

Federal Policy for Emergency Management

BUILDING A **SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA**



DECEMBER 2009



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1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1. To promote an integrated and resilient whole-of-government approach to emergency management planning, which includes better prevention/mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies.

2. PREAMBLE

- 2.1. Comprehensive and integrated emergency management is a shared responsibility between all levels of governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. A key function for the Government of Canada is to promote the safety and security of Canada and Canadians. Threats and risks have become more complex, which has led many governments to increase their focus on emergency management issues. This complexity stems not only from the diversity of natural-hazards impacting modern societies but also includes transnational threats such as consequences of terrorism, globalized disease outbreaks, climate change, interdependent critical infrastructure, and attacks on information systems or networks. When these events happen, they can result in significant human and economic losses.
- 2.2. As Canada faces change, the federal government must be positioned to address new threats and risks. It must adopt new ways in how to plan, prepare, and respond to the immediate effects of disasters. The federal government must have the ability to continue operating during emergencies and enhance its resiliency to quickly recover from disasters. Addressing its responsibility in the current risk environment requires on-going federal leadership, timely decision-making, effective communication and coordination of activities and resources at a strategic and operational level. It also requires a sound legislative and policy foundation and efficient collaboration between all levels of government, the private and not-for-profit sectors, and individuals.
- 2.3. The federal government is responsible for emergency management at the national level in its exclusive jurisdictions and on lands and properties under federal responsibility. Provincial and territorial governments exercise responsibility for emergency management within their respective jurisdictions except where legislation allows for direct federal intervention or for shared responsibility. If any emergency threatens to overwhelm the resources of a province or territory, federal institutions may respond to the request or if an emergency has a national implication. A provincial request for assistance during an emergency indicates that the province requires federal support to achieve an objective. While the province may indicate the specific resources and capabilities required, in most instances federal departments and agencies will need to define the appropriate response. Federal institutions can also make preparations in advance of anticipated need or request for assistance from a province or territory.

3. EFFECTIVE DATE

- 3.1. This policy takes effect on December 10, 2009.
- 3.2. It replaces the 1995 *Federal Policy for Emergencies*.

4. AUTHORITY

- 4.1. This policy is established under the authority of the *Emergency Management Act* and applies to all federal institutions. As all Ministers have responsibilities in relation to emergency management, this policy is intended to provide deputy heads with direction for the preparation, maintenance, testing, implementation, exercise and training by a federal institution of mandate specific emergency management plans.

5. CONTEXT

- 5.1. The Government of Canada has adopted an all-hazards approach to emergency management, encompassing four interdependent, but integrated functions: mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Effective emergency management dictates the need for a seamless relationship across all of these emergency management functions.
- 5.2. Within the respective Minister's area of responsibility, federal institutions are responsible for developing, testing, and maintaining mandate-specific emergency management plans and identify risks that are within or related to their area of responsibility, as outlined in the *Emergency Management Act*. A risk-based emergency management cycle should be embedded within an institution's broader integrated planning processes.
- 5.3. The risk assessment aims to gain an understanding of potential risks associated with all types of natural and human-induced hazards and disasters. Such an assessment would also identify the potential impacts of these events on people, property and the environment. Risk assessment can provide the basis on which appropriate prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures can be planned, provide information on likely damage impacts and operating difficulties, and facilitate rapid emergency responses, based on acceptable risk tolerance levels.
- 5.4. Public Safety Canada will lead the coordination of federal government emergency management activities including public communications into a common horizontal approach and will facilitate collaboration and seamless relationships across all federal institutions. In consultation with other government departments, in support of this Policy, Public Safety Canada will provide operational tools, guidelines, and best practices for undertaking all phases of emergency management planning, including conducting risk assessments.

6. DEFINITION

- 6.1. For definition of terms used in this Policy, refer to Appendix A.

7. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1. Under the *Emergency Management Act (EMA)*, the Minister of Public Safety is responsible for exercising leadership relating to emergency management in Canada by coordinating, among federal institutions and in cooperation with the Provinces, Territories and other entities, emergency management activities. Under section 4 of the *EMA*, the Minister of Public Safety's responsibilities include providing advice to government institutions respecting the preparation, maintenance, testing and implementation of emergency management plans. Section 6 of the *EMA* outlines the emergency management responsibilities of each minister accountable to Parliament for a government institution. In accordance with sections 4 and 6 of the *EMA* federal institutions are to:
 - 7.2. Identify the risks that are within or related to their areas of responsibilities and base emergency management plans on the assessment of risks, including those related to critical infrastructure.
 - 7.3. Develop, by using the guidelines provided by Public Safety Canada, emergency management plans related to the federal institution's area of responsibility that address mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
 - 7.4. Develop emergency management plans that address, where appropriate, the risks and interdependencies to strengthen the resiliency and the protection of critical infrastructure within or related to the areas of responsibility.
 - 7.5. Include in the emergency management plans facilitation of collaboration, both within and across sectors, through sector networks and other relevant sub-sector networks, if responsible for a critical infrastructure sector.
 - 7.6. Include in emergency management plans any measures to assist provincial and territorial governments and, through the provincial, territorial governments, local authorities.
 - 7.7. Include in emergency management plans, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, any measures or arrangements to assist in the management of emergencies that impact Canadian citizens or Canadian interests abroad.
 - 7.8. Establish internal structures to provide governance for departmental emergency management activities and make those consistent and interoperable with government-wide emergency management governance structures.
 - 7.9. Provide Public Safety Canada, as requested, with emergency management plans and risk assessments for the purposes of analysis and evaluation of these, in order to contribute to a cohesive emergency management planning process across the federal government.

Public Safety Canada will also coordinate and engage other government departments in government-wide activities, such as interdepartmental consultations and exercises, for the purposes of identifying common linkages, facilitate collaboration and address an integrated emergency management planning government wide.

7.10. Address each function of emergency management in the emergency management planning process, and where appropriate be responsible for:

7.11. Mitigation/Prevention:

- a. Conduct mandate-specific risk assessments, including those affecting critical infrastructure, within or related to their area of responsibility, based on all-hazards risk analysis and risk assessment methodology.
- b. Use the common tools and best practices, as may be provided by Public Safety Canada, to conduct risk assessments, while recognizing pertinent risks related to the individual department.
- c. Develop programs, arrangements or measures, where appropriate, aimed at mitigating risks from hazards, relevant to departmental mandates.
- d. Apply and implement changes, as well as collaborate with stakeholders to implement changes, based on lessons learned and best practices derived from the conduct of training and exercises as well as from response and recovery experiences.

7.12. Preparedness:

- a. Have a sustainable capacity to meet the goals outlined in individual emergency management plans, based on priorities, needs analysis and capability requirements.
- b. Conduct or participate in exercises to test and implement emergency management plans and participate in training with respect to emergency management planning.
- c. Incorporate in the emergency management planning process, lessons learned and best practices derived from the conduct of actual events, training and exercises.
- d. Include in the emergency management plans any program, arrangements, or other measures to provide for the continuity of operation by using the guidelines and best practises provided by Public Safety Canada.
- e. Provide the Government Operations Centre, based on criteria identified by Public Safety Canada, with information collected under the institutions' authorities that affects or can affect Canada's national interests and contributes to national level situational awareness.
- f. Provide post-exercise and post-event information related to whole-of- government response to Public Safety Canada in accordance with the guidelines and improvement process provided to federal institutions.

7.13. Response:

- a. Respond to emergencies, in a manner that is consistent with areas of responsibility, the departmental response plan, and existing arrangements.
- b. Respond to emergencies that require an integrated Government of Canada response, in a manner that is consistent with the overall coordination provided by Public Safety Canada.
- c. Align event specific and departmental plans with the Federal Emergency Response Plan in order to contribute, when requested, to an integrated Government of Canada response.
- d. Support other federal institutions, when requested, and take into account departmental capacity limitations to sustain their primary lead response capacity.
- e. Undertake post-incident analysis and incorporate lessons learned and best practices into emergency management plans.
- f. Provide the Government Operations Centre with information on updated departmental response activities (i.e. information requests, status of nationally coordinated response activities, emerging or changing threats, situational awareness products), in accordance with guidelines provided to federal institutions.
- g. Take the necessary measures to ensure that trained and security cleared liaison officers or subject matter experts are ready to be deployed, and are provided, as required, by the Government Operations Centre to support a federal, integrated response.

7.14. Recovery:

- a. Include in emergency management plans any program, arrangements or other measures respecting the provision of recovery assistance to provincial/territorial governments.
- b. Undertake post-recovery analysis and incorporate lessons learned and best practices into emergency management plans.

7.15. Federal institutions should include in emergency management plans public communication provisions in order to:

- a. Enable effective collaboration and timely decisions throughout all stages of an emergency consistent with the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada.

