

Responsibilities of Niagara Region in a Local Municipal Emergency



Regional Emergency Planning Integrated Community Planning Department

Niagara  **Region**
Building Community. Building Lives.

Issue Date March 2011

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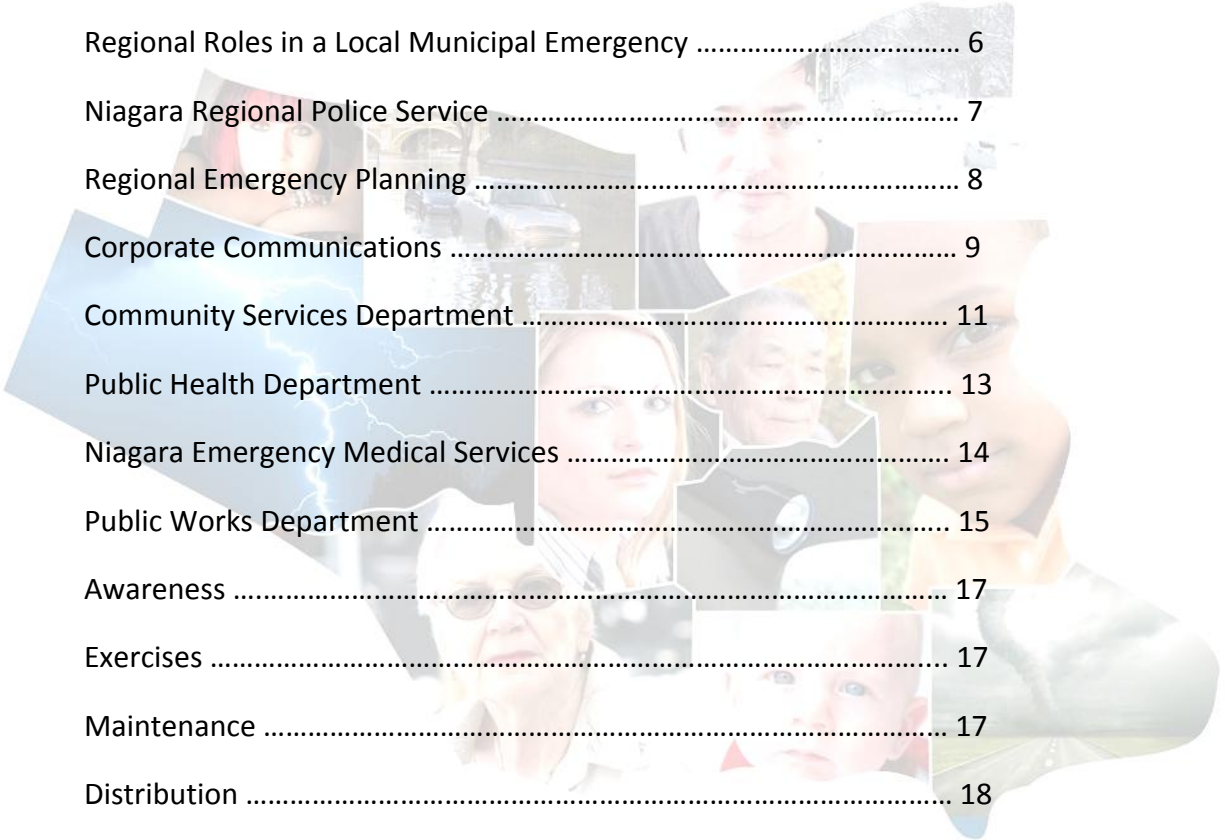
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Aim

This document will serve as an operational guideline outlining the role of Niagara Region core departments and services and how these align with local municipalities during a local emergency incident.

Emergency Plan Alignment

This document has been prepared as a single attachment to local Emergency Plans to ensure continuity across all Niagara Region area municipalities. Because conformity between regional and local Emergency Plans is a requirement of legislation, it is shared responsibility of the Niagara Community Emergency Management Coordinators to ensure proper alignments are in place.

Because Niagara Region is an upper tier municipality and acts as a service provider to twelve local area municipalities, it is essential that all local municipal Emergency Plans contain the same regional emergency responsibilities.

To that end, this document, *Responsibilities of Niagara Region in a Local Municipal Emergency*, has been prepared in partnership between all Niagara Region core departments and services with defined responsibilities during and/or in support of a local emergency. These responsibilities are contained within this single document in place of being contained within individual local municipal Emergency Plans. This measure has been taken to ensure continuity across all regional departments, services and all local area municipal Emergency Plans.

