

Annex D of Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES PLAN

Amendment Procedure

This Plan will be reviewed annually. Updates and revisions must be approved by the Commissioner of Community Services, unless revisions are related to ordinary maintenance such as updating contact information, title changes or resource information.

It is the responsibility of each party named within this Plan to notify the Community Services Department Homelessness and Emergency Services Advisor of any administrative changes or revisions that may result in a change to this Plan or its appendices.

Please refer to Appendix A: Amendment Table.

Testing Procedure

An annual regional emergency simulation exercise shall be conducted in order to test the overall effectiveness of the Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan, in which Community Services Department staff will participate. Debriefing and lessons learned from such exercises may also inform recommendations to be incorporated into this Plan.

Plan Distribution

The Community Services Department Homelessness and Emergency Services Advisor will distribute a new version directly to all holders via email as updates are made. The Plan will also be available in the M: Drive under the HSCE folder. Each Plan holder will be responsible for maintaining the most current version.

Emergency Contact Information

Specific contact and resource information referred to in this document is contained in a series of confidential documents within the Community Services Department and Regional contact lists that are not intended for widespread distribution. The following contact lists will be emailed to those who require them:

- Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team confidential contact list
- Community Services Department Emergency Social Services community partners confidential contact list

Niagara Region Community Services Contact Information

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905-980-6000 ext. 3807

Manager, Homelessness Services
905-980-6000 ext. 3863

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1.0 Introduction

The Region's Community Services Department leads a collaborative effort together with internal and external stakeholders to provide emergency social services to people affected by an incident/emergency event in Niagara. The Emergency Social Services Plan serves as Annex D to the Niagara Region Emergency Management Plan and establishes a service delivery framework for the provision of emergency social services.

1.1 Scope

This Plan outlines the response the Region shall provide to meet the essential needs of people during and following an emergency until they may re-establish themselves. The role of the Community Services Department is to plan, lead, coordinate and manage the delivery of emergency social services to those affected by a small or large scale incident in Niagara. The delivery of emergency social services is provided through partnerships with First Responders, Local Area Municipalities, non-governmental organizations, other Regional departments and community partners.

1.1.1 Legislative Authority

The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, 1990 ('EMCPA') defines an "emergency" as a situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise. In Ontario, the EMCPA also establishes the legislative framework under which municipalities respond to emergencies by delivering emergency social services.

1.2 Emergency Social Services

Emergency social services consists of both standard and specialized services.

1.2.1 Standard Services

- Reception and Information
- Registration and Inquiry/Family Reunification
- Food
- Clothing
- Lodging
- Personal Services

1.2.2 Specialized Services

- First Aid
- Psychosocial Support
- Financial Assessment
- Culturally-Specific and Language Services
- Vulnerable People and Unattended Children
- Public Health (e.g. infection, disease prevention and control)
- Animal Care
- Recreation

1.3 Types of Emergency Social Services Response Settings

There are a number of ways to deliver emergency social services to those affected and in need. Each type of response may be considered in relation to the nature and scale of the incident, preparedness of households, vulnerability of those affected, anticipated level of displacement, and proximity to community resources (rural or urban environments). For those who are not displaced, emergency social services may be provided through a door-to-door response to support those sheltering in place. In the event of displacement, emergency social services may be provided through a curbside response or at a temporary location (e.g. evacuation centre). It is important to note that there may be incidents where all three responses are used at different points

of time or simultaneously (e.g. deliver curbside response as an evacuation centre is being prepared to open), depending on the population and as the incident evolves or unfolds (e.g. affecting a growing number of people over a period of time).

It is important to note that an evacuation centre may be activated to support with emergency social services delivery (e.g. reception and information services) in situations where off-site lodging is available to accommodate those displaced (also referred to as ‘reception centres’). In other instances, an evacuation centre may be activated and may provide on-site lodging to evacuees.

