

# PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS



Partners in Preparedness—Newsletter #3

December 2018

## The OEM Gets a New Home

At the end of October, a few organizational changes occurred at the City of Toronto. City Manager, Chris Murray, announced a realignment of some of the city's services. As a result, the Office of Emergency Management was brought under the oversight of the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services in an effort to reinforce an already solid relationship and improve emergency response coordination.

Over the coming months, OEM will develop a multi-year work plan in collaboration with colleagues in Toronto Fire to strengthen our Emergency Operations Centre capacity, refine plans and procedures related to special / extreme events and other specific risks as well as further developing the city's business continuity and community resiliency initiatives.

The OEM is hopeful that continued work on the Partners in Preparedness initiative will contribute positively to improving the overall resiliency of the city.



*One of the real joys of the **holiday** season is the opportunity to **say** thank you and wish you the very best for the new year.*

*Warmest thoughts & best wishes for a wonderful **holiday** and a very happy new year.*

## Emergency Management - eLearning

The Office of Emergency Management maintains 24/7 operational readiness in case of an emergency event. The City of Toronto now offers an introductory eLearning course "OEM Emergency Management 100" for anyone interested in learning more about emergency management in Toronto. Please send an email to [oemtrainingexercises@toronto.ca](mailto:oemtrainingexercises@toronto.ca) for a copy of the eLearning course.

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## Toronto's 11th Annual Emergency Management Symposium

The 2018 Toronto Emergency Management Symposium took place at the Toronto Police College on 70 Birmingham St., Toronto on November 14 and 15.

Over 400 working professionals came together in order to educate themselves and interact with other working professionals in the field of emergency management. This symposium offered a unique networking opportunity for individuals from private and public organizations to share their experience and knowledge within the field of emergency management.

Highlights of this years event included presentations on:

- Vegas October 1 Mass Casualty Event
- Crowd Safety and Special Events Planning
- UK Mass Casualty Bureau and Victim Supports

Attendance this year was our largest to date and many of you were in attendance thanks to the “partners in preparedness” private sector engagement initiative.



YOU MIGHT BE PREPARED  
FOR AN EMERGENCY,  
BUT WHAT  
ABOUT THEM?



[toronto.ca/oem](http://toronto.ca/oem)

# Neighbourhood Resilience

The concept of neighbourhood resilience is emerging as a way to help reduce the direct and indirect impacts of emergencies. In addition to acknowledging the natural and human caused hazards that exist, to truly understand what a community needs to become more resilient, there needs to be a holistic picture of what makes up a given neighbourhood from a social, economic and infrastructure perspective. If some of the root causes of vulnerability in a neighbourhood can be identified and pro-actively addressed, overall community resiliency can be improved to lessen the effects when an emergency occurs.

Currently, there is not a lot of guidance or tools to assist with identifying, planning and executing measures to improve resilience. To date, the OEM has pushed the preparedness message that everyone should have an emergency kit and be prepared to take care of themselves for 72 hours following an emergency. While there is no intention to cease that message, it has become evident that a more community based, 'neighbour helping neighbour' approach is needed to make people generally more resilient.

With the insight and assistance of multiple stakeholders (both internal and external), OEM is hoping to explore a number of initiatives to address the idea of neighbourhood resilience and what might be done to implement change, such as examining hazards affecting the built and natural environment to better understand the vulnerabilities of specific neighbourhoods and propose improvements, and working with private sector partners to examine a potential role for their participation in enhancing neighbourhood resilience in their own communities.



## Communications Update

Did you know that the City of Toronto Strategic Communications Division and the Office of Emergency Management co-chair an Emergency Risk Communicators Network (ERCoN)? This network brings together individuals from various City divisions and external agencies to share public education campaign materials and best practices with their peers in the field. It also helps to familiarize participants with other emergency communicators so that when an incident happens, contacts are already established.

In conjunction with the OEM's Family and Friends Assistance Centre planning, a sub-group of communications professionals was proposed to look at how risk communications are coordinated in events that also greatly impact the hospital system. This follows the lessons learned from the Yonge-Finch van attack incident, where it was determined that coordination of communication messages with the hospitals would have provided residents with a more unified message.

ERCoN is always open to new members who also work in crisis communications. If you would like a communications professional from your organization to be included, please send an email to [Jennifer.smysnuik@toronto.ca](mailto:Jennifer.smysnuik@toronto.ca).

## OEM Special Events — UPDATE

Earlier this fall, OEM launched a new **Event Safety & Security Workgroup** to review, coordinate and communicate planning and operational safety & security response plans for special events. The workgroup includes representatives, stakeholders and subject matter experts from various City divisions and/or relevant agencies who are responsible both planning and operational execution of special events within the City of Toronto. Currently workgroup representatives include; OEM, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Paramedic Services, Transportation Services, Event Support and the Toronto Transit Commission.

For 2019, the workgroup will pilot ten events through an enhanced planning program and hopes the learnings will benefit all event safety plans going forward.

## Winter Preparedness

While the danger from winter weather varies across Ontario, most people are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. That could mean snow or subfreezing temperatures, as well as strong winds, ice or heavy rain storms. According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, winter storms and excessive cold claim over 100 lives each year in this country – which is more than the combined number of deaths caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, extreme heat and lightning each year.

As we head into the winter season, this is a good time for businesses and organizations to consider their readiness for cold weather-related hazards. You can get started by reviewing our [Guide to Business Continuity Planning](#) for more information on how to put together a plan.

Once you have a plan in place, consider running an exercise to test your plan. By simulating a cold weather event, you can figure out if your plan is up-to-date and ready to be used. For example, exercise your plan to figure out if it includes procedures for telling employees how they can find out if the business is open, how their schedule may be changed, and what they should do if they are unable to make it to work due to the weather.

And finally, take this opportunity to teach your employees about the risk posed by winter weather. You can educate staff on:

- the potential impacts of winter storms
- the [terms that Environment and Climate Change Canada uses](#) to describe changing weather conditions
- the importance of having supplies ready to stay at home for up to three days without power, water or heat
- your organization's business continuity plan

For more information on the risks posed by winter weather, visit [getprepared.gc.ca](http://getprepared.gc.ca).



## Contact Us



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