CITY OF Thunder Bay
Superior by Nature

2026

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

REVIEWED:

07/01/2026

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT NUMBER	SECTION(S) OR PAGE(S) AMENDED	DATE OF AMENDMENT
	Replace entire plan	2026-01

This document is considered expired and should be destroyed thirteen (13) months following the most recent listed review or revision.

INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Response Plan (ERP) outlines a centralized controlled and coordinated response to support responders and safeguard property, the environment and the health, safety and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Thunder.

Based on the Incident Management System (IMS), the ERP is designed to support individuals and agencies, both internal and external, which may become involved in a municipal emergency response to become aware of their respective roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

The ERP scope addresses incidents that warrant the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre, not addressing emergencies that are handled on site by appropriate first responding agencies. The ERP is intended to complement existing contingencies, standard operating procedures, and other emergency prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery initiatives that make up the municipal emergency management program.

The following response goals are applied to all emergency situations:

1. Protect the safety of all incident responders and those affected by the incident
2. Save lives
3. Treat the sick and injured
4. Protect the health of those affected by the incident
5. Safeguard the continuity of government and critical services
6. Protect property and the environment
7. Prevent and/or reduce economic and social losses

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The legislation, regulations, related standards, and By-Laws under which the municipality and its employees are authorized to respond to an emergency are:

- The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, RSO 1990, c.E.9, as amended (the *Act*); and Ontario Regulation 380/04;
- Ontario Incident Management System (IMS) 2.0
- The City of Thunder Bay By-law 76/2021

The *Act* requires municipalities to develop, implement, and maintain an emergency management program, and adopt it with a by-law.

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY CONTROL GROUP

In the case of an emergency, the Emergency Operations Centre will be activated and operated by the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) and support staff as needed.

The acting City Manager will assume the EOC Commander role and chair the MECG.

The City of Thunder Bay's MECG consists of the following members or their designates:

- City Manager
- Fire Chief
- Police Chief
- EMS Chief
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC)
- Commissioner Infrastructure and Operations
- Commissioner Community Services
- Commissioner Corporate Services
- Commissioner Growth
- Emergency Information Officer
- Community Support Table Liaison

The City of Thunder Bay's Manager, Communications & Public Relations, is appointed as the Emergency Information Officer.

The City of Thunder Bay's Director, Strategic Initiatives & Engagement is appointed as the Community Support Table Liaison

When activated, the MECG is additionally supported by the Scribe, Safety Officer, and relevant Technical Specialists.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, external agencies and organizations not normally part of the MECG may be asked to send a representative to join the MECG.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is a central hub for the MECG and support personnel to carry out the functions of managing the emergency at the strategic level.

During an emergency, EOC personnel will meet at regular intervals or as required to provide and receive situation updates relating to the emergency. The EOC will consider strategic objectives and develop an action plan for a defined operational period. This interval will be known as the EOC operational period.

All members of the MECG shall assign designates to attend the EOC and act for them in their absence as required.

ACTIVATION

The Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Operations Centre may be partially or fully activated when there is an identified need for significant coordination. This can include active or imminent hazards threatening the community; support of other communities' emergency responses; or to manage risks during a planned event.

Response Level	Description	Criteria
Normal Operations	Activities that are normal for the EOC when no incident or specific risk or hazard has been identified The CEMC will coordinate routine watch and warning activities as they emerge.	Routine operations, including emergency responses within the scope of first responders
Partial Activation	Select EOC team members/organizations are activated to monitor a credible threat, risk, or hazard and/or support risk management during a planned event.	Significant potential impact to citizens, property and environment. Significant media attention Significant demand on resources
Full Activation	The EOC team is activated, including personnel from assisting agencies, to support response to a major incident or credible threat.	Major impact on citizens, property and environment Major public interest Major demand for resources impacting business continuity

ACTIVATION OF THE PLAN

The City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Response Plan can be activated:

- Directly by any member or acting designate of the MECG directly **and/or**
- By request to a member of the MECG by the municipal department, community partner, or emergency responder most directly involved in the response and/or mitigation of an emergency. The request for activation will be considered based on the size, seriousness, or complexity of the emergency and the response capability of that agency.