1.3.1 Shelter-in-Place

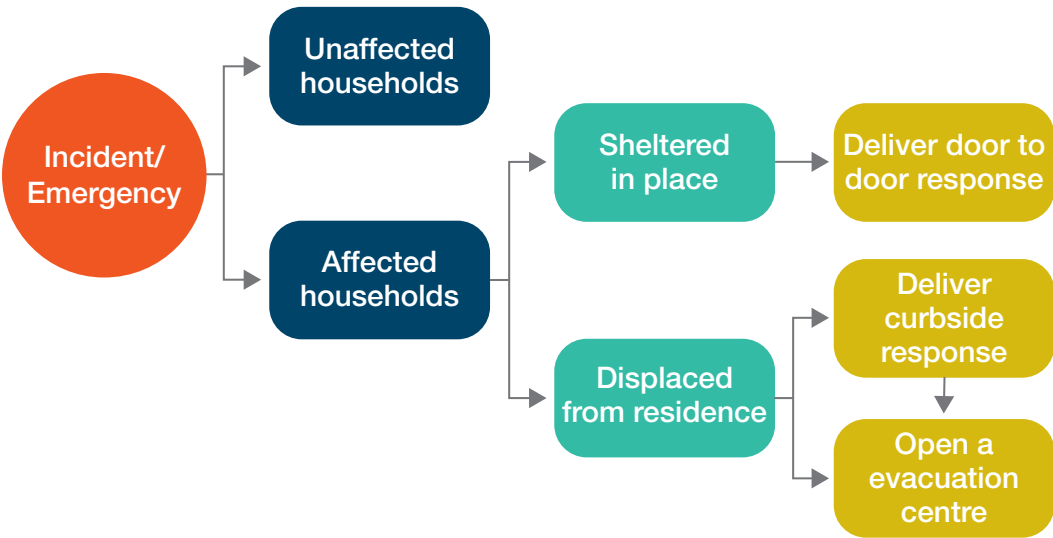
People who are able to or may be required to shelter-in-place within their homes may still need emergency social services to meet their essential needs.

1.3.1.1. Door-to-Door Response (Wellness Checks)

A door-to-door response through the use of wellness checks may support the identification of vulnerable populations and/or those who require additional supports to sustain their safety and well-being while remaining at home. The decision to conduct wellness checks will be made by the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member (with the primary Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member being the Commissioner of Community Services) in consultation with, but not limited to, the following stakeholders:

- Niagara Region Community Services Department Senior Leadership Team
- Niagara Regional Police Service
- Niagara Region Public Works Department
- Niagara Region Public Health Department
 - Niagara Region Emergency Management
- Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) - Home and Community Care
- Local Area Municipality(s) Community Emergency Management Coordinator(s)

Figure 1: Emergency Social Services Responses



Wellness checks may be performed by Regional field staff, First Responders, the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and/or other non-government organizations. Before conducting wellness checks, the geographic area to be covered must be safe, well defined, and information collected or disseminated must be reviewed by the appropriate department in collaboration with the Emergency Information Officer and affected Local Area Municipality(s).

The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member is responsible for acting as the point of contact, or designating a Community Services Department emergency social services team staff member as the point of contact, for the field team conducting wellness checks to monitor their progress and resource needs. If found eligible, households may receive standard emergency social services. This could include support to access food, income assistance, pet supplies, etc. Households may also require specialized services as required, such as home care provided through Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) Home and Community Care – Niagara Branch.

1.3.2 Displacement

Should people be displaced, services may be provided in a safe area outside of the incident site either at the curbside or at an evacuation centre.

1.3.2.1 Curbside Response

If the on-site Incident Command (Fire, Police or EMS) determines a safe area exists to support the emergency social services needs of those affected, a curbside response may be appropriate. A curbside response can occur on buses, on the sidewalk or street, at a nearby park, etc. Should the level of demand for service outgrow the designated safe area, or if there is not a safe and appropriate area for those affected to gather/congregate, then an evacuation centre may be established. A curbside response may also be used while an evacuation centre is being established.

1.3.2.2 Evacuation Centre

In the event of a large scale incident where people are unable to shelter-in-place and a curbside response is not appropriate or does not meet the demand for service, then the activation and opening of an evacuation centre(s) may occur. The Region in collaboration with Local Area Municipalities have designated a number of facilities to be used as evacuation centres (typically community centres, arenas, other municipally-owned venues, or high schools).

