



Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

Emergency Management Program Annual Compliance Review and Bylaw Revision

1. Recommendation

1. Regional Council receive this report as confirmation that York Region has fulfilled all required program elements to comply with the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04.
2. The Regional Solicitor update the current Emergency Management program bylaw to adopt changes to the Emergency Management Plan and Annexes.
3. The Regional Clerk forward the program bylaw and Emergency Management Plan to Emergency Management Ontario.

2. Purpose

This report updates Council on York Region's activities to meet the 2024 annual requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04. It also provides an overview of additional emergency preparedness and response initiatives to enhance York Region's resilience.

The report recommends that the Regional Solicitor update the program bylaw to incorporate changes to York Region's Emergency Management Plan and Annexes as mandated by legislation, and that the Region forward the updated program bylaw and Emergency Management Plan to Emergency Management Ontario to fulfill legislative requirements.

Key Points:

- York Region completed all annual regulatory requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04 in 2024

- York Region Emergency Management continues to support the northern six municipalities to deliver Emergency Management programs on a cost recovery basis, under the current agreement which is valid until 2026
- York Region Emergency Management has entered into a Direct Resource Agreement to provide support to York Regional Police. This agreement is reviewed annually and has been extended through 2025
- Updates have been made to the York Region Emergency Management Plan, primarily a new Public Works Annex, updated Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- York Region has consistently met the annual regulatory compliance for its Emergency Management Program since legislation came into effect in 2004

3. Background

Each year, Council receives an update on York Region’s Emergency Management program, including any necessary updates to the bylaw and/or Emergency Management Plan. To meet provincially legislated requirements, municipalities must verify completion of all elements outlined in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* which include:

- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- Identification of Critical Infrastructure
- Emergency Management Plan
- Training and Education
- Emergency Exercises
- Public Education and Personal Preparedness

4. Analysis

In addition to completing all mandatory requirements for 2024, York Region partnered with local municipalities to assess and rank hazards and threats.

Each municipality must conduct an annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) to ensure Emergency Management programs are based on the identification and assessment of local hazards.

In 2024, York Region partnered with local municipalities, York Regional Police and other stakeholders to conduct its annual HIRA. Regional staff, subject matter experts and both

conservation authorities reviewed the likelihood and consequences of the hazards most likely to affect York Region.

Top threats to York Region identified in 2024 comparatively to 2023 are noted in Table 1.

Table 1
Top 10 Threats on the 2024 York Region Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

Hazard	2023 Risk Level	2024 Risk Level
Winter Weather/ Ice Storm	Moderate	High
Cyber Attack	Moderate	High
Infectious Diseases	High	High
Tornado	Moderate	Moderate
Electrical Energy Outage (Winter)	Moderate	Moderate
Flooding (severe)	Moderate	Moderate
Active Threat	Moderate	Moderate
Water/wastewater disruption	Moderate	Moderate
Civil Disorder	Low	Moderate
High Wind	Moderate	Moderate

In accordance with best practices, York Region takes an all-hazard approach to emergency planning, preparedness, and mitigation. The all-hazards approach aims to generate high organizational and stakeholder competency in managing foundational components presenting in every emergency and disaster (e.g., evacuations, emergency social services, and notification procedures). This HIRA result focuses exercises, training and public education on the most relevant local hazards and further enhances the ability to respond to these specific threats.

In coordination with local municipalities, the Critical Infrastructure Database has been reviewed and updated

The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* requires each municipality to review and update its critical infrastructure annually. Critical infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that may be deemed to be critical if their failure or disruption significantly jeopardizes the health, safety and security of the Region (e.g., critical water/wastewater treatment facility, vaccine depot, paramedic facilities).

In 2024, York Region partnered with all nine local municipalities and York Regional Police to review and update the critical infrastructure database. This information has been shared with the Province.

The Emergency Management Plan has been reviewed and updated

Each municipality must review and update its emergency plan annually. The Regional Municipality of York's Emergency Plan outlines how the Region will respond to emergencies. The Plan identifies members of the Regional Emergency Control Group and summarizes their roles and responsibilities. The revised Emergency Management Plan is attached and marked as Attachment 1.

Emergency Management partnered with stakeholders to provide staff training and public education

The Public Education and Awareness Program educates the public on local hazards and personal preparedness for emergencies. Key elements of the 2024 program included:

- **Emergency Preparedness Week:** Activities focused on promoting personal preparedness through social media messaging. Our "WHAT IF" campaign, a campaign focused on hazards in York Region resulted in more than seven million views and 19,000 visits to York.ca/BePrepared
- **Community Events:** Public education at events such as Halloween at the Village, in partnership with York Regional Police and York Region Paramedic Services, led to more than 20,000 engagements with community members
- **Fire and Emergency Preparedness Education:** Programs at the Community Safety Village, including summer camps and regular class programming, provided potentially life-saving training to approximately 4,400 children and youth

York Region conducted its annual emergency exercise in partnership with Peel Region Public Works and Regional Emergency Control Group Training

Each municipality in Ontario must conduct an emergency exercise and annual training for their Emergency Control Group members. On October 18, 2024, York Region conducted a full-scale activation of the Regional Emergency Operations Centre and Control Group, in response to a simulated extreme weather event. This year's exercise was conducted over a two-day period in collaboration with Peel Region and York Region Public Works. This exercise complied with the requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. Eighty-five participants were involved, including representatives from Emergency Management Ontario, local municipalities, Regional staff, first responders, Amateur Radio Emergency Service and conservation authorities.