On receipt of instructions from a member of the MECG, the POLICE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (684-1555) will call out the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG), MECG alternates if the primary member is unavailable, and named Support Positions by telephone or the most effective means. The member of the group giving the call-out instruction will decide if this is to be a call-out or standby.

The primary Emergency Operations Centre is:

- Superior North EMS, 105 Junot Avenue South

Alternate Emergency Operations Centres are:

- Thunder Bay City Hall, 500 Donald Street
- Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Station #3, 60 S. Water Street

Depending on the nature of the incident, a virtual Emergency Operations Centre may be established in lieu of a physical Emergency Operations Centre.

DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY

Emergency declarations will only be made if the Mayor or acting head of council, after reviewing the ERP and consulting with the MECG, deems it to be warranted. They may make such orders as they consider necessary and are not contrary to law to implement the emergency plan of the municipality and to protect property and the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the emergency area

Should circumstances warrant an emergency declaration, the Mayor or acting head of council must complete and submit a formal written "Declaration of Emergency" to Emergency Management Ontario.

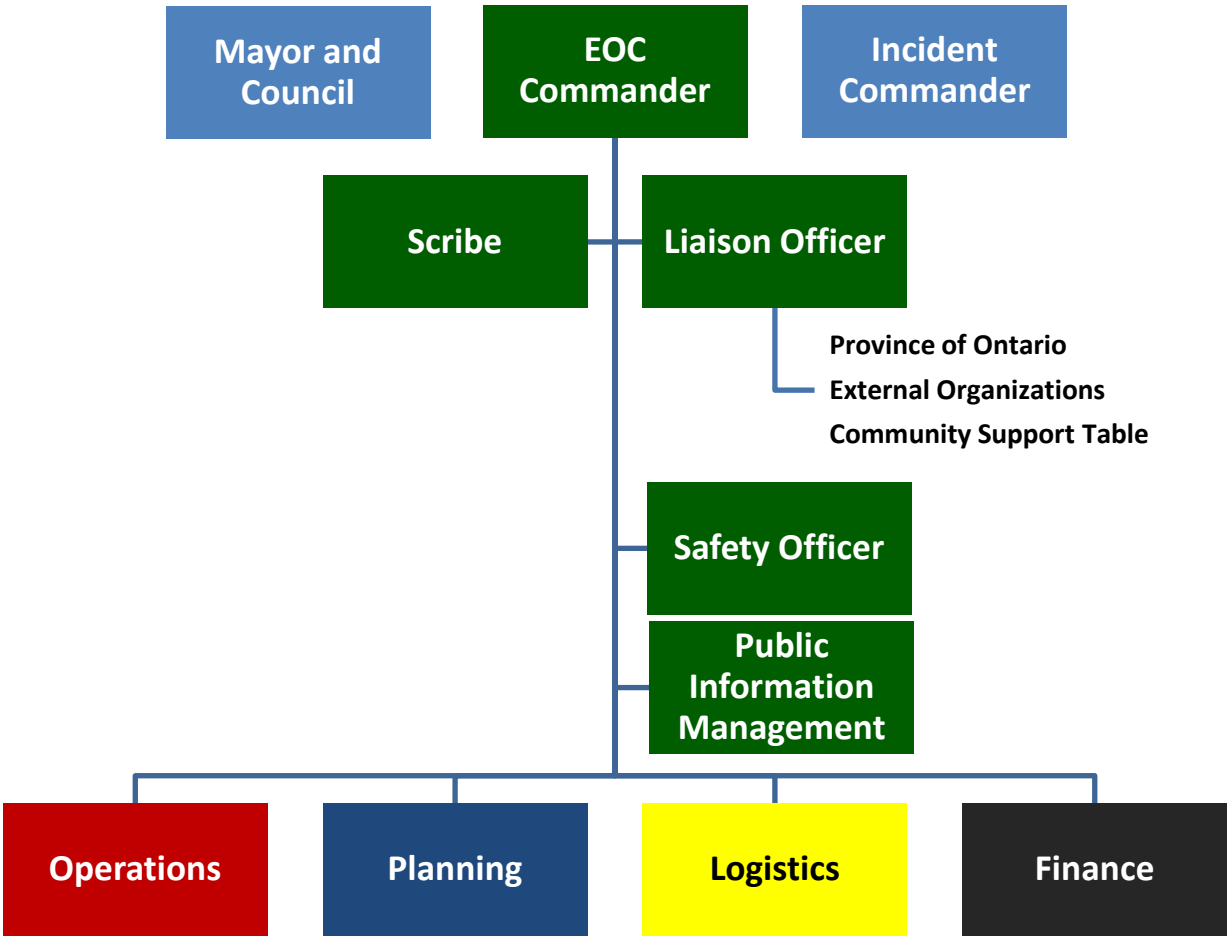
A municipal emergency may be declared terminated at any time by the Head of Council or the Council of a municipality, and/or by the Premier of Ontario through submission of a written "Termination of a Declared Emergency" to Emergency Management Ontario.

