

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Municipal Emergency Plan 2025, as set out in Attachment 1 of the February 19, 2025, Community Services report CS02834, be approved.

Requested Action	Decision required		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	N/A	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Conditions for service success
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaw 19091 - Emergency Management Bylaw 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 10, 2020, Citizen Services report CR_8014, Emergency Advisory Committee - Spring 2020 Update July 6, 2021, Citizen Services report CS00677, Emergency Management Governance and Risk Assessment - Audit Recommendations November 1, 2022, Office of the City Manager report OCM01541, Emergency Management Advisory Committee Annual Update - Verbal report May 8, 2023, Office of the City Manager report OCM01913, Emergency Management Agency Update - Verbal report January 23, 2024, Office of the City Manager report OCM02287 Emergency Management Program Annual Update August 15, 2024, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services report EFRS02542 Emergency Management Program Update 		

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Executive Summary

- The effectiveness of the City's Emergency Management Program relies on the relationships between three primary groups: the Emergency Advisory Committee, the Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Emergency Management, along with compliance with provincial regulatory requirements.
- In 2025, the City's Emergency Management Program will continue to improve and mature by being prepared to:
 - help Edmontonians during significant emergency events, and
 - help to support Edmonton's regional and national neighbours through environmental emergencies such as wildfires and floods.
- Bylaw 19091 - Emergency Management Bylaw requires the Emergency Advisory Committee to approve the updated Municipal Emergency Plan. The City of Edmonton's Emergency Management Agency has reviewed the updated plan.
- The Emergency Advisory Committee is requested to approve the 2025 Municipal Emergency Plan (Attachment 1). For 2025, Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 reflect annual meetings for the Emergency Advisory Committee and Emergency Management Agency. These updates are made to ensure compliance with the Provincial legislation.

REPORT

Complying with the Government of Alberta's *Emergency Management Act* and Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation, there are three City of Edmonton bodies that govern, lead and operationalize the City's Emergency Management Program:

- Emergency Advisory Committee - The Mayor is the Chair and all Councillors present at a meeting are members of the Emergency Advisory Committee. In addition to regular meetings of the Emergency Advisory Committee, the Mayor and the City Manager have the option to call special meetings of the Committee as emergencies arise¹. The Emergency Advisory Committee approves the City of Edmonton's Emergency Management Plan.
- Emergency Management Agency - The City Manager is the Director of the Agency, which consists of the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief of Community Safety and Risk, Deputy City Managers, the Chief People Officer and City Solicitor, and the Chief of Staff to the City Manager's Office.
- Office of Emergency Management (OEM) - The Office of Emergency Management is situated within Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and creates, implements and maintains an all-hazards emergency management program that prepares the City to respond to and recover from major emergencies and disasters. During a major emergency or disaster, the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), a function of OEM, operationalizes the Emergency Management Plan.

¹ From the *Emergency Management Act* an emergency is "an event that requires prompt co-ordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the safety, health or welfare of people or to limit damage to property or the environment"

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City of Edmonton Emergency Management 2024 Year in Review

In 2024, the Office of Emergency Management, in collaboration with regional and provincial agencies, navigated a challenging year marked by 28 major events over 183 days, including 49 days with two simultaneous activations and two days with three simultaneous activations. Running multiple activations requires a high level of coordination and each activation requires a unique team equipped to address the specific incident. A total of 4,128 staff members from municipal and provincial entities coordinated and managed strategic response efforts to these events. These numbers include the activation to support the coordinated encampment response between January and September 2024. In addition to increasing service demand, this program proactively works with internal and external partners to build relationships, identify gaps and develop emergency preparedness exercises in both full-scale and tabletop formats.

Under the direction of the City Manager as the Director of the Emergency Management Agency, the OEM manages the City's Emergency Management Program. The accomplishments from 2024 have been shared below in line with the four pillars of the emergency management cycle:

- Prevention and mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

Prevention and Mitigation

OEM coordinates and connects work in Administration and external agencies towards prevention and early detection of potential risks. OEM conducts hazard identification through a collaborative effort with the corporate Enterprise Risk Management to annually review the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment program.

This process involves:

1. Identifying potential hazards and threats that could impact the City of Edmonton;
2. Assessing the likelihood and potential impact of each hazard; and
3. Ranking hazards based on their probability, impact and changing risk factors.

This process provides Administration with a comprehensive understanding of risks and threats, and enables effective mitigation strategies and emergency response plans. Using the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment program aligns the City of Edmonton's approach with that of the Government of Alberta.

The 2025 corporate strategic risk profile presented to the September 4, 2024, Audit Committee through Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02497 Annual Corporate Strategic Risk Profile informs the City's Emergency Management Program. To be prepared for strategic risks related to the Emergency Management Program, the City's Municipal Emergency Plan considers hazards that have the potential to pose major risks to Edmonton as a community or require the City's intervention.

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Similar to 2024, extreme weather risks, including cold weather risk to vulnerable populations and critical infrastructure and hot/dry weather risks which increase the potential for wildfires and heat-related impacts to infrastructure and health, are being actively monitored and addressed. The City's monitoring efforts are aided by the ongoing briefings and guidance provided by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency through the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre.

