

Memorandum

PHD-C 3-2026

Subject: Niagara Emergency Management Program 2025 Annual Report

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Chris Sheach, Manager, Emergency Management

Recommendations

That this report be received for information

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council with an overview of the Emergency Management Program's activities in 2025.
- The program has successfully met all compliance requirements under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA).
- The Emergency Management Program continues to develop annual strategies and work plans with the oversight of an updated Emergency Management Program Committee.
- The Region's Emergency Control Group (RECG) has been updated.
- The Emergency Management Plan will be updated in 2026 and brought to Regional Council with recommendations for an update to the 2016 bylaw.

Financial Considerations

There are no additional financial implications. All programming has been delivered within the approved budget.

Analysis

In 2025, Niagara Region Emergency Management (NREM) strengthened Regional preparedness, rebuilt organizational capacity, and exceeded provincial compliance requirements despite early-year staffing challenges. With the full team in place from mid-June onward, significant progress was made in planning, training, public education, and interagency coordination.

NREM completed key updates to the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), refined governance structures, and updated the regional Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis (HIRA). The Regional Emergency Control Group (RECG) membership was streamlined to meet legislative requirements, reducing administrative complexity while enhancing readiness.

Training delivery increased substantially, with more than 134 staff trained and over 2,600 hours of instruction provided across emergency management and incident management courses. A major multi-agency hazardous materials field exercise and a leadership continuity tabletop exercise further advanced operational capability across the Region.

Operationally, NREM played a pivotal role during an unplanned influx of wildfire evacuees placed in Niagara by provincial vendors, coordinating health and social supports for more than 5,000 individuals over several months. This resulted in an estimated Regional service impact exceeding \$2 million, largely unreimbursed. The team also provided drone-based situational intelligence during the Humberstone landfill fire and introduced a new “Enhanced Monitoring” readiness level for emerging threats.

Special projects advanced significantly, including more than \$500,000 in grant-funded enhancements through the Legacy Gas Well Transfer Payment Program, supporting training, communications equipment, drones, and emergency response infrastructure. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program was refocused exclusively on public education due to low response demand and liability considerations.

Looking ahead to 2026, major strategic initiatives include a full modernization of the ERP, potential relocation and redesign of the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC), development of a unified data and situational awareness platform, expanded training programming, and strengthened collaboration with local area municipalities, many of which have expressed interest in shared-service emergency management models. Legislative changes resulting from Bill 25 will also increase provincial oversight and shape future planning priorities.

Overall, 2025 was a year of rebuilding and significant operational achievement. With renewed staffing, enhanced coordination, and strong legislative compliance, NREM is positioned to advance a comprehensive, modernized emergency management program in 2026 and beyond.

Other Pertinent Reports

None

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Prepared by:

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Public Health & Emergency Services

Recommended by:

Karen Lutz-Graul
Chief, Niagara Emergency Medical
Services
Public Health & Emergency Services

Submitted by:

Azim Kasmani
Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
Public Health & Emergency Services

This report was prepared in consultation with the Program Specialists and Project Coordinator and reviewed by EMS Chief Karen Lutz-Graul

Appendices

Appendix 1 Emergency Management Annual Report 2025