

Policy	Emergency Management	Number	6.10.10
Refer to	Public Health Emergency Response Plan Continuity of Operations Plan Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) Emergency Management 6.10.10.P1	Original Reviewed Revised Next Review Date	May 17, 2012 June 2024 June 2024 June 15, 2026
Written by	Executive P&P Committee	Approved by	Board of Health

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements and expectations of the Health Unit to prepare for and respond to incidents and/or emergencies. This policy also provides a general overview of the systems utilized by the agency to provide a controlled and coordinated response and ensure the Health Unit is ready to cope with and recover from threats to public health or disruptions to public health programs and services.

Legislation

The legislative requirements for emergency management in the province of Ontario is in part provided for in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA). The EMCPA and its Regulation (*Ontario Regulation 380/04*) requires ministries (i.e.: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care) and municipalities to develop and implement an emergency management program consisting of emergency plans, training programs, exercises, infrastructure, and public education to support emergency response. The EMCPA also outlines municipalities as the lead agency for most emergency situations, apart from infectious disease/pandemic.

The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) provides legal authority for boards of health to respond to a public health emergency and further provides the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) with the authority to take appropriate action to prevent, eliminate or decrease the effect of the hazard. The HPPA provides the authority of the MOH, Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and the ministry of health to lead emergency responses when the health of the community is threatened by an infectious disease.

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), and the Emergency Management Guideline 2023 (or as current), mandated, under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) outlines that the following requirements:

1. The board of health to develop, implement, and document 24/7 notification protocols for communications with board of health staff, community partners, and governmental bodies.
2. Implement an emergency management as a foundational standard across all divisions.
3. The Boards of Health must have the capacity to respond to an emergency 24 hours a day and ensure continuity of its essential services.

POLICY

Emergency Management Program

In accordance with the above legislation the Health Unit will maintain an emergency management program, that is integrated as foundational standards across all divisions and programs. The purpose of the program is to ensure the Health Unit is ready to respond and recover from hazards including new

and emerging threats, that negatively impact on public health within our region; have the potential to overwhelm the healthcare system; or disrupt the Health Unit's ability to provide public health programs and services.

The emergency management program will comply with the following requirements, as outlined below:

- The Health Unit will maintain a network of community partners and government agencies that are involved in emergency planning and responses.
- An all-hazard approach that seeks to clarify roles and responsibilities will be integrated
- Plans incorporate the Incident Management System (IMS)
- Planning incorporates a health equity lens and identify strategies to support the vulnerable populations that more negatively impacted by hazards/incidents than the public.
- Plans compliment and support local municipal, regional, ministry, provincial and federal emergency response plans, bylaws, and legislation.
- Includes 24/7 notification protocols for communications with board of health staff, community partners, and governmental bodies.as well as a 24-hr capacity to respond to an emergency,
- Includes multiple communication methods for sharing information on hazards with the public.
- Includes at a minimum the development of an emergency response plan and business continuity plan.

Emergency response plans will be reviewed by senior management and require the approval of the medical officer of health (MOH). Changes to the plans are documented within the plan and require the approval of the MOH.

The Health Unit will make available, the MOH or designate to participate in annual municipal Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) views and exercises, in particular municipalities for which the Health Unit is a member of the MECG, as capacity allows.

Emergency Response

The Health Unit will support local municipalities in responding to emergency situations that have a public health impact, by making available the MOH or designate, in an advisory capacity to Municipal Emergency Control Groups (MECG).

The MOH has the authority to initiate the emergency response plans in the event of an infectious disease threat or outbreak in accordance with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and ministry standards, guidelines, and protocols.

In the event of an emergency, the MOH has the authority to enact the Incident Operation Centre (IOC); assign IMS roles; and to determine if the Business Continuity Plan may also be activated to support the emergency response.

The MOH will inform the Board of Health, Health Unit employees and community partners of the activation of emergency response plans, including the business continuity plan, which may be activated to deploy staff as deemed necessary to respond to the incident and mitigate the health risk to the community.