7.16. Comprehensive Review and Evaluations of Emergency Management Plans:

- a. Federal institutions are responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of their emergency management plans based on a risk management approach.
- b. Provide, on request of Public Safety Canada copies of their emergency management plans for the purpose of analyzing and evaluating these plans.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 8.1. Consistent with the Treasury Board Policy on Evaluation, the Federal Policy for Emergency Management will be evaluated not less than five years after it comes into effect.
- 8.2. Federal institutions are responsible for monitoring adherence to and implementation of the Federal Policy for Emergency Management in their departments. Public Safety Canada will lead the process of evaluating government-wide application of this Policy.
- 8.3. Consistent with the Directive on Evaluation, Public Safety Canada in consultation with federal institutions will develop and implement ongoing performance measurement strategies (measures/methodologies) that institutions will use in insuring that credible and reliable performance data is collected to effectively support evaluation.

9. REPORTING

- 9.1. Federal institutions will provide Public Safety Canada every two years with the information on their activities as they relate to this Policy. Public Safety Canada will provide federal institutions with tools and methodologies to facilitate an integrated approach.
- 9.2. Public Safety Canada will report every two years to the Deputy Ministers' Committee responsible for emergency management issues on the implementation of this policy and on the government-wide readiness of the federal emergency management system, based on the information reported by federal institutions and work undertaken directly by Public Safety Canada.

10. REFERENCES

- 10.1. Government of Canada policies, directives, standards and other documents relevant to this Policy are identified in Appendix B.

Appendix A—Definitions

For purposes of this policy and its supporting directives, the following definitions apply¹.

All-hazard risk approach – An approach that recognizes that the actions required to mitigate the effects of emergencies are essentially the same, irrespective of the nature of the event, thereby permitting an optimization of scarce planning, response and support resources. The intention of all-hazards generic emergency planning is to employ generic methodologies, modified as necessary by particular circumstances. All-hazards incorporates natural and man-made hazards threats including traditional emergency management events such as flooding and industrial accidents; as well as national security events such as acts of terrorism; and cyber events (FERP).

Critical infrastructure – Refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services essential to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians and the effective functioning of government. Critical infrastructure can be stand-alone or interconnected and interdependent within and across provinces, territories and national borders (CISAP).

Emergency management – The prevention and mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies (EMA).

Emergency management plan – Means a program, arrangement or other measure for:

- (a) dealing with an emergency by the civil population; or
- (b) dealing with a civil emergency by the Canadian Forces in accordance with the National Defence Act (EMA).

Government institution – Means any department, branch, office, board, agency, commission, corporation or other body for the administration or affairs of which a minister of the Crown is accountable to Parliament (EMA).

Hazard – A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation (EMF).

Mitigation – Sustained actions taken to eliminate or reduce risks and impacts posed by hazards well before an emergency or disaster occurs; mitigation activities may be included as part of prevention. Measures may be structural (e.g. flood dikes) or non-structural (e.g. land use zoning and building codes) (EMF).

Prevention – Actions taken to avoid the occurrence of negative consequences associated with a given threat; prevention activities may be included as part of mitigation (EMF).

Preparedness – A phase of emergency management consisting in making decisions and taking measures before an emergency, in order to be ready to effectively respond and recover (ECCV).

¹ Definitions originate from the *Emergency Management Act (EMA)*, *Emergency Framework for Canada (EMF)* and, *Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP)*, and *Government of Canada Emergency and Crisis Communication Vocabulary (ECCV)*, *Critical Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan (CISAP)*.

Provincial emergency – An emergency occurring in a province if the province or a local authority in the province has the primary responsibility for dealing with the emergency (EMA).

Response – A phase of emergency management implemented immediately before, during or after an emergency, and consisting in activities aimed at limiting or preventing damage to life, property or the environment (ECCV).

Recovery – A phase of emergency management consisting in activities aimed at restoring normal conditions after an emergency (ECCV).

Resilience – The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure (EMF).

Risk – The combination of the likelihood and the consequence of a specified hazard being realized; refers to the vulnerability, proximity or exposure to hazards, which affects the likelihood of adverse impact (EMF).

Risk-Based – The concept that sound emergency management decision-making will be based on an understanding and evaluation of hazards, risks and vulnerabilities (EMF).

Risk Management – The use of policies, practices and resources to analyze, assess and control risks to health, safety, environment and the economy (EMF).

Sustainable – A sustainable approach is one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (EMF).

Threat – The presence of a hazard and an exposure pathway; threats may be natural or human-induced, either accidental or intentional (EMF).

Vulnerability – The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. It is a measure of how well prepared and equipped a community is to minimize the impact of or cope with hazards (EMF).

Appendix B—Relevant current and future documents in support of the Policy

1. Policy on Government Security
2. Federal Emergency Response Plan
3. Business Continuity Program Standard
4. Emergency Management Planning Guide
5. Risk assessment methodology
6. Policy on Evaluation
7. Communications Policy of the Government of Canada