



ESS CONNECTIONS

National Municipal ESS Network (NMESSN)

Volume 1, Issue 3, Summer 2009

York Region Exercise

York Region held its first open exercise, inviting members of the general public to participate during Emergency Preparedness Week in May 2009. York Region and the Town of Markham collaborated on this exciting public education opportunity which featured a mock Reception Centre.

Emergency Social Services (ESS) in York Region has conducted two mock Reception Centre exercises in Vaughan and Markham in the past year.

Members of the public were invited to participate in "Exercise Last Watt," along with the volunteers, staff, and students who were testing Reception Centre procedures. Event organizers encouraged nearby residents to register for services and get a hot meal while learning more about personal emergency preparedness.

The exercise tested ESS components used during a major power failure that lasts more than three days. Students and teachers from Milliken Mills High School role-played evacuees who were coming into the mock Reception Centre for a hot meal, warm shelter, and information. More than 80 people and 30 mock pets were registered in the mock Reception Centre. A hot meal was served to over 100 people during the four hour exercise.

York Region's integrated registration process was the star of the event. Evacuees, staff, and volunteers praised the simultaneous registration with Red Cross (family reunification) and York Region (client requirement assessment).

Other services provided by the mock Reception Centre included Pet Registration, Health Services, Clothing, Lodging, Personal Services, and

Information Services.

The mock Reception Centre was managed by York Region and jointly operated by York Region and the Town of Markham with staff and volunteers from:

- Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Canadian Red Cross, Region of York Branch
- Salvation Army
- St. John Ambulance
- Amateur Radio Emergency Services
- Milliken Mills High School (students and teachers)



Emergency Preparedness Week in Toronto

An Emergency Preparedness Week "Survivor Event" was held at Westview Centennial Secondary School overnight starting at 4:00 pm Thursday through to 8:00 am Friday. This event challenged students to spend the night in a Reception Centre environment using only the contents of their own survival kit. During the event students learned through games and interactive programming about topics such as personal preparedness, risks in Toronto, dealing with individuals with special needs, disaster first aid, and emergency communications.

The event was a joint partnership between the Office of Emergency Management, Emergency Management Ontario, and the Toronto District School Board. As always, we had great support from our partner agencies in Toronto Public Health, Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, Emergency Communications, and the Salvation Army who helped make this event a success.

We managed to get the word out on Emergency Preparedness week in some fairly large-scale ways:

- The Mayor's proclamation was displayed at both City Hall and Metro Hall, in addition to being highlighted on City's internet and intranet sites.
- The Rogers Centre "JaysVision" production of Emergency Preparedness messages and announcements: City of Toronto messages were displayed on the JumboTron, announced over the PA system, and ran on stadium ribbon banners that included links to our website several times during the Blue Jays' home games this week.
- The Monday morning news item (messages sent to all City staff) and InsideTO home page contained Emergency Preparedness messages and links to our website. In addition, links were added to the Toronto.ca pages to direct the public to the OEM web

page for more information about personal preparedness.

- Our <http://www.toronto.ca/oem> website has been updated with a number of new items and links. We have included a link to the City's new newsfeed service that allows individuals and groups to register to receive real-time public information messages directly from the City of Toronto. We have also included links to our newly developed guides for people with disabilities and special needs and to the City's Our Toronto: <http://www.toronto.ca/ourtoronto/spring2009/citynews/article02.utf8.htm> Winter/Spring issue that has an important pull out section on emergency preparedness and planning your emergency kit.

Thanks again to all of you who helped make Emergency Preparedness Week 2009 a great success.

