
Memorandum

PHD-C 6-2026

Subject: Amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA)

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Chris Sheach, Manager, Emergency Management

This memorandum advises Regional Council of recent amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) introduced through Bill 25, the Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2025, which received Royal Assent on December 3, 2025. The amendments aim to modernize Ontario's emergency management framework, strengthen accountability, and improve coordination between municipal and provincial governments.

Key legislative changes include the formal establishment of the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response (MEPR), additional stipulations on municipal emergency declarations, and allowing municipalities to request provincial assistance without declaring an emergency.

A new Provincial Emergency Management Planning Framework will be introduced, requiring all municipal emergency management plans to align with provincial standards.

Under the legislation, emergency plans are now formally referred to as Emergency Management Plans, and key terms have been clarified, including:

- **Emergency:** A situation or impending situation of major proportions resulting in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property, whether caused by natural events, disease, accidents, or intentional acts.
- **Emergency Management:** The organized activities undertaken to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

The amendments also strengthen the role of the Head of Council by requiring specific preconditions and authorization requirements to be met before declaring an emergency, including consultation of the municipal emergency management plan and confirmation that immediate action is necessary to prevent serious harm or substantial damage.

New mandatory accountability and reporting requirements include regular public updates during an emergency, a report to Council every 30 days justifying the continued need for the declaration, and a post-emergency written report to the Minister explaining the declaration and how preconditions were met.

Additional changes allow municipalities to request provincial assistance without declaring an emergency and permit the voluntary development of joint emergency management programs between municipalities.

In response, the Emergency Management team will review the Region’s existing by-laws and plans to ensure alignment with the new Provincial Framework when it is released. Staff will report back with an outline of required updates to the Emergency Management Program By-law, an assessment of current emergency declarations against the new legislative requirements, and timelines for reporting to the public and the MEPR.

Table 1 - Summary of Changes

	Previous Framework	New Framework (EMMA 2025)
Duration	Indefinite until terminated	Must be justified to Council every 30 days
Reporting	Minimal formal requirements	Mandatory public, Council, and Ministerial reports
Plan Name	Emergency Plan	Emergency Management Plan

- An emergency is a situation, or impending situation, that has resulted in or is expected to result in serious harm or substantial damage.
- A declaration of emergency requires that the actions outlined in the emergency management plan are necessary to address the situation and that failing to take those actions would increase risk.
- A declaration of emergency authorizes the implementation of emergency actions, including emergency-related expenditures.
- An emergency should be terminated within 30 days unless there is a clear and documented justification to continue emergency actions.
- Council is required to provide regular public updates for the duration of the emergency.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Chris Sheach
Manager, Emergency Management