



## Report to County Council

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**From:** Andrea Loughlean, Manager of Emergency Management & Elgin-Middlesex Regional Fire School

**Date:** August 13, 2024

**Subject:** Modernization of Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act Feedback

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### **Recommendation(s):**

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THAT the report titled “Modernization of Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act Feedback” from the Manager of Emergency Management & Elgin-Middlesex Regional Fire School dated August 13, 2024 be received and filed.

### **Introduction:**

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On July 3, 2024 the province and Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) engaged its partners and stakeholders on proposed modernization of the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act (EMCPA). Engagement was focused on 5 key areas to help inform opportunities for a modernized legislative framework. These 5 focus areas include:

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

The County’s Emergency Management Department prepared feedback through discussions with subject matter experts, CEMCs across Ontario, and Emergency Management Ontario representatives, as well as review of the following legislation and reports:

[Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act](#)  
[Ontario Regulation 380/04](#)  
[Order in Council 1739/2022](#)

[Engagement on Proposed Modernization of the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act & Discussion Guide](#)  
[Improving Assessment of the Quality and Sufficiency of Emergency Management Programs in Ontario \(IQEMPO\) Executive Summary](#)  
[Provincial Emergency Management Strategy and Action Plan](#)  
[Provincial Emergency Management Strategy and Action Plan – Annual Report 2023](#)  
[CSA Z1600, Emergency and Continuity Management Program](#)  
[Emergency Management Accreditation Program \(EMAP\), Emergency Management Standard](#)  
[Alberta’s Emergency Management Act](#)  
[British Columbia’s Emergency and Disaster Management Act](#)  
[British Columbia’s Modernized emergency management legislation](#)

Thorough research shows areas to commend, to caution, and to offer feedback for future consideration of the modernization of the EMCPA.

### **Background and Discussion:**

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Since 2022, EMO has undergone considerable changes. Many of these changes have been highly anticipated, such as increased staffing of Field Officers to better support municipalities, province wide access to public education materials through an online portal, and the launch of the Community Emergency Preparedness Grant (CEPG) funding. Conversely, the release of reports such as the Provincial Emergency Management Strategy and Action Plan (PEMSAP) (2022) and Improving Assessment of the Quality and Sufficiency of Emergency Management Programs in Ontario (IQEMPO) Executive Summary (2023) have raised some questions as to the potential implications for municipalities if implemented. Both reports are referred to, directly or indirectly, throughout the Modernization Discussion Guide. It should be noted that EMO staff were not authorized to share the full IQEMPO report when requested.

The EMCPA has not been comprehensively updated in over 15 years; as such, the modernization of the EMCPA has the potential to support emergency management best practices and standards while improving clarity, collaboration, and efficiency.

The following are suggested changes to the modernization of the EMCPA that speak to each Focus Area and would benefit Elgin County and its lower tier municipalities, as well as others across the province.

#### **Focus Area 1**

- Clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and functions for each of the following partners/stakeholders: Province, Ministries, EMO, Field Officers, Municipalities, Program Committee, Control group, as well as other municipal departments (i.e.; prevention efforts are often inherently undertaken by Planning, Engineering, Public Works, Water, IT, etc.).
- Clearly identify/extend authority and power allotted to head of council during declaration of emergency (i.e.; evacuation orders, travel orders, etc.).
- Differentiate between politically driven declarations and emergency declarations (i.e.; declaration of emergency due to EMS offload delays vs. significant flooding)

### Focus Area 2 and 3.

- Creation of a centralized resource database, including people, supplies, equipment, facilities, and information, that is maintained by EMO and accessible by municipalities. Pre-established MOUs could further aid in timely resource acquisition, eliminate price gouging as demand increases during emergencies, and significantly lessen delays in response when kind/type, cost, financial responsibility, etc. can be pre-determined.
- Clear understanding of capabilities available within the Province, Ministries, and EMO would aid in response and improved allocation of efforts.
- Implement provincially established Hazard identification and Risk Assessments (HIRA) for each municipality to capitalize on the expertise, knowledge, data, and technology the province has access to, that is not accessible to municipalities.

### Focus Area 4

- Extend compliance timeline. Conducting a full emergency management program review every 5 years will allow municipalities time from the previous compliance to determine improvement objectives, develop and implement change strategy, practice and test changes, and prepare for next compliance with a more robust Emergency Management program. Currently, it can be difficult, within the year, to make necessary changes to meet legislative requirements – particularly those municipalities with multiple jurisdictions to manage.
- Expand eligible training for annual compliance to include training on area hazards, response, roles/responsibilities, and specialty training (i.e.; emergency management training completed in 2023 in Elgin County, such as Emergency Social Services Training, Crisis Communications Training, as well as the Petroleum Wells and Severe Weather workshops are currently not eligible in lieu of legislative compliance training).
- Expand Alert Ready language translation. At present the only available languages that can be disseminated are English and French, which does not effectively represent a vast majority of the population in Ontario.
- Increased efficiency is required for upper tier municipalities that oversee EM programs for lower tiers, in that the same task is not repeated several times over.

### Focus Area 5

- Ongoing communication with First Nation's communities and partners is essential to building relationships and determining community need specific to First Nation's communities.
- Empower and encourage municipalities, through legislation, to develop and foster relationships, collaboration, mutual aid agreements, resource sharing, and support of neighbouring First Nation's communities.

Given the potential impact, it is requested that EMO's final suggestions for modernization be presented to municipalities with an opportunity for feedback.

### **Financial Implications:**

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The possibility or magnitude of financial implication for the County or its lower tiers is yet to be determined and is dependent on the changes implemented by the province. As examples, implementing mandatory mitigation measures for all critical infrastructure may result in substantial financial implication, whereas significantly increasing the legislative requirements for compliance may in turn exceed current staffing capabilities.

**Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

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<b>Serving Elgin</b>	<b>Growing Elgin</b>	<b>Investing in Elgin</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need.  <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need.  <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth.  <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment.  <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future.  <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

**Local Municipal Partner Impact:**

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At present it is unclear the magnitude of the implications that the modernization of the EMCPA may bring to upper or lower tier municipalities. The potential for increased workload, which may or may not exceed existing capabilities, as well as potential financial implications, among others are possible. It should be noted that EMO was unable to share the project scope or timeline when requested.

This stated, the modernization of the EMCPA has the potential for increased benefit to the municipalities as well with the potential for better alignment with industry best practices supported by the province, increased collaboration, clarity of roles and responsibilities, increased efficiency, among others.

**Communication Requirements:**

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The Modernization of the EMCPA Discussion Guide was discussed with Emergency Management Program Committee (EMPC) members during recent EMPC meetings. In subsequent communication, lower tier municipal CEMCs/A-CEMCs have been extended the opportunity to submit feedback to the Elgin County Emergency Management Department to be included in the County submission.

**Conclusion:**

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Council members are encouraged to submit feedback to the Elgin County Emergency Management Department, in coordination with your local municipal councils, or directly to EMO at one of the addresses below:

**Email**

[EMOPolicy@Ontario.ca](mailto:EMOPolicy@Ontario.ca)

**Mail**

Emergency Management Policy and Governance Branch  
Emergency Management Ontario  
Treasury Board Secretariat  
315 Front St. W  
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

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