
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEER CIVILIAN PROTECTION TASK GROUP

Thank you!

We would like to thank the Province of Ontario for its considerations over the years for many projects and look forward to a stronger relationship moving forward.

Proposal

The need for sustainable funding for the Emergency Management Program and the need for a coordinated volunteer corps to assist municipalities establish a surge capacity for civil protection.

We are asking for your support to pilot a County-led Emergency Management Volunteer Civil Protection Task Group that can be scoped and spread across Ontario. We are requesting \$400,000 to create a new model of Emergency Management Volunteers and an annual operating budget of \$40,000.

Background

When emergencies escalate beyond the capability of local municipalities, rapidly available, reliable additional trained help and expertise is required. This capacity is missing on the local, regional and provincial level making it impossible to rapidly respond to larger scale disasters or catastrophic events, and to sustain longer term operations. Technical capabilities to mitigate escalation of the response phase and to ensure timely and cost-effective recovery are currently not tied into the response system thus prohibiting the continuum needed from immediate response to recovery. A shift from ad-hoc, reactive response to pro-active capacity building, coordination, and cooperation of all available assets under a clear governance structure is urgently needed to adapt to the increase and severity of disasters.

As we adapt to severe climate change impact and other challenges, a civil protection approach is needed. The role of government must shift from being the sole responders to providing the structure and framework to enable citizens and communities to be part of the solution.

A new clear organization and command structure of this all-hazard “second response” capacity guarantees rapid availability and reliability equal to the CAF and ensures coordination and interoperability of all available assets. To support prolonged and large-scale disaster response operations, technical units are needed which focus on tasks such as flood protection, assistance in wildfire fighting, emergency infrastructure repair, damaged building assessment, debris clearance, emergency bridge building, logistic support, water purification, emergency wastewater management, emergency communications and power supply, etc.

Help from outside is always reactive, and often late. It is not financially viable to establish a local expert capacity based on full-time, paid and equipped, professionals, to deal with a catastrophic disaster which may or may not occur. And spontaneous volunteers, though well-intentioned, often present a burden to already overtasked authorities and first responders.

A framework for an Ontario volunteer civil protection program to enable and support municipalities and Ontarians, as they volunteer their time, their skills, and their professional expertise as required, is needed. The reliance on volunteers should not be solely a municipal responsibility. Under the mandate and guidance of the Minister responsible for Emergency Management, unpaid citizen volunteers need to be recruited, trained and equipped to support local Emergency Management programs.