Preparedness

Administration uses the Incident Command System (ICS) as the foundation for managing operational incidents and events. To maintain training standards, the Office of Emergency Management adheres to the guidelines set by ICS Canada and the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, the governing authority in Alberta. In 2024, the Office of Emergency Management offered 12 ICS courses: seven multi-day ICS200 sessions, five multi-day ICS300 sessions and in addition administered 100 ICS 100 online courses. OEM's training approach emphasizes interdisciplinary learning to show how different agencies handle emergencies. These are multi-agency ICS training sessions that include the Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services, Alberta Health Services Emergency Medical Services, other Administration members and external partners collaborating during exercises.

Planning and preparations for 65 partner agencies were completed and in place to support the annual "Get Ready In The Park" event, which aligns with the Federal Public Safety Canada Emergency Preparedness Week each May. This event brings people together in an interactive, educational environment to inform them, regardless of age, about the importance of emergency management. The planning involved in this event demonstrates strong and aligned partnerships between agencies across Edmonton and the surrounding region.

Response and Recovery

The City of Edmonton received two Provincial Requests for Assistance from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency due to large wildfires in Fort McMurray and Jasper. The following table illustrates the scale of each activation and the staff redeployments required to support each effort:

Wildfire	Number of Days Activated	Evacuees	Unique City staff working on-site at reception centres
Fort McMurray	6	1,845 Registered 6,600 Evacuees	118
Jasper	43	2,856 Registered 25,000 Evacuees	308

The budget and financial implications section of this report provides the Emergency Advisory Committee with details on the expenditures and reimbursements related to responding to these two Requests for Assistance.

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Aside from wildfire support, examples of events that activated the Emergency Operations Centre included:

- Encampment support
- Canada Day and New Year's Eve celebrations
- Corporate contingency planning
- NHL Playoff games

The Office of Emergency Management's Emergency Support Response Team (ESRT) helps people displaced during emergencies or disasters by meeting immediate needs like shelter, food and clothing. Depending on the type and severity of the emergency, ESRT may open a reception centre. Aside from the dedicated staff from Office of Emergency Management, ESRT has 985 City staff members who support large activations as needed. In addition, staff in specialized roles such as animal control officers, peace officers and communications professionals support ESRT during activations.

Including provincial wildfire support provided in 2024, ESRT responded to 62 calls for service, supporting 6,198 displaced persons requiring temporary emergency accommodations and 5,343 people requiring further assistance. For all activations, the City contracts with the Canadian Red Cross Society when individuals require temporary accommodations. In addition to those received at reception centres for the Fort McMurray and Jasper wildfires, many of these include Edmontonians displaced from their homes due to structure fires, gas leaks and other events that make their residence unsafe based on an assessment from EFRS and/or EPS.

ESRT was able to use a City of Edmonton facility as a Rapid Emergency Support Terminal (REST) to support evacuees for the 2024 Hazard Season. This building was also known as the Kennedale Site, located at 12814-58 Street. The opportunity to use a city-owned facility that was in operational transition reduced operating pressures on both the EXPO Centre and the City's recreation facilities.

Delivering the Emergency Management Program in 2025

The City's approach to emergency management is outlined in the Municipal Emergency Plan. The Plan, in conjunction with the Emergency Management Program, helps support Edmonton's resiliency by:

- ensuring the protection and preservation of life, safety, health and property;
- minimizing the effects of the incident on the city and its inhabitants;
- minimizing loss or damage to property and the environment;
- maintaining and restoring essential services; and
- facilitating the earliest possible coordinated response, mitigation and equitable recovery efforts.

Attachment 1 provides the 2025 version of this document for Emergency Advisory Committee approval. The City of Edmonton's Emergency Management Agency reviewed the updated plan. The changes for the 2025 plan are Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 to reflect annual meetings for the

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Emergency Advisory Committee and Emergency Management Agency. These updates are made to ensure compliance with the Provincial legislation.

Activities in 2025

In addition to emergency activations, the Emergency Management Program engages annually in a number of activities including:

- Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Analysis: Conducting a thorough risk assessment to identify potential hazards and vulnerabilities within the community. This will inform mitigation strategies and resource allocation.
- Emergency Response Training: Developing and delivering comprehensive training programs for emergency responders, including: first responders, law enforcement, medical personnel and volunteers. This includes ICS training, tabletop exercises and full-scale exercises.
- Public Outreach and Education Campaigns: Conducting ongoing public education and outreach campaigns to raise awareness of potential hazards, promote preparedness and provide information on emergency response procedures.
- Municipal Emergency Plan: Testing and evaluating response capabilities and identifying areas for improvement. This can include tabletop and full-scale exercises involving the Emergency Management Agency and the Emergency Advisory Committee. The Office of Emergency Management is working on a full-scale exercise with the University of Alberta, local authorities and partners from across the corporation. This exercise will be held in fall 2025. OEM is also developing, inclusive of partner agencies, tabletop exercises dealing with Wildland-Urban interface and a CP train derailment within the City of Edmonton.
- Business Continuity Planning: Identifying and prioritizing Tier 1 and 2 services that need to continue in the event of a severe labour disruption.
- Preparations for expected activations: This includes developing and reviewing plans for expected activations, for example major civic events and/or seasonal emergency events such as wildfires.