Legal Authority

The legislation that both empowers and mandates Niagara Region to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency situations is as follows:

Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act

The Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act requires that municipalities within the Province of Ontario have both an Emergency Management Program and an Emergency Plan (Sections 2.1 and 3.1 respectively) that are empowered by municipal by-law.

Ontario Regulation 380/04

Ontario Regulation 380/04 sets in place the standards for both Provincial Ministry Emergency Management Programs and Municipal Emergency Management Programs. These standards describe the minimum provisions that must be provided to constitute an emergency management program at the essential level.

Regional By-Law 75-2008

The Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara has empowered both the Regional Emergency Management Program and the Emergency Management Plan by Regional By-Law.

The legislation that requires the conformity of lower-tier municipal plans to upper-tier municipal plans is as follows:

Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act

Conformity with upper-tier plan

5. The emergency plan of a lower-tier municipality in an upper-tier municipality, excluding a county, shall conform to the emergency plan of the upper-tier municipality and has no effect to the extent of any inconsistency.

Planning Assumptions

This document is prepared based upon the following planning assumptions in support of local municipal emergency operations as follows:

Normal Emergency Operations

Many regional departments / services operate in response to emergency incidents are part of their core service delivery mandates. These “normal emergency operations” always remain within the management of the respective regional department / service under the provisions of their respective legislation, mandate or other normal legal authority.

Single Municipal Emergency Incident

This document serves as an operational guideline in the event of an emergency incident occurring within the boundaries of a single local area municipality within the boundaries of the Niagara Region. Under such incident the role of the Region is to provide support and assistance to the impacted municipality and to manage the deployment of regional emergency resources.

Rapid Escalation Incident

An emergency incident within the purview of this document may occur with little or no warning and escalate in short order. When these events occur, immediate management of the event rests with the emergency service and or department with jurisdiction over the response to the event where it occurs. Immediate control of these events and their impact on the community at large remains with the site response personnel until such a time that any local municipal and/or regional emergency plan is activated. Once activated the local municipal and/or regional emergency plan operates in support of the emergency site. Depending on whether it is a local or regional emergency service / department most responsible at an emergency site, the incident may trigger activation of a regional emergency plan prior to activation of the local municipal emergency plan. Under such circumstances the Region is responsible for establishing liaison with the local area municipality to determine what an appropriate model for alignment of emergency operations is.

Extra-Ordinary Emergency Measures

Any emergency incident that overwhelms or threatens to overwhelm municipal emergency management capacity and that has a significant impact on the community at large will automatically precipitate the activation of the regional emergency plan. When these events occur, the provisions of this document serve as a resource for the alignment of regional support to local municipal emergency operations knowing that regional operations will be managed from within a regional emergency operations centre.

Regional Assistance to a Local Municipality

Any local area municipality responding to an emergency within their boundaries may at any time make a formal request for emergency assistance to Niagara Region as follows.

Prior to Activation of the Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan

If the request for emergency assistance (outside of normal working operations) is made prior to the activation of the Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan the request for assistance will be made through direct communications between either:

- Municipal CAO / Town Manager to the Regional CAO, or
- Local Emergency Management Coordinator to Regional Emergency Planning
- Local Fire Department to Regional Community Services (Shelter Incidents)
- Local Fire Department to Regional Public Health (Environmental Health Incidents)
- Local Emergency Information Officer to Regional Corporate Communications
- Peer Service to Peer Service (in a two-tier system i.e. Water-Wastewater and Transportation)

Once a request for emergency assistance is received, it is the responsibility of Niagara Region to determine its capability to offer the assistance requested either directly or through activation of the Regional Emergency Plan / Incident Management System.

Following Activation of Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan

If the request for emergency assistance is made following the activation of Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan, the RECG members will be tasked with evaluating the request for assistance and making any recommendations regarding the capability of the Region to offer the assistance requested.

Issue of Local Municipal Control

At any time a local area municipality makes a formal request for assistance, such a request does not imply that the municipality is requesting the Region to assume control over municipal emergency operations. Control of any single municipal emergency incident always rests with the local Municipal Emergency / Community Control Group.

