Toronto Hydro's agreement with 311 Toronto for outage emergencies

| **Date:**  | October 23, 2015 |
| **To:**    | Government Management Committee |
| **From:**  | Director, 311 Toronto |
| **Wards:** | Ward – ALL |
| **Reference Number:** | P:\2015\Internal Services\311\Gm15002-311 (AFS# 22002) |

**SUMMARY**

The Government Management Committee on October 5, 2015, requested the Director, 311 Toronto to discuss with Toronto Hydro further amendments that will be incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure that 311 Toronto is made aware of all minor outage emergencies that occur at the Ward or within-Ward scale, and to report back to the Committee at its meeting scheduled to be held on November 9th. The updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will establish clear direction on the steps to be taken during a power outage or emergency event with a focus on improving the customer experience.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Director, 311 Toronto recommends that:

(1) The Government Management Committee receive this report for information.

**Financial Impact**

The adoption of this report’s recommendations will have no financial implications. Zero dollars have been included in the 2015 Operating Budget.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.
DECISION HISTORY

Government Management Committee on October 5, 2015 deferred the item until its meeting on November 9, 2015 and requested the Director, 311 Toronto to discuss with Toronto Hydro, and report back on, further amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding, that will ensure that 311 Toronto is made aware of all minor outage emergencies that occur at the Ward or within-Ward scale.


The report can be found at:

Government Management Committee on September 17, 2015 deferred the item until its meeting on October 5, 2015.


City Council on July 7, 8 and 9, 2015, requested the City Manager to report to the September 17, 2015 meeting of the Government Management Committee on the details and status of Toronto Hydro's agreement with 311 Toronto for outage emergencies.

The report can be found at:

Attachment 1 -Transmittal letter dated June 16, 2015 from Toronto Hydro President and CEO Re: Progress Update on Implementation of Ice Storm Recommendations (http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-81757.pdf)

At its meeting on City Council on November 13, 14, 15 and 18, 2013 City Council requested the City Manager and the Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer to report to the Government Management Committee, no later than February 2014, on a more coordinated approach between 311Toronto, Toronto Hydro which would assist 311Toronto in responding to Toronto residents during emergency events within the City.

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX35.1
A review of the events that took place as a result of the July 8, 2013 flood and December 2013 ice storm, identified opportunities for improvements to the coordinated effort of 311 and TH in responding to Toronto residents during emergency events.

Since the events of 2013 (flood and ice storm), TH and 311 staff have been working collaboratively and have made significant progress to address the concerns. **Objective** - improve the customer experience at each call center during power outage emergency events.

A comprehensive review of each organization’s operation and customer service needs has been completed, including the identification of communication and service gaps and opportunities to improve the customer experience.

A strategy has been developed to better integrate 311 and TH communication systems, which has been formally documented and executed in a MOU.

Over the past 18 months, the strategy and action plan has been substantially implemented and customer experience results have significantly improved. A number of customer experience improvements have already been implemented and complete while others are underway and will be completed over the next 12-18 months. City related IT projects are underway - expected completion 2016 (e.g. 311 Interactive Voice Response (IVR) up-grade and integration with TH call Centre)

**Implementation Points**

The original signed MOU of April 2015 will be amended to include the following paragraphs;

311 Toronto and Toronto Hydro understand that:

a) Toronto Hydro will transmit hourly IVR outage messages (outages impacting a single transformer - approx. 10-20 customers) or greater. These messages will include outage boundaries, crew status and estimated time of restoration, if available. These messages are updated on an hourly basis (more frequently if required) and will be automatically provided to a 311 Toronto distribution list. 311 Toronto will utilize this information to effectively respond to customer calls they may receive related to power outages.

b) When necessary, 311 Toronto will access the new Toronto Hydro online outage map torontohydro.com/power outage, for additional information. This map is refreshed every 15 minutes, includes a search function by address, crew status and estimated time of restoration, when available.

c) When applicable, 311 Toronto will assist Toronto Hydro customers by reporting outages directly, using the new online power outage reporting tool torontohydro.com/reports. This updated tool includes address validation and troubleshooting questions, improving the accuracy of ticket submission.
d) To ensure consistency of general power outage information provided to customers, 311 Toronto will utilize OutageTo.com, a mobile friendly online outage communication tool, available in eight different languages, to access emergency/outage preparedness information, restoration protocols, available resources, and social media (Twitter) updates.

e) 311 Toronto will take advantage of such other support communication channels or Toronto Hydro’s direct primary communication channel in respect of power outages as may be directed by Toronto Hydro from time-to-time as the entity with principal legal responsibility for serving its customers, including during power outages. 311 Toronto will be mindful that safety and other risk management factors may heighten the urgency and importance of redirecting callers to Toronto Hydro where emergency conditions may be present.

f) In order to promote public safety, minimize customer confusion, and limit call volumes during peak times, 311 Toronto will not promote its service as an alternative to Toronto Hydro’s communication channels and will co-operate with Toronto Hydro in educating customers on the importance of contacting Toronto Hydro directly where emergency conditions may be present. Similarly, and mindful of these same considerations, Toronto Hydro will continue to invest in its direct communication channels and other support communications channels.

CONCLUSION
The amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will establish clear direction on the steps to be taken during a power outage or emergency event. A mutual understanding and agreement with respect to the coordination of customer communication and engagement services offered by 311 and TH will improve the customer experience. An awareness campaign on all the items discussed will be conducted for all Members of Council at a separate session to follow.

CONTACT
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SIGNATURE

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Gary A. Yorke
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ATTACHMENT
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - 311 Toronto and Toronto Hydro Partnership Agreement (updated)