Purchase your NMESSN membership by filling out the form below and sending in with your payment (chqs made out to ESSA)

COMMUNITY:	
CONTACT PERSON:	
EMAIL:	
PHONE:	
ADDRESS:	
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED:	
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP	\$125 ANNUALLY
<i>Municipal ESS</i>	This membership entitles general members to participate on monthly conference calls including agendas and minutes, receipt of quarterly newsletters, and access to information-sharing website and resources.
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP	\$100 ANNUALLY
<i>Emergency Response Agencies & other levels of Government</i>	This membership entitles associate members to participate in quarterly conference calls, receive quarterly newsletters, have an opportunity to speak to the network about their agency (via conference call), and access the information-sharing website and resources.
SPONSOR MEMBERSHIP	\$500 ANNUALLY
<i>Same as Associate Membership but includes the opportunity to promote your organization/agency</i>	This membership entitles the sponsor member to the benefits included with the Associate level membership PLUS includes opportunities to promote their organization and/or agency through the distribution of their information & brochures at any in-person meetings and on the information-sharing website and resources.
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	\$50 ANNUALLY
<i>Students studying Emergency Management & ESS</i>	This membership entitles the student member to full general membership benefits.

Research Study Results: Planning for At-Risk Populations

Susan Gilbert

Editor's Note: In the last edition of the NESS Newsletter (Winter, 2008), we featured an article about the Functional Needs Framework (FNF) and its value as an emergency planning tool. Susan Gilbert has recently completed a study which investigated how Canadian emergency managers are planning for at-risk populations and their awareness and use of the FNF. Read all about it below.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, conducted in the fall of 2008, was to examine how Canadian emergency practitioners are planning for and with at-risk people in their communities. Specifically, the research sought to determine whether Canadian emergency practitioners are aware of the Functional Needs Framework (FNF), and if so, if they are using the FNF as the basis for their planning efforts. This study also sought to identify barriers to using the FNF and explored how emergency practitioners who are not using the Framework currently plan for and with at-risk populations.

NESS Network as Study Participants

Fifty-seven research participants from four existing emergency management networks were invited to participate in the study, including the members of the Council of Emergency Social Services Directors and the National Emergency Social Services Network.

Key Internet Survey Findings

The Internet survey portion of the study which surveyed emergency social services (ESS) managers from across Canada revealed the following results:

- 52% of ESS managers surveyed are planning for at-risk people in their communities.
- The three most often included at-risk populations are people with disabilities, the frail elderly and non-English speakers, followed by children, homeless people and other groups.
- 68.4% of ESS managers surveyed reported that they use a collaborative strategy to plan for/with at-risk people in their communities
- 63% percent of Canadian ESS managers are aware of the FNF
- Of ESS managers who are aware of the FNF, over 84% responded that they are not using the FNF in their planning efforts
- The main reasons for not implementing the approach included that managers

need more information about the Framework, as well as the lack of time and key resources such as templates and checklists

- Almost all survey respondents (93.8%) indicated that they would consider using the FNF in future as a basis upon which to plan for and with at-risk populations

Study Conclusions

1. This study revealed that two-thirds of ESS practitioners are aware of the FNF, whereas less than one quarter (21%) of Ontario Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMC) are aware of it. This finding suggests that planning for at-risk populations is primarily the responsibility of ESS, rather than a broad-based emergency management consideration.
2. Most emergency practitioners are not using the FNF in their planning work.
3. Why are practitioners not using the FNF in their work? This study's conclusion is that the most common reason is that practitioners do not believe that they know enough about the FNF to use it in their planning efforts.
4. With reference to current planning practices, this study has determined that most (63%) emergency practitioners are planning for at-risk populations. However, when at-risk populations are considered, these efforts are neither consistent nor formalized. Practitioners noted that they plan in a general way for at-risk people or on an "ad-hoc basis", or when an emergency reveals the need to consider specific groups of people.
5. Collaborative planning strategies—that is, planning for emergencies with at-risk people and the advocacy groups that support them—are used more often within emergency social services planning efforts (68%) than in community emergency management planning efforts (26%).
6. There is a lack of clarity with regard to whose responsibility it is to plan for and

with at-risk people. A comment expressed by several CEMCs is that planning for at-risk populations is the responsibility of emergency social services planners, and is, therefore, outside their jurisdiction. For the safety and well-being of our communities, emergency practitioners cannot afford to view people at-risk in separate, "special needs" categories, apart from the population at large, and as the sole responsibility of one segment of emergency management. Our communities are kaleidoscopes of shifting needs and capacities and it is every emergency practitioner's responsibility to consider the diversity of needs and capacities in Canadian communities and base planning, response and recovery efforts on this principle.

