

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS EMERGENCY PLAN



Enacted under By-law No. 2017-84, as amended

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1.0 Introduction

This Emergency Management Plan will guide the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls in managing an appropriate response to any emergency situation either occurring within or impacting within regional boundaries.

1.1 Legal Authority

In the Province of Ontario, municipalities are mandated and empowered to prepare for, respond to, and recover from, emergency situations as follows:

Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (R.S.O. 1990)

This legislation requires that all municipalities within the Province of Ontario have both an Emergency Management Program and an Emergency Plan (Sections 2.1 and 3.1 respectively). Both the Program and the Plan must be empowered by municipal by-law.

Ontario Regulation 380/04

This regulation sets in place the standards for municipal emergency management programs and details the essential program components. Those essential components include the following:

- *Emergency Management Program Coordinator*
- *Emergency Management Program Committee*
- *Municipal Emergency Control Group*
- *Emergency Operations Centre*
- *Emergency Information Officer*
- *Emergency Response Plan*

Municipal By-Law

Through ratification of By-law #2017-84, as amended, the Council of the City of Niagara Falls has empowered an Emergency Management Program, this Emergency Management Plan and the authority to enter into Emergency Mutual Assistance Agreements under the authority of the above legislation.

Emergency Management Program Coordinator

The responsibility for coordination of the City of Niagara Falls Emergency Management Program is assigned to the staff of the Fire Department. The Fire Chief serves as the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) with the Deputy Chiefs (2) serving as Alternate CEMCs.

Emergency Management Program Committee

The City of Niagara Falls Emergency Management Program Committee has been established and approved by City Council.

1.2 *Emergency Response Plan*

This Emergency Management Plan meets the expectations of the emergency response plan requirement under provincial mandate. This Plan will define:

- *An emergency within the municipal context,*
- *The emergency incident management structure*
- *The emergency operations structure*
- *The procedure for declaring an emergency to exist, and*
- *The emergency assistance structures that may be employed*

This Plan has been designed to be flexible and adaptable to any emergency or crisis situation. However, in order for it to be operationally sound, identified municipal departments, emergency services and other key stakeholder agencies must:

- *maintain familiarity with the Plan contents*
- *remain committed to participation in annual mandated training and exercises*
- *ensure any required supporting or departmental plans are in place as required*
- *contribute to the annual Plan review to ensure its contents remain current*

This Plan is supported by operational emergency plans, procedures, or protocols as required by assisting departments, emergency services, and associated agencies.

Definition of Emergency

The Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act defines 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, a disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise.”

Therefore, any situation occurring within or impacting within the City of Niagara Falls that meets the above definition may precipitate the activation of this Plan.

Emergency Plan Alignment

Because the Niagara Region is an upper tier municipality, it provides region wide services to the twelve local area municipalities. Therefore, it is essential that the Regional Emergency Plan

align with this Emergency Plan, specifically as it relates to the provision of regional services during emergency situations.

To this extent it is a requirement of the *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act* that the emergency plans of a lower tier (local area municipality) conform to the emergency plan of the upper tier municipality and are to have no effect to the extent of any inconsistency (Section 5).

Emergency Plan Activation

This Plan is considered activated at any time Emergency Operations Centre personnel are instructed to assemble and conduct operations under the Incident Management System.

Emergency Plan Solidarity

Any time this Plan is activated, all decisions made and actions taken by Emergency Operations Centre personnel from that point forward are made under the authority of the EOC Director as empowered by provincial legislation.

All contribute to the decision making process during emergency operations within their defined role. However, once any decision is made by the EOC Director under the Incident Management System, all agree to collectively support that decision under public scrutiny from that point forward.

1.3 Emergency Planning Assumptions

This Plan has been developed based on the following assumptions:

Normal Emergency Operations

In the course of normal business operations, various municipal departments may be required to respond to an impending threat and/or hazardous situation. A normal emergency event is one that can be effectively managed and mitigated by a department operating independently or in coordination with other departments. When these events occur, normal emergency operations are conducted and do not require activation of this Plan.

