directives for the future; Shelters and Evacuation Centres, Generators, Public Education, Preparedness Plan and Communications including Crisis Communications. The report also identifies whether or not the specific recommendations can be achieved, and if so how they will be implemented.

SHELTERS/EVACUATION CENTRES

1. **Recommendation:** To pre-identify shelters/evacuation centres and promote the location to residents as part of our public education program, but these sites should be provided with back-up power to be identified and promoted in preparedness campaigns.

It was there are only a few sites with back-up power that meet the Health Canada requirements for overnight accommodations within the County of Wellington.



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Emergency Management and Social Services will continue to work with Red Cross to identify appropriate sites in the County suitable for overnight accommodations. Most public facilities can accommodate temporary emergency uses such as places to cool down or warm up.

Action/Directive: The identification, equipping and promotion of these facilities is a Council decision and may require agreements between the municipality and some pre-identified sites.

2. **Recommendation:** Consensus that if any part of the community is in need, reception centres/shelters should be opened and where possible we should avoid using fire stations for reception centres/shelters.

Action/Directive: This should be a municipal program Committee decision and if Fire Stations are to be used it should be based upon the advice and direction of the municipal Fire Chief.

3. **Recommendation:** Shelters should be opened within **72** hours. The CEMCs in Wellington County agreed that this should be 72 hours and not 48 hours of a situation (power outage) and it should be the decision of the EOC (Incident Command) when to open and what sites to open.

Action/Directive: Emergency Management staff will look at creating a policy for this.

4. **Recommendation:** Make a list of all potential shelter sites, identify if they have back-up power and what facilities in the site are available with or without back-up power.

Action/Directive: These lists have been prepared and EM staff is in the process of including the location and specific site information into the Common Operating Picture.

5. **Recommendation:** Where and if possible promote a staged evacuation process such as Stage 1 – elderly, those with very young children and those with medical need; Stage 2- would be the rest of the community.

Action/Directive: CEMCs agreed that we should not take on this approach.

GENERATORS

1. **Recommendation:** Have a pool of municipal generators that could be moved around the county. It was suggested/agreed to that this could be funded through the County; or County staff could assist with bulk buying of generators. It should be noted that

generators will need to be sized appropriately for the facility that they will run. Facilities will have to be wired appropriately with an approved disconnect that will be the responsibility of the individual municipalities. General consensus is that some municipalities are adequately prepared with generators to operate their critical infrastructure including potential shelters/places to get cool and warm.

Action/Directive: The purchase and installation of generators should remain a municipal decision and responsibility. Emergency Management staff will compile and maintain a list of potential mobile generator resources and include information in the Contact and Resource Guide. Facilities being used as shelters/places to get cool or warm will be identified in the Common Operating Picture and the attribute list will identify if the facility has a generator.

2. **Recommendation:** Municipalities should maintain 72 hour fuel supply for generators and municipalities should incorporate this into their emergency fuel plan calculations.

Action/Directive: Municipalities should be including a fuel amount for generators in their fuel purchasing plans. There is an option with some fuel suppliers to pre-order and pre-purchase fuel. EM will create a list of appropriate fuel depots with stand-alone back-up power and where an option of gases (regular, diesel and coloured diesel) may be acquired. This information may also be included in the Common Operating Picture.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. **Recommendation:** Continue to promote 72 hour "Be Better Prepared" in our public education campaigns across the County.

Action/Recommendation: Our annual public education/awareness campaigns will continue to focus on the "Be Better Prepared" messaging including 72 hour personal preparedness and more targeted 72 hour preparedness for specific types of incidents such as Ice Storms, Power Outages, Tornadoes and Floods.

2. **Recommendation:** Public Education should be provided to residents about the location, the use of and hours of operation for municipal public facilities where residents can go to cool down in the summer or warm up in the winter particularly during prolonged power outage events.

Action/Directive: This will be the responsibility of each municipality to identify. Emergency Management will assist/work with each municipality and coordinate consistent education information where practical.



PREPAREDNESS PLAN

1. **Recommendation:** Create a standardized extreme heat and cold weather policy. Social Services, Public Health, Communications and EM Staff have been working on this.

Action/Directive: Draft policies are being reviewed by partner agencies. Public Health has a Cold Alert Protocol and Heat Alert Protocol which has been provided to the alternate CEMCs. Wellington County and City of Guelph EM staff, Social Services staff and County and City Communications staff are reviewing a draft Municipal Cold Alert Plan. Once completed a copy of the Plan will be provided to alternate CEMCs and partner agencies. EM staff will finalize the municipal Heat Alert Plan.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Recommendation:** Ensure we make appropriate use of all forms of technology available to communicate emergency information to our residents and business. Different demographics use different technologies. Consensus was to have ready to use communication media templates and where appropriate social media messaging.

Action/Directive: The Communication staff throughout the County have, as a result of past weather response situations, worked together and shared best practices particularly during large scale municipal emergencies. Communication staff will continue to work with EM and other communication departments to create a list of emergency information messaging.

2. **Recommendation:** There needs to be ongoing training for communication officers and spokespersons. A Crisis Communication Workshop was held in 2015 primarily for Heads of Council and their alternates. A similar workshop was provided in 2016.

Action/Directive: Each municipality's five year training program has been updated to include a crisis communication course every year for the next five years and this will be included in the Emergency Measures budget for the County.

3. **Recommendation:** For single municipal events, local staff may be able to deal with the communication needs of an emergency but for larger county wide events, municipalities may need and wish to access the resources of the County Communications Division and the Wellington OPP media officers.

Action/Directive: The Emergency Response Plan contains policies to provide for this resource in a large scale emergency. Coordination of this assistance/resource may be



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provided through the Emergency Manager/CEMC or alternate. Similar process may be followed for other County Departments such as Social Services.

SUMMARY:

It is recognized that in certain situations and depending upon local circumstances, there are some decisions that will have to be made locally that differ from the recognized response standards suggested in this report and, further, that may not be consistent with bordering municipal decisions. However, the consensus and desire of the eight municipal emergency management program committees is, where feasible and practicable in County wide emergencies, to ensure a coordinated response so that all residents and business are provided with similar response and recovery efforts to emergency/abnormal situations as they arise. Having Emergency Management staff assist with coordination within and amongst municipalities during abnormal events and emergencies has become an emergency management standard within the County that Municipal Staff/Municipal Control Groups expect and appreciate.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives this report and supports the recommendations and identified implementation of the recommendations **and further that** Council endorses the efforts of the Town's Emergency Management Program Committee with the assistance of the Emergency Management staff to undertaken the completion of the recommendations in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Dickson", on a light blue rectangular background.

Linda Dickson, MCIP, RPP, CMMIII Emergency Management Professional
Emergency Manager/CEMC