

The Evolution of Emergency Management in Toronto



H. Ellis private ambulance (c. 1905)
Toronto Archives Fonds 1568, Item 406



Members of Toronto Police Force (c. 1883)
Library and Archives Canada Topley Studio
Fonds, Item E-43956



Break in water supply pipe under bay (c. 1893)
Toronto Archives Fonds 200,
Series 376, File 1, Item 29b

1832 ► First Great Cholera Outbreak

1832 ► First organized Ambulance service in Toronto starts June 22, 1832 by the Board of Health to transport victims of 1832 cholera outbreak.

1834 ► Province incorporates the Town of York as the new city of Toronto.

1834 ► Police services in Toronto begins.

1834 ► Second Great Cholera Outbreak

1841 ► Toronto's first gas lights are installed.

1841 ► Toronto's first water supply system is, privately owned and operated by Albert Furniss (or Furness).

1858 ► Toronto's first Union Station is built by the Grand Trunk Railway.

1867 ► Birth of a nation, July 1, the Dominion of Canada is established through the British North America Act.

1869 ► Toronto's very first by-law contains building restrictions to help prevent fires, an important consideration in a city where most houses are made of wood and heated with coal or wood fires.



Hydrant — 4" (c. 1918) Toronto Archives Fonds 200, Series 372, Subseries 72, Item 878



Horse-drawn fire wagon with ladder (c. 1907) Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, Item 7



Power Plant of Toronto Electric Light Company, foot of Scott Street (c. 1897) Toronto Archives Fonds 1231, Item 1994

- 1873 ➤ Toronto buys Albert Furniss' water supply infrastructure from his estate and begins expanding it as a public system.

- 1874 ➤ First fire hydrants in Toronto. Metropolitan Water Company supplies the City with 12 hydrants. The system is supplemented with water barrels and underground tanks.

- 1874 ➤ Professional Fire services in Toronto begins in 1874. Prior to 1874, fire services were provided by volunteer companies in the city.

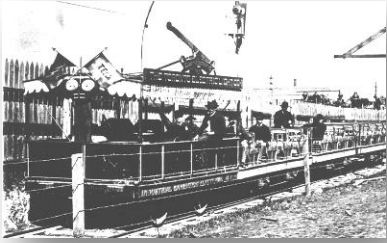
- 1876 ➤ First Long-Distance Telephone Call, August 10, Alexander Graham Bell makes the world's first long distance telephone call in Ontario; about six miles between Brantford and Paris.

- 1879 ➤ First two electric lights in Toronto are demonstrated in McConkey's Restaurant.

- 1879 ➤ Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) opens to the public for the first time.

- 1881 ➤ More electric lights are installed in downtown stores, including Eaton's.

- 1884 ➤ Newly formed Toronto Electric Light Company (funded by, among others, Sir Henry Pellatt, builder of Casa Loma) wins a contract to put 50 electric lights along King, Queen, and Yonge Streets.



Canada's first electric railway, Strachan Ave to Dufferin St. Toronto (c. 1884) Toronto Archives Fonds 16, Series 71, Item 10248



Island incinerator plant - exterior (c. 1915) Toronto Archives Fonds 200, Series 372, Subseries 70, Item 44



The Great Fire of 1904 Front St. west of Bay. Toronto Archives Fonds 1408, Item 4

1884▶ Toronto's First Electric Railway is built by John Joseph Wright and Charles Van Depoele from the Toronto Street Railway's King-Exhibition horse-drawn rail terminal line at Strachan Avenue into the CNE, a distance of about a mile.

1888▶ Toronto approves first garbage incinerator.

1896▶ Department of Public Health starts testing water quality weekly.

1901▶ First Trans-Atlantic Wireless Signal received at Signal Hill, Newfoundland from Cornwall, England by Guglielmo Marconi.

1903▶ First Flight - December 13, Orville and Wilbur Wright achieve first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight

1904▶ **April 14**

The Great Fire of 1904

104 buildings destroyed in downtown Toronto, \$10,350,000 in damages but no deaths. Fire puts 5000 people out of work, at a time when Toronto has only 200,000 inhabitants.



Collapse of Neilson's building, Gladstone Avenue. Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, Item 7094

1909 ► Collapse of the Neilson Building
The building was owned by Neilson, the Canadian chocolate and ice cream manufacturers.



