

INTRODUCTION: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

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Applies to: Local Authorities in Manitoba

An emergency management program is a program of organizing, planning, and applying measures through which communities or organizations reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with emergencies and disasters.

This type of program contains elements that are common to all programs such as goals/objectives, leadership, budgets and schedules, records management, etc.

It also contains elements that are specific to emergency management.

The Emergency Measures Act (Act) and Local Authorities Emergency Planning and Preparedness Regulation (Regulation) speak to common elements such as leadership by noting the responsibility of the local authority for this program and the contributions of the Local Emergency Response Control Group. The Regulation further speaks to common elements by requiring that emergency management programs conform to one of two external standards: Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Z1600 or National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1600. These standards include topics such as program management, senior management review, and continual improvement.

While the Act and Regulation contain requirements for elements that are common to all programs, they focus on elements that are specific to emergency management.

The following sections list the key emergency management program elements that are included in the Act and Regulation.

Who is part of an emergency management program?

The Act and Regulation refer to the following key entities or individuals in relation to emergency preparedness:

Local Authority – Responsibility for emergency management programs rest with the local authority.

Municipal Emergency Coordinator (MEC) – This individual is tasked with the preparation and coordination of emergency management programs and emergency plans for the local authority. This person is drawn from/part of the Local Emergency Response Control Group.

Local Emergency Response Control Group – This group is created by the local authority and tasked with assisting the local authority's MEC in preparing and coordinating emergency management programs for the authority.

Community Advisory Group – This is a committee of members of the community who advise the local authority of the development of emergency management programs and emergency plans. Examples of committee members include local schools or school divisions, industry/businesses, senior citizen groups, etc.

Mutual Aid Partners – A local authority may enter into mutual aid agreements with the provincial government, any local authority, any department, or any person with respect to establishing, developing, or implement emergency management programs and emergency plans and conducting emergency operations. The Act notes that mutual aid agreements are an optional activity.

Other groups and individuals are often involved in carrying out the activities of the emergency management program but are not specifically mentioned in the Act or Regulation. A common group is an Emergency Operations Centre response team, as noted in Item #6 below.

What are some key activities of an emergency management program?

The Act and Regulation highlight some key activities of an emergency management program which are listed below.

Additional activities are listed or described in the two external standards (CSA Z1600 or NFPA 1600).

1. A hazard and risk assessment

- One purpose of this assessment is to make sure that the emergency response plan focuses on and addresses the emergencies or disasters that may occur in a particular municipality or jurisdiction.
- The hazard and risk assessment might also inform strategies to prevent or mitigate an emergency from occurring.
- The Regulation lists five areas of concern for a hazard and risk assessment: loss of life; harm or damage to the safety, health or welfare of people; damage to property or other economic impact; damage to the environment; or an interruption of a critical service.

2. Emergency plan

- This is a plan for responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters.
- An emergency plan answers questions such as
 - who will do what activities to respond to or recover from emergencies or disasters,
 - under what circumstances the activities will be carried out, and
 - how and where will the activities be carried out.

3. Exercises

- An exercise is a simulated scenario in which an organization practices its response activities.
- The Regulation requires multiple types of exercises that provide different levels of practice and learning.

4. Public knowledge

- The Regulation requires that the local authority provides its residents with information about how they can look after themselves and their families during an emergency or disaster, existing emergency management tools, and where to find additional emergency and disaster information.

5. MEC with knowledge of key activities of an emergency management program

- This is addressed in the Regulation by requiring that MECs be trained on key activities by Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) or that MECs already have the knowledge, training, and experience to carry out their role.

6. Other activities that assist the local authority to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate any hazard or risk identified in its hazard and risk assessment

- This requirement could lead to many different actions.
- For example, common activities to assist with responding to an emergency or disaster include assembling and training an Emergency Operations Centre response team and an Emergency Social Services team.
- Another common activity is establishing and running an Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate and direct the emergency response.

7. Spending sums

- Local authorities may expend sums to establish, develop, or implement the emergency management program and emergency plans.

8. Business Continuity Plan (Manitoba EMO is referring to this simply as a “Continuity Plan”)

- This is a plan developed to provide procedures and information for the continuity and/or recovery of critical service delivery and operations in the event of a disruption.
- The plan focuses on the continuity and/or recovery of a local authority’s critical services.

- Continuity planning overlaps with emergency management as disruptions to critical services may result in a need for the type of emergency response and recovery coordination and support provided by emergency management.

9. Implementing Emergency Plan

- When an emergency exists or is imminent, the emergency plan may be implemented by the local authority or other persons designated to do so in the plan.