An emergency declaration is not necessary to activate the plan, convene the MECG, or request assistance from outside agencies, surrounding communities, or higher levels of government.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Incident Management System (IMS) is a standardized command and control approach to emergency management encompassing personnel, facilities, equipment, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. Standardized processes and terminology allow incident responders to formulate a unified plan to manage the situation. The standardized terminology reduces the risk of miscommunication among the many responders.

The position summaries to follow are intended to guide collaboration and complement IMS training and position checklists.



ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE (EOC)	The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is where the MECG carries out the functions of managing the emergency at the strategic level. The functions performed in the EOC include but are not limited to: • Supporting on-site incident response • Collecting, gathering and analyzing data • Making decisions that protect life and property • Maintaining continuity of municipal operations • Disseminating decisions to response agencies and the public EOC functions **do not** include tactical decisions for on-site responders or resources. That responsibility lies with the Incident Commander. Not all IMS positions are required to be filled in an emergency, but all IMS functions must be assigned. One person may be assigned to multiple IMS roles. All personnel should reference relevant continency plans and procedures, use established templates and resources such as the Critical Infrastructure List, and be aware of their responsibilities listed in this plan, the IMS Common Responsibilities Checklist and the Position Checklist for their assigned role(s).
MAYOR ACTING HEAD OF COUNCIL	• Declare and terminate an emergency as necessary • Ensure members of Council are notified of the emergency and updated on response. • Notifying the Mayors of adjoining municipalities of the emergency if required and providing any status reports.

CITY COUNCILLORS	• May assist the Emergency Information Officer to relay information to community members • Liaise through acting head of council regarding any concerns from constituents
INCIDENT COMMANDER SITE	• Establish and maintain command of the incident site (when incident has specific location) • Coordinate with EOC for support, considering unified command where appropriate • Set the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities.
EOC COMMANDER CITY MANAGER	Overall authority and responsibility for the activities of the EOC. Until otherwise delegated, all EOC functions are the responsibility of the EOC Commander. • Sets priorities and objectives for operational periods and ensures they are carried out. • Approves EOC Incident Action Plan (IAP) • Liaises with the Incident Command and Mayor • Approves emergency information releases. • Determine what sections are needed, assign section chiefs as appropriate
SCRIBE	• Record all critical decisions, actions, briefings, and resource requests in real time • Support clear and traceable information for continuity, accountability, and after-action review
PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT EMERGENCY INFORMATION OFFICER	• Collects and disseminates accurate and timely emergency information both during and following an emergency • Develops and shares messages to the public, through the media, and through other trusted community sources • Activates Emergency Information Centre • Tracks media reports including social media feeds for trends or misinformation • Liaises with other organizations' communication leads

