

Executive Summary

This report aims to provide The City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Services Committee with an update on information as it relates to recent business activities within the Emergency Management Section of the Community Safety Department.

The Emergency Management Section provides leadership, guidance and direction to ensure the safety of residents in community emergencies. The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) govern this Section. The Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) and the Greater Sudbury Emergency Management Advisory Panel provide further direction and advice to the Emergency Management Section. This Section offers 24/7 support with a primary focus on the safety of our citizens through the effective management of community risks and emergencies.

Emergency Management

Emergency Response

COVID-19

In early January 2020, Public Health Sudbury & Districts (PHSD) alerted the Infectious Disease Planning and Response Committee (IDPRC) of a viral pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan, China. The IDPRC met on January 24th to discuss the recent developments of the novel coronavirus as well as preparation and response in the event Greater Sudbury was impacted.

On January 27, 2020, City of Greater Sudbury entered Situational Awareness, in support of PHSD through a special convening of the Community Control Group (CCG).

On March 13th 2020, an internal committee was established “CGS COVID -19 Planning and Advisory Committee”, for enhanced monitoring and support to the CCG in response to COVID-19. The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated on March 16th and transitioned shortly after to virtual meetings to comply with social and physical distancing measures.

Mayor Bigger declared a State of Emergency on April 6, 2020, as the outbreak of COVID-19 constituted a significant danger that could result in serious harm or death.

The Emergency Management section has been engaged in discussions with the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) since the onset of the pandemic. Discussions continue weekly with the PEOC where a Municipalities and Ministries update is provided in order for CGS to maintain a situational awareness at the Provincial level.

To ensure community engagement throughout the pandemic the Greater Sudbury Emergency Management Advisory Panel (GSEMAP) has gathered weekly to discuss local challenges, impacts and changes due to COVID. Continued engagement remains a focus to ensure local educational institutions, healthcare agencies, first responders, and leaders from the private sector remain connected and can have their concerns and questions addressed or escalated by CGS Director of Communications, Ian Wood.

The Community Control Group which includes the CAO from Health Sciences North and the Medical Officer of Health from PHSD continue to meet weekly to maintain situational awareness. The focus of our discussions have been on the CGS response to COVID-19 including lessons learned to improve the planning and response for resurgence in the coming months.

Emergency Management is participating in the COVID resurgence planning working group lead

by the General Manager of Corporate Services. Work is underway to review lessons learned, identify gaps, address needs of CGS Services and plan the next steps in the response to COVID. This group includes members from the Community Control Group, the healthcare sector, Economic Development, Social Services, Community Safety, Long Term Care, and Police Services.

Host Community Planning

Annually, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) seeks host communities' assistance to plan for the health, safety and well-being of First Nations community residents in the event there is a need for evacuation due to the threat of flooding or forest fires.

As a result of COVID-19, many traditional host communities were unable to act as host to evacuees due to the risk of illness and spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

In light of COVID-19, OFMEM developed a new framework that would help First Nations residents stay in their communities. The decision to evacuate a community during this time would only be made in exceptional circumstances (i.e., potential threat to life and limb) and only if all other options to keep members in their community have been exhausted or unsuitable.

The City of Greater Sudbury agreed to serve as a host community if a need to relocate members of a First Nation community were to occur in Northwestern Ontario. Emergency Management conducted planning sessions with multiple stakeholders including; Indigenous Services Canada, Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, CGS Paramedic Services, Ontario Health, Health Sciences North, CGS Leisure Services, Greater Sudbury Police Service, and Public Health Sudbury & Districts. The objective of this group was to ensure CGS would be prepared to host evacuees and the safety and well-being of both CGS residents and any visitors would be achieved while hosting through a pandemic. Although the flood risk was very high in the northwest this spring we did not host any visitors from affected communities as they were accommodated by other communities that were, typically, closer to their homes.

Hot Weather Response

The City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) and Public Health Sudbury & Districts (PHSD) have collaborated to develop a Hot Weather Response Plan (HWRP) for Greater Sudbury.

Every day between May 15 and October 15, PHSD monitors weather data from Environment and Climate Change Canada, including temperature and humidex for the City of Greater Sudbury. Additionally, PHSD receives notification from Environment and Climate Change Canada when Heat Warnings will be issued based on forecasted temperatures.

