

**CORPORATION OF THE  
TOWN OF THESSALON  
DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

***EMERGENCY RESPONSE***

**PLAN**

**A**

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<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
	1
Introduction to Thessalon	2
	3
	4-5
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)	6
Community Emergency Management Coordinator	7
Emergency Management Program Committee	8
Emergency Response Plan	9
Emergency Operations Centre	9
Municipal Emergency Control Group - Activation Control Group	10
Critical Infrastructure	10
Training	11
Exercises	11
Emergency Information Staff	11
Public Awareness Program	12
Annual Review	12

## **Mission Statement**

Emergencies are defined as situations or impending situations caused by forces of nature, accident or an intentional act that constitutes a danger of major proportions to life and property. They affect public safety, meaning the health, welfare and property as well as the environment and economic health of the Town of Thessalon.

The aim of this plan is to make provision for the extraordinary arrangements and measures that may have to be taken to protect the public safety of the residents, businesses and visitors of the Town of Thessalon.

This plan enables a centralized controlled and coordinated response by a number of agencies under the direction of the Community Control Group to emergencies in the Town of Thessalon. These emergency arrangements and procedures are distinct from the normal, day to day operations carried out by emergency services. This plan meets the legislated requirements of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

The Emergency Management Program Committee chaired by the Mayor oversees the development of this plan within the context of the Emergency Management Program for the Town of Thessalon. Every official, municipal department and agency is prepared to carry out assigned responsibilities in an emergency. The response plan has been prepared to provide key officials, agencies and departments of the Town of Thessalon important emergency response information related to:

- \_ Arrangements, services and equipment; and
- \_ Roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

1.

## **Introduction to Thessalon**

The Town of Thessalon, population 1335, is situated on the north shore of the North Channel of Lake Huron on Highway 17, 80 kilometers east of the City of Sault Ste. Marie and 53 kilometers west of Blind River. Highway 129 leads from Thessalon, north to the Town of Chapleau, a distance of 232 kilometers.

The Huron Central Railway Inc. passes within 1.6 kilometers north of the Town, with the bed of the spur into the town owned by The Corporation of the Town of Thessalon. The Thessalon River as it flows into the North Channel bisects the town.

The community depends largely on lumbering operations for its livelihood. The tourist industry adds to the local economy. A saw mill and plywood factory, located in the nearby Municipality of Huron Shores and a veneer mill in the Town of Thessalon are of economic importance to the area, together with a deep water harbour that presently services the Smelter Bay Aggregate loading facilities.

Electrical power is supplied and distributed by Hydro One Networks Inc. Communications are by telephone through the Bell Canada system.

The Thessalon Hospital, consisting of 6-bed inpatient, 2-bed observation and an emergency department, is administered by the Blind River District Health Centre. This hospital is community sponsored, with two permanent doctors and a competent staff.

The Algoma Manor became the Algoma Manor Nursing Home on November 1, 2011, with provisions for 96 residents plus staff. It is linked to the former Algoma Manor building which houses the hospital, North Channel Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic and PHARA (Physically Handicapped Adults' Rehabilitation Association) with 33 units.

The Medical Building provides offices for physicians, eye doctors, dentists as well as a chiropractor.

Aircraft equipped with floats can land on nearby water. The nearest airport for large aircraft is at Sault Ste. Marie, 62 miles west.

It is important that residents, businesses and interested visitors be aware of the provisions contained in the emergency response plan. Copies of the Town of Thessalon Emergency Response plan may be viewed at the Municipal Office. For more information contact:

Community Emergency Management Coordinator,  
Robert P. MacLean  
187 Main Street  
Thessalon, ON  
P0R 1L0

Phone: (705) 842-2217  
Fax: (705) 842-2572

2.

### **Authority**

The *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act, RSO, 1990, as amended (EMCPA)* is the legal authority for this emergency response plan.

The *EMCPA* states that:

“The head of Council of a municipality may declare that an emergency exists in the municipality or in any part thereof and may take such action and make such orders as he or she considers necessary and are not contrary to law to implement the emergency plan of the municipality and to protect property and the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the emergency area.”

As enabled by the *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act, RSO, 1990, as amended*, this emergency response plan and its elements have been:

- Issued under the authority of the *Town of Thessalon By-Law #1448*;  
and
- Filed with Emergency Management Ontario, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

3.

## **Emergency Levels**

Three levels will be used as designations of an emergency. Level I involves an emergency with a predictable duration at a single site and only one agency such as the police department will be involved. A Level II emergency has an unpredictable duration and a response from many agencies. Level III is a widespread emergency that has a large impact on the town with the possibility of long term negative effects.

NOTE: If any incident so designated above requires the involvement of volunteers or if there is the potential for the incident to outstrip the response capability of the Town of Thessalon, then a formal declaration of an emergency consistent with the requirements of the Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act of the province will occur.

### **Level I**

**Definition:** This is an unplanned event that has the potential of threatening life, health, or property within a single area. A single agency such as the police, fire, public works is all that is needed.

