

Emergency Social Services Plan

# SUB-PLAN B: EVACUATION CENTRE

# Amendment and Distribution 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. The Community Services Department, Homelessness and Emergency Services Advisor will prepare and distribute amendments to the Evacuation Centre Plan as required.

Please refer to Appendix A: Amendment Table.

## Confidential Information

Information related to preferred sites/buildings to be used for the purposes of an evacuation centre, and information related to the operating of these sites are confidential and not intended for widespread distribution. The following documents will be emailed to those who require them:

- Community Services emergency social services evacuation centre site list
- Standard Operating Procedures for all preferred sites

## Niagara Region Community Services Contact Information

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### Manager, Homelessness Services

905-980-6000 ext. 3863

### Homelessness and Emergency Services Advisor

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# 1.0 Introduction

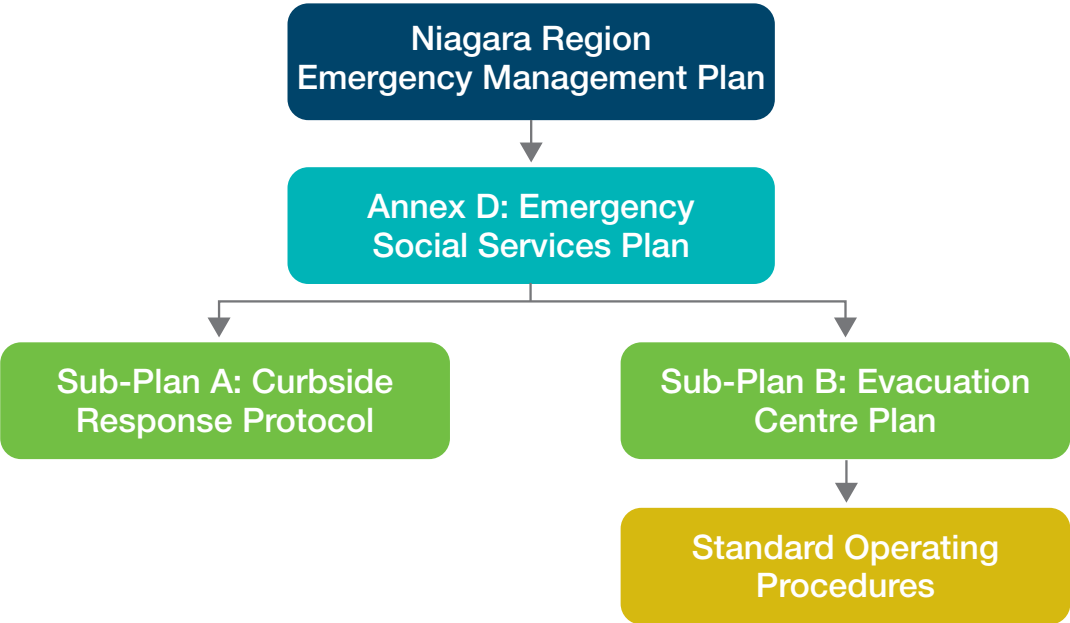
To support the Region’s Emergency Social Services Plan, a number of additional plans and procedures exist that provide more detailed information on how Regional and community partners collaborate and respond within different service delivery settings to provide emergency social services. The Region’s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

The Evacuation Centre Plan outlines the steps required to identify, coordinate and provide emergency social services to people in Niagara who are impacted by an incident. The Plan can be activated for large scale (more than 25 people) incidents in Niagara.

Local Municipalities have identified preferred facilities in each of their municipalities that can be used as an evacuation centre. Additional municipally-owned facilities and schools have been surveyed through the Canadian Red Cross should the preferred sites not be operational.

**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’).**

Figure 1: Emergency Social Services Plan and Sub-Plans



## 2.0 Evacuation Centre Activation

An evacuation centre is intended to provide temporary lodging and other emergency social services to more than 25 people in Niagara Region impacted by an incident.