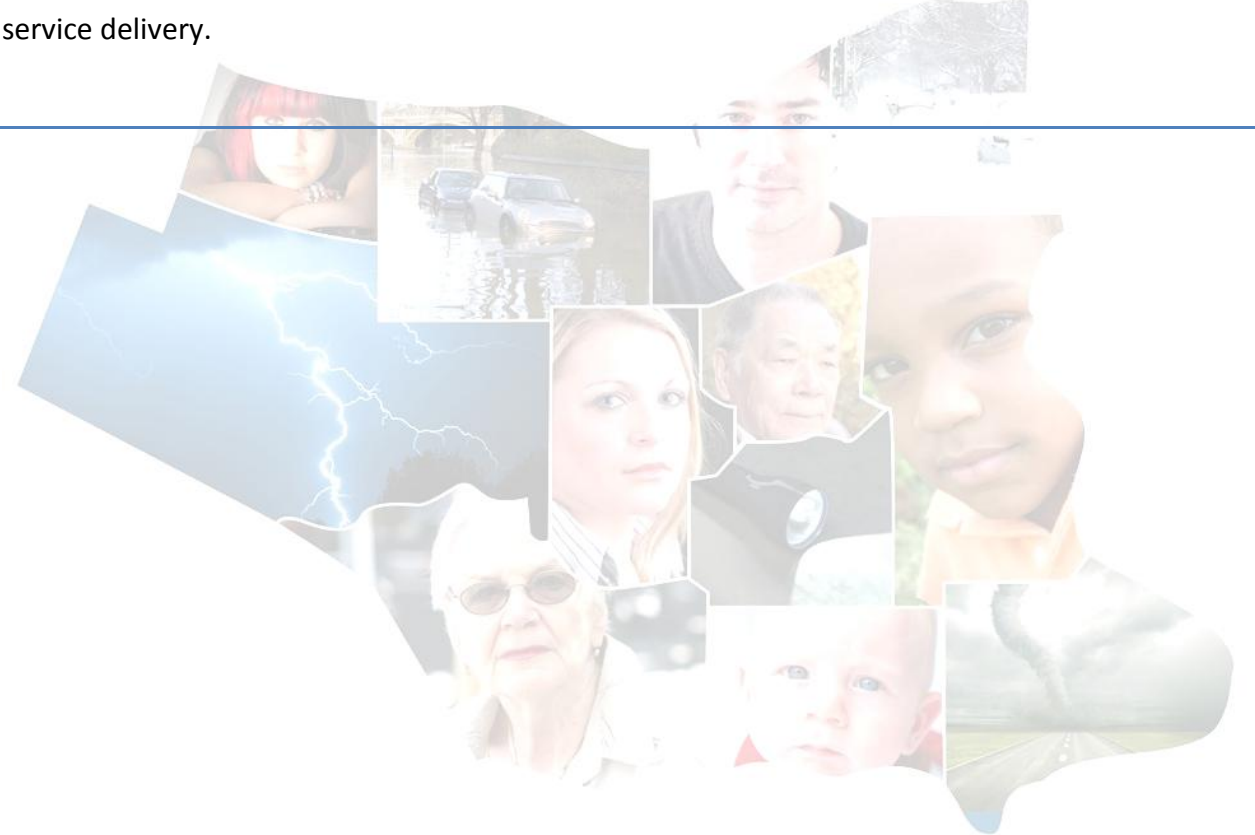
Issue of Liaison Officers

However, when assistance is provided by Niagara Region to any local municipality the service / department providing the assistance will be given the opportunity to have a senior staff person

attend at the Municipal Emergency Operations Centre as the department / service Liaison Officer. The role of the Liaison Officer is to facilitate the emergency assistance requested and communicate (share information with / seek approval from) the regional Service Chief / Department Head.

Issue of Regional Control

Should any Municipal Emergency / Community Control Group request that any regional service provider conduct any emergency operations that they feel is outside of their capabilities or not appropriate to that service, Niagara Region always maintains oversight authority over regional service delivery.