**Criteria:**

- Short term evacuation and only for a small, localized area
- Incident lasts for a duration of two hours maximum
- Procedures are established to protect occupants, evacuees, and property
- Medical needs are planned for
- Command post is established
- A written report, covering as a minimum damage estimate, injury report, and the agencies involved is prepared

**Examples:** A structural fire to a building, a chemical spill involving a disruption of services and a hazardous-materials response, a water main break which threatens critical services, power outage affecting critical infrastructure, an odour that requires evacuation.

#### 4.

##### **Level II**

**Definition:** An unplanned event that may be harmful to life, health, or property on a large scale. To control the situation, a broad based agency response including police, and/or the fire department as a minimum, will be needed. Effects of this disaster may be long term.

**Criteria:** Same as Level I with the exception that the duration could easily exceed two hours.

**Examples:** A water main break that involves several buildings and business, loss of heat or power to multiple buildings, a fire affecting a large residential area, a chemical release causing evacuation, or large scale civil unrest.

##### **Level III**

**Definition:** This is an incident that impacts or threatens life, health or property on a large scale. Control of this incident will require numerous agencies and could very quickly exceed the capacity of the response resources in the Town of Thessalon. Long term affect is expected.

**Criteria:**-Serious hazard to life, health and property

- Major evacuation and relocation required
- Duration of the incident is unpredictable
- Command post is established
- Medical needs are planned for
- Communications centre established
- Recovery plan established
- Written report is prepared

**Examples:** Natural disasters, large scale chemical release, major power outage, building collapse.



5.

### **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)**

The Town of Thessalon has completed a HIRA which indicates that the most likely Level III emergencies will be in the form of severe weather, specifically snowstorms/blizzards and ice/sleet storms with the possible consequence of power outages for an undetermined length of time. These have occurred in recent memory and are likely to occur again. This is reviewed annually.

There is also the potential for a transportation incident on Highway 17 involving hazardous materials, that could, depending on wind direction, impact on the Town of Thessalon and/or present a threat to the environment associated with the Thessalon River.

Highway 17 also presents the potential for incidents involving multiple people being carried in buses that could tax the response capabilities of the Town of Thessalon.

The HIRA process requires the involvement of the Community Emergency Management Coordinator and the Emergency Management Program Committee of the Town of Thessalon. The identification of possible hazards and risks is based on the 38 hazards listed in Emergency Management Ontario's *Provincial Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment*.

The local knowledge present among the people involved with the HIRA process for the Town of Thessalon enables realistic assessment of the possible consequences and establishment of risk based emergency management program priorities. These risk management program actions address prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

This Emergency Response Plan is designed so emergencies will be dealt with as quickly as possible in a logical and coherent manner. This is a framework that will allow an immediate response to an emergency

without hindering the initial response or requiring policy decisions to be made first.

6

### **Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC)**

The primary (or alternate) emergency operations and communications centre to enable the Community Control Group (CCG) to function in an emergency will be established and activated under the supervision of the Clerk-Treasurer. The reporting of all emergency situations, including information from the incident, will be made to the location of the Community Control Group.

After receiving the initial information pertaining to the emergency, the Community Emergency Management Coordinator will make a decision about the response and category of the situation (Level I, II or III). The Emergency Response Coordinator will then notify the Community Control Group and begin staging for the emergency.

#### **CEMC Role:**

- To act as a liaison and contact person with Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) for the Town of Thessalon during the emergency response.
- To serve as Chair of the Community Control Group and ensure the necessary and appropriate resources are available to the CCG.

- To act as a liaison and contact person for the Town of Thessalon during the emergency response.
- To manage the Community Operations Centre during an incident, clean-up and restoration.
- To coordinate all activities of response and recovery.
- To ensure that the Communications Centre is operational and can serve as the focal point for routine communications during all phases of an incident, including provision for emergency power.
- To maintain continuous contact with the Communications Centre and the Community Control Group.
- To establish and staff a media centre separate from the Emergency Operations and Communications Centres.
- To ensure briefings are prepared and presented to Town Council, media and Emergency Management Ontario.
- To insure that all operations during the incident are coordinated and being carried out in a constructive and safe manner with consideration of what to do after the emergency.
- To assemble damage assessments and coordinate a plan for recovery.
- To manage the Emergency Response Centre during recovery operation.
- To ensure that the incident is properly documented.
- To ensure that the required de-briefings are held within an appropriate time period.
- To review and update the Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Management Programs as required.

## **Emergency Management Program Committee**

The Emergency Management Program Committee (EMPC) is the critical management team to oversee the development, implementation and maintenance of a risk-based emergency management program at the community level.

The basic tasks of this committee are to:

- Review the Emergency Response Plans of the committee members, associated agencies, and mutual aid agreements.
- Identify gaps in existing plans and/or agreements.
- Match tasks to the appropriate participant.
- Make necessary improvements to existing plans, integrating them into a Community Emergency Response Plan and gaining committee agreement.
- Commit the integrated plan to writing and secure approval from the Town Council.