The evacuation centre may be used to receive people after an evacuation (e.g. of an apartment building or neighbourhood). As a base of operations for emergency social services delivery, the evacuation centre serves as a source of public information and a resource centre over the course of the emergency until evacuees can return home or find appropriate lodging. The provision of services within the centre is to meet the immediate needs of those displaced, and therefore not every form of emergency social service will necessarily be provided in each emergency event.

2.0 Plans and Procedures

To support the Region’s Emergency Social Services Plan, a number of additional plans and procedures exist that provide more detailed information on how Regional and community partners collaborate and respond within different service delivery settings to provide emergency social services. The Region’s Emergency Social Services Plan consists of two sub-plans and standard operating procedures.

2.1 Sub-Plan A: Curbside Response Protocol

The Curbside Response Protocol outlines the steps required to identify, coordinate and provide emergency social services to people in Niagara who are impacted by an incident. The Protocol can be activated for small scale (25 people or less impacted) and large scale (more than 25 people) incidents in Niagara. Broadly, there are three (3) steps involved in activating and providing curbside response.

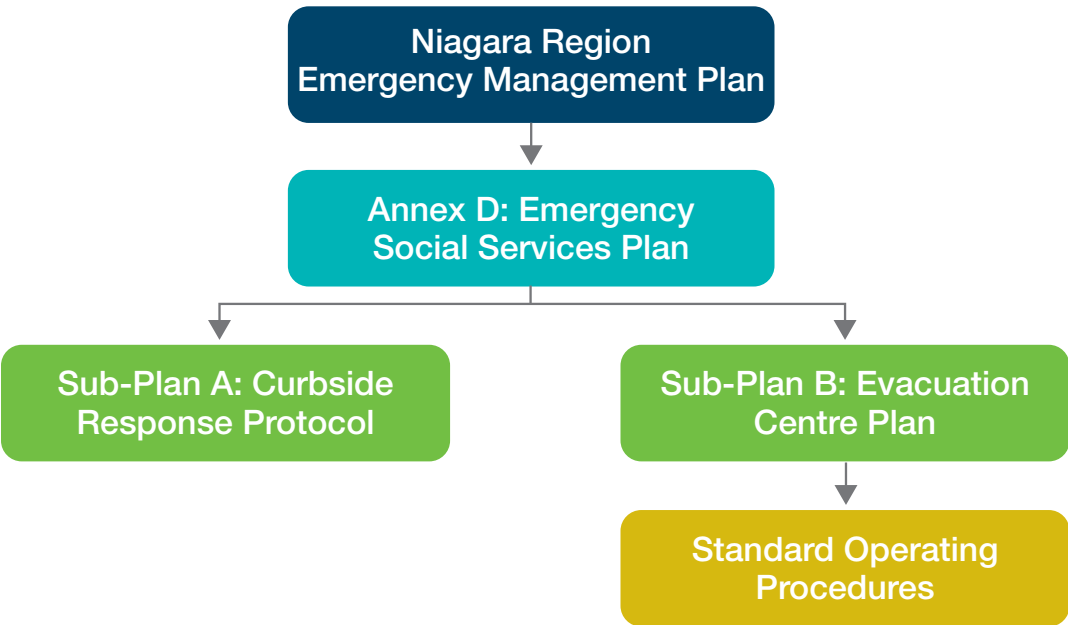
Step 1: The on-site Incident Command (Fire, Police or EMS) is responsible for identifying the number of people that require emergency social services and activating the Protocol by calling

the Canadian Red Cross. The Incident Command may request local area municipal public transit or Niagara Specialized Transit support to provide buses for temporary shelter from the elements or transportation to another site.

Step 2: The Canadian Red Cross will document the information provided by the on-site Incident Command and, if over 25 people have been impacted, will notify the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member (Community Services Department staff). The Canadian Red Cross will provide emergency social services through their Personal Disaster Assistance Program for up to 72 hours and can fulfill all standard emergency social services (lodging, food, clothing, transportation, etc.) along with referrals to other community partners and support agencies in small scale events.

Step 3: The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member will assess the response required based on the numbers of people impacted or anticipated to be impacted and arrange for additional or continued support, as needed.

Figure 2: Emergency Social Services Plan and Sub-Plans



2.2 Sub-Plan B: Evacuation Centre Plan

The Evacuation Centre Plan outlines the steps required to identify, coordinate and provide emergency social services to people in Niagara during and immediately following a large scale incident where 25 or more people are impacted.