The objectives of the HWRP are:

- To ensure that all agencies working with vulnerable groups are provided with information on what precautions to take when temperatures reach extreme levels
- To coordinate a community response when temperatures reach extreme levels
- To ensure that high-risk populations are cared for when temperatures reach extreme levels
- To provide cooling centres when appropriate
- To activate the City's Emergency Response Plan when appropriate

In response to COVID-19, provincial emergency orders closed facilities that were traditionally available to provide relief for residents during extended heat conditions. These include malls, pools, beaches, libraries and recreational facilities. The closure of municipal facilities added additional challenges as we attempted to meet the needs of the City's most vulnerable throughout extended heat alerts.

For this reason, the City modified the Hot Weather Response Plan to align with available CGS resources and the provincial emergency orders that were in place at that time.

To ensure emergency heat relief assistance is available and accessible to residents in need, the City in consultation with PHSD made the following modifications:

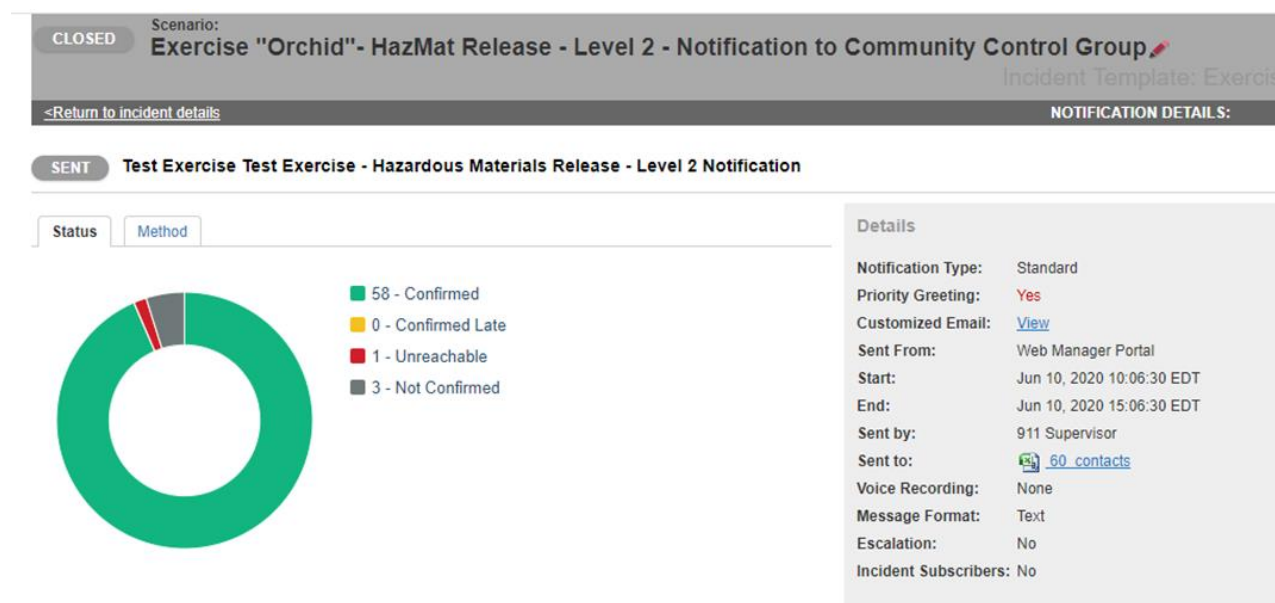
- Extended the hours of operation for the Sudbury Arena which was used to support the downtown vulnerable population for meal services and to act as a shelter from the elements
- Enhanced and provided support to the YMCA for its use as a shelter from the heat, which also included extending their hours from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily
- Red Cross Personal Disaster Assistance was offered when needed for the distribution of bottled water and completion of wellness checks of vulnerable residents
- Use of transit buses as cooling stations throughout the community
- Focused public education and awareness campaign was launched which saw enhanced communication to the public on ways to stay cool at home and while outdoors aligned with Public Health Sudbury and Districts

Training

In light of COVID-19, the first test of the Public Alerting System for 2020 scheduled for March 25th “Exercise Mauve” was cancelled. The second hazardous material quarterly testing for 2020, “Exercise Orchid”, was held on June 10th. Communication process were tested between emergency response and partner agencies who would be involved in a hazardous material release event.

First responders including Emergency Management, Public Health and Vale staff also assembled via the emergency teleconference line, which tested communication systems and processes.

The assessment of the CCG notification process was positive with 94% of CCG members confirming receipt of the notification within 5 minutes.



This exercise provided a training opportunity and ongoing awareness for the Community Control Group and staff. Activities such as this assist in continuously improving our Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) by identifying gaps and assists responding and partner agencies in improving their response procedures.