In the event of an internal incident or emergency or an infectious disease, the medical officer of health may activate the agency's emergency response plan and convene the IOCIMS Committee to assess the situation and coordinate an agency response. The Emergency Fan-Out Notification System (RAVE) may be activated to deploy staff as deemed necessary to respond to the incident and mitigate the health risk to the community.

Emergency events/situations may arise any time in any location from a variety of threats including natural, human-caused, and technological. As outlined in the legislation, the Health Unit will respond to municipal emergency situations that have a public health impact e.g. flooding, as an "assisting agency" at the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG). While in emergency situations involving an infectious disease threat or outbreak e.g. novel virus/Pandemic, the Health Unit will be the lead agency, responsible for initiating and directing the coordination of the emergency response. The Health Unit must also be prepared through business continuity planning to respond to internal emergencies that impact its ability to provide programs and services e.g. may also need to respond to internal emergency situations such as but not limited to a Cyberattack

- Emergency Management will include the following activities within the Health Unit:
- Development of comprehensive planning documents including as a minimum an Emergency Response Plan, and Business Continuity Plan.
- A 24/7 notification protocols for communications with board of health staff, community partners, and governmental bodies.as well as a 24-hr capacity to respond to an emergency,
- Multiple methods of communicating hazards with the public
- Promote emergency preparedness to the public,
- Employees who service key IMS roles and./or participate in municipal emergency control groups will be required to take Emergency Management Ontario Basic Emergency Management Training (BEM 200) and Incident Management system (IMS 200).
- As outlined in the Emergency Response Plan, employees who have roles within the Incident Management System(IMS) receive training through Emergency Management Ontario in Basic Emergency management (BEM 200) IMS 200 and scribe training.
- As required in the New Emergency Management Guidelines 2023, all new employees and new Board Members will receive training on internal Emergency Management procedures at orientation.
- Training for new employees, Board of Health orientation
- To participate with municipal partners, annually in their Hazardous Identification Risk Assessment (HIRA) and mock exercises, as capacity allows.
- To complete an annual Organizational Risk Assessment review related to business continuity planning.
- To support local municipalities in responding to emergency situations that have a public health impact, which includes making available, the Medical Officer of Health or designate, in an advisory capacity to Municipal Emergency Control Groups (MECG);
- To initiate the emergency response plan in the event of an infectious disease threat or outbreak in accordance with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and ministry standards, guidelines, and protocols;
- To strengthen community partnerships, to support risk mitigation
- To work with community partners to ensure procedures are in place to identify at-risk populations that may be disproportionately impacted by incidents or events.
- To work with community partners to support preparedness and recovery for

populations that may be disproportionately impacted by an incident or event based on the identified risks and increase awareness of and access to services that may be needed during and after the incident. To have procedures in place for collaborating with partners and stakeholders to determine community recovery priorities and to define public health's role(s) in community recovery. To initiate the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in conjunction with the emergency response plan or without; when an incident/event has a significant impact on the Health Unit's ability to maintain time critical (sensitive) program and services as mandated within the Ontario Public Health Standards;

- To provide emergency preparedness and response education and training to Health Unit employees and Board of Health members;
- To collaborate with community partners and municipalities to promote public awareness regarding individual and family emergency preparedness activities; and
- To annually exercise in whole or in part, the Emergency Response Plan, the Business Continuity Plan and the 24/7 Notification procedures and revise plans as identified.

In accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards, the Health Unit will implement an emergency management program that integrates and supports emergency management as a foundational standard across all divisions. Through internal and external collaborations, the Health Unit will develop, train, test, and update emergency response plans that at a minimum fulfil the requirements outlined within the OPHS and legislative requirements.

Source Documents

Provincial Emergency Management Strategy and Action Plan: A safe, Practiced and Ready Ontario, Feb 2023

[2022 Chief Medical Officer of Health Annual Report: Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics \(ontario.ca\)](#)

PHO: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Framework and Indicators, May 2020

Emergency Management Guideline 2023

Ontario Public Health Standards 2018

Ready and Resilient Health Care System 2018

Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act

Health Protection and Promotion Act

Emergency Management Doctrine of Ontario

HKPR District Health Unit Emergency Response Plan

HKPR District Health Unit Business Continuity Plan