Avenue Road sewer (c. 1890)
Toronto Archives Fonds 200,
Series 376, File 5, Item 20

1910 ► Water chlorination begins; sewage-treatment facilities built.

1911 ► Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) is formed to manage Toronto harbour and waterfront lands



Wreckage of first Toronto airplane crash
Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, Item 96

1911 ► **August 3-4**
First Toronto Plane Crash J.A.D. McCurdy crashes a 7-cylinder Gnome rotary engine at the Aviation Meet, Donlands Farm, Todmorden Mill



Eastern Avenue Gas Co. Bridge Collapse
(c. 1929) Toronto Archives Fonds 200,
Series 372, Subseries 84, Item 555



Snow shovellers, Queen St. (c. 1922)
Toronto Archives Fonds 1266, Item 58



Lakeshore Boulevard, Toronto during a
snowstorm. (c. 1925)
Archives of Ontario C 7-3 29241image no.
10003684

1929► October 29, Stock market crashes marking the beginning of Great Depression

1932► The first all-Canadian phone line is introduced.

1933► **December 29**
Ontario's Coldest Day 14 sites record their coldest-ever temperature, including Ottawa at -38.9°C and Algonquin Park at -45.0°C .

1934► **February**
Cold Wave Grips Eastern North America. A cold wave engulfs the continent from Manitoba to the Atlantic seaboard and down the east coast to Palm Beach, Florida. Ice traps fishing vessels off Nova Scotia, hospitals are jammed with frostbite victims and, for only the second time in recorded history, Lake Ontario freezes completely over.

1935► Toronto approves building of island airport and tunnel (tunnel stopped by Federal Government).



Women in shorts "cause" car to crash into pole (c. 1937) Toronto Archives Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 4766



Toronto Island airport from roof of grain elevators (c. 1939) Toronto Archives Fonds 1231, Item 117b



Malton airport (c. 1939) Toronto Archives Fonds 1231, Item 1141a



Toronto Snow Storm 1944 Toronto Archives Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 87

1936 ▶ **July 5-17**

The Deadliest Heat Wave in History,

Temperatures exceeding 44°C in Manitoba and Ontario claim 1,180 Canadians (mostly the elderly and infants) during the longest and deadliest heat wave on record. 400 of these deaths are caused by people who drown seeking refuge from the heat. The heat is so intense that steel rail lines and bridge girders twist, sidewalks buckle, crops wilt and fruit bakes on trees.

1938 ▶ Toronto Island Airport opens

1938 ▶ First plane lands at the Malton Airport (renamed Toronto International Airport in 1960, and in 1984 renamed again to Lester B. Pearson International Airport).

1939 ▶ September 1, Outbreak of World War II

1944 ▶ **December 11**

Toronto's Worst Single-Day Snowfall

A severe winter storm dumps 48 cm of snow on Toronto's downtown, while gale-force winds pile the snow into huge drifts. A total of 57.2 cm falls over two days. In all, 21 people die - 13 from overexertion. Funerals are postponed, expectant mothers walk to hospitals, and there are no home deliveries of milk, ice or fuel.



Steamship Noronic
Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, Item 1429



Allan A. Lamport
Toronto Mayor 1952 - 54



Hurricane Hazel Damage, 1954, Toronto
Archives, Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 1997.

1949 ▶ **September 16**

SS Noronic, "the Queen of the Lakes," destroyed by fire in Toronto Harbour, Pier 9. Fatalities estimated between 118 and 139, all of whom are passengers.

1952 ▶ First Television Broadcast in Canada, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) begins television broadcasting in Canada, September 6, 1952 from its Montreal, Quebec station CBFT. Two days later the Toronto station CBLT went on the air.

1952 ▶ **December 12**

First nuclear reactor meltdown. The NRX nuclear reactor in Chalk River, Ontario suffers a partial meltdown due to operator error and mechanical problems in the shut-off systems.

1954 ▶ City of Toronto and 12 municipalities federated into the regional government of Metropolitan Toronto.