Within Local Area Municipalities Emergency Operations Centres, the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member in consultation with or as requested by the Local Area Municipality's Chief Administrative Officer, will activate the Evacuation Centre Plan.

When a Regional Emergency Operations Centre has been activated, the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member in consultation with or as requested by the Regional Chief Administrative Officer, will activate the Evacuation Centre Plan.

# 3.0 Emergency Social Services at an Evacuation Centre

## 3.1 Types of Services

Emergency social services consists of both standard and specialized services.

### 3.1.1 Standard Services

- Reception and information
- Registration and inquiry/family reunification
- Food
- Clothing
- Lodging
- Personal services

### 3.1.2 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, and pharmaceutical support)
- Animal care
- Recreation

## 3.2 Service Restrictions

Emergency social services assistance may be restricted to individuals where:

- Incidents of verbal abuse or physical violence occur, impacting people accessing emergency social services and staff or volunteers providing emergency social services
- A serious incident occurs arising from behaviours that cause safety concerns
- On demobilizing, a person refuses to leave an evacuation centre

The Site Manager and Evacuation Centre Liaison may be required to ban a person from the facility. The person(s) must be informed immediately of the reason for their ban and a letter may be issued to the person(s) on-site or forwarded to a temporary address. Assistance may be required from:

- On-site security
- Niagara Region Mental Health
- Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS)

## 3.3 Suspension of Services

Once an emergency is declared terminated or the Chief Administrative Officer (Municipal or Regional) and the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member has determined an evacuation centre is no longer required, demobilization activities may begin. Eligibility for further assistance will be determined by the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member and the Canadian Red Cross.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities: General

The Evacuation Centre Plan identifies stakeholders that are responsible for effectively activating, coordinating, managing and providing standard and specialized services within an evacuation centre. The specific nature and size of the incident will determine the functions and staffing required. The Community Services Department emergency social services team is comprised of trained staff to support the delivery of emergency social services. When numbers of people seeking emergency social services are minimal and only one evacuation centre is in operation some staff leads may take on two roles such as the Evacuation Centre Liaison can act as the Specialized Services Lead. If the number of people seeking emergency social services increases all Community Services emergency social services roles may be implemented.

### 4.1 Transfer of Information between Staff/Volunteers

At the end of each shift, all staff must provide status update information to their replacements and any personnel coming on shift at the same time. This is also a time when tasks may need to be assigned to ensure a smooth transition into the work flow. Updates will include:

- The current operational status
- Any issues/concerns both outstanding and resolved
- Anticipated priorities and actions to be implemented
- Operational health and safety information

### 4.2 Documentation Management

All internal/external stakeholders who have a role in supporting the operation of an evacuation centre must:

- Document all actions taken using the logbook provided (e.g. notes to include details, dates and times)
- Participate in briefings as appropriate
- Follow all written procedures, protocols and plans, as applicable
- Refrain from speaking to the media, instead directing all media inquiries to the appropriate Municipal or Regional Emergency Information Officer



## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities: Regional Support to the Evacuation Centre

The support staff in this section are not present at an evacuation centre.

### 5.1 Community Services: Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member

Evacuation centre(s) are supported by the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member, who assists in the activation and coordination of resources for the effective delivery of emergency social services. Where Community Services does not have specific resources to support service delivery in an evacuation centre, other Regional departments will be called upon to assist.

- Primary Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member – Commissioner, Community Services
- First Alternate Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member – Director, Homelessness Services and Community Engagement
- Second Alternate Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member – Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities

The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member is the communication conduit between the Municipal or Regional Emergency Operations Centre and the Evacuation Centre Liaison. The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member provides decision-making support and evacuation centre status updates, including reports from the Evacuation Centre Liaison back to the Emergency Operations Centre. In addition, the Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member is responsible to:

- Notify and request all non-government Organizations and any Regional departments who support the operations of an evacuation centre
- Contact, deploy and schedule Community Services staff to operate and support evacuation centre operations, leveraging **Human Resources staff** support as required
- Liaise with **Public Health Department** staff (via Emergency Operations Centre Director) to support the operations of evacuation centre(s) by providing expertise on health-related areas such as screening for communicable disease control, environmental hazards, food safety and handling, and pharmaceutical support. Individuals and families will be guided to community health resources as necessary. Public Health staff may be required to provide 24-hour presence at an evacuation centre.
- Liaise with **Communications staff** (via Emergency Operations Centre Director) to advise the public of the locations and operations of evacuation centre(s) during an incident and immediately after, to ensure the public has current and accurate information
- Order and/or arrange for delivery of supplies, materials and equipment to support evacuation centre(s) operations
- Receive and resolve issues that cannot be resolved at an evacuation centre

# 6.0 Roles and Responsibilities: Evacuation Centre

## 6.1 Evacuation Centre Reporting Structure

The delivery of emergency social services in an evacuation centre is achieved by Community Services staff working in partnership with Local Municipality staff, Niagara Regional staff, the Canadian Red Cross and other non-government organizations. Community Services lead in the evacuation centre activation and operations is the Evacuation Centre Liaison (Community Services staff) who works closely with the Site Manager (Canadian Red Cross) to make decisions. Together, they will be supported through four section leads who oversee a number of services and resources.

- Primary Evacuation Centre Liaison – Manager, Homelessness Services
- First Alternate Evacuation Centre Liaison – Advisor, Homelessness and Emergency Services
- Second Alternate Evacuation Centre Liaison – Manager, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities

The Evacuation Centre Reporting Structure in Figure 2 represents all possible roles and services that may be activated at each designated site. While each service may be provided by two staff or volunteers, not all services may be required at activation. Services can be scaled up or down as needed.

### 6.1.1 Reporting Relationships

The reporting structure boxes in grey are evacuation centre supports that are not on site but are accessed throughout evacuation centre activation, operations and decommissioning as required.

- The Emergency Social Services Emergency Operations Centre Member will be working from the Regional or Municipal Emergency Operations Centre (or other designated emergency response control space) to provide information and where necessary direction and authorization
- The Evacuation Centre Liaison provides a communication link between the Emergency Operations Centre and the evacuation centre, and works with the Site Manager to oversee operation of the evacuation centre
- The Leads for Standard Services, Specialized Services and Logistics/Administration will report to the Site Manager and Evacuation Centre Liaison
- Responding Regional staff will report to their assigned evacuation centre leads
- Responding Local Municipality staff and non-government organizations will report to their assigned evacuation centre leads while also maintaining their normal reporting to their own organizations

**Figure 2: Evacuation Centre Reporting Structure**



# 6.2 Evacuation Centre Command

Figure 3: Evacuation Centre Command



The Site Manager and the Evacuation Centre Liaison are together responsible for providing leadership, direction and coordination during set-up, operations and the demobilization of an evacuation centre. The Standard Services Lead, Specialized Services Lead and Logistics Lead will report to the Site Manager and Evacuation Centre Liaison.

Site Manager staff will be provided on a 24-hour basis at the evacuation centre.

In situations involving on-site lodging, an Evacuation Centre Liaison will be provided on a 24-hour basis. In situations where off-site, commercial lodging is used (e.g. Reception Centre), an Evacuation Centre Liaison may or may not be provided on a 24-hour basis. Whenever possible each Evacuation Centre Liaison will be scheduled for no more than eight hours per shift with an overlap of 30 minutes to transfer information to the Evacuation Centre Liaison on the next shift.

The Site Manager and Evacuation Centre Liaison will provide direction and/or authorization for actions taken to secure appropriate care and accommodations for any vulnerable adults, older adults, children or unattended children identified through the registration process.