As part of overall continuous improvement for 2025, the Office of Emergency Management is planning to focus on three main projects:

- Wildfire Risk Management Strategy: In addition to efforts outlined above, Administration is in the early stages of developing a Wildfire Strategy that will aim to mitigate Edmonton's wildfire risk. Led by the Urban Planning and Economy Department, this strategy aims to take a long term look at the progressive risks and future resilience of Edmonton's urban-wildland interface.
- Long-Term Recovery Plan Development: Develop a long-term recovery plan to better prepare for the fourth pillar in the emergency management continuum, 'Recovery'. This will address the social, economic and environmental impacts of emergencies including strategies for rebuilding infrastructure, supporting businesses and assisting individuals and families.

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- **Emergency Management Review:** In addition to the Emergency Support Response Team audit in 2024, a third-party review was completed of the emergency management program as a whole to recommend changes to ensure future sustainability. The draft report is currently in review.

Budget/Financial Implications

2024 Wildfire Cost Recovery

Total support costs for 2024 were \$11.64 million to support two communities impacted by wildfires. The support costs for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) were \$1 million, and the support costs for Jasper were \$10.64 million. An invoice was issued to RMWB for \$1 million in September 2024 for the 2024 evacuation centre support provided to that community. RMWB is currently in the process of working with the Canadian Red Cross to review costs prior to making the final payment.

The Town of Jasper was invoiced for \$237,000 in January 2025 for the 2024 mobilization component of support provided to that community. A second invoice will be issued by the end of Q1 2025 for evacuation centre costs, estimated to be \$10.4 million, as time is needed to compile and provide all supporting documentation.

2023 Wildfire Cost Recovery

Total 2023 wildfire costs for City support were \$16.9 million. The Northwest Territories evacuation center costs of \$10.4 million were recovered from the Government of Northwest Territories in September 2024. Alberta mobilization costs of \$2.5 million were fully recovered through mutual aid agreements from the impacted communities in Q1 2024. Alberta evacuation centre costs of \$4.0 million were submitted to the Province through the Disaster Recovery Program. The \$4.0 million has yet to be recovered as the Province and the City continue to work with the impacted communities to confirm costs per municipal authority.

Community Insight

The City of Edmonton's Emergency Management Program emphasizes coordinated action between individuals, communities, industry, government and mutual aid partners for effective emergency planning and response. While there are general management standards, responses are tailored to each specific incident. The lived experience of evacuees from various activations has led to program adaptations and expansions, including measures to address diverse needs such as providing halal meals, ensuring pet safety and security, enhancing stress management through partnerships and supporting people of different faiths.

The program also recognizes City employees as key participants, especially those who operationalize the program. During stressful situations and extended deployments, like wildfires, the City's health and safety program focuses on supporting psychological well-being. Following ICS best practices, emergencies and incidents are managed using operational periods that separate work and rest. The City's large, skilled workforce helps offset the core service delivery

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team's workload, while also considering the impacts on staff who temporarily shift from their regular roles to support the emergency response.

GBA+

Climate change-related events in Edmonton disproportionately impact vulnerable populations², including seniors, youth and children, Indigenous peoples, racialized populations, people with disabilities, pregnant individuals, frontline emergency responders, residents of northern and remote communities, socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and those who are immunocompromised or have pre-existing illnesses. Recognizing these heightened risks informs the City's tailored approach to meeting diverse needs.

Emergency displacement also has disproportionate effects, particularly for people with disabilities, those who primarily speak languages other than English, those with limited access to immediate emergency funds and those who have experienced prior trauma. The adaptable Emergency Management Program, in partnership with various organizations, offers appropriate support based on individual and community circumstances. Aligning with the Corporate Indigenous Framework and Corporate Accessibility Guidelines, the program strives for inclusive and compassionate responses for all Edmontonians and others requiring the City's assistance.

Environment and Climate Review

An Edmonton-specific study found the impacts of climate change could cause direct annual costs of approximately \$1 billion by the 2050s and up to \$4 billion by the 2080s³. Unless there are significant local and global efforts⁴ to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, climate change will have serious and continued impacts on Edmonton. Processes (including emergency management) must adapt and evolve. For instance, with a higher risk of future wildfires, a drone program was launched in spring 2024 to provide surveillance and early identification of fire hazards in the river valley. This work has led to faster response times and safer approaches for first responders.

Attachment

1. Municipal Emergency Plan 2025

² <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/climate-change-health/populations-risk.html>

³ Boyd, R. 2022. Costs of inaction: Economic impacts of climate change on Edmonton.

⁴ The City of Edmonton's two climate strategies, the Energy Transition Strategy and the Climate Adaptation Strategy chart the path forward for Edmonton to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change risks and impacts. The City of Edmonton has taken steps over the past year to advance these strategies. Council approved an additional \$376 million of capital and operating spending related to the Energy Transition Strategy and \$5.5 million related to Climate Adaptation over the 2023-2026 budget cycle.