1954 ▶ **October 15**

Hurricane Hazel hits Toronto with devastating effect, dumping an estimated 300 million tonnes of rain on the city, causing lost streets, washed out bridges and untold personal tragedy. North of the City, Holland Marsh is flooded, leaving 3,000 people without homes. A total of 83 Canadian fatalities, 36 on Raymore Drive alone. Some bodies wash up on the shores of Lake Ontario in New York State days later.



Leslie H. Saunders
Toronto Mayor 1954 – 55



Nathan Phillips
Toronto Mayor 1955 – 62



Donald D. Summerville
Toronto Mayor 1963

- 1955**▶ Metropolitan Toronto Council approves creation of the new Civil Defence Organization.
- 1956**▶ Civil Defence Organization reflects Federal Government concept of passive defences against the threat of war.
- 1957**▶ Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is formed to manage Toronto wetlands and floodplains in the aftermath of Hurricane Hazel
- 1959**▶ The St. Lawrence Seaway opens, first vessel to reach Toronto is the Prins Willem George Frederik.
- 1960**▶ J.H. Pollard, Vice-Chair, Ontario Emergency Measures Organization, becomes Director of Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Measures Organization.
- 1962**▶ First Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Operational Plan distributed.
- 1963**▶ Ontario Emergency Measures Act, 1962-63 defines emergency powers and duties of municipalities.



Phil Givens
Toronto Mayor 1963 - 66



William Dennison
Toronto Mayor 1966 - 72



First Moon Landing



David Crombie
Toronto Mayor 1972 - 78

1966 ➤ Staff transferred from Toronto Emergency Measures Organization and Toronto Department of Public Health to form the new Department of Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Services.

1967 ➤ Seven smallest municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto merged with their larger neighbours, resulting in a six-municipality configuration that included the old City of Toronto and the surrounding municipalities of East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough and York.

1969 ➤ First Moon landing, July 20, Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin successfully land the lunar module, "Eagle" at a site on the "Sea of Tranquility."

1970 ➤ **July 5**
Deadliest Toronto air accident
Air Canada Flight 621 crashes at Pearson International Airport, killing all 100 passengers and 9 crew.

1970 ➤ Toronto Harbour Container Ship Distribution Centre opens.



Anik A Satellite



Pickering Nuclear Generating Station



CN Tower



Commodore PET Computer

- 1972► World's first domestic satellite, Anik A, is launched. CBC is now able to broadcast to the Canadian North for the first time. The satellite is capable of carrying 12 colour TV channels.

- 1973► Pickering Nuclear Generating Station is completed, and begins producing more electricity than any nuclear power station in the world

- 1974► Reductions in Federal emergency measures funding results in the decline and eventual disbanding of the Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Services Department.

- 1975► April 2, Toronto completes building of the CN Tower, the world's tallest freestanding structure

- 1975► **December 8**
GO Train TTC Bus Crash. Eastbound GO Transit commuter train express from Toronto Union Station collides with a stalled Toronto Transit Bus on the level crossing at Danforth Road. 9 passengers from the bus are killed.

- 1976► Metropolitan Toronto Police inherit ownership of emergency measures planning. New Emergency Planning Unit is created.

- 1977► The first successfully mass marketed personal computer, the Commodore PET is introduced in January



John Sewell
Toronto Mayor 1978 – 80



Mississauga Train Derailment



Air India Boeing 747, similar to the one used for
Flight 182



Art Eggleton
Toronto Mayor 1980 – 91

1979► Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Planning Committee established.

1979► **November 10**
Mississauga train derailment.
Canadian Pacific freight train carrying explosive and poisonous chemicals from Windsor to Toronto derails near the intersection of Mavis Road and Dundas Street. Over 200,000 people are evacuated, the largest peacetime evacuation in North America up until the New Orleans evacuation of 2005. It was the last explosion in the GTA until the Sunrise Propane blast in 2008.

1980► First edition of the new Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Plan published.

1980► **June 23**
Air India Bombing. A bomb was loaded onto Air India Flight 181, which departed from Toronto Pearson International Airport and arrived at Montréal-Mirabel International Airport. It then departed as Air India Flight 182, using the same aircraft and carrying passengers who were on Flight 181. It blew up over the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Cork, Ireland killing all 307 passengers and 22 crew.

1990► World Wide Web is born when Tim Berners-Lee, a researcher at the CERN laboratory in Geneva, develops HTML, HyperText Markup Language.