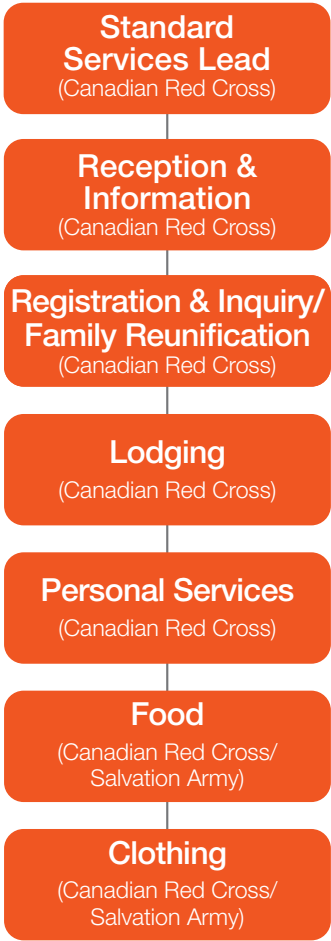
The Evacuation Centre Liaison will work with Niagara Region’s Human Resources to ensure an appropriate level of support is provided to Community Services staff at the evacuation centre related to critical incident stress management.

This may include designating a quiet, separate space for staff breaks, ensuring the Employee Assistance Program phone number is posted, watching for staff fatigue and stress, arranging for on-site psychosocial support if necessary, etc.

# 6.3 Standard Services

Standard Services are available to support the essential needs of people impacted by an incident.

Figure 4: Standard Services



### **6.3.1 Standard Services Lead: Canadian Red Cross**

The Standard Services Lead will oversee, initiate and collaborate with non-government organization personnel and facility staff providing Standard Services to impacted people. Standard Services will be provided on a 24-hours basis at the evacuation centre unless otherwise specified e.g., clothing services may not be required at all times. Based on the size of the evacuation centre, the Canadian Red Cross may have multiple Leads, designating a Lead for each type of Standard Service.

### **6.3.2 Reception and Information: Canadian Red Cross**

Reception and information services includes providing a place where people who have been impacted by an incident can receive information and services. This service also may include referring evacuees to other organizations or programs that can assist them, establishing a call centre or conducting outreach to provide information.

### **6.3.3 Registration and Inquiry/ Family Reunification: Canadian Red Cross**

If people with complex care or acute medical needs arrive for reception and information or, for registration and inquiry/family reunification, arrangements will be made for transportation to the nearest hospital.

Registration and inquiry is the first point of contact for impacted people that enter an evacuation centre seeking emergency social services. Through the registration process important information is gathered to assist in identifying the support required during and after the incident, and in identifying vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities and unattended children.

Where services within the evacuation centre cannot meet peoples' needs external service providers may be contacted to assist. The registration process is also the time when information will be provided regarding additional services and community supports available.

Family reunification services are dependent on people registering at an evacuation centre. This service assists in reuniting families and answering inquiries regarding the condition and whereabouts of missing persons.

### **6.3.4 Lodging: Canadian Red Cross**

Lodging services consists of off-site (commercial) and/or on-site lodging. On-site lodging includes the provision of sleeping cots and blankets. Through the registration process people who require overnight lodging will be assigned an appropriate sleep area.

Where there is an identified health and/or safety risk to individuals who require additional support, alternate accommodations may be arranged. Some examples may include: individuals experiencing addiction or engaging in substance use; individuals with serious mental illness; individuals who require consumable medical supplies such as incontinence supplies, formula, bandages, ostomy supplies, etc.; those who use mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, etc.; those who require a service animal; and/or, individuals with attendants or caregivers.

The Standard Services Lead will consult with the Site Manager and Evacuation Centre Liaison and appropriate Leads to determine if alternate accommodations such as hotel/motel or special care facilities would be more appropriate.

### **6.3.5 Personal Services: Canadian Red Cross**

Personal services consists of the provision of basic hygiene kits with infant supplies such as diapers and other essential and/or special supplies such as incontinence supplies for adults, as needed. Where there is an identified need for assistance accessing prescriptions and medical aids such as a medication refill, replacement or repair of eyeglasses, dentures and hearing aids, financial support may be provided to access such items when no other financial support is available.

