
Subject: Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, February 19, 2019

Recommendations

1. That this report be **RECEIVED** for information.
2. That Regional Council **APPOINT** a member of Council as a representative on the Niagara Region Emergency Management Program Committee.

Key Facts

- This report provides a brief summary of the key activities of the Emergency Management Program in 2018.
- The program is recommended under the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management's (OFMEM) *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act Compliance Guide for Municipalities* to provide an annual report to Council on the Program's activities.
- The program developed annual strategies and work plans through oversight of the Niagara Region Emergency Management Program Committee.
- Emergency Management services were delivered through training, public education, stakeholder symposium, planning, municipal collaboration and exercising.
- Under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, Ontario Regulation 380/04*:
 - 11(1) states that "Every Municipality shall have an emergency management program committee"
 - 11(2) & (3) states that the committee shall be composed of
 - Emergency Management Program Co-ordinator (CEMC)
 - A senior municipal official
 - Members of Council as may be appointed by Council
 - Municipal employees who are responsible for emergency management functions
 - Other persons representing organizations and industry
 - 11(4) Council shall appoint one of the members of the program committee to be the chair of the committee".
- The current chair of the committee is the CEMC for Niagara, the Chief of the Emergency Services Division

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications. All programming was provided within budget.

Analysis

The Region's Emergency Management Program continues to strive for excellence in emergency management through the development and roll out of new initiatives aimed at increasing Niagara's resilience. This report is intended to provide a brief summary of the key activities of the Program in 2018.

Niagara Region Emergency Management Program Committee (NREMPC):

The NREMPC met on four occasions (January 29, June 4, October 1 and December 12). The objective of the NREMPC is to assist in the development and support of the Emergency Management Program. The committee must also conduct an annual review of the program including the emergency plan, training, exercises, public education, Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) and Critical Infrastructure (CI) for the Region. This review was completed on December 12, 2018.

Emergency Planning:

The Region's Emergency Management Plan has been reviewed as required by the province. In addition, the emergency drinking water distribution plan was approved and implemented and the mass evacuation committee has met to build upon (operationalize) the mass evacuation plan implemented in 2017. A revised regional business continuity facility closure plan (previous severe weather protocol) is pending approval and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) activation levels has been formalized and shared with the EOC personnel. Volunteer Management Best Practices and Guidelines have been developed.

Emergency Training:

New in 2018, under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, all EOC staff are required to annually demonstrate an adequate level of training in each of the following areas:

- Knowledge of all of the components of the municipal Emergency Management program, including, but not limited to, the municipal Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) and Critical Infrastructure (CI) list;
- Knowledge of their municipality's Municipal Emergency Plan, including their roles and responsibilities, and those of organizations which may have a role in response;
- Knowledge of the procedures used to activate and operate under the Municipal Emergency Plan;
- Knowledge of the notification procedures used to notify members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) when the Municipal Emergency Plan is activated; and
- Knowledge of the location, communications infrastructure and technology in their municipal EOC.

Annual compliance training sessions (Emergency Management 101) were provided to a total of 92 Regional staff members on the following dates: June 14, June 26, July 19, Sept. 7, Sept. 13, and Oct. 15. In addition, Basic Emergency Management course was delivered January 15 and Incident Management System 200 was delivered in January and November with staff from both the Region and municipalities attending. Emergency Social Services training was also delivered by an external agency to Regional staff on January 11-12 and December 6-7. An online orientation e-module is being developed this year to provide to new staff who are identified as having a role in emergency management.

Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Readiness, Notification, and Annual Exercise:

The Primary and Alternate EOC's have been reviewed for set up and the equipment has been tested to ensure functionality. Enhancements to the Primary EOC include two large dry erase boards, EOC signage for the rooms and the installation of two televisions in 2019.

Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, Ontario Regulation 380/04: 15. (2b) states that the emergency plan shall set out procedures for notifying the members of the municipal emergency control group of the emergency. Effective October 2018, the Niagara Region began using Everbridge as an internal emergency notification tool for EOC personnel on a temporary basis through Niagara Regional Police Services. This web-based automated notification system replaced a manual process of calling/texting/emailing individuals to alert them to an emergency. It has proven to be very effective at sending critical messages quickly and efficiently to many people at one time while tracking staff responses regarding their availability to respond. The quicker we are able to notify staff of an emergency and assemble in the EOC to support the incident the quicker the co-ordination of human and physical resources, services and activities that may be required. Emergency Management is recommending the acquisition of a permanent system through the proposed 2019 operating budget.

An annual exercise which evaluates the region's emergency plan and procedures was conducted on November 5, 2018, which included the participation of approximately 115 regional staff members. The objectives of the exercise included: evaluate the effectiveness of the internal notification system Everbridge, evaluate the room set up of the primary emergency operations centre, provide a better understanding of participant roles and relationships, and identify critical functions, actions and timeframes to facilitate response and recovery. An exercise evaluation was completed following the exercise to identify any recommendations of improvement to plans and procedures.

Public Education:

Public education is a key function of emergency management programs. Each municipality is required to have an emergency public education program. The number of public education events and initiatives in 2018 was increased to reach more people. Public Education activities included a radio live interview, CANWARN (CANadian

Weather Amateur Radio Network) storm spotter training, four 'Ask a Storm Chaser' presentations throughout the Region, a display booth at community events, and other emergency hazards and preparedness presentations made to Brock University, Take your Kids to Work Day, and Public Health Week Pandemic Planning. A 2019 Public Education Plan has been developed to identify public education activities delivered throughout the year to provide information on the risks that could impact Niagara and strategies to help the public become better prepared for emergencies.

Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (HIRA) and Critical Infrastructure (CI):

The HIRA for Niagara Region was revised to meet best practices in risk assessment. The purpose of this document is to identify the hazards and their associated level of risk for Niagara. The CI for the Region was also reviewed to meet compliance and Emergency Management is working with NRPS and the Region's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to further develop, update and maintain the CI lists and mapping in GIS.

Assistance to Municipalities:

Emergency assistance continues to be offered to municipalities on an on-going basis. Assistance was provided during the Port Colborne Vinyl Works Fire. In addition, the Emergency Management Program continues to support municipalities in the development and implementation of their own training and exercises. We continue to work cooperatively to review and maintain the CI and HIRA across all 12 local area municipalities.

A business case was submitted for the procurement of an internal notification system for all 12 municipalities and the Region in the 2019 operating budget. This will replace the temporary solution through Niagara Regional Police discussed above. While several LAMs were looking at similar systems, it made sense to have one system regionally that all 13 municipalities can communicate together.

An additional capability needed by both LAMs and the Region is to be able to inform the public of critical information for their safety in the case of an emergency (external notification system or mass notification system). Currently in the case of a local or region-wide emergency, multiple media could be leveraged in hopes that everyone would see the message on one of those channels in an attempt to notify the public. Engaging all these different media, would take time and separate work for each medium. An emergency notification system would streamline the work, speeding up the ability to reach the public, as well as providing greater certainty that messaging would be received and seen by everyone. Such an external notification system, while not possible in this year's budget, remains a priority to address in future years.

The Niagara Emergency Management Committee, consisting of municipal CEMC's and other public emergency management stakeholders, met on three occasions on the following dates; January 23, June 25, and October 23. Topics of discussion included the

OFMEM Compliance Guide for Municipalities, mass evacuation, Niagara Emergency Communications Network committee, Alert Ready, Building a Disaster Resilient Niagara Symposium, training, Emergency Preparedness Week, HIRA and CI, and guest presentations from the Emergency Medical Assistance Team, Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. Minutes were circulated to all committee members.

Alternatives Reviewed

The Emergency Management program is constantly assessing priorities and best methodologies for service delivery. Due to the activities mentioned above, the Region's Emergency Management Program will meet the annual compliance requirements under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* for 2018.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The Emergency Management activities summarized in this report reinforce the commitment of the Region's emergency management program to ensuring the Region is prepared to respond to disaster situations, thereby reducing the risk to the community and exposure to liability, while supporting the strategic priorities of Council.

Other Pertinent Reports

No other pertinent reports.

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