Rapid Escalation Emergencies

An emergency event within the context of this Plan may occur with little or no warning and escalate in short order. When these events occur, immediate management of the event rests with the emergency services or municipal departments with jurisdiction over the event where it occurs. Control of these events and their impact on the community at large remains with the site response personnel until such a time that a local municipal emergency plan is activated.

Extraordinary Emergency Measures

An emergency event that overwhelms or threatens to overwhelm municipal resources (response capacity) and that has a significant impact on the community at large will precipitate the activation of this Plan. When these events occur, the overarching aim of this Plan is to provide the foundation for effective and appropriate municipal control of extraordinary actions and measures that must be taken to mitigate the emergency.

2.0 Emergency Operations

Emergencies require a controlled and coordinated response effort by multiple agencies, under the direction of appropriate officials. For these emergency operations to be successful, clear lines of control, communication and reporting must be established and maintained between the various locations and stakeholder groups. Emergency operations may be conducted at any of the following locations.

2.1 Emergency Operations Centre

An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) serves as the communications hub for the control, facilitation and administration of any emergency response from multiple agencies. Emergency Operations Centre(s) can exist at three levels of government in the Province of Ontario applicable to the City of Niagara Falls as follows:

- *Municipal Emergency Operations Centre(s)*
- *Regional Emergency Operations Centre(s)*
- *Provincial Emergency Operations Centre*

Municipal Emergency Operations Centre

The Municipal Emergency Operations Centre is where the local response to any emergency event is managed within, or impacting within, local boundaries.

Recognizing that an emergency can occur at any location, the City of Niagara Falls has designated and equipped both a Primary and Alternate location at two geographically distanced facilities.

Regional Emergency Operations Centre

The Regional Emergency Operations Centre is where the regional response to any emergency event is managed occurring within, or impacting within, regional boundaries.

Recognizing that an emergency can occur at any location, Niagara Region has designated and equipped both a Primary and Alternate location at two geographically distanced facilities.

Provincial Emergency Operations Centre

This is the location where Provincial Government staff and Provincial Ministry Actions Groups (MAG) coordinate the Provincial response and support to any localized emergency occurring within, or impacting, the Province of Ontario.

The Provincial Emergency Operations Centre is located in Toronto and maintained by Emergency Management Ontario.

2.2 Emergency Site Operations

During any emergency situation where the hazard location is specific and identifiable, emergency responders will congregate where the emergency exists and work together to accomplish the following:

- *Protect the life, health and safety of emergency response personnel*
- *Protect the life, health and safety of the public*
- *Mitigate/remove the danger/hazard presented by the emergency*
- *Where possible minimize damage to personal property*
- *Restore the site to its pre-emergency condition*

These emergency site operations are controlled and coordinated to make the most efficient use of personnel and equipment and may be operated with the support of an Emergency Operations Centre.

2.3 Emergency Support Operations

During any emergency situation, various emergency support operations may be required based on the hazard and its impact on the community. These support operations may be located within the emergency site, adjacent to the emergency site, or at other locations within the community and may include:

- *Evacuation /Reception Centre(s)*
- *Assisting Departmental Operations Centres (DOCs)*
- *Cooperating Agency Emergency Operations Centres*
- *Equipment Staging Areas and other support locations as required*

3.0 Incident Management System

Upon assembly, the City of Niagara Falls Emergency Operations Centre personnel will assume and perform functional roles under the Incident Management System model of operations.

Best Practices

The Incident Management System is the best practices model of emergency operations. It is comprised of a standardized model that is flexible, scalable and adaptable to any situation. The model includes clearly defined roles and accountabilities to manage the use of personnel, facilities, equipment, and any other required resources during any emergency.

The IMS model of operations is supported by Niagara Region working in cooperation with the twelve Local Area Municipalities. It is also the model of operations for emergency management agencies of the Provincial Government and its member Ministries.