1990► Emergency Management Act (Provincial) enacted



June Rowlands
Toronto Mayor 1991 – 94



Barbara Hall
Toronto Mayor 1994 – 97



Hydro-Quebec pylon collapsed under the weight of the ice, near Drummondville, Quebec



Mel Lastman
Toronto Mayor 1998 – 03

1995 ➤ **August 11, 1995**

Russell Hill Subway accident. A TTC subway collides with a stationary train when a driver misinterprets a signal. 3 are killed, and 30 injured.

1996 ➤ **September 2**

Nimrod Crash at the CNE. Seven Royal Air Force crew members were killed when their Hawker Siddeley Nimrod MR.2P stalled during a low altitude turn and crashed into Lake Ontario

1996 ➤ Toronto Police Emergency Planning Unit joined with the Public Order Unit to form the Toronto Police Service, Public Safety Unit, Emergency Management Section.

1998 ➤ **January 4-9**

Ice Storm of the Century. One of the most destructive and disruptive storms in Canadian history hits Eastern Canada causing hardship for 4 million people and costing \$3 billion. Losses included millions of trees, 130 transmission towers and 120,000 km of power and telephone lines. Power outages last from several hours to four weeks.

1998 ➤ Metropolitan Toronto and five municipalities amalgamate to form the new City of Toronto

1999 ➤ **January 2-15**

Toronto's Snowstorm of the Century. A series of storms dumps nearly a year's amount of snow in less than two weeks. The worst storm hits on January 2, burying much of southern Ontario, from Windsor to Kingston in snow between 20 and 40 cm,



Canadian Forces Bison armoured personnel carrier drives into Toronto downtown core



Hickson Fire, Scarborough



9/11 Terrorist Attack



SARS Outbreak Toronto 2002-3

affecting more than five million people. In total, at least eleven people died.

Four additional storms make this the snowiest two-week period since 1846. The downtown weather station records the greatest January snowfall total with 118.4 cm and the greatest snow on the ground at any one time, with 65 cm

1999 ► Works and Emergency Services Department establishes the Toronto Emergency Planning Office.

2000 ► **April 9**
Hickson Fire Scarborough
A significant fire occurs at U.S.E. Hickson Products Ltd., Scarborough, consuming a variety of products associated with the construction industry.

2000 ► Toronto Emergency Planning Office inherits ownership for emergency management planning and administration of the Toronto Emergency Planning Committee.

2001 ► Toronto Office of Emergency Management establishes new Emergency Operations Centre.

2001 ► **September 11**
Coordinated terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania
The first time in history, the plan for the Security Control of Air Traffic and Air Navigation Aids (SCATANA) is invoked, forcing all civilian aircraft in the US and several other countries, including Canada, to be grounded. Canada receives 226 of the diverted flights and launches Operation Yellow Ribbon to deal with grounded planes and stranded passengers.

2002 ► **November**
SARS Crisis (1st wave),



David Miller
Toronto Mayor 2003 – 10



Crash of Air France Flight 358, Pearson International Airport, August 2, 2005



Explosion at Sunrise Propane Facility in Toronto, August 10 2008



Robert Ford
Toronto Mayor 2010 – Current

- 2003** ➤ **July**
SARS Crisis (2nd wave) Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome infects estimated 251 Canadians, killing 44 in Toronto, many of whom were in the Health Care profession.
- 2003** ➤ **August 14**
Northeast Blackout, widespread power outage affects an estimated 10 million people in Ontario
- 2003** ➤ **December 9**
Uptown Theatre collapse, cinema undergoing demolition falls onto neighbouring Yorkville English Academy, killing one person and injuring 14.
- 2005** ➤ **August 2**
Air France Flight 358 overshoots the runway at Pearson International Airport, skids into a ravine, and bursts into flames. All 297 passengers and 12 crew members survive.
- 2006** ➤ Emergency Management Act (Provincial) renamed Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act
- 2007** ➤ Emergency Management Act (Federal) enacted, June 22
- 2008** ➤ **August 10**
Sunrise Propane explosion, one person killed, more than 12,000 evacuated from their homes.
- 2010** ➤ Toronto Office of Emergency Management is reorganized, moved out of Technical Services and reports directly to Deputy City Manager under new Directorship.