Depending on the nature of the incident and the needs of evacuees, the emergency social services provided at these sites will vary across standard and specialized services (e.g. the Evacuation Centre may not provide on-site lodging and therefore may also be referred to as a ‘reception centre’).

An emergency evacuation centre is activated by the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member with authorization by the Local Area Municipality’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or the Regional CAO. The operation of an evacuation centre is led by the Community Services Department in partnership with multiple internal and external stakeholders. In large scale incidents, it is likely that both standard and specialized emergency social services are required to meet the needs of those affected.

2.3 Standard Operating Procedures

For each facility owned and operated by a Local Area Municipality, school board or other entity, that is designated as a preferred evacuation centre in the event of a large scale emergency, Standard Operating Procedures will be used to support Regional, Local Area Municipal and non-government organization staff to set up and operate emergency social services within that setting.

2.4 Business Continuity Plans

The activation of the Evacuation Centre Plan will require the reallocation of staff resources to ensure the continued delivery of critical functions and services during a significant disruption.

Figure 3: Evacuation Centre Reporting Structure



3.0 Activation and Notification

This section outlines the criteria, process, strategy and stakeholders involved in activation and notification of emergencies in Niagara. In partnership with stakeholders, the Community Services Department leads the coordination and response to provide emergency social services to people impacted by an incident.

3.1 Emergency Activation Levels

There are four Emergency Activation Levels for Niagara Region's Emergency Management designed to monitor, support and respond to an incident. The different levels identify triggers requiring diversion of resources from regular operations to response and recovery activities. The four activation levels are:

- 1. Routine monitoring** – No incident has occurred. The Emergency Operations Centre is not activated.
- 2. Enhanced monitoring** – An incident that requires monitoring and information coordination has occurred, with a possibility of escalation. This level does not require Emergency Operations Centre staffing to complete a response.
 - The Curbside Response Protocol (Sub-Plan A), may be activated for less than 25 people, triggering the need for enhanced monitoring in case of escalation.
- 3. Partial activation** – An emergency activation has occurred where an Emergency Operations Centre may be activated with several but not all Departments coordinating a response.
 - The Curbside Response Protocol (Sub-Plan A) may be activated as the first step in implementing the Evacuation Centre Plan (Sub-Plan B).

- 4. Full activation** – An incident has a major impact and requires significant coordination of information and activities. The Emergency Operations Centre is fully activated to provide centralized emergency management.

Depending on the Emergency Activation Level, Community Services Department staff may be notified and deployed to respond as appropriate. See Appendix B: Levels of Activation.

- The Evacuation Centre Plan (Sub-Plan B) may be activated in one or more Local Municipalities to provide emergency social services for more than 25 people impacted by an incident as part of a partial activation.

3.2 Incident Notification

During Enhanced Monitoring, Partial Activation or Full Activation, stakeholders may need to be notified and placed on stand-by, or activated. This may include but is not limited to the following:

Government

- Niagara Regional Departments
- Local Area Municipalities

Non-Governmental Organizations

- Canadian Red Cross
- The Salvation Army – St. Catharines
- St. John Ambulance (Niagara Region Branch; Niagara Falls Branch)
- Animal Protection and Care Agencies (Local Affiliate Humane Societies and SPCAs)
 - Fort Erie SPCA
 - Lincoln County Humane Society
 - Niagara SPCA and Humane Society
- Victim Services Niagara
- INCommunities
- Additional stakeholders where required

3.3 Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member

When an incident occurs where people must leave their home, a First Responder will call the Canadian Red Cross to activate the Curbside Response Protocol. If over 25 people are impacted due to one or more incidents, Canadian Red Cross staff will notify the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member (Commissioner of Community Services or alternate) to relay the information provided by the First Responder. The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member will:

- Respond to acknowledge notification and gather information
- Activate the appropriate response based on the number of people impacted by the incident, including whether the Evacuation Centre Plan requires activation to support over 25 people that are unable to return to their homes

The activation of the Curbside Response Protocol will trigger a need for Enhanced Monitoring or other levels of activation.

The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member may also be contacted related to incidents where residents are advised to shelter-in-place.