SAFETY OFFICER	• Monitors physical and mental safety of EOC and response personnel • Recommends safety modifications to operations • Assesses and monitors response risks and halts operations if necessary
LIASON OFFICER CEMC	• Invites required or requested agencies and stakeholders to the EOC • Provides orientation to agencies and stakeholders entering the EOC • Supports coordination with engaged local, provincial, and/or federal partners
COMMUNITY SUPPORT TABLE LIAISON	• Support communication and coordination between the EOC and Community Support Table member organizations • Primary contact will be Liaison Officer, may be redirected as appropriate
OPERATIONS SECTION	• Meet the incident objectives and priorities stated in the IAP • Manages tactical operations. • Develops the operations portion of the IAP • Maintains contact with Incident Commander, subordinate Operations personnel, and other agencies involved in the incident.
PLANNING SECTION	• Collects, confirms, analyzes and shares incident information gathered from incident responders • Develops EOC IAP in coordination with other IMS functions. • Conducts advance planning activities • Plans for EOC demobilization
LOGISTICS SECTION	• Arranges and provides services and supports including personnel, supplies, facilities and other resources to an incident • Provides other support services such as arranging for food and lodging for workers within the EOC and other sites.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRAION SECTION	• Manages incident-specific finance and administration activities including payroll, vendor contracts and incident cost tracking. • Coordinates claims and compensation. • Tracks and reports on personnel time.
TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS	• Provide technical observations, recommendations, and other support as needed to incident staff • Report to Planning Section chief by default, may be reassigned as appropriate
EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES	• Supports the essential needs of individuals, households, and communities affected by disaster. • Report to Operations Section chief by default, may be reassigned as appropriate
ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE	• Represent partner organization to support coordination of incident response • Primary contact will be Liaison Officer, may be redirected as appropriate

Municipal Emergency Control Group and Designates must be aware of the contents of the Emergency Response Plan and must be trained on how to carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities as outlined in the plan.

EMERGENCY DOCUMENTATION

It is extremely important to accurately document all major decisions, individuals contacted, instructions issued, and actions taken in an emergency. Emergency record keeping should utilise Incident Management System forms from Emergency Management Ontario or other NIMS compatible formats.

All EOC positions are required to keep an activity log during events and completed forms must include contact information for the individual completing the document and other individuals involved in response efforts.

All documentation developed during an event is to be submitted, retained, and managed by the Planning Section. Staff are required to submit completed forms regardless of their usage in the IAP or other formal document planning.

DEACTIVATION AND RECOVERY

Deactivation of the EOC will be performed once all objectives associated with the developed demobilization plan have been achieved.

Criteria considered for EOC deactivation is, but not limited to:

- The incident is resolved
- All resources assigned to the incident have been released and returned to their home base
- The EOC is/are no longer required as the incident has been stabilized
- On-going recovery operations are to be managed from a separate entity such as normal municipal operations.

The deactivation will be announced to all personnel including any assisting or cooperating agencies during the final briefing. If the general public was informed of facility activation, deactivation will also be communicated.

A critical incident debrief shall be held following EOC activations, and an after-action report shall be created following exercises, full EOC activations, and emergency declarations to inform corrective actions and continual improvements to emergency management procedures.

For significant incidents, a Recovery Coordination Team should be designated to support recover actions.

A report summarizing the event, actions taken, and evaluation of responsibilities, including any recommended changes to the Emergency Response Plan and its associated documents, should be produced after the event concludes.

PLAN MAINTENANCE, REVISION, AND TESTING

The City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Response Plan is developed and maintained by the Emergency Management Program Committee under the authority of Municipal By-law 76/2021 and in accordance with the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

The group is chaired by the Community Emergency Management Coordinator, and membership includes:

- Mayor (Head of Council)
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator
- City Manager
- Chief of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue
- Chief of Superior North Emergency Medical Services
- Chief of Thunder Bay Police Service
- Commissioner of Infrastructure & Operations

The plan is reviewed and revised on an annual basis by the Emergency Management Program Committee and circulated to all plan holders.

The Emergency Management Program Committee is supported by the Emergency Management Program working group, which includes both internal and external representatives and subject matter experts.

Annual exercises are conducted in order to test the overall effectiveness of the City's Emergency Response Plan and provide training to emergency response and recovery stakeholders in the City of Thunder Bay. Recommendations stemming from these exercises are incorporated into the plan where necessary.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRONYMS

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

EOC Forms
IMS 201 – Incident Briefing
IMS 202 – Incident Objectives
IMS 209-G – Incident Status Summary
IMS 211 – Check-In List
IMS 214 – Activity Log

APPENDICES

IMS Position Checklists
Meeting Agenda Templates
Communication Templates
Contact lists
HIRA
Critical Infrastructure List
Hazard-Specific Contingencies
Evacuation Plan
Recovery Plan