Emergency Management provided annual core training to regional staff and key partners in 2024

As part of annual training program activities, more than 575 York Region staff and partners received training in 2024. Courses offered by York Region's Emergency Management team include Incident Management System (IMS) training (i.e., IMS 100, IMS 200 and IMS 300)

York Region's Emergency Management Conference brought all nine municipalities, stakeholders and key partners together for a day of learning

The York Region Emergency Management Conference took place on November 8, 2024. The theme of this year's conference was "Clouds of Change: Navigating Weather Extremes and Digital Threats".

The conference brought together 160 emergency management stakeholders including representatives from all nine local municipalities, first responders, Emergency Management Ontario, non-governmental organizations, academia, utilities, hospitals, conservation authorities and local school boards. Presentations covered cyber security and aspects of extreme weather risks and impacts, which have been ranked among York Region's highest threats.

York Region's Business Continuity Program supports organizational resiliency and continuity of operations

York Region continues to plan for business disruptions resulting from a loss of staff, facilities or technology. The Business Continuity Program ensures that critical services relied upon by York Region residents can continue to be delivered during emergencies.

Several actions have been undertaken to advance program priority areas, including:

- Initiated procurement of Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery software
- Established York Region's Business Continuity Planning Community of Practice
- Integrated the Region's most time-critical business functions into emergency management plans, resources and training
- Developed an online training module completed by more than 175 Regional staff with roles directly responsible or in support of emergency management

York Region demonstrated leadership in business continuity planning by sharing its journey at the Continuity and Resilience Today Conference. A presentation at the conference showcased York Region's program, contributing to the broader business continuity community, and generating significant interest from the City of Toronto, City of Brampton, Region of Waterloo and Emergency Management Ontario.

York Region provided Emergency Management support to the northern six municipalities

Since 2017, York Region Emergency Management has been supporting the emergency management programs of the northern six municipalities (Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Stouffville) on a cost recovery basis through a Memorandum of Understanding.

In 2024, this program supported these municipalities through the following activities:

1. Emergency Management Program Compliance: This included reviewing and/or updating existing emergency plans and bylaws, updating Hazard Identification Risk Assessments and reviewing Critical Infrastructure data.
2. Emergency Management Training: About 15 in-person and virtual training sessions were conducted to improve operational readiness and emergency response skills.
3. Emergency Exercises: Six individual exercises were designed and facilitated in 2024; these refocused on Incident Management System functionality.
4. Additional support to the northern six municipalities: Included supporting in-person and virtual Emergency Operations Centre activation procedures and other planning initiatives.

York Region provides business continuity planning support to York Regional Police

In 2023, York Region Emergency Management and York Regional Police entered into a partnership agreement to pilot the provision of business continuity support to York Regional Police. The pilot was successful; as a result, York Region entered into a Direct Resource Agreement with York Regional Police to continue providing support through 2024 and beyond. The agreement is reviewed on an annual basis and has been extended for 2025.

York Region provided input into Ontario's review of The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* modernization

On July 3, 2024, the Province introduced its proposed modernization of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* with a focus on these **five areas** as a first step of a phased approach to inform opportunities for a modernized legislative framework.

1. The scope of an emergency and emergency management.
2. One window approach to provincial emergency management coordination.

3. Enhancing coordination between government, broader public sector and external partners.
4. Improving the consistency, quality and inclusivity of emergency management programs.
5. Reflecting how Ontario works with First Nations in emergency management.

On August 24, 2024, York Region staff in collaboration with local municipalities, and York Region's lead Indigenous Relations Advisor, provided a written submission on a discussion guide to Emergency Management Ontario.

The following feedback was provided by York Region:

- Consider the option for municipalities to combine emergency management programs. In a multi-tier municipality, that could mean one regional or county level program, or consolidated lower-tier municipal programs
- Consider a tiered approach to emergency management programs based on population size. Municipalities with smaller population size and less risk should not require the same type/level of emergency program as the large, densely populated municipalities
- Mandate a critical infrastructure assuredness program, including defined roles and responsibilities of the province, municipalities, and private sector
- Align Business Continuity Planning/Continuity of Operations Planning requirements for municipalities with those for the ministries

On December 9, 2024, the government introduced the First Reading of Bill 238, the *Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2024*. This Bill proposed amendments to modernize the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

Given the Provincial Election and the legislature being dissolved, Bill 238 did not receive Royal Assent and is considered abandoned. However, a newly elected government, whether of the same political affiliation or not, may choose to re-introduce the Bill as is or with revisions.

5. Financial Considerations

This report does not present current or anticipated financial changes to the Region's budget or fiscal position and forms part of the approved budget funded from the tax levy.

6. Local Impact

Strong partnerships with local municipalities and key stakeholders are crucial for success in emergency management. In 2024, York Region Emergency Management team continued to

collaborate with its partners to ensure the Region remains prepared and ready to respond to business disruptions and emergencies of various sizes and impacts. They also worked together on HIRA, training, situational awareness mapping and public education activities for residents.

7. Conclusion

York Region has fulfilled all legislative requirements for its Emergency Management program in 2024 and continues to maintain key partnerships with York Regional Police and local municipalities. For more information on this report, please contact Morris Faccin, Manager, Emergency Management at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71212. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

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Approved for Submission:

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Attachment #1 – 2025 Emergency Plan (eDOCS #16497369)