Access to transportation may be required for people who have mobility issues or do not own a vehicle, to obtain more appropriate shelter, pickup medication, access the nearest walk-in clinic, etc.

Support to assist people coming into or leaving an evacuation centre will include information about how and where to access transportation as well as provide transit passes or taxi vouchers if required.

### **6.3.6 Food: Canadian Red Cross/Salvation Army – St. Catharines**

Meals will be prepared (in advance and/or on-site) by the Salvation Army at the evacuation centre for people impacted by the incident, staff and volunteers. Public Health Inspectors will ensure all food preparation and serving at an evacuation centre is in compliance with the relevant requirements and food handling legislation. Special dietary requirements for infants, people with diabetes, older adults, pregnant and nursing mothers and religious and cultural groups will be accommodated where possible. Nutritional snacks will be made available for people that have missed main meal times and young children who require snacks throughout their day.

The Canadian Red Cross will work with the Salvation Army in the event that a surge capacity for food is anticipated/needed. The Canadian Red Cross may also arrange for an external vendor or caterer to deliver meals.

### **6.3.7 Clothing: Canadian Red Cross/Salvation Army – St. Catharines**

Adequate clothing and footwear will be provided to meet immediate needs of people impacted by an incident to include at least one change of seasonal clothing per person and footwear as needed. Infants and young children may require two changes of seasonal clothing.

Should the requirements for emergency clothing exceed the Salvation Army's capacity to provide; the Canadian Red Cross will contact existing suppliers to assist, as needed.



# 6.4 Specialized Services

Specialized Services are additional supports that may be required to assist people that have more complex needs.

Figure 5: Specialized Services



## 6.4.1 Specialized Services Lead: Niagara Region Community Services

The Specialized Services Lead will oversee, initiate and collaborate with non-government organization personnel and facility staff providing specialized services to impacted people. Specialized Services will be provided on a 24-hour basis at the evacuation centre unless otherwise specified, such as recreation services may only be required during the day and early evening and/or culturally-specific and language services are required on an as needed basis.

## 6.4.2 First Aid: St. John Ambulance

Trained personnel will provide First Aid, CPR and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) coverage at first aid stations within an evacuation centre. As well, St. John Ambulance personnel will provide information to Niagara Region Emergency Medical Services when necessary for the care and transportation of persons who require medical treatment at a hospital.

Any narcotic medications or medications that require refrigeration will be stored in a locked box and managed by the Specialized Services Lead.

## 6.4.3 Public Health: Niagara Region Health Department

Public Health Department staff may be required to screen for communicable diseases, inspect food premises, provide pharmaceutical support, and monitor for health hazards, potable water and general sanitation at the evacuation centre. When communicable disease cases are identified at the evacuation centre, Public Health staff will provide education and recommendations for implementation of infection control measures.

#### **6.4.4 Psychosocial Support: Niagara Region Mental Health**

Niagara Region Mental Health will lead the delivery of mental health counselling and support for anyone within an evacuation centre, providing services in partnership with Victim Services Niagara. Where the needs of an individual cannot be safely met within the evacuation centre Niagara Region Mental Health staff and Victim Services Niagara staff will work together to determine the best option(s) for the individual and implement a plan of action.

#### **6.4.5 Financial Assessment: Niagara Region Community Services**

Through the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division of Community Services, evacuees may be assessed to determine their eligibility for financial assistance. Households who are not recipients of Ontario Works benefits may be eligible for alternate benefits such as emergency and discretionary benefits to support their transition from the evacuation centre back into the community.

#### **6.4.6 Culturally-Specific and Language Services: Agencies**

Language interpretation services may be accessed over the phone using the interpreter telephone line through Corporate Services, in addition to in-person American Sign Language interpreters. On-site interpretation services provided by local interpreters may be accessed through INCommunities.