Regional Roles in a Local Municipal Emergency

The following regional departments, divisions, services and/or agencies may have a role in a local municipal emergency incident:

- Niagara Regional Police Service
- Integrated Community Planning Department (ICP)
 - Regional Emergency Planning
 - Corporate Communications
- Community Services Department
- Public Health Department
 - Emergency Services Division (Niagara Emergency Medical Services)
- Public Works Department
 - Transportation Services
 - Water and Waste Water Services
 - Waste Management Services

The roles of the above regional business units during a local municipal emergency incident are described in detail as follows:

Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS)

Niagara Regional Police Service, in fulfilling its normal tasks is constantly engaged in responding to emergencies, and in general, will follow standard procedures.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Niagara Regional Police Senior Staff are notified of an event through the Police Communications Centre (Duty Supervisor)***

Responsibilities of Niagara Regional Police Service include:

- Protection of life and property and the prevention and investigation of crime
- To maintain law and order
- Protection at the scene of the disaster area
- To alert persons endangered by the effects of the disaster
- Protection of evacuated buildings and other property in the emergency area
- Establishing the inner perimeter within the emergency area
- Establishing the outer perimeter in the vicinity of the emergency to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles and restrict access to all but essential emergency personnel
- To control traffic and crowds and ensure clear entrance and exit to and from the scene of the emergency to traffic and personnel
- Providing police service in the Emergency Operations Centre, evacuee centres, morgues and other facilities as required
- Notifying the coroner of fatalities
- Ensuring liaison with other community, provincial and federal police agencies, as required
- To alert and assist other emergency agencies

Regional Emergency Planning (Integrated Community Planning)

Region Emergency Planning (Integrated Community Planning Department) in fulfilling its mandate of providing appropriate regional emergency management capacity; is engaged in ensuring alignment between the Emergency Plans of all Niagara Region municipalities and the Region. In addition, Regional Emergency Planning staff may be activated in support of local emergency operations in the role Regional Liaison Officer.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Regional Emergency Planning staff are notified of the event either directly (during normal business hours) or indirectly through Regional Dispatch (apart from normal business hours)***

Below is a synopsis of the roles and responsibilities of Regional Emergency Planning in a local emergency.

Responsibilities of the Niagara Region CEMC may include:

Support to a Local Municipality

- Support to a Municipal CEMC
- Support to CCG members as required
- Potentially serve as alternate CEMC as requested through mutual assistance

Regional Liaison to Municipality

- Point of contact for Regional stakeholders not present in EOC
- Access to Regional resources and equipment

Regional Liaison to Critical Infrastructure

- Point of contact for critical infrastructure stakeholders not present in EOC
- Access to critical infrastructure resources and equipment

Regional Liaison to Cross Border Stakeholders

- Point of contact for cross border stakeholders not present in EOC
- Access to cross border resources and equipment

Regional Liaison to Province of Ontario

- Access to provincial resources and equipment

Corporate Communications (Integrated Community Planning)

Niagara Region Corporate Communications (Integrated Community Planning Department) in its normal day-to-day procedures, responds to and redeploys communications specialists, web services staff, and telecommunications staff to issue accurate and speedy information to the public using various methods (website, automated phone messaging, media relations, social media, fact sheets, direct household info drops, etc.) in response to disasters.

Municipal Emergency Information Officers (EIOs) are urged to contact the Niagara Region Corporate Communications Associate Director at the start of a disaster and the neighbouring EIO for assistance and information sharing.

The Crisis Communications Plan for Issues and Incidents can be activated during any emergency incident, whether declared or an undeclared emergency. This request is made by the Mayor of a municipality, the Fire Chief or the local Emergency Information Officer designate.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Corporate Communications staff are notified of the event either directly (during normal business hours) or indirectly through Regional Dispatch (apart from normal business hours)***

Below is a summary of the methods available to communicate with the public and the media, which are available to the area EIOs. To access these services, the area municipal Chief Administrative Officer or Mayor contacts the Niagara Region Chief Administrative Officer. These services include:

Responsibilities of Corporate Communications:

- Media relations, including the preparation and distribution of media products (i.e.: media releases, public service announcements, fact sheets, Frequently Asked Questions document, etc.) and organizing media conferences and media interview
- An automated information line at 905-685-4225 ext. 3002 or 1-800-263-7215 ext. 3002 for pre-recorded messages, which can be updated frequently
- Web copy and content, maps, and links to relevant sites and information
- Social Media updates on the Niagara Region Facebook page and Twitter account to drive readers to the area municipal website, the Niagara Region website and newspaper websites
- A TVCOGECO news crawl that can be updated by members of the Crisis Communications Response Team to override regular programming during the disaster response

- Identification of one joint media centre and public information centres
 - Development of door-to-door drop information flyers or letters
-



Community Services Department

Niagara Region Community Services, in its normal day-to-day procedures, supports and advances the well-being of individuals, families and communities in Niagara. The Community Services Emergency Response Plan (The Plan) can be activated during a declared emergency, or an undeclared emergency. The request is made by the Mayor of a municipality, his deputy or the Fire Chief.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Community Services staff are notified of the event either directly (during normal business hours) or indirectly through Regional Dispatch (apart from normal business hours)***
- ***Niagara Region Community Services Staff may also be notified of an event through the Niagara Branch of the Canadian Red Cross***

Below is a synopsis of the roles and responsibilities for Niagara Region Community Services in a local emergency.