3.1 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Management Team

The EOC Management Team is responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination, public information and media relations, agency liaison, and risk management procedures through the joint efforts of local government agencies and private organizations. The Incident Management Team is composed of the following positions:

- *EOC Director*
- *Deputy Director*
- *Liaison Officer*
- *Information Officer*
- *Risk Management Officer*
- *Operations Section Chief*
- *Planning Section Chief*
- *Logistics Section Chief*
- *Finance/ Admin Section Chief*

EOC Director

The EOC Director has overall authority and responsibility for the activities of the EOC, and for ensuring organizational effectiveness. The EOC Director is also responsible for direct supervision of the EOC Management Team and may choose to appoint a Deputy Director to act on his/her behalf when required. The EOC Director, in conjunction with the EOC Management Team, sets out priorities and objectives for each operational period and ensures they are carried

out. Additional responsibilities of the EOC Director include liaising with the Policy Group and approving emergency information releases.

Risk Management

Risk Management is responsible for monitoring, assessing and recommending modifications to safety conditions and halting unsafe operations in the EOC. Risk Management also provides legal support and identifies liability and loss exposures to personnel and property.

Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is responsible for inviting required or requested agencies to the EOC, as identified by the EOC Director and EOC Management Team, and for maintaining contact with external agencies and other EOCs.

Information Officer

The Information Officer is responsible for establishing and maintaining media contacts; preparing news releases; coordinating interviews, news conferences or media briefings; developing public information materials; providing messaging to the public; establishing communications strategies for internal and external purposes; and liaising and coordinating messages with other Information Officers.

Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief oversees the Operations Section and usually represents the lead agency involved in the response and recovery efforts.

Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief oversees the Planning Section. The Planning Chief does not have to represent the lead agency involved in the response or recovery efforts. Ideally, the Planning Chief should be knowledgeable of the municipality's geography, capabilities of its various departments/agencies, resource capabilities and infrastructure.

Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief oversees the Logistics Section and ensures the overall Logistics function is carried out in support of the EOC Action Plan. The Logistics Chief does not have to represent the lead agency involved in the response or recovery efforts. Ideally, the Logistics Chief should be knowledgeable of the municipality's various departments/agencies, resource capabilities and infrastructure.

Finance & Administration Section Chief

The Finance and Administration Section Chief oversees the Finance and Administration Section. This position has both financial and management responsibilities and does not have to represent the lead agency involved in the response or recovery.

3.2 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) General Staff

Operations Section

The Operations Section is responsible for overall emergency site support. This includes gathering current situation information, sharing it with the Incident Management Team as appropriate, and coordinating resource requests from the site level. The Operations Section may be comprised of the following positions:

- *Operations Section Chief*
- *Fire Branch Coordinator*
- *Police Branch Coordinator*
- *EMS Branch Coordinator*
- *Emergency Social Services Branch Coordinator*
- *Public Health Branch Coordinator*
- *Public Works Branch Coordinator*
- *Utilities Branch Coordinator*
- *Transit Branch Coordinator*

Planning Section

The Planning Section is responsible for collecting, processing, evaluating and displaying information within the EOC and maintaining all EOC documentation. The Planning Section is also responsible for anticipating long range planning needs including the demobilization and recovery phase. The Planning Section may be comprised of the following positions:

- *Planning Section Chief*
- *Situation Unit Coordinator*
- *GIS Unit Coordinator*
- *Resources Unit Coordinator*
- *Documentation Unit Coordinator*
- *Advance Planning Unit Coordinator*
- *Demobilization Unit Coordinator*
- *Recovery Unit Coordinator*
- *Technical Specialists Unit Coordinator*

Logistics Section

The Logistics Section provides and acquires resources requested to support the emergency including personnel, facilities, equipment and supplies. This section is also responsible for ensuring the EOC is operational, including arranging access to technological and telecommunications resources, as well as providing other support services such as arranging for food, lodging and transportation. The Logistics Section may be comprised of the following positions:

- *Logistics Section Chief*
- *Information Technology Branch Coordinator*
- *Telecommunications Unit Coordinator*
- *Computer Systems Unit Coordinator*
- *EOC Support Branch Coordinator*
- *Security Unit Coordinator*
- *Supply Unit Coordinator*
- *Personal Unit Coordinator*
- *Transportation Unit Coordinator*