#### **6.4.7 Animal Care: Animal Protection Agencies**

Depending on the evacuation centre facilities, pets may or may not be accommodated within the centre. To safeguard the health and safety of both people and pets during an incident, pets may only be boarded in rooms which have separate ventilation systems and/or have a separate exit outside. Animal protection and care agencies (e.g. Fort Erie SPCA, Lincoln County Humane Society, Niagara SPCA and Humane Society and/or the OSPCA - Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) may be called upon for assistance in placing and caring for pets.

Only service animals as described by O. Reg. 191/11-Integrated Accessibility Standards are allowed to accompany their owner in an evacuation centre and will be the responsibility of the owner. Priority will be given to find appropriate lodging and animal care for individuals with service animals.

#### **6.4.8 Vulnerable People and Unattended Children: Niagara Region Community Services**

In the event that vulnerable people with special needs or an unattended child is identified at registration or discovered in the course of evacuation centre operations the Specialized Services Lead will maintain temporary responsibility until appropriate caregivers are identified (hospital transfer, Children's Aid Society, etc.). Supervision, support and the provision of appropriate care will be established in a secure, supervised area within the evacuation centre.



6.4.9 Recreation: Niagara Region Community Services/Local Municipal Facility Staff

Recreational activities may be provided to encourage lodgers to maintain their well-being and physical fitness, where possible. When an evacuation centre is in operation for an extended period of time, age-appropriate recreational activities may be organized and supervised by facility Recreation staff or Community Services staff (e.g. Children’s Services or Seniors Community Programs).

6.5 Planning

6.5.1. Planning Lead: Niagara Region Community Services

The Planning Lead responsibilities include collecting, analyzing and transferring of information, making recommendations for action, tracking resources, maintaining all documentation, supporting the various evacuation centre leads, and updating status boards with relevant information.

Figure 6: Planning



6.6 Logistics/Administration

Logistics/Administration is led by a Facility Manager or Supervisor with in-depth knowledge of the facility and its capacity to serve as an evacuation centre. The aim of the Logistics/Administration function is to keep the facility running at its optimum to support evacuees.

Figure 7: Logistics



### **6.6.1 Logistics/Administration Lead: Municipal/Regional Facility Manager**

The Logistics/Administration Lead will be responsible for making the facility available for operations as an evacuation centre and providing facility staff, ongoing maintenance and housekeeping activities for the duration of an evacuation centre's activation. Additionally, the Lead is responsible for managing the facility during evacuation centre operations to ensure office functions are running to track facility invoices, employee and contractor sign-in, providing program information, and ensuring administrative management of the facility is running smoothly.

Logistics/Administration will be provided on a 24-hour basis at the evacuation centre unless otherwise specified (e.g. Information Technology assistance may only be required on an as needed basis).

### **6.6.2 Facilities Maintenance: Local Municipal Staff/ School Board Staff**

The facilities staff will ensure the facility is clean, in good repair, safe to enter and exit and that all hygiene supplies (paper towels, soap, and hand sanitizers) are replenished regularly during evacuation centre operations. All present at the evacuation centre will work with facility staff to maintain a safe environment during evacuation centre operations.

### **6.6.3 Security: Municipal/ Regional Staff**

Staff may provide security services, working together with the Site Manager, Evacuation Centre Liaison and facility staff to maintain a level of personal and centre security. Should fire safety systems fail, personnel will be instructed to conduct "fire watches" until fire safety systems are operational.

### **6.6.4 Transportation: Municipal/Regional Staff**

Staff will arrange Niagara Specialized Transit, Local Area Municipal public transit, taxis or buses for evacuees who may require transportation.

### **6.6.5 Information Technology (IT): Local Municipal IT/ Regional IT**

The Logistics/Administration Lead will contact Municipal IT or Regional IT to coordinate the maintenance or service of IT equipment and assist staff in accessing the internet and other communications as needed.

# Appendix A: Amendment Table

Number	Date	Version	Amended by	Community Services Senior Leadership Team Approval	Sections updated	Nature of the update
1	02/01/2020	1.0	Michelle Johnston		All	New Document

Emergency Social Services Plan

# SUB-PLAN B: EVACUATION CENTRE

Niagara  Region

February 2020