Responsibilities of Niagara Region Community Services include:

- Provide a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident

Emergency Feeding

- Community Services will provide emergency food, essential to sustain life, to those affected by the emergency and shelter staff/volunteers
- Food will be provided at or as near the shelter as possible
- Food will be provided through The Salvation Army Family Services wherever possible
- Special diets and requirements will be provided wherever possible

Emergency Clothing

- Community Services will provide emergency clothing/blankets for warmth and comfort in the event of an emergency
- The Salvation Army Family Services will supply gently used clothing
- Clothing will be provided to meet basic immediate needs and not replacement of lost articles
- When possible, special requests for items of clothing will be accommodated

Emergency Shelter

- Emergency shelter will be provided to ensure the safety and comfort of displaced persons in the following priority: 1) Family and friends; 2) Commercial hotels/motels; and, 3) Group lodging facilities established in schools, churches, community halls, etc.
- The Canadian Red Cross is the responsible agency for the emergency shelter and will manage the site and registration of displaced persons
- The location of the site is determined by the Mayor of the Municipality, his/her deputy and or/ the Fire Chief (CEMC) in consultation with the Niagara Region's Community Services Department

Personal Services

- Personal services such as special care, crisis counselling and family counselling are provided by Community agencies like Niagara Victims Crisis Support Services
- Such agencies will be contacted and given resources (space) when possible to provide personal services if required

Emergency Shelter for Pets

- Pets will not be permitted inside of a group shelter, except for certified service animals
- With the assistance and coordination of the local SPCA's and Humane Societies, pets will be housed in an alternate location
- The Red Cross agreements with the local SPCA's/Humane Societies will allow the brokering of local animal kennels and boarding facilities if required

Vulnerable Populations

- Community Services will contact our Community Partners and agencies when we receive an alert of a possible emergency, or are requested to act in the event of an emergency
- It will be the responsibility of the community agencies to implement their internal plans to ensure that their vulnerable clients have been contacted and their safety assured

Special Services

- Niagara Specialized Transit may be requested to assist in the transportation of vulnerable persons, and those with mobility issues
- The Pharmacists of Niagara Association may be contacted to request assistance with medication replacements and or to complete pharmaceutical histories within a shelter
- In extreme conditions, the Canadian Forces reserves may be contacted to assist in door to door safety checks and property safety checks

Public Health Department

Niagara Region Public Health, in its normal day-to-day procedures, identifies real or potential hazards to the health of the population and takes measures, or issues such instructions, as are necessary to prevent those hazards from occurring or corrects them in the event they have occurred.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Public Health staff are notified of the event either directly (during normal business hours) or indirectly through Regional Dispatch (apart from normal business hours)***

Below is a synopsis of the roles and responsibilities for Niagara Region Public Health in a local emergency incident.

Responsibilities of Niagara Region Public Health include:

- Assessment of the extent of the emergency as it relates to public health
- Providing advice on any matters which may adversely affect public health
- Providing authoritative instructions on health and safety matters to the public through the EOC and Public Information Coordinator
- Coordinating the response to disease related emergencies or anticipated emergencies such as epidemics, according to Ministry of Health policies
- Ensuring coordination of care of vulnerable citizens in evacuee centres during an emergency
- Ensuring coordination of all efforts to prevent and control the spread of disease during an emergency
- Ensuring liaison with the Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Branch
- Ensuring liaison with the Director of Public Works regarding the need for potable water and sanitation facilities
- Ensuring liaison with Niagara Regional Community Services on areas of mutual concern and health services in the Emergency Evacuation Centres
- Providing a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident

Niagara Emergency Medical Service

The Niagara Emergency Medical Service (Public Health Department) in fulfilling its normal tasks is constantly engaged in responding to emergencies, and in general, will follow standard procedures.

- ***Niagara EMS Senior Staff are notified of an event through the Niagara Ambulance Communications Centre***

Below is a synopsis of the roles and responsibilities for Niagara Emergency Medical Services in a local emergency incident.

