



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Pandemic Influenza Planning – Report on Exercise HEALTH Guard 2007

Date:	January 23, 2008
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Within the framework of the City of Toronto Emergency Plan and the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee established under Municipal Code 59, the City of Toronto is actively engaged in pandemic preparedness.

An integrated response for the City of Toronto to an influenza pandemic is being directed by a steering committee chaired by the City Manager. The Toronto Public Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, updating the original November 2005 plan, was tabled at the Board of Health in October 2007.

Exercise HEALTH Guard 07 was the major element within the Office of Emergency Management's 2007 overall comprehensive exercise plan. The exercise was devised as a component for the City's pandemic influenza planning process as assigned by the City Manager. This exercise followed an earlier exercise that took place on October 10, 2006.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

While this report does not have any direct financial impact, the recommendations resulting from the exercise being reported on may have financial implications related to pandemic stockpiling, which is the subject of a concurrent report to Executive Committee from Purchasing and Materials Management Division.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 15, 2007, the Board of Health considered a September 28, 2007, report from the Medical Officer of Health tabling the updated Toronto Public Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic. This staff report provided an update on the pandemic influenza exercise which is part of the City's overall preparedness planning process.

The pandemic planning process was the subject of an Auditor General audit in 2007 and was reported to the Board of Health on December 4, 2007. The report is scheduled to go to the February, 2008 meeting of Audit Committee. One of the recommendations in the report was to provide regular reports on the progress of emergency management activities to the Executive Committee. In consultation with the Mayor as Chair of the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (TEMPC), it was agreed that the City Manager will provide annual reports to the Executive Committee on the City's emergency management plans.

With the level of work completed on the City's pandemic influenza planning process, particularly as tested in the November 2007 Exercise HEALTH Guard tabletop exercise, it was agreed that a report specific to this element of emergency planning at the City should now come forward to Executive Committee. A companion report presented to Executive Committee at this meeting entitled "Stockpiling Requirements for Pandemic Influenza Planning" is a detailed report outlining the work completed to date to determine the stockpiling requirements for the City and requests authority to purchase antiviral medications for staff in a number of divisions, and agencies, boards and commissions.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto Emergency Plan establishes the framework and methodology through which the City will mobilize its resources in the event of an emergency. The plan unifies the efforts of City organizations for a comprehensive and effective approach for responding to and reducing the impacts of a public emergency. It is intended to increase the emergency response capability of the City of Toronto by establishing a plan of action to efficiently and effectively deploy city resources.

The City of Toronto Emergency Plan has been formulated under Toronto Municipal Code 59, and adopted by By-law, in compliance with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The Act requires every municipality to develop and implement an emergency management program consisting of:

- (a) an emergency plan;
- (b) training programs and exercises for employees of the municipality and other persons with respect to the provision of necessary services and the procedures to be followed in emergency response and recovery activities;
- (c) public education on risks to public safety and on public preparedness for emergencies; and
- (d) any other element required by the standards for emergency management programs.

The Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (TEMPC) is responsible for emergency management in the City of Toronto. Chaired by the Mayor, its primary responsibility is to provide the executive leadership and support for the actions required to develop and implement the municipal requirements of the Emergency Management Act.

TEMPC is generally responsible for initiation and coordination of plans for all departments, agencies and local boards under the jurisdiction of City Council, and the coordination of any procedures for implementation of the plan developed by such departments, agency and local boards for the purpose of integration with the plan.

Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (Control Group)

Mayor (Chair)
Deputy Mayor
City Manager
Deputy City Managers for Cluster A and Cluster B
Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer
Chief of Police
Fire Chief and General Manager of Fire Services
Chief and General Manager of Emergency Medical Services
Medical Officer of Health
General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
General Manager of Transportation
General Manager of Water
Chief Corporate Officer
Chief General Manager of Toronto Transit Commission
Executive Director of Technical Services
Treasurer
Manager, Office of Emergency Management

Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (Support Group)

Chief Building Official and Executive Director of Building
City Solicitor, Legal Services
General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation
C.A.O. of Toronto & Region Conservation Authority
GO Transit
Toronto Hydro Electric Commission
Enbridge Consumers Gas
Enwave
Bell Canada
Insurance Bureau of Canada
Ontario Hospital Association
Toronto Port Authority
St. John Ambulance
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Catholic District School Board

In developing the emergency management program, the municipality must identify and assess various hazards and risks to public safety that could give rise to emergencies and identify the facilities and other elements of the infrastructure that are at risk of being affected by emergencies. An influenza pandemic is such a risk.

Pandemic Preparedness

In November, 2005 the Board of Health, in considering a status report by Toronto Public Health on pandemic influenza planning, requested that the City Manager: ensure continuity of operations plans be in place by July 2006; proactively address HR & Labour Relations issues arising from an influenza pandemic; and implement an information and education plan for staff, collaborating with Toronto Public Health staff. The status of these requests was reported to the Board of Health in December, 2007 as part of the Auditor General audit of the pandemic influenza planning process at the City.

The Office of Emergency Management and Toronto Public Health among many other groups continue to work to ensure that the City is prepared for the possibility of an influenza pandemic. The pandemic preparedness process involves each Division within the City of Toronto, the Unions and COTAPSAI, agencies, boards and commissions, as well as other public levels of government and private sector interests. Since the Board of Health request of the City Manager in November 2005, the City of Toronto has been actively engaged in pandemic preparedness and has been conducting scenario-based exercises.

The Office of Emergency Management began coordination of the City's Divisional Continuity of Operations planning process in December, 2005, applying accepted business continuity practices, supported by the Province. This represented a comprehensive examination and analysis of Divisional functions, resulting in the identification of prioritized activities across all Divisions. The Continuity of Operations work culminated in a tabletop Exercise HEALTH Guard 06 in October to test the readiness of these plans. As with other emergency management exercises, this one was designed to; raise awareness, increase understanding of responsibilities, look for gaps in current planning, and promote advance planning.

In February, 2007, the City Manager established the Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee to oversee pandemic influenza planning and preparedness and to ensure that key City services continue to operate in the event of a pandemic. The Committee is composed of the City Manager, Deputy City Managers, Medical Officer of Health, Strategic Communications, Human Resources including Employee & Labour Relations and Occupational Health & Safety, City Clerk's Office, TTC, Police, Technical Services Division, the Office of Emergency Management, the Management Co-Chair of the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinating Committee and the unions and associations (Locals 416, 79, TPFPA Local 3883 and COTAPSAI) as illustrated in Appendix A.

A cross-divisional Core Planning Group reporting to the Steering Committee monitors, reviews and makes recommendations around detailed planning issues arising from pandemic planning efforts across all divisions, agencies, boards and commissions to the

Steering Committee (see attached chart). As a key component of pandemic planning, in 2006 all City divisions, agencies, boards and commissions developed continuity of operations plans that identify the priority functions to continue in the event of high rates of staff absenteeism.

COMMENTS

As a follow-up exercise to Exercise HEALTH Guard 06 and the ongoing work undertaken as a result, the Office of Emergency Management and Toronto Public Health conducted a second tabletop exercise in November, 2007 as a practice for senior City staff in the Toronto Emergency Operations Centre and to further test Divisional Continuity of Operations Plans.

Exercise HEALTH Guard 07 focused on the City's response and ability to maintain critical municipal service delivery during a pandemic influenza emergency. The exercise was a component of the City of Toronto's overall pandemic emergency preparations and was designed to address some of the key issues identified through the planning process. Exercise HEALTH Guard 2007 provided senior staff the ability to practise the City's operational responsiveness to maintain critical municipal service delivery during a pandemic influenza outbreak.