Finance & Administration Section

The Finance and Administration Section is responsible for financial and administrative activities. This section monitors the expenditure process and response and recovery costs. In addition, it is responsible for coordinating claims and compensation, contracts and procurement agreements, timekeeping, and cost estimates and analysis. The Finance and Administration Section may be comprised of the following positions:

- *Finance and Administration Section Chief*
- *Time Unit Coordinator*
- *Procurement Unit Coordinator*
- *Compensation and Claims Unit Coordinator*
- *Cost Accounting Unit Coordinator*

4.0 Emergency Declarations

An emergency declaration promotes a sense of urgency to the community regarding the severity of an emergency situation and the danger it presents.

An emergency declaration should be made if any Ontario Municipality must take “extraordinary” actions to protect life, health, safety and property of residents and to formally engage the powers granted through the *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act*.

The *Act* empowers emergency declarations at three levels of government in the Province of Ontario as follows:

- *Municipal Emergency Declarations*
- *Regional Emergency Declarations*
- *Provincial Emergency Declarations*

4.1 Municipal Emergency Declaration

The Mayor (or designated alternate) of the City of Niagara Falls has the authority to declare an emergency to exist within the boundaries of the municipality.

Municipal Emergency Declaration - Consultation

Any decision by the Mayor to declare a municipal emergency will be done in consultation with the EOC Director and the members of the Emergency Operations Centre Management Team. Irrespective of the advice given, the Mayor does have the final authority for deciding to (or not to) declare a municipal emergency to exist.

4.2 Regional Emergency Declaration

The Regional Chair (or designated alternate) has the authority to declare a regional emergency to exist anywhere within the boundaries of the Niagara Region.

Regional Emergency Declaration - Jurisdiction

Although the Regional Chair is empowered to declare a regional emergency at any location within regional boundaries, the Chair does NOT have the power to declare an emergency on behalf of any local area municipality.

That power rests only with the Mayor/Lord Mayor of each specific municipality and their respective designated alternates.

4.3 Provincial Emergency Declaration

The Premier of the Province of Ontario (or designated alternate) has the authority to declare a provincial emergency to exist within the boundaries of the Province of Ontario.

Provincial Emergency Declaration - Jurisdiction

In addition to a provincial declaration, the Premier also has the authority to declare an emergency **on behalf** of any community within provincial boundaries and may also at any time declare that an emergency has terminated **on behalf** of any Ontario municipality.

5.0 Emergency Information

At any time this Plan is activated, there will be the need to communicate appropriate and factual information to area residents, local area municipalities, strategic partner agencies, or municipal staff directly. This information may include issuing staff action directives, responding to requests for information, and providing information to the mass media.

Emergency Information Officer

Under provincial mandate every municipality must designate an Emergency Information Officer responsible for management of all information for the public and the media during an emergency.

5.1 Municipal Emergency Information Officer

The City of Niagara Falls has designated an Emergency Information Officer to facilitate emergency information functions during municipal emergency operations.

Designated Spokespersons

In support of emergency information operations, the following are designated as media spokespersons during any activation of this Plan:

- *Mayor as the voice of Niagara Falls City Council (Primary Spokesperson)*
- *City of Niagara Falls CAO as voice of the Corporation (Secondary Spokesperson)*
- *Designated senior staff (subject matter experts) as required*

5.2 Regional Emergency Information Officer

Niagara Region has designated the Associate Director, Corporate Communications as the Emergency Information Officer to facilitate emergency information functions during regional emergency operations. The Corporate Communications team supports the Emergency Information Officer in fulfilling their duties as described within the Incident Management System, Standard Operating Guidelines.

6.0 Recovery and Assistance

Emergency recovery operations commence once any emergency has been successfully mitigated (danger/hazard removed). At that time, emergency operations may shift from the management of the emergency itself to management of the impact/

aftermath of the emergency. Recovery operations focus on restoring the community to its pre-emergency state and can vary in time from a few hours to several months.

6.1 Recovery Plan

To ensure recovery operations occurs in a seamless and coordinated manner, the Emergency Operations Centre Management Team will determine the appropriate time to shift operations to resource demobilization and recovery.