Permanent/Core Members of the EMPC are:

- OPP
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Public Works
- Clerk-Treasurer, CEMC
- Members of Council, with the Mayor being the Chair

Any of the following groups are involved for specific needs as the risk-based program is developed and maintained.

- Local industry
- Representation from critical infrastructure
- Social services agencies
- Medical personnel
- Utilities



## **Emergency Response Plan**

This Emergency Response Plan is designed so emergencies will be dealt with as quickly as possible in a logical and coherent manner. This is a framework that will allow an immediate response to an emergency without hindering the initial response or requiring policy decisions to be made first.

The core components of this plan address:

- \_ Notification procedures for convening the Community Control Group,
- \_ Requesting assistance,
- \_ Declaring and terminating an emergency,
- \_ The composition and functioning of the Community Control Group including its operations cycle,
- \_ The incident management system,
- \_ Physical space, security and staffing requirements for the operations centre,
- \_ Telecommunications,
- \_ Emergency information function and process,
- \_ Internal and external resource directory,
- \_ The need for special arrangements as required, and
- \_ Appropriate distribution.

### **Amendments**

It will be the duty of the Clerk-Treasurer to update the Emergency Response Plan by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The Mayor will then approve the revisions and have the plan dated. This is to ensure that the residents of Thessalon will be protected during emergency situations.

### **Emergency Operations Centre**

The Emergency Response Plan designates the physical space (primary and alternate) established to facilitate the Community Control Group to support the incident management system as appropriate for the circumstances of an emergency incident.

The physical and human resources needed to enable the Community Control Group to function as per the plan are identified and sourced.

## **Municipal Emergency Control Group**

This group of officials is responsible for providing the essential services needed to minimize the effects of the emergency on the Town of Thessalon as follows:

- Community Emergency Management Coordinator
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator Alternate

There is an established procedure to notify and activate this group and operations responsibilities and procedures to maximize the efficiency of this group.

## **Activation Control Group**

This group of officials is responsible for assisting in the essential services needed to minimize the effects of the emergency on the Town of Thessalon. This group has representation as follows:

- Mayor
- Public Works
- Fire
- OPP
- EMS
- Emergency Information Officer

There is an established procedure to notify and activate this group and operations responsibilities and procedures to maximize the efficiency of this group.

## **Critical Infrastructure**

The identification of critical infrastructure addresses essential facilities, equipment, and systems necessary to preserve:

- \_ Public health and safety,
- \_ Responders' health and safety
- \_ Public services

- \_ Energy systems
- \_ Local economy
- \_ Community obligations

## **Training**

The training plan to support the emergency response capability of the Town of Thessalon and to develop emergency management program expertise is designed to ensure that in an actual emergency, the participants know their roles and responsibilities. The goals of this training plan are to:

- \_ Confirm Control Group roles and responsibilities with a priority on those new members of the Control Group,
- \_ Continue to develop the skills of operational staff required to set up, maintain, and operate the Emergency Operations Centre,
- \_ Provide an opportunity for the Community Control Group to practice functioning as a group.

## **Exercises**

An annual exercise is conducted to evaluate the approved Emergency Response Plan for the Town of Thessalon. The exercise schedule over a defined time period is designed to follow a logical progression from individual elements, to integrated elements to the entire plan.

A key feature of this schedule is the requirement for the Community Control Group to assemble at least once a year as participants in the process of testing/evaluating the Emergency Response Plan.

Exercising the plan also requires, as necessary, updating/improving the



plan as a result of the lessons learned from the test/exercises.

### **Emergency Information Staff**

During an emergency, the provision of timely, accurate information to the public and participating agencies is absolutely essential. It is also essential that this information is delivered by a credible and authorized source. From the perspective of the Community Control Group, managing an emergency is managing information.

The needs of the media and their key role in the communications process is understood and incorporated into the emergency information component of the Emergency Response Plan.

The responsibilities to assemble and verify this type of information are assigned within the Emergency Response Plan as is the responsibility and authority to deliver/present the information.

### **Public Awareness Program**

The thrust of this component of the Emergency Response Plan is to create an ongoing program directed at media and the public. The goals are to:

- Create awareness of the existence of the Emergency Response Plan,
- Inform of the acquisition by the Community Control Group and administrative staff of operational skills and practice with the plan,
- Inform of the ongoing development of skills by emergency services and associated agencies with responsibilities within the Town of Thessalon Emergency Response Plan.

### **Annual Review**

There are provisions for the Emergency Management Program Committee to review annually both the Emergency Response Plan and the overall Emergency Management Program.

Any and all aspects of change with the potential to impact on the

Emergency Response Plan, especially critical infrastructure, are constantly being evaluated as key personnel become aware of the change. Changes could include but not be limited to:

- Regulations
- Appearance of new hazards or modification of existing
- External and internal resources
- Organizational structure of agencies with roles in the Emergency Response Plan
- Infrastructure
- Funding or budgets
- Technology