



DATE: January 28, 2024

MEMORANDUM TO: Emergency Management Professionals

FROM: Bernie Derible
Deputy Minister and Commissioner of Emergency Management
Treasury Board Secretariat

SUBJECT: Congratulations on an Impressive Year

Dear Fellow Emergency Management Professionals,

EMO has accomplished many achievements in the last year.

In 2024, the team successfully:

- Supported the Premier's announcement launching Ontario Corps, as one of the first provinces in Canada to mobilize volunteer corps for emergencies;
- hosted *Exercise Heatwave*, the first Provincial Priority Exercise since 2008;
- introduced the *Emergency Management Modernization Act*; and
- issued the first-ever PEMSAP annual report.

In addition to these achievements, we continued to deliver on our day-to-day activities, such as training, participating in partner exercises, and responding to emergencies including wildland fires and floods. The great work continued this month with our response to the unprecedented snowstorm in the Gravenhurst area. We demonstrated that strong working relationships are the key to our success in keeping Ontario safe, practiced, and prepared. I look forward to further strengthening our partner relationships in the new year.

News and updates

Premier Ford and Associate Minister Jones Announce Ontario Corps

On December 13, 2024, Premier Doug Ford and Associate Minister Trevor Jones announced the launch of Ontario Corps at the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre. This makes Ontario one of the first Canadian jurisdictions to mobilize non-governmental organizations and volunteers for emergencies. Ontario Corps is a delivery-through-partners model, with non-governmental organizations and First Nations partners. Skilled partners will be able to quickly mobilize to provide on-the-ground assistance such as emergency shelter, debris management, food services, flood protection and more, when needed. We also announced our partnership with Northern College on a regional emergency hub in Timmins to bolster local on-the-ground response in northern Ontario. Four additional hubs will be set up at strategic locations in northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast Ontario. These new hubs will store equipment to help reinforce local efforts, providing more timely support to impacted areas. Please considering signing up as a volunteer for Ontario Corps. For more information, visit [Ontario Corps | ontario.ca](https://ontario.ca/ontario-corps)

Ontario Corps in Action: Helping Gravenhurst Dig Out of Unprecedented Snow

Earlier this month, the Gravenhurst region was hit by unprecedented snowstorms that brought two metres of snow and left 150,000 households without power – some for as long as a week. People were stuck in their homes and cars, and Highways 11 and 17 were closed. The Town of Gravenhurst was hit especially hard, receiving 100 cm of snow within 24 hours, causing the town to declare a state of emergency.

EMO assigned field officers to assist and deployed some of our Ontario Corps partners to enhance our response efforts: the Ontario Search and Rescue Volunteer Association (OSARVA), GlobalMedic and the Salvation Army. OSARVA sent a team of seven that conducted 141 wellness checks, vetted 151 calls for service, delivered 22 hampers and evacuated three people. Global Medic sent a team of three to help manage the warming centre and evacuated 1 person, and the Salvation Army set up

a food truck at the warming centre and distributed 536 food hampers in collaboration with GlobalMedic from Feed Ontario.

Gravenhurst Mayor Heidi Lorenz issued a statement thanking Premier Ford and EMO, noting that we “wasted no time in providing required resources,” and also thanked our field officers for their help and expertise.



GlobalMedic during the Gravenhurst snowstorm



OSARVA during the Gravenhurst snowstorm

Ontario Corps: First Incident Management Team (IMT) Deployment

Following the snowstorm in the Gravenhurst area, weather reports called for a similarly destructive storm to hit the Lake Huron region. As part of Ontario Corps, the OPS Incident Management Team (IMT) was deployed for the first time. EMO deployed an EMO field officer and seven members of the OPS IMT to Blyth to provide on-the-ground support, if needed.



The OPS Incident Management Team in Blyth

New Public Education Strategy

EMO launched "A Public Education Strategy and Program Framework for Safe, Practiced and Prepared Ontarians," the first of its kind for public education in Ontario. It reflects the increase in hazards we face today, and revisits conventional methods of public education. The strategy was developed in close consultation with our partners in all ten sectors, as well as our Ministry Emergency Management Coordinator (MEMC) partners across the OPS. As part of the strategy, EMO has started translating our existing preparedness education products into the top 3 Indigenous and top ten non-Indigenous languages spoken in Ontario, including:

1. Cree
2. Ojibway
3. Oji-Cree
4. Arabic
5. Cantonese
6. Mandarin
7. Punjabi

- 8. Portuguese
- 9. Filipino
- 10. Urdu
- 11. Spanish
- 12. Ukrainian
- 13. Tamil

The strategy is a living document and is accompanied by a program framework based on a centre of excellence model, that will inform the development of new public education products.

Emergency Management Modernization Act

Emergency Management Modernization Act (EMMA) was introduced on December 9, 2024, by Associate Minister Trevor Jones, reinforcing EMO's role as the one-window for coordinating provincial emergency management activities, enhance municipal emergency management capacity, and clarify the process for municipalities to declare local emergencies under the Act. This new legislation will further strengthen our ability to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

It's important that we take pride in the work we do and share our success. Here's a recap of our 2024 numbers.

Number of engagements with EM partners/stakeholders 759	Number of EM courses delivered 388	Number of people trained: 16,549
Number of declared emergencies 33	Number of significant incidents 109	Social media impressions on EMO posts 437,000+

**Engagements with
private sector and NGOs
140**

**Number of
exercises/drills engage
on
114**

Best always,



Bernie Derible
Deputy Minister and Commissioner of Emergency Management
Treasury Board Secretariat