Responsibilities of Niagara Emergency Medical Services include:

- Providing essential primary medical care relief at the site of an emergency, as required
- Coordinating the transportation of casualties to appropriate medical care facilities from the emergency site
- Ensuring liaison with the receiving hospitals
- Liaising with the Medical Officer of Health as required
- Assessing the need for and advising the Community Control Group of other resources, including human and material resources, which are available and/or required
- Assisting other emergency responders as required
- Providing a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident

Public Works Department

Niagara Region Public Works is responsible for providing essential community services within the Region of Niagara.

- ***In the event of a local emergency incident Public Works staff are notified of the event either directly (during normal business hours) or indirectly through Regional Dispatch (apart from normal business hours)***

Below is a synopsis of the roles and responsibilities for Niagara Region Public Works in a local emergency incident.

Responsibilities of Niagara Region Public Works include:

Transportation Services

- Provide information regarding impact to regional road infrastructure
- Provide assistance as able in support of traffic management activities
- Provide equipment and/or manpower in support of various road and bridge operations activities (i.e. tree removal, snow removal, etc.)
- Provide specialized transit services as able
- Provide a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident

Water and Waste Water Services

- Assessment of the extent of the emergency as it relates to water and wastewater
- Providing advice on any matters which may adversely affect public health and/or the environment
- Ensuring liaison with the Medical Officer of Health and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment
- Provide information regarding impact to regional water / waste water infrastructure
- Provide assistance as able in support of local municipal water/wastewater infrastructure and water quality issues
- Provide a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident

Waste Management Services

- Provide information regarding impact to regional waste management operations
- Arrange for Niagara Region's waste collection contractor to provide emergency waste collection services (for debris, brush, etc.) as required

- Assess the need for additional waste drop off services at Regional waste drop off facilities (e.g. extended service hours, additional staffing)
- Communicate changes of waste management collection services to the affected public
- Liaise with the Ministry of Environment on emergency amendments to Certificates of Approval for waste facilities as required
- Provide a liaison to the impacted municipality as required by the emergency incident



Awareness

This document is provided as a resource to all the Niagara Region Local Area Municipalities. Therefore in order for it to be effective all Niagara Region and Local Area Municipal Emergency Control Group / Community Control Group members must be familiar with its contents.

- *The information contained within this document is incorporated into the Niagara Community Control Group Level One Training Package*

Exercises

In addition to the above noted training linkages, regional participation in local municipal emergency exercises will serve to further clarify regional responsibilities and promote familiarity with local municipal and regional stakeholders working together prior to an actual emergency incident occurring.

- *Regional Departments / Services will endeavour to participate in standalone municipal exercises, shared municipal exercises and/or joint municipal / regional emergency exercises*

Maintenance

Responsibilities of Niagara Region in a Local Municipal Emergency is considered a living document. Therefore, it must remain current and be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure operational sustainability. In addition all key stakeholders must have access to the most current document and ensure that all paper copies within their area of responsibility reflect the most current information.

Annual Annex Review and Revision

This Annex will be reviewed and updated annually by Regional Emergency Planning staff in cooperation with the emergency planning leads of the above noted regional departments / services.

Maintenance Responsibility

It is the responsibility of Regional Emergency Planning staff to maintain this Annex and to facilitate all revisions to it.

Stakeholder Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders (regional departments / services noted above) to ensure that Regional Emergency Planning is notified of changes, revisions or additions that affect the contents of this document.

Municipal Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all Municipalities to ensure that Regional Emergency Planning is notified of changes that affect the contents of this document, including changes to identified threats or changes in response capacity. Additionally, Municipalities are encouraged to seek clarification from Regional Emergency Planning if there are questions surrounding the contents of this document.

Distribution

This document is to be distributed annually to the following members of the Niagara Community Emergency Management Coordinators Committee.

- CEMC, City of St. Catharines
- CEMC, City of Niagara Falls
- CEMC, City of Welland
- CEMC, City of Thorold
- CEMC, City of Port Colborne
- CEMC, Town of Fort Erie
- CEMC, Town of Pelham
- CEMC, Town of Grimsby
- CEMC, Town of Lincoln
- CEMC, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- CEMC, Township of West Lincoln
- CEMC, Township of Wainfleet
- Golden Horseshoe Sector Community Officer, Emergency Management Ontario