6.2 Emergency Assistance

During emergency operations, the Emergency Operations Centre Management Team will determine the need for assistance in support of an emergency site(s), local municipal emergency operations or other emergency support functions within the boundaries of Niagara Region. Emergency assistance under this context is specific to resources that are not available through normal operations at the direction of municipal officials.

Types of Assistance

The above emergency assistance may include the following types:

- *Personnel with special expertise*
- *Specialized equipment with trained operators*
- *Any other type of service/expertise required to support emergency operations*

Assistance Between Levels of Government

During emergency operations, the City of Niagara Falls may be requested to provide assistance to local area municipalities, regional municipality, critical infrastructure partners, critical business, industry and/or non-governmental community support agencies.

- *The City of Niagara Falls participates as a partner with the Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Region for the provision of emergency assistance as per the terms and conditions of the Mutual Assistance Agreement developed for this purpose.*



It is also possible that the City of Niagara Falls may make appeals for assistance from higher levels of government (Provincial or Federal) agencies, neighbouring communities and/or cross-border partners to support regional emergency operations.

7.0 Training and Exercises

This Plan details the City of Niagara Falls response structure for managing any emergency occurring within or impacting within municipal boundaries. Therefore, in order for this Plan to be effective:

- *All key Municipal staff with responsibilities defined in this Plan must be trained in its content, its implementation, emergency operations including the Incident Management System Standard Operating Guidelines and participate as requested in training exercises*

7.1 Training Responsibility

The Niagara Falls Fire Department is responsible for facilitation of emergency management training opportunities and promoting other external training opportunities that support the professional development of emergency operations staff.

7.2 Training Products

Training will be provided using a variety of training products. Training may be delivered in-house or through external opportunities including:

- *Municipally facilitated training courses*
- *Regionally facilitated training courses*
- *Provincial facilitated training courses*
- *Cross- Border partner facilitated training courses*
- *Other specialty or risk specific training opportunities*

7.3 Exercise Responsibility

The Niagara Falls Fire Department is responsible for coordination of the annual emergency exercises to test the provisions of this Plan or to test the provisions of any other component of the Municipal Emergency Management Program.

7.4 Exercise Types

Exercises simulate emergency conditions that require activation of this Plan (in whole or in part) and assembly of emergency operations staff. The basic types of exercises include:

- *Tabletop (Case Study, Paper or Static)*
- *Functional (Telecommunications, Alerting or Equipment Specific)*



- *Field (Fully Functional Generic, Hazard Specific or Specialty)*

Exercises vary in duration and complexity by type beginning with the basic static exercises to the most complex field functional exercises. Fire Department staff will provide or promote a variety of exercise opportunities using a variety of products that may be delivered in-house or through external opportunities including:

- *Municipal Exercises (of varying complexity)*
- *Regional Exercise (of varying complexity)*
- *Department/Service Specific Exercises*
- *Other External Emergency Exercises*
- *Cross Border Exercises*

8.0 Maintenance and Distribution

This Plan is considered a living document and therefore must remain current. It will be, as a minimum, reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure operational sustainability in alignment with the provincial mandate.

8.1 Plan Maintenance Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Niagara Falls Fire Department to maintain this Plan and to facilitate all revisions to the Plan contents. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that the Niagara Falls Fire Department is notified of any department specific changes, revisions or additions that affect the contents of this Plan.

8.2 Plan Distribution

This Plan is considered a public document as per the provisions of the *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act*.

As such, it will be posted on the City of Niagara Falls website to be available to anyone wishing to review it. Requests for paper copies of this Plan can be made through the Clerk's Office or through Fire Department staff.

- *All paper or electronic copies in general circulation will carry the current year date*

Paper copies of this Plan will be maintained as part of the standard Municipal Emergency Operations Centre equipment cache. Those plans will be replaced annually upon revision of the document in accordance with the provincial mandate.

Paper or electronic copies are current as of the cover date. It is the responsibility of the Plan holder to ensure their Plan copy is current and to replace it annually.