3.4 Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team

Niagara Region's Emergency Social Services Team is comprised of Community Services Department staff trained to support the provision of emergency social services during an incident requiring the activation of the Evacuation Centre Plan. If called upon, the Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team will:

- Acknowledge and respond to a notification as soon as possible
- Once contacted and provided with emergency information, deploy within two hours of notification to the assigned location of the Evacuation Centre

Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team staff are responsible to have access to appropriate equipment to support their response (e.g. personal go-bags, Regional mobile device – if necessary, etc.).

The Homelessness and Emergency Services Advisor will hold and maintain the confidential Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team staff list.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Section 4.0 outlines the general roles and responsibilities of emergency social services stakeholders. Specific details are expanded in the Evacuation Centre Plan and within the Standard Operating Procedures written for each of the evacuation centres.

4.1 Internal Stakeholders

4.1.1 Commissioner of Community Services

When the Commissioner of Community Services is notified of an Enhanced Monitoring, Partial or Full Activation Level he/she may contact the Community Services Department Senior Leadership Team to discuss the situation within the department. The Community Services Department Senior Leadership Team will:

- Assess potential impact on programs and services
- Be prepared to support the activation of the Evacuation Centre Plan

Community Services Department Senior Leadership Team includes:

- Commissioner of Community Services
- Director of Children's Services
- Director of Homelessness Services and Community Engagement
- Director of Seniors' Services
- Director of Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities
- Human Resources Consultant
- Program Financial Analysts
- Communications Consultant

4.1.2 Community Services Department

As the lead department for emergency social services, Community Services Department is responsible for planning, coordinating and managing the delivery of emergency social services response to small and large scale incidents. The Community Services Department will provide 24-hour support and coordination of emergency social services response through the Community Services Department Emergency Social Services Team. All Community Services Department staff with assigned roles in the delivery of emergency social services will maintain an appropriate level of emergency preparedness.

4.1.3 Other Regional Staff

In the event of a large scale incident that exceeds the capacity of the Community Services Department to respond, other Regional staff may be asked to support in the delivery of emergency social services including the operation of an evacuation centre. Staff will be oriented to assigned roles and responsibilities.

4.2 External Stakeholders

4.2.1 Non-Governmental Organizations

The Community Services Department works with non-government organizations to provide emergency social services in the event of a small or large scale incident. These services are delivered in accordance with written Memoranda of Understanding and service agreements. Personnel will be scheduled and supplied by non-government organizations to provide a 24 hour presence at an evacuation centre unless otherwise specified.

The non-government organizations may include but are not limited to the following:

- Canadian Red Cross
- Salvation Army – St. Catharines
- St. John Ambulance (Niagara Region branch; Niagara Falls branch)
- Animal Protection and Care Agencies (Local Affiliate Humane Societies and SPCAs)
 - Fort Erie SPCA
 - Lincoln County Humane Society
 - Niagara SPCA and Humane Society
- Victim Services Niagara
- INCommunities

Refer to Appendix C: Non-Government Organization Alliance of Ontario, for a network of non-governmental organizations across the province that are active participants in Ontario's Emergency Management landscape.

4.2.2 Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN)

The HNHB LHIN will support a health system emergency response when notified or requested by an affected health care facility. The HNHB LHIN will assist in locating available long-term care and hospital beds within Niagara Region or other neighbouring municipalities to provide alternate locations for the delivery of care for persons with complex medical care needs. HNHB LHIN Home and Community Care will ensure existing clients receiving care are provided with continued services at an evacuation centre, if appropriate. Niagara region falls within the Hamilton-Niagara-Haldimand LHIN-Brant boundary.

4.2.3 Pharmacists' Association of Niagara

The Pharmacists' Association of Niagara will notify members during a large-scale incident, facilitate requests for replacement medications, and may be available at an evacuation centre to support with gathering information related to medical histories.