The main goals of exercise HEALTH Guard 2007 were to:

- Convene senior staff at the Toronto Emergency Operations Centre and familiarize them with their expected roles during an emergency.
- Test Divisional Continuity of Operations Plans for a pandemic.
- Examine human resources issues, including employee and labour relations and occupational health & safety issues arising from anticipated absenteeism rates in a health related emergency.
- Review purchasing procedures and stockpiling of critical supplies during such an emergency.
- Consider the internal and operations-related communications required with respect to pandemic health emergencies.
- Allow further practice of procedures within the Emergency Operations Centre.

Exercise Conduct

Exercise HEALTH Guard 07 involved members of the City of Toronto senior management team working from the Emergency Operations Centre. In addition to the Emergency Operations Centre, four divisional operations centres participated: Human Resources (including Employee and Labour Relations and Occupational Health & Safety), Toronto Public Health, Emergency Medical Services, and City Clerk's Office. Union and COTAPSAI representatives were present at the Human Resources divisional operations centre to participate fully in the exercise and to be kept apprised of developments related to the pandemic scenario.

The response activity in the Emergency Operations Centre was led by the City Manager, supported by the three Deputy City Managers and Medical Officer of Health. The Mayor participated by teleconference and remained briefed and apprised of the situation by the City Manager.

Participants at Emergency Operations Centre

Mayor	
City Manager	
Deputy City Managers/Chief Financial Officer	
Divisions	
City Clerk's Office	Purchasing & Materials Management
Chief Corporate Officer	Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
Emergency Medical Services	Solid Waste Management Services
Fire Services	Strategic Communications
Human Resources	Technical Services
Legal Services	Toronto Public Health
Office of Emergency Management	Toronto Water
Parks, Forestry & Recreation	Transportation Services
Agencies, Boards & Commissions	Divisional Operations Centres
Toronto Transit Commission	Human Resources (HR/E&LR/OH&S/Unions/Association)
Toronto Police Service	Emergency Medical Services
	Toronto Public Health
	City Clerk's Office

The exercise scenario focused on a provincially declared pandemic emergency corresponding to a pandemic declaration by the World Health Organization. The established specific timeframe was the second week of a pandemic when illness had not yet peaked. In the scenario, the Emergency Operations Centre and divisional operations centres were activated and both provincial and municipal emergencies had been declared.

By design, an emergency management exercise is intended to test key systems and assess the level of understanding of the plan. The scenario presented allowed participants to address difficult issues and challenging questions with respect to the continuation of municipal service delivery during a pandemic influenza event. These issues were presented to the group in a simulated response environment in the City's Emergency Operations Centre.

Exercise Recommendations

The exercise resulted in the following recommendations for the attention of the Pandemic Steering Committee.

- Further clarify issues around personal protective equipment, infection control and policies related to the City's response to a pandemic.
- Support the on-going purchasing plan to acquire additional personal protective equipment, infection control materials and critical supplies before an emergency of this nature happens.

- Ensure the annual review of divisional continuity of operations plans and response plans is conducted.
- Continue to deliver emergency management training and exercises to increase awareness throughout the Toronto Public Service on emergency management and pandemic preparedness.
- Enhance and practise existing emergency operations centre and divisional operations centre procedures to increase understanding of responsibilities and promote a corporate environment of preparedness.

Summary

Exercise HEALTH Guard 07 was one component in the overall preparedness plan for a potential pandemic health emergency affecting Toronto. It enabled senior staff to practise their divisional continuity of operations plans with respect to the simulated event. Identified divisions tested processes established within their divisional operations centres after making changes and improvements to them since the 2006 exercise.

The exercise served to highlight those areas that have been successfully planned for and also identify those areas where further work is needed.

It is generally acknowledged that the City of Toronto has accomplished a great deal with respect to pandemic emergency management and is leading in this field. However, efforts must continue to improve, and strive for the highest level of readiness to ensure the City is as prepared as it can be to protect the residents of Toronto from not only an influenza pandemic, but for any emergency.

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SIGNATURE

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: City of Toronto Pandemic Influenza Planning & Preparedness Structure