Recommendations

The study offers four key recommendations to improve planning for people at-risk in Canadian communities:

1. Federal and provincial endorsement of the FNF
2. The development of FNF-based training, tools and templates
3. Initiation of provincial FNF pilot projects
4. Embedding collaboration with people at-risk in all community emergency management planning efforts.

Final Thoughts

A view of people who are at-risk from a "special needs" perspective is not a clear or comprehensive lens through which to plan for people at-risk in Canadian communities. All Canadians, at some point in their lives, may have a functional limitation caused by or coinciding with an emergency. Adapting community emergency planning to reflect a function-based approach will help emergency managers to ensure that all members of the community are included in preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

Vancouver ESS Pet Container & EP for you and your Pets Jackie Kloosterboer – Emergency Planning Coordinator

We all remember the heart-wrenching broadcasts of Hurricane Katrina that showed evacuees who refused to leave life-threatening situations because it meant abandoning their pets. As a direct result, **Dr. Ben Weinberger** - a veterinarian who donated his time to the pets of New Orleans after the devastation – was moved to form the City of Vancouver ESS Volunteer Pet Committee. Other pet committee members include volunteers from the SPCA, Vancouver Animal Shelter, Vancouver Parks Board, ESS, and the Canadian Animal Assistance Team (CAAT). Under Dr. Weinberger's leadership, volunteers have spent countless hours developing a plan to ensure our 4-legged friends will not be forgotten in the event of a disaster.

As part of the City of Vancouver Emergency Pet Plan, a container was purchased to hold the necessary supplies to look after pets during a major emergency or disaster. Supplies included in the container are kennels, bowls, litter trays, pet food, and numerous other items that would be required to care for pets.

The container was unveiled by **Jackie Kloosterboer** – ESS Coordinator, **Dr. Weinberger**, **John Gray** – Vancouver Animal Shelter and **Kevin Wallinger** – Director of Emergency Management, on the grounds of the PNE during Emergency Preparedness week. The City of Vancouver has entered into a partnership agreement with the PNE to use the Forum Building as a triage centre for injured and lost pets; the pet container is stored there. A similar agreement is in place with Canada West Veterinary Specialists & Critical Care Hospital near the PNE, the destination for injured pets that require emergency care during a disaster. The Vancouver Animal Shelter and the SPCA are key partners in the program. In many of the city's smaller ESS activations, these organizations help provide support when evacuees need help with their pets.

Vancouver currently has 27 "People" containers in place. The majority of the "People" containers are located at Vancouver community centres and contain cots, blankets, water, food, and other supplies that would be required to open a Reception Centre or Group Lodging

Centres to look after a displaced population until they can return home. We know many evacuees will have pets and part of the ESS plan includes looking after pets at Reception or Group Lodging Centres.

The key to better surviving a disaster is to ensure you, your families and of course, your pets are prepared. To teach people to be prepared for both themselves and for their pets, a training session was also launched during EP Week by Jackie Kloosterboer. This session is part of the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP) series and covers the necessary steps to ensure residents and their pets are ready for any type of emergency or disaster they may be faced with.

For information on the City of Vancouver ESS Pet Program or NEPP, contact Jackie Kloosterboer, Emergency Planning Coordinator at jackie.kloosterboer@vancouver.ca or 604 829 4373.



National Municipal ESS Network

PO Box 50029, South Slope RPO
Burnaby, BC V5J 5G3

Phone: 604-435-1442

Fax: 866-824-7505

Email: execdirector@essa.ca