4.3 First Responders

First Responders within Niagara region are comprised of:

- Niagara Region Emergency Medical Services
- Niagara Regional Police Service
- Fort Erie Fire Department
- Grimsby Fire Department
- Lincoln Fire Department
- Niagara Falls Fire Department
- Niagara-On-The-Lake Fire Department
- Pelham Fire Department
- Port Colborne Fire Department
- St. Catharines Fire Department
- Thorold Fire Department
- Wainfleet Fire Department
- Welland Fire Department
- West Lincoln Fire Department

The On-site Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that the Canadian Red Cross is notified if people from a residential dwelling are impacted by an incident. The Canadian Red Cross will contact the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member and provide incident information to activate the appropriate emergency social services response.

4.3.1 Niagara Regional Police Service

Niagara Regional Police Service will (depending on available resources) provide traffic control to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles and access/egress from a small or large evacuation area and support an evacuation centre when there is an escalated incident that requires a police presence. Niagara Regional Police Service will oversee the repatriation of large numbers of displaced people back into their homes once it is safe to do so. Police may also support with the security and safety at an evacuation centre.

4.3.2 Local Municipal Fire Departments

Local Municipal Fire Departments are responsible for protecting the lives, property and environment of Niagara residents impacted by fire, explosion, hazardous materials incidents or other fire-related incidents.

4.3.3 Niagara Region Emergency Medical Services

Niagara Region Emergency Medical Services' (EMS) primary role is to triage and treat people in need of medical care, including transportation to hospital. EMS can also organize and transport people from long term care homes to more secure shelter, if required. If resources are available, EMS may also support with the medical needs of those presenting at an evacuation centre.

Appendix A: Amendment Table

Number	Date	Version	Amended by	Commissioner approval	Sections updated	Nature of the update
1	10/02/2005	0.0	Scott Laughher		All	
	10/29/2009	0.1	Scott Laughher		All	
	09/15/2011	0.2	Scott Laughher		All	
	12/07/2015	0.3	Scott Laughher		All	
2	02/01/2020	0.0	Michelle Johnston		All	Comprehensive review

Appendix B: Levels of Activation

Level	Description	Examples of Events/ Triggers	Plan/ Procedure Activation	Minimum Staffing
Routine Monitoring	No event or incident has occurred. Local Area Municipal and Regional Emergency Operations Centre are not activated.	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Management
Enhanced Monitoring	<p>An event that requires monitoring and information coordination.</p> <p>There is a possibility of escalation.</p> <p>This level does not require Emergency Operations Centre staffing to complete response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned or unplanned events/incidents in Niagara and/or in other jurisdictions with an associated risk that could threaten public safety, public health, the environment, property, critical infrastructure and economic stability Severe weather watches and warnings Displacement of less than 25 people due to an isolated incident or cumulative number of incidents Sheltering-in-place order Loss of utilities (electricity, water, gas) to an area of a Local Area Municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curbside Response Protocol Put non-government organizations and other departments on standby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Management Community Services Communications Team

Level	Description	Examples of Events/ Triggers	Plan/ Procedure Activation	Minimum Staffing
Partial Activation	An emergency declaration can be made by a Local Municipality. An Emergency Operations Centre may be activated to support response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation requiring the lodging of 25+ individuals • Acting as a host community for evacuees from surrounding jurisdictions • Request to open an evacuation centre • Evacuation of any resident home areas within a long-term care home with 1-2 days of displacement • Prolonged loss of utilities (gas, water, electricity) for 1-2 days within one or more Local Area Municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curbside Response Protocol • Evacuation Centre Plan • Standard Operating Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Operations Centre Director • Emergency Information Officer • Community Services • Emergency Management • Other positions, as required
Full Activation	The event has a major impact and requires significant coordination of information and activities that requires Emergency Operations Centre activation to provide centralized emergency management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for a large scale evacuation of people within one or more Local Area Municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation Centre Plan • Standard Operating Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Emergency Operations Centre positions are fully staffed • Community Services • Other positions, as required

Appendix C: Non-Government Organization Alliance of Ontario

The Non-Government Organization Alliance of Ontario is a network of non-governmental organizations that are active participants in Ontario's Emergency Management landscape.

The purpose of the Non-Government Organization Alliance of Ontario is to support municipal and provincial emergency planning and preparedness, response and recovery efforts through coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and communication.

NGO Alliance of Ontario Handbook:
oaem.ca/sub-blogs/ngo-alliance-of-ontario/ngo-alliance-of-ontario-handbook

Annex D of Niagara Region
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February 2020