



CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF THESSALON

DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN A

Updated – November 2024

Corporation of the Town of Thessalon
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Introduction

The Town of Thessalon, population 1,206*, 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 and operated by the North Shore Health Network.

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 West Wind Shores assisted living with 33 units.

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

*2021, Statistics Canada Census

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.

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.

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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:

“Every municipality shall formulate an emergency plan governing the provision of necessary services during an emergency and the procedures under and the manner in which employees of the municipality and other persons will respond to the emergency and the council of the municipality shall by by-law adopt the emergency plan.” Section 3 (1)

Declaration of Emergency

The *EMCPA* gives authority to the Head of Council to Declare both the existence and or the termination of an Emergency.

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.” Section 4(1)

“The head of council or the council of a municipality may at any time declare that an emergency has terminated.” Section 4(2)

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.

Scope

An emergency may last from a few hours to several days or longer and possible events for the Town of Thessalon include but are not limited to:

- Health –related emergencies
- Critical infrastructure failures
- Severe weather emergencies
- Fires and/ or explosions
- Transportation emergencies
- Cyber Attack
- Electrical Energy
- Chemical Release (i.e. Oil Spill)

This Plan does not replace existing operating procedures or guidelines that are used by agencies responding to an emergency

Emergency Levels

Three levels will be used as designations of an emergency.

Three levels will be used as designations of an emergency. Level I involve 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 1

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 odor that requires evacuation.

LEVEL 2

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 3

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.

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.

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 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 with 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 Town Council.

Permanent/Core Members of the EMPC are:

- Head of Council (Mayor) or alternate
- Clerk-Treasurer
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) or alternate
- Public Works Superintendent
- Fire Chief

Additional personal/community stakeholders may be invited to committee meetings such as OPP, EMS, Social Service Industries, Critical Infrastructure representatives, etc.

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 conveying the Community Control Group
- Requesting assistance
- Declaring or 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
- Appropriate distribution

Amendments

It will be the duty of the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) to update the Emergency Response Plan by December 31st of each year. The Emergency Management Program Committee (EMPC) will then review and recommend approval and the Mayor will then provide final approval of 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 Emergency Control Group to function as per the plan are identified and sourced.

EOC Equipment List

EOC Equipment List Equipment available at each of the EOC's are as follows:
Emergency Operations Centre for the Municipality of Thessalon

- MEEG envelope containing: room ID card, pad of paper, pens, pencils, folders, paper clips, and Activity Log forms
- Cots with blankets and pillows
- Phones/Two Way Radios
- Flip chart/ White boards
- 72 hour kit
- Personal hygiene kits

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.

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

The persons from time to time holding the following positions in the municipality, or their designates, shall be members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (ECG):

- Head of Council (Mayor) or alternate
- Clerk-Treasurer
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) or alternate
- Public Works Superintendent
- Fire Chief

Additional personnel/stakeholders that may be invited to meetings of the Emergency Control Group may include but not limited to:

- Hazard Plan Liaison(s)
- Emergency Management Ontario Representative
- Ontario Provincial Police Representative
- Medical Officer of Health, or alternate
- Social Services Director, or alternate
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Director, or alternate
- Office of the Fire Marshal
- Algoma District School Board representative
- Local electrical utility representative, or alternate, if required or available
- Representatives of local industrial and retail businesses
- Volunteer organizations
- Liaison staff from provincial ministries

- Any other officials, experts or representatives from the public or private sector as deemed necessary by the Community Control Group.

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

Ontario Provincial Police Role

In accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act* and standards set out in the regulations, and with the requirements of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Code*. The OPP is responsible for:

1. Crime prevention.
2. Law enforcement.
3. Maintaining the public peace.
4. Emergency response.
5. Assistance to victims of crime.
6. Any other prescribed policing functions.

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

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 Officer (EIO)

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 creditable 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.

Responsibilities of the Emergency Information Officer include but not limited to:

- Preparing major announcements and media releases in consultation with the Emergency Control Group
- Ensuring news reports of the current situation is up to date and accurate and respond to misinformation.
- Apprise the Emergency Control Group of any significant information received from members of the public, the media and other EIOs.
- Maintain a log of all actions taken

Alert Ready

Alert Ready is designed to deliver critical geographically specific alerts through television and radio. The Alert Ready system is developed in partnership with federal, provincial and territorial emergency management officials, Environment and Climate Change Canada, The Weather Network and the broadcast industry. For additional information on visit www.alertready.ca

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
- Educate the residents of Thessalon to prepare at an individual level emphasizing on individual preparedness for 72 hours.

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 medication of existing
- External and internal resources
- Organizational structure of agencies with roles in the Emergency Response Plan
- Infrastructure
- Funding or budgets
- Technology